

WAITING FOR COFFIN MUSIC - Piano various

COFFIN ENTRY MUSIC - Time to say goodbye by Andrea
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RITUAL - PLACING WATCH ON COFFIN

Today we celebrate and remember the life of James Alexander McLeod — Jim to most who knew him.

Jim was born on 16 March 1948, and he was a Greenock man through and through. Even if life carried him into new routines and different seasons, his roots were always here — in the town, in the people, and in the steady way of life that shaped him. When the family spoke about Jim's early years, what came through wasn't a long list of dates, but a clear sense of where he came from and what that meant to him.

He talked about the shipyards, the Clyde, and that strong sense of community — the feeling that people looked out for one another. Money could be tight and

life could be demanding, but Jim learned early on to take responsibility, to be self-reliant, and to do his best with what was in front of him. He wasn't someone who needed applause, and he wasn't one for drama. He was proud, steady, and grounded — the sort of person who quietly got on with things and made sure the people around him were alright.

Jim's parents were Alex and Jean. Alex worked in the shipyards — a working life that takes grit and stamina — and Jean was described as the “glue” of the family. You can hear the shape of Jim in those descriptions: a strong work ethic from his dad, and that steady, caring, practical “hold it all together” warmth from his mum. Jim also had a sister, Morag,

and they kept close; they spoke most weeks, and that regular contact mattered. It was never about big emotional displays — it was about staying connected, in that ordinary, dependable way that matters more than big gestures.

Those early values — fairness, decency, hard work, and a clear sense of right and wrong — stayed with him for life. They showed up in his work, in his friendships, and most of all in his family life.

Jim served his apprenticeship straight from school and became a joiner by trade. It's a craft that suited him: practical, skilled, patient, and precise. He worked in construction for years and, later on, worked for himself. The family described him as a

perfectionist, and it's said with affection — because with Jim, it wasn't about showing off. It was about doing things properly. If Jim fixed something, it stayed fixed. If he built something, it was built to last. And if something wasn't quite right, he would keep at it until it was right — and if it couldn't be fixed, he would still find a way to make it better.

There's something quietly meaningful about that. We live in a world that can feel rushed and disposable, but Jim belonged to a mindset that believed in craftsmanship, in pride in your work, and in leaving things better than you found them. People trusted him because he was careful. People respected him because he was consistent. And those qualities

don't just make a good tradesman — they make a good friend, a good neighbour, and a good dad.

It's also worth saying that joinery is the kind of trade that teaches patience. You measure, you adjust, you step back, you look again. You don't force it. You work with what you have, and you make it right. And in many ways, that's how Jim lived. He wasn't flashy. He didn't rush. He was steady. He was the sort of person who would take a situation, stand back, and quietly think, "Right — what needs done here?" And then he'd do it.

That approach wasn't only about timber and tools. It was how Jim moved through life. He was the kind of person who noticed what needed done and simply

did it — without fuss, without a big announcement, and without expecting anything back. When the family were asked about his achievements and contributions, they didn't talk about awards or public recognition. They said: he looked after people — quietly. He helped others without making a song and dance about it. He fixed things for free. He turned up. He gave people the feeling that they weren't on their own.

Sometimes, that kind of goodness can be easy to overlook in the moment, because it's so ordinary. But when you stop and look back, you realise it's the most important thing there is. A life of steady kindness. A life where people felt supported. A life

where the people around you knew they could rely on you.

In 1971, Jim met Margaret — and that meeting became the central partnership of his life. There's a detail the family shared that feels very "Jim": their first dance. Margaret stood on his feet the whole time — and it's the kind of story that has stayed in the family because it captures something real: warmth, humour, and the way love is made out of ordinary moments. Jim and Margaret went on to share 52 years of marriage — a lifetime of day-to-day loyalty, care, and quiet understanding.

A long marriage like that isn't built on grand statements. It's built on routine and commitment. On

cups of tea. On small acts of care. On showing up for one another, even on the days that are hard and ordinary. And when a family says, “They were married for 52 years,” what they’re really saying is: they built a life together, and they stayed beside one another, through the whole of it.

Together they built a home, and they built a family.

Jim was a dad to Laura and to David, and as a father he was the same as he was in every other part of life: dependable, solid, and present. The family spoke about the reality of working life — shifts, events, late nights — but what matters is the feeling his children carried: that Jim was always there in the ways that counted. Not always in big

gestures, but in steady support. In turning up. In providing. In making sure things were taken care of. In being a steady presence — especially when it mattered most.

Jim's care didn't come with fuss. It came with action. It came with practical help. It came with that calm steadiness that says, without words, "I've got you." And for many families, that's the greatest gift a parent can give.

And then Jim became a grandad — and that is a role that seems to have brought him genuine joy. His grandchildren Sophie, Callum, and Ellie knew him as hands-on, patient, and completely in his element when he was doing things with them. The shed was

sacred territory — a place of tools, projects, and quiet concentration — but it was also a place where he passed on skills and confidence.

He fixed bikes. He built wee things. He made bird boxes and little wooden toys. He showed them how to try again when something didn't work first time.

He taught them, without big speeches, that you can figure things out — that you can keep going — and that you don't need to panic when something goes wrong. You just take a breath, look at the problem, and work out what needs done.

The family described him as “hands-on” with the grandkids — and that's important. It means he didn't just sit back and watch life happen. He got involved.

He made time. He gave them attention. And in the middle of all that practical time together, he was also giving them something deeper: memories of being cared for. Memories of feeling safe. Memories of someone who had patience for them.

The family put it beautifully when they described him as a grandad: “All the love, none of the hassle.” That line says so much. It speaks to the kind of grandad who doesn’t overcomplicate things, who doesn’t demand anything, who simply offers warmth, steadiness, and presence. The kind of love you remember in your bones — and the kind of love that carries on.

When you think about what Jim enjoyed, it wasn't extravagance. It was simple pleasures — a cup of tea, a bit of peace and quiet, and being outdoors. He liked walking, keeping fit, being out in the fresh air. He had a quiet appreciation for nature — not in a big dramatic way, but in a simple, steady way: the kind of person who notices the weather, notices the seasons, notices when the light changes.

And there's an image the family gave that feels very fitting: Sunday mornings — Jim up early, settled, the radio on quietly, the world not yet busy. That's a small scene, but it's the kind of scene that becomes precious because it tells you who someone was when they were simply themselves.

Jim wasn't a religious man, but he had a strong moral compass. A clear sense of right and wrong. A belief in taking responsibility. A belief in honesty and fairness. He also had a sense of nature and continuity — that life is part of something bigger, that seasons turn, that what we do matters, and that love remains even when someone is no longer here in person. The family described him as “decent” and “responsible” — and those are words that sound simple, but they are not small. They are the foundation of a good life, and they were part of Jim from the beginning.

He also loved football — not in passing, but properly. Celtic were sacred. The scarf, the routine, the

devotion — even when health made it harder, he still attended when he could, because it mattered to him. That, again, is Jim: loyal, committed, steady in the things he cared about. Football isn't only about sport; it's about belonging. It's about routine. It's about identity. And for Jim, it was one of the threads of his life.

And then there was family time. Sunday dinners. Birthdays. Any excuse to have people together. Those are the moments that become the glue of family life — the table, the familiar voices, the ordinary conversations that, over time, become memory. If you look closely, you can see that Jim's

life wasn't about big speeches. It was about building a life where people felt held together.

When the family were asked how others would describe Jim, the words that came up again and again were quietly dependable, kind, steady, grounding. Calm in a crisis. Solid. Someone you could rely on. And alongside that steadiness, there was Jim's dry sense of humour — the gentle, understated kind that appears at just the right moment, lightens the air, and then moves on.

The family have asked that today's tone be respectful and reflective — more “life, love, and impact” than sombre — and that feels exactly right for Jim. Gentle humour is okay, because it was part

of him. But the core of today is simple: we are here to remember Jim, to thank him for his life, and to support those who loved him.

There are certain habits and sayings that were just... Jim. Standing back and looking at things, as if he was measuring it up in his mind. The phrase “That’ll do nicely,” said when something was finally sitting right. And that very practical wisdom: “No point worrying about what you can’t fix.” Not about ignoring problems — but about putting your energy where it can help, and letting go of what you can’t change.

And then, as he was heading out the door, there was the routine: “Phone, keys, wallet.” It’s a small thing,

but it's one of those lines that can echo in a house for years. Because grief often lives in the everyday. It shows up when you make a cup of tea and expect to hear a voice. When you see a tool in the shed. When a Sunday comes round and the table feels different. It's the little things that feel big now.

The family shared one story that captures Jim perfectly — the treehouse. He convinced everyone it would be simple. But it took weeks longer than planned and, as these projects often do, it ended up leaning slightly to one side. Jim stepped back, looked at it, and said: "Well, trees aren't straight either." That is such a Jim line. Practical. Funny. A little shrug of acceptance. And also, in a way, it's

wise — because it reminds us that life doesn't need to be perfect to be good. Something can be a bit wonky and still be full of love — and it can still do exactly what it was made to do.

There's tenderness in that story too, because it's about time spent together. About effort. About the intention to create something for others. That's a thread through Jim's life: building, fixing, making, providing — not for applause, but for the people he loved.

We also heard about the people around Jim beyond immediate family — the friendships and connections that supported him, and that he supported in return. Morag, his sister, who spoke with him most weeks.

Tommy, his best friend since their teens, someone he spoke to every day — with football always somewhere in the conversation. And Ian, a neighbour who became like family, the kind of friendship that's made through cups of tea, shared chats, and putting the world to rights.

Those friendships matter, because they tell you something about the kind of man Jim was. You don't speak to your best friend every day for decades unless there is trust, loyalty, and a sense that you genuinely value one another. And you don't become "like family" to a neighbour unless you are the kind of person who shows up, who keeps the door open, and who has time for people.

Jim passed away on 3 September 2025, peacefully, with family around him, at Inverclyde Hospital. The family have asked that we don't focus on his health in recent times, and we will respect that. What matters today is the life Jim lived — the person he was long before illness was ever part of the story, and the love that surrounded him at the end.

So, how would Jim want people to remember him?

The family were clear: he would want to be remembered as a family man. Someone who worked hard and took pride in what he did. Someone who helped others without making a fuss. Someone who did right by other people without needing praise.

Someone who didn't use big words — but who lived a life where his actions spoke clearly.

And that is what we honour today. Jim's influence will carry on — not as a grand statement, but as something woven into the family: in the patience he modelled, in the skills he passed on, in the calm he brought, in the humour he used gently, and in the steady love he gave.

Before we move on, let's take a moment to pause and reflect — on Jim's life, on what he gave, and on what remains with us. We'll do that now through a piece of music.

REFLECTION MUSIC - There You'll Be by Faith Hill

At this point, we're going to hear a reading chosen by the family, and read for us by Jim's son, David.

READING

Thank you for those words David. I'd now like to share a poem — one that reflects on family, connection, and the quiet ways love continues.

READING - POEM

In Blackwater Woods

by Mary Oliver

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is
nameless now.

Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.

To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;

and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

Final Reflections

As we begin to draw the service towards its close, we take a moment to acknowledge Margaret — a life shared, built together over many years, full of care, commitment, and love.

We also acknowledge Laura and David, and Jim's grandchildren — the ways his influence, values, and example will continue through them.

Jim would not have wanted grand words spoken about him today.

He would have been content to be remembered as fair, kind, and dependable — someone who did right by others and got on with things quietly.

And for those who knew him, that is exactly how he will be remembered.

Committal

We now come to the moment of farewell.

In a spirit of love and respect, we commit Jim on this final part of his journey, giving thanks for his life and for all that he was to those who loved him.

Jim leaves this place surrounded by the thoughts, memories, and love of his family and friends.

[Music – Committal]

“Caledonia”

(Music begins softly, then fades)

Closing Poem

Before we part, I'd like to offer a few closing words.

May we remember the life that has been lived —

the roots that shaped it,

the people who mattered,

and the care that was given and received.

May what has been shared continue to live on

in memory, in habit, and in quiet moments still to

come.

And as we leave this place today,

may each of us find our own way forward,

carrying what matters,

and letting go, gently, of what we must.

Closing Words

On behalf of the family, thank you all for being here today — for your presence, your support, and for the care you have shown to Jim and to one another.

The family would like to thank everyone involved in today's service, including the [funeral director] and staff here at the crematorium, and all those who have offered kindness, messages, and support in recent days. [name of other organisations/charities]

[funeral director] our Funeral Director will shortly lead us out of the chapel.

For those who wish to make a donation, the family have chosen [charity] charity in honour of Jim's memory.

As we leave, we will hear our final piece of musical tributes chosen by Laura and David because it was one of Jim's favourite songs. I hope you will all find it special as Jim found it to be, in your own travels in life.

The family warmly invite you after our service to [reception location] to join them in some light refreshments in honour of Jim and to share your stories about our wonderful friend Jim. Perhaps you might wish to raise your glass in their honour.

Thank you again for being here today.

[Over the Rainbow / Simple Gifts by Piano Guys – Exit]
(Music plays as family leave first, followed by congregation)