

## PETER BRILL

Popular DIY shop owner and a dedicated family man dies at 87  
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‘He was honest, loyal and devoted to us all’.



POPULAR Birchington DIY shop owner Peter Brill has died at the age of 87. Mr Brill was born at the family home in Plains of Waterloo, Ramsgate, on November 7, 1927. He was the third child of four, born to Ernie and Rene Brill. He had two sisters, Rene and Hilda, and an older brother, Ernie.

Life was not easy for them and worse was to come with the outbreak of war in September 1939. In 1940 Peter and his fellow pupils of Hereson School joined thousands of other children at Ramsgate Station to be evacuated to Staffordshire. Little did he know that, on that same day, also travelling to Stafford was his future wife, Mary, who was just six. Peter was billeted with other boys on a farm. The farmer used the boys as labourers and they were made to sleep on hay bales in his barn.

### Rebelled

Peter rebelled against his treatment and was fortunate to be able to return home after a few months to live with his family again. His schooling, though, had been brought to an abrupt end. Before the end of the war his house was destroyed by a bomb. The family were not hurt but they had to spend the last few months of the war, together with many others, sleeping each night in the railway tunnels under Ramsgate.

After the war the family moved to Whitehall Road in Ramsgate and Peter started a carpenter apprenticeship with Pikes the shop fitters. He soon became their foreman and he continued to work for Pikes for many years.

In 1950 Peter met Mary at the Coronation Ballroom in Ramsgate. He knew straight away that she was the one for him, Mary was 16 but at the time she told Peter that she was 18. They married at St. George’s Church two years later. Two years later daughter Mandy was born and in 1956 Wayne arrived to complete the family. That same year Peter and Mary wanted to emigrate to Australia. The £10 ‘Pom’ tickets were bought, preparations made and all their furniture sold. At the last moment all sailings to Australia were cancelled due to the Suez Canal War.

Mary’s father had given them £150 so, in the



event that they didn't like Australia, they could buy tickets back. They used this as the deposit to buy their first house in Bursill Crescent.

Peter had always wanted to go into business for himself and soon he and Mary started to look for a suitable shop to buy. They settled on one in Minster and turned it into a DIY store, although Peter stayed on at Pikes for a further five years. In 1976 the Brill's Birchington store was opened. At first managed by Mandy and then Mary and Peter when the decision was made to close the Minster shop and concentrate all efforts on the new store. The shop has been extended over the years and is now run by Wayne.

Peter enjoyed swimming, bowling, tennis, squash, golf, caravanning, walking, driving his Jaguar cars and being with his many friends. He and Mary also had a holiday home in Spain. The couple also raised money with Birchington Squares group making tea and coffee at Quex Park with the proceeds funding Christmas dinners for the elderly.

In 1988 their first grandchild, Peter, was born, followed by Annabel, Sam, Jack and Melissa.

Mr Brill's son Wayne said: "They were dad's great joy. All have wonderful memories of their granddad being the best ever, playing and laughing with them, joining in birthday parties and having super times together.

"Dad was a family man; his family meant the world to him. Him and mum have been inseparable for over 64 years.



They were partners in business as well as in life. He has been an honourable loyal and devoted partner, husband, father and grandfather. He's been an example to us all." In March 2016 Brills will celebrate 50 years in business, from their beginning in Minster to the successful Birchington store.

