

Tom Gilzean – funeral held today

Tom Gilzean MBE has been laid to rest today in Mount Vernon Cemetery following a Requiem Mass in St Mary's Cathedral on York Place.

Archbishop Leo Cushley welcomed mourners to the church explaining to the huge congregation that among them were the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, councillors and Bailies, representatives of the General Consul of France and representatives of the charities that Tom supported with his fundraising.



Gordon Scott from Gordon's Trattoria and his daughter Daniella with their staff and the rest of his family were all dressed

with red tartan scarves to honour their old friend. Tom took lunch there each day (on the house of course!) Today the restaurant is closed as a mark of respect.

The archbishop described him as an ornament of the city and someone who was to be much admired for the energy he devoted to his fundraising work. He went on to explain that during the service the words of St Paul about love would be read – and there was nobody who displayed love for people quite like Tom.

A lone piper Hector played Wings, the march of The Corps of Royal Engineers with whom Tom had served followed by Highland Cathedral leading the standard bearers to the front of the Cathedral past Tom's tartan coffin where they parted and stood guard during the service.

The opening hymn The Old Rugged Cross was followed by The Lord's my Shepherd and then the coffin was removed from the cathedral to the strains of Amazing Grace.



The priest Father Jamie McMorris said Tom's was a well kent

face in the city and that the family had been overwhelmed by the Lord Provost opening a book of condolence in his memory, by messages on social media, cards and letters.

Father McMorris continued : “You are all here as Tom touched your lives in some way. His life had a profound meaning. First of all he served his country and then he expressed love in action with his fundraising.

“As Tom used to say ‘Open your hearts and give’.”

This was followed by a tribute from his son Douglas who said that the family had tried in vain to stop their father from going out in all weathers to fundraise. Then they would see a photo of him on Princes Street on Facebook and realise he had gone out anyway – telling his son later that it wasn’t raining when he left the house....!



As the funeral cortege passed Marks & Spencer on Princes Street where Tom would so often be out shaking his tins at the passers by hundreds of people lined the street on both sides.

The staff of M&S handed out red and white roses which were thrown on to the hearse as it stopped there for a moment or two.

Edinburgh's Christmas closed for a while to allow the cortege to pass by. As a mark of respect to Tom, who raised more than £1 million for local charities, Edinburgh's Christmas paused with all rides stopped and trade halted.





He was an amazing character I was glad to know and his memory will live on. At the council meeting on Thursday there will be a discussion over a fitting tribute.

The Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross said : “Thank you Edinburgh for the incredible respect you’ve shown for Tom Gilzean. His funeral day demonstrated the long and eventful life he led and just how loved he was.

“They say grief brings people together and it’s certainly united our whole city. It was really touching to witness so many organisations volunteer their services and make donations, like Tom’s fitting tartan coffin, and to see residents pause along Princes Street where Tom famously shook his tin.

“Many people have signed a Book of Condolence in the City Chambers and this will remain on display until further notice. Many thousands more have signed a petition to see a street named in Tom’s honour and there will be a Motion to the Council on Thursday calling for this too, alongside a

suggestion to rename part of the Edinburgh Children's Hospital in Tom's honour.

"We all wish to pay our respects in our own way and I'm sure a fitting tribute will be found. My condolences remain with the Gilzean family, who we hope to present Tom's MBE to when the right time comes. He sadly never had the chance to receive it himself."

