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Friends and family, thank you for being here to celebrate the life of Thomas James Whitfield — our Tom.

It still feels impossible to say he's gone.

He was only 38, born on 2 September 1985, and somehow managed to cram a lifetime of colour, mischief and kindness into those years.

I was lucky — best mates with Tom since secondary school.

We were comrades in mischief and in milestones.

If there was a harmless scheme brewing or a half-sensible detour to take, Tom was at the wheel, grinning, already saying yes.

He grew up in Bristol, took that spark to Brighton to study graphic design, and turned a talent into a life's work.

He built a small creative studio that punched well above its weight.

He had this gift: bold colours, clean lines, and stories that breathed.

Local charities will tell you he made them feel seen — he used creativity with purpose, exactly as he believed it should be.

And then there's the chapter he loved most.

Tom married his university sweetheart, Emily, and became a devoted dad to Isla and Noah.

He talked about them constantly — not to boast, but because he was in awe.

Sunday morning pancake experiments, five-a-side in the park, bedtime sketches that turned into treasure maps.

He was a husband to Emily, a father to Isla, six, and Noah, three, a beloved son and brother — and the anchor of a circle of friends who felt like family.

What defined him?

A big heart.

Irreverent humour that could turn a tense room into a shared laugh.

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Loyalty you could lean your whole weight on.

And that endless curiosity — the sort that made him sketch strangers in cafés, drag us to indie gigs in dingy basements, and argue passionately about which roast potato method was truly unbeatable.

My favourite memory?

A chaotic road trip to the Highlands.

The car broke down miles from anywhere.

We strung up questionable tarps and huddled against the wind.

Most people would call that a disaster.

Tom made it an adventure.

He drew constellations on a napkin, named our campsite “The Palace,” and told me, “Say yes to the detour — that’s where the story is.”

By sunrise, I realised he was right.

With Tom, the unexpected was not the problem; it was the point.

He lived by simple principles that felt like secret superpowers.

Friendship first.

Creativity with meaning.

And yes — saying yes to the detour.

He showed up for people — in hospital waiting rooms, in moving-day stairwells, in the quiet moments when you needed a laugh or a listening ear.

That’s what we’ll miss most.

His booming laugh that you could hear from the other side of the pub.

His spontaneous plans — “I’ve got an idea” — that somehow turned ordinary Tuesdays into stories we still tell.

And his doodles — on napkins, receipts, the back of to-do lists — tiny love letters to life scattered everywhere.

Tom didn’t pretend life was tidy.

He just decided it was worth celebrating anyway.

He brought that spirit to five-a-side nights, to gigs where the floor shook, to Sunday roasts with too many chairs squeezed round the table.

He kept curiosity alive in all of us.

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Emily, he adored you.

Isla and Noah, your dad was proud of you every single day.

He wanted you to know that the brightest colours come from kindness and courage.

That you can make something beautiful with simple lines and a big heart.

And that detours can be magical if you're together.

To his parents and his brother, to all of us who loved him — thank you for sharing Tom with the world.

He made our corners brighter.

He made our causes bolder.

He made us laugh until we had to catch our breath.

As his best mate, I'm particularly grateful for one thing.

Tom taught me to lighten up — to make room for joy on the most ordinary Tuesdays.

To laugh first, to help quickly, to say yes.

It's the lesson I'm keeping.

It's the way I'll honour him.

So today, in this celebration of life, let's do what Tom did.

Hold our people close.

Tell a good story with the time we have.

Take the detour.

Sketch the idea before it slips away.

And never leave a napkin un-doodled.

Tom, thank you for the colour, the courage and the laughter.

We will carry your love forward — in bold colours and clean lines —
and in the everyday choices that make this world a little kinder.

We love you, mate.

And we'll keep saying yes.

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