

Tribute to Martyn Burnham

Written by Annabel Brittain, Gloucester Police

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Family and friends of Martyn Burnham are mourning the death of 'a legend' and say it will leave a massive void in their lives.

The 16-year-old from Quedgeley in Gloucester died on Wednesday after his motorbike hit a tree the day before.

The crash happened at about 1pm just after he had left his home to visit his girlfriend in Newent.

Paying tribute to her son, Caroline Burnham, a teaching assistant at Field Court Junior and for Gloucestershire Reintegration Service, said: "He was very loving and caring and would do anything for anybody if he could. He was always there to back your corner if anything went wrong. This is going to leave a very big gap in our lives."

Touched by all the flowers and condolence messages the family have received and the tributes placed at the site of the accident, she added: "I knew he had a lot of friends and always looked after them but I didn't realise he was quite such a popular lad and just how well-liked. We're very grateful to everybody for all the flowers and letters of support we've had."

Born in Gloucester, Martyn lived throughout his life in Church Drive with his parents and older sisters, Lisa, 20, and 18-year-old twins Nicola and Hayley. As a small boy, he went to Field Court infant and junior schools before moving to Severn Vale.

"He was the class clown and probably a teacher's worst nightmare", said Mrs Burnham describing how the outgoing teenager won the hearts of his fellow pupils.

"We've had loads of messages saying English lessons would never be the same without him there to disrupt them."

Having just taken nine GCSEs and being optimistic of good results, Martyn had applied for car mechanic apprenticeships and was looking forward to an interview with Vauxhall.

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Vehicles, especially motorbikes, were his passion and his own bike had been a birthday present just two weeks before. He was keen to be earning so he could buy a motocross bike, having spent years supporting and photographing his best friend Ade Phelpstead, 16, competing at events. Describing the best mate he has lost, Ade said simply "he was a legend."

Martyn also spent much of his free time off-road biking, kick-boxing and clay-pigeon shooting with his 16-year-old cousin and county shooting representative, Andrew Burnham. Andrew's mother, Bridget, said: "They were very close and had every holiday together since they were born. This is a great loss and we are going to miss him for the rest of our lives."

Describing how he enjoyed his son's company when shooting vermin for local farmers, Paul Burnham, a forklift driver for Rackham House Floors in Cinderford, said: "He was always there when I went out shooting and we had fun together. That's going to be a lot harder now, as well as everything else we'll now have to do without him."

Martyn's school held a two minutes silence in his honour this morning and a local motorbike club member is planning a tribute ride around Quedgeley.