

Brave boy's school pals in special memorial tribute

By Heather Butler Blackpool Gazette

A BRAVE little boy has been remembered by friends at his old school. Former Weeton Primary pupil Sean Evans lost his long battle against a rare form of cancer over the school summer holiday.

Friends and classmates released a cloud of balloons into the sky above the neighbouring army camp to symbolise Sean's freedom from pain, in a ceremony similar to his funeral last month.

The school then watched as the colourful tribute floated off towards the sun in a fitting finale to a memorial in his honour.

Sean's pal Jake Harris, nine, was among the few pupils at Weeton who remember the happy youngster, as many of the soldiers' families have moved to a new camp in Northern Ireland with the Second Battalion the Rifles and were replaced by the Second Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment.

Honour

He said: "We let the balloons go to celebrate that Sean was not in pain any more."

Earlier the school gathered to see a slideshow of photographs of Sean, drawing gasps of delight from the children as they watched him grow from a smiling little baby to a grinning schoolboy covered in paint!

Some children stood up to speak about Sean, including Shauna Mitchell, in Year Five, who remembered Sean as a great friend.

She said: "I didn't start in Year One so I didn't know many people when I arrived. But every time I had no one to play with Sean would come to play with me."

Chris Horrocks, headteacher at Weeton, said the whole school wanted to honour the youngster and ensure his memory lived on, before unveiling a football-shaped trophy bearing Sean's picture.

He said: "Anyone who knew Sean knew he was always smiling and he loved football and we wanted a trophy to reflect that.

"The award will go to the child who shows perseverance, as Sean did, by trying hard and keeping smiling even when they are not very well, they find something really difficult or they're upset because their dads are away.

"He was such a lovely little boy and everyone who met him is glad they had the chance to know him.

"Through the award and the pictures we have of him, Sean will always be remembered at this school."

Sean's parents, Keith and Louise, have settled in Ballykinler with sons Ryan, 13, and Callum, almost two, and the rest of 2 Rifles.

Speaking from home Louise said: "Sean loved school and they were always so good with him. They raised lots of money for Alder Hey children's hospital where he was treated which we were always grateful for and they set up a home page on the website so he could stay in touch.

"We were glad he got the chance to go in and say goodbye before we moved to Northern Ireland and it is an honour to think there is now a trophy which the children can win.

"It is a comfort to know he will be remembered and talked about even by people who never knew him."

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