

A Celebration of the Life of



Barbara McMurchy

24th June 1920 - 23rd July 2020

Bramcote Crematorium, Reflection Chapel

Tuesday 11th August 2020

at 11.15 am

And attended by many people from their own homes.

We hope you will feel able to join in singing
or reading at the points indicated by an asterisk*

Opening Words

Hymn*

chosen by Barbara

He who would valiant be 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master.
There's no discouragement shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round with dismal stories
Do but themselves confound - his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might; though he with giants fight,
He will make good his right to be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend us with Thy Spirit,
We know we at the end, shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away! I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day to be a pilgrim.

Welcome

from Reverend Sue Pendenque

Barbara's Life

written by Barbara's daughter, Kate Perry

Barbara was born Barbara Day in June 1920 in Luton. She was always grateful to have been born in the first year of a new decade which made it easy to calculate her age! Her father, Arthur Thomas, was a clerk in the railway accounts office of what became LMS - London, Midland Scottish - the largest of the 'Big Four' railway companies formed in 1923. Her mother, Louisa Victoria, always known as 'Queen' on account of her birth in the year of Victoria's Golden Jubilee, worked for Ryders seed company then as an outworker making the straw hats for which Luton was renowned. Barbara was the youngest of four children and the only girl, her eldest brother, Frank, was 11 years her senior, followed by Maurice then Alfred. Although she was a sickly child suffering from diphtheria and mastoid, Barbara's childhood recollections were very happy. We know Arthur was one of 7 and Queen one of 8 and there were lots of large family get togethers which involved singing in the winter and cricket matches in summer. Unusually for a family in their circumstances at that time they were able to take holidays as Arthur's work for LMS meant he qualified for free family rail travel in Britain. A lifetime love of music and singing was further fostered by a group of Luton friends who formed the 'Harrison Concert Party' with whom Barbara performed sketches written by Godfrey Harrison who went on to write comedy scripts for radio. This association, as well as inherited traits, may have contributed to the great sense of fun Barbara brought to her adult life. Her schooling was another important influence. Barbara won a scholarship to Luton High School. She would regale Jane and Kate with vivid stories - especially of the time that the Headmistress walked the length of the school hall to take morning assembly with her skirt tucked into her knickers at the back. Not one girl dared to smile, let alone giggle. However, her overall school memory was the sense of honour of being a pupil. Tragically, childhood and schooling were cut short when her Mother died in 1936.



Aged 16, Barbara left school and went to work for a dentist, then in the civil service, moving to Radlett with her father a few years later. During the war, she and her father worked in London. Barbara combined work at the Ministry of Supply with nighttime firewatching. Later she told hair-raising stories about hearing doodlebugs on the train back to Radlett, hoping that the train would reach a tunnel or be out of range before the bomb's engine cut out and it fell. Her brother Alfred, an RAF pilot flying Lancaster bombers was shot down and killed over Poland. There were wartime highlights though. She and Maurice's wife, Teddie, had some glorious short holidays, one on bicycles. Barbara was a novice, Derbyshire was hilly and - inevitably - she fell off! The war was also when she met Andrew while he was being entertained by her brother Frank in Harpenden (This was at the request of Frank's local vicar, Gerald Hawker, who later married the pair). After an initial time spent getting to know each other (closely monitored by her father who insisted that Andrew slept back in the duty tent while he was on Home Guard duty), Andrew was posted abroad and their relationship was carried on by correspondence over the next 3 years until they could be married at the end of the war in October 1945. A long and happy partnership of 72 years until Andrew's death in 2018. Married life began while Andrew finished his degree in Cambridge where Barbara proved to be a better cyclist. After this they moved to Bebington when Andrew took up a teaching appointment at Wirral Grammar School. Both daughters were born here, Kate first, Jane three and a half years later - just a few weeks before another move, this time to Glasgow, Andrew's hometown, where he was to start teaching at his old school, Glasgow Academy.



The family lived in Bearsden on the northern outskirts of the city in a house chosen for them in the short time available by Andrew's parents. For Barbara, the 9 years in Scotland were mixed, she loved the countryside and the Scottish Country Dancing (though not the ensuing stiffness) but as a sassenach sometimes felt an outsider. It was probably here that - in response to their adoption of the strong local dialect - she began to instil her daughters with rules of grammar and the use of a certain vocabulary. Kate, Jane and the grandchildren loved to tease her about the latter, words like napkin, not 'serviette' sitting room rather than 'lounge' and almost anything other than 'toilet'. They have discovered that she freely used the banned words in her wartime letters to Andrew. In 1960 came another move, to Nottingham, where Andrew continued his career as a modern languages master at Nottingham High School. The family lived in Sherwood and Andrew and Barbara remained in the house on Burlington Road for over 50 years before moving to the local Abbeyfield. In each location, Barbara was always hospitable and generous with her time and interests. Their homes were warm and welcoming havens where family, friends and their offspring, Andrew's colleagues and pupils loved to linger. Circumstances meant that Barbara had to be frugal with the housekeeping but they still entertained a lot, though alcohol, other than an occasional offer of sherry, was a rarity until latterly. Her friendships were strong and enduring and moving north and south of the border resulted in frequent visitors who she greeted with joy and took in her stride. When Kate and Jane were in their teens, Barbara returned to work as a receptionist in a GP Practice consisting of a largely West Indian population. She loved the work, becoming immersed in patients' lives and welfare. Medicine had always fascinated her and she became particularly interested in the GP's specialist area of sickle cell anaemia, a condition prevalent among those of Afro Caribbean background, about which little was known at the time. Although she worked long hours, often well into the evening, Barbara also devoted time to voluntary work. In Nottingham, she was very involved with St Martin's, the local church where their arrival coincided with that of an energetic new vicar, Timothy Tyndall and his family. As well as becoming a visitor in the local community, she supported the setting up of St Martin's Abbeyfield, sitting on the committee, providing lunches on the cook's day off and filling in where needed. Barbara's faith was important to her throughout her life, when she herself moved to Abbeyfield, her room had a view of the church, a solace when she could no longer attend.

In addition to her faith, she had a strong social conscience (voluntary work included helping in the nearby Nottingham prison) allied to her political conviction which was left of centre. She was a member of the local Liberal Democrats and spent many hours stuffing envelopes and delivering leaflets. She was willing to undertake most things other than canvassing! Married to Andrew, who was more of a Tory, she gave up her familiar Manchester Guardian newspaper and learned to enjoy The Daily Telegraph, devouring it cover to cover while not always agreeing with its views. She was always abreast of the news and it may have been this that led people to comment how 'modern' she was in outlook. Barbara radiated vitality and a loving warmth and affection. She took a delight in the natural world and a huge interest in the people around her. She was a very positive person and would often remark, 'We're so lucky'. Wherever she lived, she became involved with the local community, most markedly in Burlington Road. She embraced her growing family, welcoming sons-in-law, grandchildren, their partners and of course, great-grandchildren. For as long as she possibly could, she would get down on the floor to play with the new arrivals. When she and Andrew moved into Abbeyfield, she viewed that with a typically positive spirit, bowling along the corridors behind her walking frame at breakneck speed and enjoying the creative opportunities. The staff there said they would like to clone her and looked after her with great care and affection. Songs and poems were a thread through Barbara's life and are one of the many things the family will remember. Jane has kept the thread alive during these last years, often igniting a spark which would fire her mother's memory. One piece of doggerel that has enchanted each generation and will always be associated with her is the action rhyme 'Two little dickie birds sitting on a wall'. Barbara had that unusual and typically generous quality, she did not make demands of those she loved, she let them fly, and like the birds in the poem, they loved to come back to see her.



Psalm 23*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,
On earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

God of mercy, Lord of life,
you have made us in your image
to reflect your truth and light:
we give you thanks for Barbara,
for the grace and mercy she received from you,
for all that was good in her life,
for the memories of her we treasure today.
We especially thank you for her love and care, her zest for life
and the way she brought the joy of life to others.

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding,
surround all of Barbara's family and friends with your love,
that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss,
but have confidence in your goodness and strength to face the days to come.

Eternal God,
you give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death;
let your light shine on those who mourn
that they may rejoice in your holy comfort
and live in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

A Time for Quiet Reflection

For the Beauty of the Earth: Rutter

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.

Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flow'r
Sun and Moon and stars of light.

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child.
Friends on earth and friends above
For all gentle thoughts and mild.

For each perfect gift of Thine
To our race so freely given,
Graces, human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven.







The Committal

The Dismissal*

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.

Blessing

Music

Marche Militaire Op.51 No. 1
Schubert



We would like to thank you all for joining in this service. We very much regret that due to the pandemic we have not all been able to join together to celebrate the life of our dear mother. Your memories of her joie de vivre and her love and your expressions of sympathy have meant a great deal to us all.

Mother was very frail in the last few years and she was looked after with great love and compassion by the staff at the Abbeyfield Firs Nursing Home. We are very grateful for their care.

If you would like to make a donation in Barbara's memory, please do so via the funeral director or online at www.lymn.co.uk/obituaries.

Donations may be made payable to
The Abbeyfield Society
(to benefit the Firs Nursing Home, Nottingham)
or the
Alzheimer's Society
and both can receive gift aid if you are able to provide your address.

A.W. LYMN

*The Family Funeral Service**

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