

Archive Tribute of
Barbara Lilian “Lily” Bush
31/07/1928 – 03/04/2018

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(Working Script)

Lily was born at 3 Broadway in Cowbridge on the 31st of July 1928 and was one of twelve children born to Albert and Bess Cox. She didn't talk much to her children about her own childhood, other than to say it was a happy one and she had many fond memories of it including, always being the one sent downstairs by her sisters to pinch the cakes their mother had made.

It's a pity she didn't tell them more because her experiences as a child will have been very different to those of her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was a child through the thirties and experienced the war years with its rationing as a teenager.

She left school at fifteen and started work at the Bear Hotel as a maid, cleaning and changing beds. She enjoyed the work there but didn't get on with one of her bosses who hit her over the head with a pan. Tracey and Maria didn't know why he hit her, but they thought it was likely that he couldn't cope with her quick-witted comments, because they couldn't imagine her biting her tongue if she didn't agree with someone. Not surprisingly she stopped working at the Bear after this.

Around this time, she befriended an old lady called Mrs John who lived nearby. Lily visited her, did her shopping and chores for her and spoke fondly of her for many years and the fun they used to have, including when Lily was leading her to the toilet at the bottom of the garden, Mrs John used to smack her on the bum to hurry her up like a horse.

None of us know the days that will change our life, and on the day that her friend Megan invited her home, Lily didn't realise this was to be one of her days.

She met Megan's brother Arthur, who Lily always called Jim, and was to be the love of her life. She was nineteen and he was nine years older and a veteran of the Burma Campaign.

They were married in Bridged on the 15th of May 1947 and moved in with Arthur's father in Longpath Cottage, Penlline. But they soon moved to one of the huts built at Llandow Road in Wick. These were built in response to the need for housing in the post war years. They were built on stilts, could be quickly and easily constructed and were intended to last until permanent housing could be built.

Jimmy, Maria, Brian and Nancy were born here and spent some of their childhood playing in and around the site. There was not much money but that didn't seem to matter as everyone was in the same position and Lily made it a happy home, surrounded by friends.

In 1959 when Christopher was six months old they moved to 13 Castle Close, when it was first built and where Lily was to live for fifty-nine years. It has been a lovely place to live and for the children to grow up, with a wonderful community spirit and many, many, friends over the years including Roma, Connie, Mary Francis and Audrey.

Lily and Audrey have been great friends for many years and had many adventures together. Lily often told of the time they went to London to see a procession for the Queen, possibly the Trooping of the Colour. Audrey bought some apples for the wait but the bag broke and all the apples spilled out over the parade route.

The Guards' horses started eating them and Audrey tried to shoo the horses and pick the apples while calling Lily to help, unfortunately Lily was laughing so much she couldn't move and she laughed about it for many years.

Tracey and Lyndon were born at Castle Close over the next few years. There was a six-year gap between Nancy and Christopher, so Lily had a wide range of ages to deal with from teenagers to toddlers, which meant a lot of hard work for her.

Both Maria and Tracey remembered their mum taking them out. Maria remembers visiting a family friend Arthur George, going to the beach and how much Lily enjoyed having a chip butty before walking home. Tracey remembers visiting Lily's sister, aunty Florie and uncle Harold, every Wednesday, and on Sundays walking to St Donats with other local children and their parents when the pool was open to the public.

They also remember the house always being full of people, always happy and always busy; an open house where the doors were never locked, and neighbours were always popping in.

When family needed a roof short-term they were always welcome, Megan and Frank moving in for a little while and friends were also always welcome, even to stay. There was plenty of room as long as you didn't mind topping and tailing in bed. Maria made friends when she worked in France and they came to stay on a visit.

Everyone was fed by Lily, and she was a good cook producing a Sunday dinner and then baking cakes and tarts every Sunday afternoon for tea using only the black metal, coal fired, range oven in the front room.

Tracey remembers her mum always busy and having music on sometimes dancing around the house trying to get her children to dance with her.

When the younger children were growing up, there was more money around and the older children were off doing their own thing, so Lily and Jim were able

to take them on holiday. Jim bought a large tent and they went camping in Tenby and Cornwall.

A happy home then, full of love and children, but one that was not a stranger to difficulties and sorrow. Lily had a stroke in the sixties when she was in her thirties and was paralysed on one side for a while. But with the help of her family including being nursed by her children she recovered her fitness.

She lost two of her children in accidents in the seventies. Nancy died in 1971, and it took Lily a long time to get over her loss and it was then followed by Jimmy's death in 1978.

Lily was a very strong person and she had children to take care of. So, with her family around her, supporting her and each other she managed to regain her upbeat and outgoing view on life.

She carried on with her life, holidayed with friends and family, going on weekend bus trips to Blackpool and holidays with friends. She was on a cruise with Connie in 1991 when she received the news that Arthur, her Jim, had died. Her family pulled together again, and once more she recovered from her loss and got on with living her life.

She had many interests, she liked music, going to the theatre and playing Bingo. She played bingo at Bridgend, Wick and St Athens at different times over the years and made many friends. She enjoyed knitting and particularly making blankets and shawls. And she loved to visit charity shops to buy ornaments.

Her life continued to be full of people she had many friends and one Christmas was pleased to find out she had a secret admirer who sent a card with a handwritten poem in. She was touched by the poem and sentiment and she kept

the card, so Tracey and Maria have asked me to read it as it meant so much to her.

A thousand clowns I'll bring you,
Just to make you laugh.
A red balloon,
A pink baboon
A lavender giraffe.
A thousand years I'll love you,
Our love will never die,
And in a thousand years from now
When they look up at the sky,
They'll see two stars together
As close as they could be,
One star will be you, my love,
The other will be me.

Lily was the centre of a large and loving family. Brian lived at home with his mum for some years and they were very close and really enjoyed each other's company. Tracy, Maria and their families lived in the same street with Christopher and Lyndon with their families living a few minutes away.

Her living room is full of family photographs and it was clear from what I was told she was never happier than when she had her children and their families around her.

When holiday time came along, she enjoyed foreign travel, having holidays at the Italian Lakes and various parts of Greece. These were often family affairs going to Austria with Maria and Mark, having a wonderful time in the

Dominican Republic with fourteen members of her family, and going to Kenya with Rene and Basil on a holiday she spoke about for many years.

I said earlier she was a strong person and this has been shown again in the last fifteen years as her health deteriorated. She had a D.V.T. in 2003 and once again with her families support she recovered but when she was diagnosed with skin cancer aged eighty one, she underwent one operation and then said enough is enough I am eighty one not eighteen.

She was determined that she would not have an any more treatment. She was also determined to stay independent and resisted asking for any help from anyone, including her family. But they ignored that.

Her family started to notice changes in her behaviour and she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. While Lily's memory faded her personality survived and she was as funny and cheeky as ever. She may have got names mixed up, but she still teased the people around her.

She made more friends when she went to the Gathering Place Day Centre, which she really enjoyed, and she was very fond of Barry who worked there.

Hannah and her husband Chris moved in with Lily to help her and she continued to receive loving care from her family as her health got worse. Seven months ago, Brian died, and the family decided that as Lily found it difficult to remember new things telling her would be cruel.

Lily remained stubbornly independent, the genuine, forthright and funny person she always had been. Chris became the main target of her jokes and teasing, and her house still knew the sound of her family's laughter.

Lily died at home, in the house she had lived in for fifty-nine years, her family around her, surrounded by the love of those she loved. A good way to leave a good life.

She was the head of a large loving family, five children twelve grandchildren, sixteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She was a large part of their lives and leaves a huge hole behind her.