



A celebration of the life of

Barbara Lynn Jenkins

20th November 1942 – 9th February 2019

Hastings Crematorium, 22nd February 2019, 3.30pm

Celebrant: Felicity Harvest, accredited by



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The Tribute

Lynn was born on the 20th November 1942, in Bexleyheath, the eldest child of John and Evelyn Jenkins, both from South Wales, in a home where there were always welshcakes for visitors. Her Welsh roots remained very important to Lynn all her life. Though she was christened Barbara Lynn, her mother, Ev, didn't want her called "Babs" when she was older, so she was always known as Lynn.

As a wartime baby, she spent a lot of time in the Anderson shelter, and indeed they had an extra baby shelter for her – as a ballistic scientist, her father knew only too well what damage those bombs could inflict. Lynn went to Brampton Road Primary School and to Chislehurst Grammar. Soon after leaving school, she joined the Civil Service.

By 1969 she had begun to work regularly at Ashdown House in Hastings as a systems analyst, moving down there full time from 1971, and later moving to the accounts department. At first she shared a rented bungalow just off the Ridge with Rita, Rosemary and Carole, but then her posting to Hastings became permanent, and she bought her house, unseen, on the basis that it had a great garden.

Her great friend Linda first met her at Ashdown House – where she promptly made Lynn redundant – something she completely welcomed, as it gave her freedom, from her early 50's, to enjoy all her many hobbies and passions.

So, let's look at those passions which occupied her so fully for the next 25 years.

She travelled to exotic places including Nepal, Galapagos, Kashmir, Ecuador, and Egypt, to Europe with her friends in her old Triumph Vitesse, and more recently with Linda on a Bay of Biscay whale watch, and on a pampering weekend at Ragdale Hall which she won in an RSPB competition. Jane Royle described their 1982 tip to the Annapurnas: "Unusually for that period, there were more women in the group than men, and what a good, supportive lot they turned out to be ----

much needed in quite a testing environment, enduring very basic conditions, wading through icy rivers, with relentless monsoonal downpours turning paths into torrents, and with the odd alarming landslide happening just behind us!”

She gardened, and was always ready with her tips, her seeds, and her cuttings, which she also sold at Rye Harbour. Her friend Deidre, who she first met on that Annapurna trip wrote: “We connected with a love of gardening, plants and wildlife generally. She was so knowledgeable. Lynn did some excellent formative pruning on one of my less easy shrubs when she came to stay a few years ago and I think of her when it flowers in winter.”

She was involved in many campaigns and activities: The National Trust, Amnesty, Greenpeace, Dignity in Dying. She loved the visual arts, open gardens, and rugby. She was a member of a quiz team in Three Oaks and an expert on Romney Marsh Churches.

She kept up with friends and family. She would drive to South Wales about twice a year to see her Uncle Aubrey (her mother’s brother) who lived in Bridgend. Her address book was massive, and her email and phone traffic constant.

She loved food. By late morning she would be asking “is it lunchtime?” and there had to be a tea-room available at the end of the day. If they weren’t open at their published times, all hell broke loose. Her favourite tea room was the Avocet at Rye Harbour, where Linda organised a surprise 75th birthday party for her, including a special cake, made for her by Morgan. John Martin recalls how, on a cold birding visit to a ramshackle house in Brancaster, they went to The Jolly Sailors for a meal. He says “The meal was much bigger than she was expecting, but she ate it all, and was feeling very uncomfortable. When we got back Alan was sitting in the only reclining chair, Lynn promptly turfed him out, and collapsed in a heap in the chair.” And on the Bay of Biscay trip, she

missed the minke whale completely because she was down below consuming a full English.

She loved people, and animals, and loved sharing information with them. She never passed a dog without patting it, or a person without telling them about the natural world around them, if they were prepared to stop and listen.

And she watched birds. She was RSBP's Battle group leader for over 25 years (that's Battle the place, you understand). She wasn't the average birdwatcher, because she was equally interested in bees, plants, tress and beetles, and could often miss one thing while looking at another – while others were watching a red start in one tree, and a tree pipit in the next, Lynn was on her hands and knees looking at the plants, missing the birds completely. Her favourite start to the day was to be woken by the birdsong outside and doze as she listened to Tweet of the Day on her beloved Radio 4.

Barry Yates of Rye Harbour says: "I'm so sorry that I cannot be with you today to celebrate Lynn's life I do hope you all have a lovely day and the sun shines, the skylarks sing and the first flowers appear... Lynn so loved her flowers... she was a bright bloom herself and we will all miss her."

And Hugo Blomfield of the RSPB wrote: "This weekend Lynn would have been walking her stretch of coast for the 39th year running as part of our Beached Bird Survey. This is how I would like to remember Lynn, and will do so every year, she was so passionate about wildlife, birds and the RSPB. In fact Lynn was easily the longest running beached bird surveyor in the south east - perhaps even the entire country! Lynn's section was a 2 mile stretch between Cliff End and Winchelsea Beach - to me this is now "Lynn's beach"."

Cathy will now talk to us about her Aunty.

Aunty Lynn was quite a character and you will all have lovely stories that you will remember her by. I just want to spend a few minutes telling you a few stories about her that I will treasure.

As most of you will know Aunty Lynn had a passion for birds and flowers and plants. When I was a child she tried to share her passion with me and teach me the different types, however I think she decided pretty quickly that I can barely tell a plant from a weed. But she never gave up trying telling me about them over the years and I loved to listen to her talk to passionately.

We did find a common interest in castles when started when she took me to Bodiam Castle for the first time when I was a younger, and I can still remember being totally captivated by it as I stood looking from the bridge over the moat. I think she might have regretted that day because over the years I dragged her back to that castle more times than perhaps she needed to go as well as well as several other castles in the area. Bodiam castle will always be my favourite castle (and I have visited a lot of castles) and it will always hold a very special place in my heart because of Aunty Lynn.

As a child I used to stay with Aunty Lynn during the summer and it was then that I became fascinated with oast houses. She would pick me up from my home in Kent and drive around the countryside back to Sussex and I would count how many we passed. One day we found a row of a great many oast houses all together, so this ended up with Aunty Lynn driving round and round the same roundabout as I was frantically trying to count them all resulting in me laughing so hard I lost count and we had to go round again and again!! Whenever we went on trips out she regularly reminded me of this story, but we could never remember where this was, although I have just this week found out and will be taking a trip back to see them!!

Another interest we shared was a love of travelling. Aunty Lynn has been to some amazing exotic places. Last year I went to India and Nepal and knowing she had been in the early eighties I was excited to tell her of my trip. We got a map out and without realising I was going on a journey very similar to one she had done. When I came back we compared photos and she showed me a film that she had converted from cine film to DVD of her flight over Mount Everest, it was the same flight I took on my trip but just 30 years later. It felt very special to me to be able to share these experiences with her and follow almost in her footsteps.

Family and her welsh heritage was very important to Aunty Lynn. She would take trips to South Wales regularly to see family and friends. In 2010 I went with her and we took a lovely tour of South Wales where she showed me the villages where her parents, my grandparents grew up, and the exact houses where they lived which were still there and also where they met. And of course we managed to visit a few castles whilst we were there as well!! It was a very special visit for me and I'm so pleased that she could pass on family stories to me to ensure they will always be remembered.

When I moved up to Yorkshire it was a long way to come down to Hastings and visit so we would meet in London for the day. I loved these trips, we would walk around London and always go to a museum or an art gallery and always tried to coincide it with the wildlife photographer of the year exhibition. She was always so active and energetic. She had a massive influence on my love for culture, history and art.

Aunty Lynn was a very strong, brave lady. In the last few months I would come and visit her as much as I could and I am still in awe of how amazingly she handled her illness. She never once moaned or complained and was very accepting of the situation she was in.

She is an inspiration to me and I cannot be prouder to say she was my Aunty.

She was diagnosed with cancer three years ago, but she carried on her pursuits as long as possible, until last August when she collapsed in her garden, and was taken to hospital and then to Hastings Court, where she spent her remaining months, trying to attract birds to the little patio outside her window. She scheduled her many visitors with her usual efficiency, and they had to install a separate phone in her room because people rang her so often.

In the end she slipped into unconsciousness. Between Linda, Rita and Cathy, Darren and John she had company to the last, and the staff at Hastings Court lined up outside as a mark of respect when her body left.

We often think of death as a cruel enemy, taking away those we love, but for those who are suffering or who have reached the end of their endurance, it can come as a quiet friend, closing the curtains, blowing out the light, and settling us into a last sleep, free from pain and weariness.

I hope it was so for Lynn