

A celebration of life Barbara Edwards

1.20pm – 2.00pm, 13 May 2019, Nabwood Crematorium

3 March 1948 – 27 April 2019

a personal goodbye

Humanist *Ceremonies*

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Tribute to Barbara Edwards (1948 - 1919)

So, who was this woman, who was such a powerhouse of intelligence and practicality, who freely offered her time and skills to the rowing club and community and who was a loving wife and friend to her husband Terry. Let me tell you a little of her story...

When a baby girl was born at Shipley Maternity Home, on 5th March 1948, she was named Barbara Coe. Barbara never liked her middle name, and never used it. Who could have guessed that this little girl would make such an impression on so many people during her 71 years?

Barbara grew up on Scarborough Road in Shipley and went to Albert Road Junior School, followed by Salts Grammar School – which of course meant that she must have passed her 11+ exams. At school, she excelled at English, but was less interested in the Sciences. She was an active girl who enjoyed netball, but most of all, making friends.

From an early age, Barbara developed that wonderful talent for making, and keeping strong friendships, especially the two Margarets Cooke and Rogers, as well as Jennifer and Midge. It was with Midge that Barbara organised a school reunion, which went very well. I'd like to share a few words from her friend Margaret, who writes

I have so many memories-being in the recorder group with Albert Road school, in the various choirs at salts, walking to and from school together, gossiping, laughing, squabbling, running away with each other's berets and talking the events of the school day.

We used to go blackberrying together in the fields behind her home. In the school holidays, favourite "day out", just walk across the tops to Howarth and then catch the bus to Shipley. One summer, we repainted my parents garage-my father paid us £5 each and we thought we were very rich.

As we got older, there were the Saturday night "hops" at the church hall around and about, and then the discos at the rowing club!

I always associate flowers, gentleness, kindness, understanding, integrity, compassion for others and fun with a twinkle in her eye, with Barbara.

It has been a great privilege and wonderful happiness to have had Barbara as my friend. She was "a lass unparalleled" and I shall miss her deeply.

The qualities that Barbara describes are explained in a story that Barbara told Terry. She had to take some faulty shoes back to the shop for her mother. After she had explained the problem to the shop owner, he thanked her for the polite and respectful way that she had spoken to him. This was a life lesson that she carried and continued to use throughout her life – always treating everyone with kindness and respect.

On leaving school, Barbara went to Keighley Technical College to study Shorthand and typing at which she became very proficient. This secured her a job at one of the districts

main employers, the Bradford and Bingley Building Society, and another close friend, Sue.

Barbara was rapidly promoted to the Executive floor, working with the executives and the Board. Barbara continued to develop her skills and abilities and became the Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive a role which included organising several functions at the Leander Club during the week of Henley Royal Regatta using organisational skills that would pay dividends many times over the years. Barbara had a fearless approach to technology, and always wanted to be up-to-date. Work she learned how to fix things by watching the technician, quickly learning how to do things for herself.

It was at a disco to celebrate Jennifer's birthday in April 1972, at Bradford Amateur Rowing Club in Baildon, that Barbara met Terry. They soon became involved, in both the club and each other, at a time when the ladies were allowed to serve on the tea stall! No doubt there have been some changes over the years, quite possibly as a result of Barbara's influence.

By March 1975, Terry had decided that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Barbara. And so it restaurant in Leeds, Terry proposed and they were married that September at the United Reform Church in Saltaire, followed by a honeymoon in Torquay. And as she loved driving so much, getting there was a treat for Barbara. By 1977 they had moved into the house on Warren Avenue, where they were to spend the rest of their lives together, along with their dogs. Over time they had three Cairns, one Westie and then last August very cute shiatu called Leo.

It was also at this disco that Barbara met Brian and they became lifelong friends. When he married, Barbara was very proud to be godmother to Christopher and Richard. It is sad Barbara is unable to see their respective additions to their families. Barbara enjoyed the tradition on Christmas Eve, wrapping their presents with their parents. She also enjoyed taking the boys to the caravan in Bridlington.

But perhaps the greatest consequence of attending at auspicious discotheque at the rowing club, was to be her absolute commitment to supporting Terry and the club for the rest of her life. I'd like to invite Celia, who has worked alongside Barbara for many years, to tell is a little more

Barbara's Eulogy

Barbara was part of the fabric of Bradford Amateur Rowing Club, and she was at the Hub of all of the Club's activities.

Barbara's welcoming and inclusive manner set the tone for the Club and all its interactions. However, anyone came to BARC Barbara was their first point of contact as our honourable secretary since 1998.

Many here may not realise that Barbara only went in a rowing boat once. This boat was noteworthy as all the rowers were called Edwards, Barbara and Terry and their good friends Sue and Mark took to the water with Paul Franklin as cox. The anecdote

as told to me stopped there, however the fact that Barbara and the physical element of our sport didn't get in the way was no barrier to Barbara being intimately involved with the Club for nearly 50 years.

In the early 1970's BARC had a reputation for a good night out – a cheap bar that didn't close and a disco had people flocking to Lower Baildon from all over Bradford. Barbara was one such disco lover who came with her friends Margaret, Margaret and Jennifer in April 1972 to enjoy the riverside delights of BARC. That night Barbara met Terry and soon became involved with Club life – which was somewhat restricted for women in 1972 – and mainly revolved around catering! It was another 2 years before women could row at the club. Barbara was a believer in equality, and enjoyed driving the trailer to events, a task usually undertaken by men. She took on the role of Hon Sec in a pact with Mark Edwards, it was an I will if you will situation where Mark became Club Safety Advisor.

Barbara's supreme skill at systemising and administering activities made the Club run smoothly, so smoothly that many do not realise that the huge number of tasks involved in running a community sports club are happening. Barbara applied this amazing skill to running the regatta, although Terry was nominally Regatta Secretary. Barbara's untapped skills developed whilst she was at Bradford and Bingley Building Society were a great match for the Hon Sec role and she excelled at it.

Barbara could be very persuasive; it was really hard to say 'No' to a Barbara in full flow. Many volunteers were recruited through her persistence and good humour.

Barbara's rowing volunteering life, which was recognised nationally in 2012 with award of a Medal of Merit for services to regattas, extended beyond BARC to umpiring around the Yorkshire region and taking on the role of Hon Sec of the Yorkshire Rowing Council and organiser of the region's flagship event the Yorkshire Head. Her personal approach to members through the region had volunteers attending from every Club.

Barbara's welcome and her smiling face behind the regatta control desk were a very common feature of many BARC regatta and people from all the country will remember "Can we have to boat please...". Recently BARCO went to the Tideway where we boated from Tideway Scullers landing stage. A man was tinkering and we mentioned we were from Bradford, without pause he asked "Are Barbara and Terry still there? I won my novices at Bradford in 1974."

The love and admiration held for Barbara within the sport was in part down to her enthusiasm and her ability to talk to anyone from Chairmen to the youngest junior sculler.

The Deputy Chairwoman of British Rowing Kate O'Sullivan remarked that Barbara was an inspiration to many and the special glue that holds the rowing community together.

Thank you Celia

in addition to her volunteering at the rowing club, Barbara also became involved with Bellevue girls School where she initially helped with fundraising. In 2013, Barbara also became clerk to the governors where she was able to use her skills and continue giving back to the community. She always said that the children at the school were lovely, welcoming and polite. She was very pleased to be able to link the school with the rowing club, providing new opportunities for some of the more disadvantaged children from the school.

After Barbara's retirement from the building society, not only was she able to spend more time at the rowing club she was also able to enjoy more time travelling to France, as many as five times a year. She enjoyed sampling the wine and cheese favourite wines being from Beaujolais. Of course she liked to drive to France and in the earliest adventures they would always camp. They started out in a small two-man tent, once Barbara had seen a larger frame 10, complete with steel poles and heavy canvas, she wanted one too. Since the Eurotunnel opened, Barbara and Terry also enjoyed staying in Gites and being able to take their dogs on holiday with them. On holiday Barbara enjoyed people watching, sightseeing and walking on the clifftops with the dogs.

For relaxation Barbara loved reading, anything fiction, escapist or romance-she could read very quickly and could always remember the plot. She enjoyed doing general knowledge crosswords and keeping up with her friends. Such as her cousin Sue, with whom she was in nearly daily contact either by email text or phone. She was a great friend to Sue's daughter Louise and was delighted to attend her wedding to Darren last year.

As we have heard, Barbara led very full and very interesting life. Life through which she was able to give so much back to the community in which she lived. And it is this woman, who loved life, her family and friends, the outdoors and her dogs that you should bring to mind as you reflect on your own memories of Barbara.