

Archive Tribute of

Lancelot Augustus

Melbourne

01/08/44 – 15/05/2019

Written by

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Accredited Funeral Celebrant

Larry was born on the 1st of August 1944, in the front bedroom of 10 Jenner Street, the sixth of the twelve children of Lance and Florrie, born over a twenty-seven year period. He was the younger brother of Desi, Teddy, Marie, Chris and Val and the older brother of Peter, Edna, Paul, Florinda, Denise and Michael.

The family moved to Herbert Street when Larry was two and this was to be his home for most of his life. His father had been a merchant seaman who settled in Barry when he met Florrie and from then on, he worked at Barry Docks.

In such a large family, surrounded by brothers and sisters Larry was the quiet one. Chris told me he didn't often join in the games of his older siblings, he used to watch what was going on but didn't like to join in with their boisterous play, unless they made him.

He was perhaps closest to Peter, who being younger than Larry was happy to let Larry have things the way he liked them, so they would often play together and frequently squabbled, as brother do, when Peter wouldn't go along with Larry. Their closeness was to continue for the rest of their lives. After the death of their mother Larry spent every Christmas with Peter, Marilyn and their family until he went to live in Bella Vista.

Even as a child Larry was happy with his own company, that is not to say he was miserable or moody. He was just quite self-contained. He liked to listen to his music and read his books. Debbie showed me a photograph of him looking very serious, and with his round glasses like Harry Potter's, quite studious. Val said they sometimes called him the professor.

Larry also liked to make things. He once made what we used to call a 'bogey' in Barry, though I think they are probably called go-karts now. Two pieces of wood, four pram wheels, an orange box and a piece of rope to steer with. It

was his pride and joy, and as it sat two he enjoyed taking passengers on rides with him.

He also once made himself a bicycle from bits of bike that he found. It had a frame, handlebars, two wheels and a pedal, but no brakes. Chris told me how they stood in the back lane as he took it for its first ride.

Things were going well until he tried to turn left, the handlebars turned but the wheel didn't, and he rode straight into a neighbour's hedge. Chris remembers their mum laughing until tears rolled down her face as Larry walked back towards them with the bike over one shoulder. But that experience didn't stop him, and he loved tinkering with motorbikes as he got older.

Val told me that he was always well behaved and was always willing to help and would do any job he was asked. When the family had a dog, he was the one who looked after it and was always the one to help his mum with her chickens. As a child he enjoyed being outdoors and working in the garden and this was to continue all his life.

Like the rest of the family he went to Jenner Park School and later Barry Boys' Secondary School, leaving when he fifteen. He first worked in the Rank Hovis Mill, doing various jobs including as a trucker and a window cleaner. In 1963 he started working in Sully Hospital as a porter. He loved this job and stayed there until the hospital closed in 2001.

One of the roles he enjoyed a lot was looking after a small collection of sheep that was kept at the hospital. Sully used to be an isolation hospital and while working there he contracted TB from patients. He was ill for many months and kept in isolation himself. When the family visited him, they had to wear gowns and masks.

When the hospital closed he was presented with a certificate for his service and became a groundsman at Llandough and Barry Hospital until he retired in 2009.

As I said Larry was quiet and he was easy going, but that didn't mean that he was a pushover. He was not backwards in coming forwards and he would always say his peace, but he would not bear a grudge and would move on.

He was also very set in his ways and had a very structured life. When he finished work he would call in the Witchel or the Royal for a few pints and then he would buy himself pie and chips on the way home. Always pie and chips.

Chris once tried to persuade him to try fish and chips, or even chicken and chips for a change, but he wouldn't hear of it. And she told me that you had no chance of getting a chip off him.

One of the phrases that I heard a few times when I met the family was that he loved his food. He was a terrible cook, hence all the pie and chips, but he looked forward to and always enjoyed his meals. When Nicola lived with him when Danielle was a baby, she remembers him always enjoying it when she made a Spaghetti Bolognese or anything else really. He was always happy to eat a home cooked meal as long as someone else cooked it.

He enjoyed having Nicola and Danielle in the house calling them his little girls and he really loved Danielle. Nicola remembered that he was always playing his music in his room and that for a period he seemed to play "Baby Comeback" on a constant loop.

When his father died Larry continued to live at home with his mum until she died in in 1984 and he remained in the family home. As a result, he was always at the centre of the family. He was a sort of overseer always looking after everyone and he was a fixed point in the lives of his many nieces and nephews.

Debbie told me that he was always very good with them all and he was always funny. All the nephews and nieces enjoyed spending time with him, often taking their friends with them. He would make up stories to tell them which were guaranteed to make them laugh as he had an excellent sense of humour.

In 2013 Larry had a heart attack and he was rushed into Llandough Hospital. The family were told that there was a high likelihood he would die in the next forty-eight hours. Solicitors were contacted, and a family bed watch initiated.

Nicky and Mandy were sitting with him and roaring with laughter when a doctor came in and gave them a row for laughing at such a serious time, not realising that it was Larry, who had made an amazing recovery and was feeling better, who had been making them laugh.

He recovered, but after six months in hospital it was obvious that he needed nursing care and so he moved into Bella Vista where it soon became apparent that as well as his heart problems Larry had dementia and his memory slowly left him.

The care he received over the following years from the staff of Bella Vista was excellent. He felt safe and comfortable there, he told his family that he loved it and he enjoyed helping in the garden, though he was constantly looking for an opportunity to escape. Gemma was a particularly favourite of his and his family would like to thank her and all the staff for the loving and professional care they gave Larry.

Larry was taken ill in February and spent the last few months in the Heath where his bed was often surrounded by the family that he loved and was so very proud of.

He was being assessed to return to Bella Vista but on the 15th of May the family received a phone call that he had taken a turn for the worse. So his family went to the hospital and were with him when he died.