

A celebration of life

Ian Charles Wiley

8<sup>th</sup> June 1949 – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019

13.00 – 14.00 Cardiff and Glamorgan Natural Burial Ground, Cardiff

*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

Humanists UK is a registered charity no. 285987 and limited company no. 228781 in England and Wales. Humanists UK, 39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V8BB, 020 7324 3060

Ian was born in Keynsham in Somerset on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1949 and grew up in Marksbury, a small village, in a cottage with his Dad Viv, his mum Joan, and his six brothers and sisters. There was a twenty-one-year spread in the children's ages: John, Dave and Viv, older than Ian and Mick, Keith and Jenny, younger. The family always called Ian "Ee."

Ee had a happy childhood growing up in their tiny cottage in three acres of land. Surrounded by his family, and a cow called Daisy. Together with his siblings he played in the surrounding countryside and the tennis court they mowed in the garden lawn. They teased each other mercilessly and joking and mickey taking has been a continuing family trait to this day.

They had many adventures, each having at least one tale, that would turn any parent's hair white, in which they were nearly killed. When they weren't nearly dying horribly they were being put to work in the garden and huge green house by their father.

Ian was a very intelligent child, but he was also a charming blagger, who was able to get away with doing the minimum required. When he gained a place in Grammar School, he became a bit cocky, and a bit of a pain to his siblings.

He loved learning new things but got bored easily and didn't like doing homework. Ian did well in school and stayed on for an extra year, for reasons he never fully explained to his family (perhaps his siblings or friend Bob can explain?!) but which, when remembered, seemed to consist mostly of playing chess.

It also amused him to 'brag' about his extra O Level in French: the result of failing his A Level and being given another O Level instead.

Ian would often cycle to the next village or school. When he was fifteen he and his best friend Bob Hawksley set off on their bikes for a ride, without telling

anyone where they were going. They made it to Paris, bought a carton of cigarettes and smoked all the way home and when he was nearly home, Ian fell off his bike and hurt himself

Upon leaving school Ian went to Lanchester Polytechnic and from there to Southampton, where he started work as an unqualified social worker. He lived in a shared house with Ag Jones who was to become one of his best friends. It was here that Ian's cooking skills began to develop. Though time management was not one of those skills; a beautiful dinner would eventually appear, but sometimes not until 10pm. Nothing changed as he grew older.

In 1974 Ian moved to Liverpool and underwent an interview for a job with Barnados as an unqualified social worker. Ann was involved in the selection process and obviously saw something in him, and he got the job. Having started work he attended Manchester University to train as a social worker.

He had also noticed Ann and finding out where she lived he sent a letter to her flat saying that he liked her. Unfortunately, there were two Anns in the flat, so they didn't know which one he fancied. He returned to Liverpool for the 1978 New Year's Eve Office party and they finally got together.

They decided to get married, but didn't want any fuss, so they booked a slot in the registry office for December the 20<sup>th</sup> 1980 and didn't tell their families. But a few days before, Ian's mum announced she was coming for her very first visit to Liverpool resulting in an invite to the wedding. Very few others were invited to the ceremony and this caused a bit of a stir in the family.

In 1981 Ian and Ann moved to Claycross in Derbyshire and both began work in the area. Ian was bearded, with a resemblance to the Yorkshire Ripper which often drew attention in pubs at that time. However, despite being a country boy

from Somerset and a newcomer to the area, his friendliness to everyone he met stopped that being the major problem that it could have been.

A more flattering comparison was to DH Lawrence. Before becoming friends, Sue and Charlie used to call him 'DH'. Ian read quite a bit at points in his life, but his family don't think that this likeness ever inspired him to seek out any literature.

In 1983 Ian and Ann were living in Alfreton when Megan was born and in 1987 Bethan came along and completed their family. When I met them, they were bubbling over with stories of their Dad, far too many for me to include here, but what was clear was that he was a loving, supportive and fun Dad who loved to tease them.

He convinced a young Megan that shop dummies were specially trained members of the staff, who could stand still all day, so that she would stand quietly with him outside shops, watching the mannequins, waiting to see them blink. He also filled Megan with terror about Margaret Thatcher and the threat of ongoing Tory governments.

Coming second, Bethan missed some of the worst indoctrination and had Megan there to point out some of the more obvious lies. However, Ian did such a good job of keeping the myth of the tooth fairy alive through regular letters penned to his youngest daughter in special handwriting, that Bethan was convinced she had a magical pen pal. Luckily, she discovered a stash of letters and pictures she'd sent to the "tooth fairy" before she went to secondary school and everybody breathed a sigh of relief.

Ian was a very principled man and served for eight years as a Derbyshire County Councillor for the Labour Party. This involved a period as the Chair of the Public

Protection Committee. This committee had a wide remit, so he couldn't be expected to be an expert on everything.

But as the committee had run a fire safety campaign leading up to Bonfire Night, it was not ideal when he used petrol to start a bonfire and set himself alight (fortunately saved by his copious facial hair). Though only his pride was injured, it is not something he was allowed to forget by his ever-supportive family.

Ian was not content to let things that he knew to be wrong go on. When in Manchester University he stood by a fellow student who was failed on her last placement because she refused to cross a picket line to enter her place of work.

This was to be an early example of Ian standing up to authority within the organisations he worked for and this often came at a cost to himself. He was not always an easy man to manage at work as both Joe and Kate will testify. This was because his priorities were his clients and his team, not the organisation.

On one occasion he knew the best thing for a vulnerable child would be the stability they would get by being returned to their school. This was not convenient and other plans were put in place, so Ian drove the child a great distance in his own car, at his own expense and on his own time back to their school, inventing games to keep her amused during the journey as he had with his own children.

Ian was very good with all children, not just his daughters. He was as much fun with his nieces and nephews and a very popular uncle throughout the family, some of whom fondly likened him to a monkey.

Ian was a great team member, the teasing and sense of humour developed with his siblings made him popular within his teams and with his clients, he enjoyed being the instigator and the subject of jokes and pranks in work, lightening what was often a very stressful environment.

Through his experience as a social worker, Ian gained a range of skills such as conflict management, which he was always happy to share with others who were having a tough time. He passed on many of the things he learnt to his two girls, one of the main lessons being, “if someone is being nasty to you, be nice to them. They won’t expect it and they won’t know what you are thinking”.

After his death, Ian’s good friend Ag sent him a letter about their friendship and I would like to read some observations about Ian he included.

“You always managed to be older than me..... You acted as an invisible friend/spirit guide for so long, with your calm logic and extra knowledge from god knows where, and your utterly unique ability to listen. You even made me feel listenable; you listened even when I didn’t say a word....

I could never fathom how you ended up .....that calm. How you made people feel so good about themselves all of sudden.”

In 2012 Ian was diagnosed with bowel cancer and Ann insisted he retire. Although he was reluctant at first, he took to retirement like a duck to water, doing “one job a day” as advised by his friend Alan. He recovered fully from the cancer and felt very lucky not to need any further treatment.

One of Ian’s big passions was cooking, and retirement allowed him even more time to do this. Unfortunately, he was also tasked with doing some housework, which he did with typical Wiley focus. Vacuuming was not just a quick whizz around with the Hoover.

He started downstairs with a pre-Hoover, before a thorough dusting followed by the real Hoovering. Unfortunately, this process took so long that for two years he never made it upstairs before running out of time.

When Ann retired in 2016, they moved to Llantwit Major, so that they could be close to Megan and Sam and the rest of Ian's family in the West Country. Being within a reasonable day trip distance, he was able to see his siblings regularly and to visit his Mum.

Ian and Ann loved Llantwit Major and the lovely people they met, including their fantastic neighbours. However, Ian did miss his friends from Derbyshire and trips to the Dead Poet's Inn. He always looked forward to their reunions. Ann and Ian began to learn Welsh and Ian approached learning in his usual fashion, avoiding his homework but happily reading Welsh signage wherever he went!

While still quite relaxed about his learning, he continued to put all his effort into the things he really loved. Mainly his family and especially Ann; Megan, Sam and Buddug (*Bithig*); and Bethan and Jon. But also his cooking and greenhouse. Although Ann had finally managed a drastic cull on some of his more than a hundred cook books during the work to create his dream kitchen in 2019, Ian still had an enormous selection of kitchen equipment and ingredients.

Family and friends can still remember the pain he felt when forced to get rid of some of his baking trays and chicken stock in the move to Wales. Ian always loved music and since moving to Wales he had enjoyed several trips to the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (where Megan works) to hear various concerts. The Brass music we're hearing today reflects that love. Although he briefly joined a male voice choir in Derbyshire Ian's strong dislike of uniform meant that he preferred to be a keen participant from the audience.

Ian hated being ill or any kind of medical treatment, he had found the period of recovery after bowel cancer very difficult and had been putting off a possible knee replacement for many years. Since discovering that he had a severe heart

condition at the start of 2019 Ian had been very worried but, aside from some tiredness, he had felt fit and was enjoying his life, starting every day with a song.

The 29<sup>th</sup> of November was a lovely, sunny day and Ian took the opportunity to spend a few hours in the garden before coming inside for his well-earned 5 o'clock Abbots Ale. Ann came in from a trip to see Megan a short time later to find that he had died, very suddenly.