

A celebration of life

IRENE LOUISA STAINES

12th April 1939 – 7th January 2021

11.30 1st February 2021 Robin Hood Crematorium, Solihull

a personal goodbye

Humanist Ceremonies

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The Way We Were – Barbara Streisand

Marion Lowe:

Farewell My Friends

At every turning of my life
I came across
Good friends, Friends who
stood by me Even when time
raced me by.
Farewell, farewell My friends
I smile and Bid
you goodbye.
No, shed no tears
For I need them not
All I need is your smile.
If you feel sad
Do think of me
For that's what I'll like
When you live in the hearts
Of those you love
Remember then
You never die.

Rabindranath Tagore

Irene was born in Ladywood. Her father was a lorry driver. Her mother was a bus conductor. And drove articulated trucks.

When Irene left school, she got a job as a Bluecoat at a holiday camp.

She worked in the office of Lewis's Advertising.

And set up her first shop – Miss Margaret's. A very successful dress shop.

Which she followed with another success - Family Affair.

She sounds very independent minded.

Arthur told me that she was changing the tyre on her car one day outside a hotel. Out stepped Norman Wisdom. Clearly impressed at such a capable woman he chatted with her – and asked her to marry him.

Arthur is a Norman Wisdom fan. He liked the idea.

But Irene drew the line at having to live on the Isle of Man.

She did marry. Geoff from whom she divorced in 1985. Then she partnered with George. Who sadly died in 2011. She'd known George since school. They had a shared love of bowling. They were together for 26 years.

George's son Mark was one of the bearers who brought Irene into the chapel.

I think Arthur should pick up the story here, starting with a rather special poem:

Arthur Lowe:

Miss me, but let me go

Now I've come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?

I want everyone to enjoy the day
And partake of a nibble or three
Indulging in sociable banter
But you must talk about me!

But not for too long, and certainly not
With your head bowed low
Remember the good times we shared Miss
me, but let me go.

But don't let me go as you're leaving the crem
Remember who's funding this 'do'
Keep saying nice things about me
At least till you've supped one or few

I'm now on a journey we all must take
And each must go alone. It's all

part of the Big Yin's plan A step on
the road to home.

If you start to feel lonely
Spend time with the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds Miss
me, but let me go.

And as the curtains slowly close today
All stand firm and steady
And imagine me saying, with a smile on my face
"I'm missing you a lot already"

But only for an hour or two
Certainly, no more than, say, seven
You know it won't take me very long
To settle into the bowls in Heaven.

Goodbye, farewell, dear friends, all
And enjoy the afternoon
I'll see you, when I see you But
let it not be *too* soon.

Irene was my sister for almost 82 years.

It wasn't long enough. I could not have had a more generous sister.

Sometimes annoyingly so!!

Every time I visited her at Dells Farm, Hollywood, she wanted to thrust money into my hand for 'petrol'.

My "definitely not" was usually accepted...eventually.

But, when I got home from my visits I would be met by Marion who would say "Irene's been on the phone. She's put £5 or £10 in the boot, or glove compartment, or under the passenger seat.

How she managed to secrete money into my car I'll never know.

I remember visiting my grandmother with Irene, having returned from evacuation after the war. My grandmother told me "It is better to give than receive".

Being 10, I knew everything and I thought her wrong.

Irene obviously thought our grandmother wise.

I have many photos of Irene:

On a motor bike.

On skis in Austria.

Three hundred feet high in a cable car above a canyon in the Blue Mountains of Australia.

Proudly standing in front of her dress shop 'Family Affair'.

Her shop was ram raided three times. Proof that she sold quality clothing. She couldn't have sold rubbish if she tried.

One photo, not of her doing, was with a male stripper. I think he was pleased to see her!!!

Irene had a tremendous amount of fun because of the many lovely friends she had, including the ones here today.

Irene may have told some of you, if not all that when she was twelve years old I tried to drown her in Monument Road Baths.

I may have ducked her a few times. But that was just brotherly love. I don't remember.

However, for the record, I am so very sorry Irene. I am so pleased I did not succeed.

Leaving a hotel late one evening in Madeira, we were confronted by a dog. The dog was shivering.

Irene had a friend's cardigan with her. She scooped up the dog, wrapped it in the cardigan, and took it back to our hotel.

If you see a dog wearing a cardigan let me know.

Towards the end Marion and I would sit either side of her bed, talking about old times in the hope that she could hear us. She was very tired and mainly asleep. One day she half opened her eyes, gave me an unfocused look and said "Silly Sod".

I laughed out loud and said "Thank you. You've just made my day."

She made a lot of days for me.

Irene loved cats.

And she was, as her poem indicated, rather keen on Bowls.

The difficulty with Bowls was not trying to beat Irene – but to beat her to the bar to buy a round of drinks. I am told that she usually won. I know there are some members of Wythall Bowls Club here today. Raise your hand if you ever managed to buy Irene a drink.

Thought so.

She relied on the kindness of her girlfriends – and her cats – Alfie and Tabby.

Let's round off this tribute with some words from her friend Ray Dediccoat – written when she retired from Hollytrees Animal Rescue Trust. Ray...

Ray Dediccoat

Twenty Years Ago

Twenty years ago, I started this career
I walked into the office full of dread and fear
Little did I know then what I was about to find
A friendship in a person of the dearest kind
We have been such good friends over so many years
We've shared times of happiness
And shared times of tears
But now that time has changed and
The years just washed away
For you are leaving your job and I am here to stay
These days it's not the same
Your chair is empty and still
The office now has a vacant space
The space you used to fill
But all is not lost
And some things will never alter
On my friendship you can trust
As that will never falter.

I will miss you.

Your dearest friend.

Ray Dediccoat

QUIET REFLECTION

Unforgettable – Nat King Cole

EXIT

Time to Say Goodbye – Sarah Brightman & Andrea Bocelli