

A celebration of life Fay Lima

19 February 1934 – 23 September 2017

2.00 pm, 05 October 2017, Barry Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Tribute

Fay was born on the 15th of February 1934 in Graving Dock Street in Barry and was the second child of William and Evelyn Stokes. She grew up with her older sister June and her younger brothers Roderick and David. Many things in the world that she was born into have changed including the name of her street where they lived, which is now St Mary's Avenue. Fay was born six years before the Second World War started and as a result her childhood was in a very different world to the one that we now know. She did not know many of the luxuries that her descendants now take for granted. She was subject to rationing for most of her childhood and lived so close to Barry Docks, a major port in those days, that she was used to hearing air raid sirens, putting on her gas mask and going to the air raid shelter in the garden with the rest of the family.

She attended Holton Road school, but didn't speak much about her childhood to her own children, though she has spoken about the street parties that were held to celebrate the end of the war in Europe and Japan.

When she left school, she worked as an usherette in the Theatre Royal and it was here that she met Gilbert. They fell in love, but this was not to be a straight forward courtship. Her father didn't like the fact that Gilbert's father was Portuguese and when he bumped into them leaving the cinema, on one occasion, was furious and stopped them seeing each other for while.

But they were not going to be kept apart. In those days, a woman could not get married without her father's permission before her twenty first birthday and he wouldn't give it. But they stood up to her father and went to court. They won their case, getting the court's permission to marry instead. Then one day they caught the bus into Cardiff and were married quietly.

They did what most of Gilbert's family did and started married life by living in rooms with his great Aunt Wyn in Kingsland Crescent. They lived there for some years and Robert, Lena and Tony were all born there. They moved to Burns Crescent where Maxine was born, then onto Carradock Avenue for the arrival of Margaret and Aneurin Road for Nick. Robert was born in hospital but the rest were all born at home and Tony's birth was more memorable for taking place on the day that Gilbert had an accident in work and was taken into hospital, so that when he arrived home it was all over and Tony had arrived safely.

With so many children she realised that it would be easier if she could drive and so she set about learning. It took her over a hundred lessons and three tests to pass. Driving was not something she ever enjoyed, seeing it as a necessary evil, so each time she had a new car Robert had to take her out in it until she got used to the car. This was not an easy process and on one occasion Robert told her he hoped she had her licence on her, because he thought they would be stopped on suspicion of her being a learner driver, driving without L Plates.

But Gilbert and Fay seem to be well matched when he acted as her navigator. For their first holiday in the car they took eleven hours to drive from Barry to Holimarine in Somerset; which is a two-hour journey and they passed London on the way. While she may not have been keen on driving she did like to have nice cars including a Ford Capri, a Triumph 1300 and a Brabham Vauxhall Viva.

Margaret and Robert told me one of their favourite memories was her taking them to the Knap Lido, or as "The Baa's" as it was called, in the summer. She would take them there for the entire day, right through the summer, always sitting near the small pool with the dolphin, so she could keep an eye on the younger children.

As well as looking after her children she loved looking after her dogs and particularly Pekineses, first owning Pinky and Sherry when Margaret was young and years later another dog called Pinky and this time his friend was Perky.

She enjoyed knitting and used to make dresses for the girls and jumpers for the boys, but her main hobby was gardening. She got a great deal of pleasure from gardening and perhaps this was because it suited her nature. She had the patience and perseverance needed as well as the love of living things required to grow beautiful flowers and delicious vegetables. She gained a lot of satisfaction seeing the results, as she did in bringing up a family of six children.

And while bring up her family and gardening were hard work; hard work was not something she was afraid of. Robert and Margaret said that they remember her always having a job. She worked as a barmaid in the Ship Hotel and later as a stewardess, with Gilbert as the steward, managing various pubs and clubs including the Mount Stuart in Cardiff and the Ex-Servicemen's in Barry.

She also worked for many years as a house keeper in Sully hospital, where Gilbert worked as a chef and at various times Margaret, Lena and Maxine worked there with her as well.

All our lives are complicated and relationships can be the most problematic part. Things changed, Fay and Gilbert split up and some years later Fay was remarried to Graham. Initially some of her other relationships suffered, but time and the deep love built up over many years within the family meant that these relationships healed.

Fay's second home was Benidorm and visited there over fifty times. Initially staying in various hotels and later staying with Maxine for many holidays. She enjoyed the social life, meeting people and having a drink in the sun, or sitting in the sun painting ornaments.

When home she enjoyed playing bingo and used to go to the BP club in Market Street and more recently the Community Hall in Belvedere Crescent.

About fifteen years ago she had a triple by-pass, so when Graham died ten years ago she moved into a flat, where she was very happy. She and Gilbert had been good friends for years and continued to enjoy each other's company. She enjoyed seeing her children and

grandchildren and great-grandchildren, being an important part of their lives. But it became obvious to the family that she was beginning to suffer from dementia.

Her condition worsened over the years and her children tried to return to her the love she had shown them, in the care that they gave her and sought out for her. But dementia is cruel and there comes a point when even the most loving family is unable to do everything that the sufferer needs. The last few years have been very hard for Fay's family and her loss has been a slow, cruel process as they saw the person they loved change until the day they final lost her.