

A celebration of life Margaret Edith Bannister

07 February 1948 – 03 October 2018

10.00 am, 17 October 2018, Cardiff and Glamorgan Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Entry Music

Easy – Lionel Richie

Welcome to this service to remember and celebrate the life of Margaret Edith Bannister. My name is Steve Parry and I am a celebrant from Humanists UK. I met with Barrie last week to discuss today's ceremony and I have written this service based on what he told me about Margaret.

Margaret was not religious and so this will be a humanist ceremony in keeping with how she lived her life. Humanists think that we must make the best we can of the one life we have, and that this is done by having as positive an impact on the world around us and other people as possible; by behaving ethically, making decisions based on reason and rationality, and by treating others in the way we would like to be treated.

Whatever your beliefs, I would suggest that we all have similar feelings when someone we care about dies. There is a desire and a need to come together to say farewell in a ritual as old as humanity itself. This ceremony will be a

recognition of the time that Margaret has spent on earth. It's a chance for family and friends to pay their last respects, and I hope it will bring you some comfort.

I will speak about Margaret's life, based on my conversation with Barrie but I am unable to capture the fullness of her life and the many facets of the personality you knew, so there will also be an opportunity for quiet reflection, when you can think of the person you knew and the impact that she had on your life. You may use this time to pray if you wish.

The uniqueness of each human life is at the heart of why we grieve in bereavement. In the whole world, there is no one like Margaret. But everyone here understands what Barrie is going through because the loss of a unique loved one, is perhaps the most common experience human beings share.

We all know the wounds that are left by that loss and that the deeper the love that we feel for them, the deeper the wound we suffer.

Its hurts and perhaps it should, because that wound and its scar are a testament to the love that we still feel for them after they are no longer with us. We are left with a wound that will heal with time and memories that need not diminish, if we chose not to let them.

The loss of a loved one should also remind us that life is precious and fleeting, that we should take every opportunity to make to most of the few decades we have; to enjoy our lives, and particularly today, to tell those we love how we feel about them and show those who have lost loved ones, that we understand what they are going through.

Margaret was always proud of her family's traditions as trawlermen going back generations in Brixham in Devon and so we are now going to sing a Hymn which was written by a vicar in Brixham and has always had close associations with the Brixham Trawler fleet, Abide With Me.

Hymn - Abide With Me

Tribute

Margaret was born on the 7th of February 1948 in Milford Haven, to Les and Dilys Brown and this was where she grew up with her sister Linda. Her grandfather, a trawlerman had moved his boat and family from Brixham to Milford Haven. Her father was a trawlerman when he met her mother but became an electrical engineer and maintained the trawler fleet working out of Mildford Haven.

She spoke of having a good childhood, much of it spent in the open air, she told Barrie how in the summer they spent nearly all their time playing in the Rath open air pool which overlooked the sea, or away at the family caravan in Little Haven and remembered fondly the long walks they used to take along what became the Welsh Coastal Footpath with her father on Sundays. This was the beginning of her lifetime love of the outdoors and wildlife,

Margaret was a bright girl who enjoyed school, she won a place in the Board School, which was equivalent to a grammar and did well. She enjoyed

swimming, played hockey for the school, had many friends and a good social life.

When she was about sixteen or seventeen, her father, seeing the future of the fishing fleets, moved the family to Cardiff when he got a job as an electrical engineer at steel works.

When she finished school, she got her first job on the switchboard at the British Telecom building in Wood Street and she worked there for a couple of years until she moved to Health Service Administration. It was here she was to work for the next thirty years, moving offices on several occasions as the organisation changed, eventually running the General Administration Office.

In her twenties and thirties Margaret went through two unhappy marriages and at the end of each she picked herself up and rebuilt her life, finding a new home and a new start.

Margaret always enjoyed sports and when her second marriage finished she started going out and about, joined the Cardiff Badminton Club and went on

winter holidays where she learnt to ski and became proficient very quickly. It was around this time that she began a relationship with Greece which was to last the rest of her life. She particularly liked visiting Thalos in Rhodes where she made many friends, some of whom remain friends to this day.

Her mother died towards the end of the nineteen eighties. At this time her father was living in Llanederyn and Margaret was living in Sully so they used to go for a drink and a meal in the Wenvoe Arms to get her dad out of the house. Another regular at the Wenvoe was Barrie and they soon started going out together.

Barry owned the cottage in Tyn-yr-Odyn which was to become their home, but he was in the process of renovating it, so their first home together was in Sully. When Margaret's father's Alzheimers became problematic they moved in with him in Llanederyn, only moving into their cottage after her father's death.

Margaret and Barrie had a good life together, they continued to go to Greece on holiday, sometimes three times a year and have many good friends from these trips both in the UK and in Greece.

From early in her life Margaret enjoyed cooking, she once went on a cordon bleu course and was an excellent chef, which suited Barrie who really enjoyed eating all the wonderful dishes she made. They both enjoyed going out to eat and for drinks with their many friends.

Her other main home-based hobby was gardening and she loved spending time working in the cottages beautiful garden.

She was always very active and when people in work with her started to go running and she joined in and enjoyed running for a few years until she was almost run over by a bus. The experience really frightened her and put her off running, but she started going for long walks in the country and away from traffic instead.

When she was fifty-one she was offered early retirement and took it gratefully. She had enjoyed most of her thirty years working for the Health Service but was ready for a change and was eager for a new challenge.

She soon found another role working as a receptionist at Macob's in Taff's Well. She enjoyed the job and worked there for the next ten years. Five years ago she discovered that she had breast cancer, she underwent the treatment with huge determination that she would beat her cancer and indeed she did.

She returned to work for another year until Macob's closed down and she decided to retire properly. Margaret enjoyed her retirement.

She always got on well with people and was well liked. Barrie thinks this was for several reasons, she liked people, had a good sense of humour and was very genuine. She was plain speaking and you always knew where you were with her, which people appreciated and as a result they had a lot of friends and groups of friends. She became a lady who lunched, often meeting friends for coffee mornings, lunch or other social events.

About a year ago Margaret started to have problems with her shoulder but after a while they realised that this was the return of the cancer and this time it progressed very quickly so that her death has come as a shock to Barrie and everyone.

Barrie has been very touched by the number of cards he has received and the lovely messages they have contained which have confirmed to him how well-liked and well thought of Margaret was and well thought of. These cards and the well wishes have been a great comfort to him. I am going to read a poem now that Barrie has chosen which says how he is trying to approach his loss.

She is Gone

You can shed tears that she is gone

or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back

Or you can open your eyes and see all she's left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
Or you can be full of the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember her and only that she's gone
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what she'd want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

David Harkins

Margaret will be missed by a lot of people, and it is difficult to think of any comforting words to say at a time like this. If I can offer you any thoughts of consolation it would be these. The chances that each of us would be born are incredibly small. For example, it required that every one of Margaret's ancestors going back many thousands of years would survive illness and accident until they were old enough to have children, and that a long series of

circumstances had to occur in each generation so that her ancestors would be in the same place at the same time so that they could meet.

So, if you think about it, you will realise that Margaret, like all of us, was very fortunate to have been born, and that you were fortunate to have been able to meet and get to know her.

Given that extreme good fortune, I would ask you to remember that once Margaret had the rare gift of life, her pleasures and achievements were real and have not been undone by her death. her life was unique and irreplaceable, and your lives have been enriched by her presence, and continue to be enriched by her memory.

This is also an opportunity to recognise that we in turn affect the lives of those around us, and that we may be remembered by them after our deaths; that how we live now, can help to shape the future after we are gone and that this can give our lives a significance which lasts longer than we do.

We will now take some time for each of you to think about and remember Margaret and what she was to you and the influence she had on your life.

You may remember things she said, things that made her special to you, or things you did together. If you wish, you are may this time for prayer.

Thirty Second Pause

Committal Curtains to Close

Please stand if you are able as we say farewell to Margaret. **Turn to face the coffin.**

With sorrow and respect we say goodbye to Margaret, loving and loved daughter, partner and friend

We commit her body to its end.

So that its constituent elements, from which we, and all things are made;

Can return to the natural cycle from which they were borrowed,

To become part of new life and once more become part of nature's beauty.

Wait for curtain to close and turned to face people

While Margaret may be gone from the earth, she still lives in the memories you hold of her, and the love you feel for her.

Time will heal any pain you feel for her loss, but the memories and love you have for her will remain, until you can think of her without sadness, see her

face or hear her voice, and just smile at the memory of her. Please be seated

Closing Words

Barrie would like to invite you to the Horse and Jockey after this ceremony where you can share some food, some drink and some memories of Margaret.

If you wish to, you may make a donation in lieu of flowers in Margaret 's memory to Velindre Hospital.

Thank you for coming today and please continue to show the support for Barrie that you have today, over the days, weeks and months to come. Don't be afraid to talk about Margaret to him for fear it will remind him she has gone. He won't need reminding of his loss and it will be a comfort to know that you also remember her.

We will leave shortly while Sailing by Rod Stewart is played. But first I will read a poem called the Dash.

The Dash

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on his casket from beginning to the end.
He noted that first came the date of his birth
And spoke of the following date with tears.
But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that he spent alive on earth
And now only those who loved him know what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own, the cars, the house, the cash,
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; Are there things you would like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.
If we could just slow down enough to consider what is true and real
And always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives like we have never loved before.
If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read with your life's actions to rehash...
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

Linda Ellis

Exit Music

Sailing – Rod Stewart