



Celebrating the Life of

Barbara

Mary McLachlan Finch

9th November 1930 – 4th March 2017

Harwood Park Crematorium
Friday, 31st March at 11.00 am

Conducted by
Steve Stacey - Civil Celebrant

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Celebrating the Life of

Barbara

Entrance Music

You'll Never Walk Alone – Gerry & The Pacemakers

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome here today as we meet to celebrate the life of Barbara and to pay our respects to her.

We meet to share our memories of her, our stories about her, our love for her and our grief at losing her.

To each one of you she was a dear friend and her life touched many. We celebrate that too.

Barbara was unique - there's never been anyone like her before, there never will be again.

She was a kind, caring and thoughtful woman.

Barbara had an outgoing personality and was always as bright as a button. She was warm hearted with a wonderful sense of humour and had an infectious laugh. She enjoyed her banter with her boys – in turn, they enjoyed winding her up!

She was young at heart and got on with everyone regardless of their age. She never accepted that she was getting old.

She had traditional values of family, of right and wrong and of politeness.

There were times when she could be stubborn and would always speak her mind. She had a strong side to her – if she said something, she meant it.

That strength of character helped her get through the difficult times in her life.

Her family are her greatest achievement in life and she was so proud of them.

Our hearts go out to David and Neil. They've lost the cornerstone of their family. Barbara was a doting grandmother to Tom, Molly, Daniel, Sophie and Emma.

Her family are the wonderful legacy that she leaves behind. They are a living and growing memorial to her and a testament to the love of Barbara and Vic.

We take a moment to remember Vic – he meant everything to her, they were best friends, each other's rock and soul mate. He was always in her heart and never far from her thoughts.

We think of Beryl, Stan, Ian and Keith, who have lost an irreplaceable part of their family.

Rosie and Magali have lost a dear friend.

Each one of you has lost a special part of your life.

There is never a good time to die or a good way to die. We want the people that we love to be with us always, happy and healthy.

Barbara was 86 – she had a long life – she was fit and healthy and her death will have come as a shock to each one of you. Her passing is a reminder to us all that we're all mortal and like all living things, only here for a brief moment.

However long that moment is, it is never long enough for those who really love us.

We're going to share some of the love and esteem her family have for her. She would be very proud that Sophie has written some words to share.

Sophie

Since the day our nan passed away, people have said I'm so sorry to hear that, how old was she? And when I say she was 86, they say oh she was really quite old, but they didn't know her.

We are talking about a lady that you can only get hold of on a Wednesday because all the other days were fully booked, that's why it was such a shock to all of us. We all thought she had so much life left in her.

I don't think she really knew the impact she had on so many people, she always put everyone else before herself and she absolutely adored everyone single one of her grandchildren. We knew that because she introduced us to everyone whenever she got a chance.

What a privilege it was and is to be able to call her my nan and I say that from all of her grandchildren. We are all going to miss her so much.

I really want to say to everyone here, please tell the people you love how much you love them because you never know when they could suddenly be taken away from you.

Thank you everyone for being here today and as my dad, my uncle David, my sister Emma, Tom, Molly and Daniel all know, just like our nan would say before it's time to go to sleep, "good night god bless" to you this time nan.

Barbara's Story

Barbara was born on Ninges Farm, in Billaricay on the 9th November 1930 to Christiana and Alex Martin. She joined her brother Jim, just 18 months older than her and 18 YEARS later was joined by her sister Beryl.

By all accounts, Barabara and her brother would argue like cat and dog.

She grew up on the farm and the woods, the fields and the streams would have been her playground when she was a young girl.

The farm was a dairy farm and her father worked as a cowman. Barbara was used to living in a house with an outside toilet, tin bath, one outside tap and windows that froze over in the winter.

Living in the middle of a farm, she remembered cycling 5 miles across the fields to school. She remembered watching the dogfights in the skies above during the Battle of Britain. Barbara and her friends were used to diving into ditches if a German plane came towards them – pilots often opened fire on civilians.

She was a sporty girl and enjoyed athletics – she ran for Essex and threw the Javelin for the county too. She was tall and thin and was given the unkind nickname of Olive Oil from the Popeye films!

By the time Barbara was 12, the family moved to Little Baddow.

She left school at 14 and joined the Land Army. She worked at farms in Maldon and Mount Nephin in Chelmsford. Throughout her life she loved the outdoors and working in her garden.

Later she worked in a sweetshop.

She met Vic on a day out. Barbara went for a day out to the coast with a friend and met Vic and his brother.

Vic lived in Romford at the time. He was very much a ‘cockney’ and quite a city lad. He went to see Barbara, dressed very smartly in a suit and ready to take her out. He was horrified to find out that the nearest pub was 5 miles away and that he really was dressed up with nowhere to go! He was terrified of cows too!

They were married in Little Baddow Church on the 19th May 1956. She kept her wedding dress – it was remarkably small.

On the day of the wedding, Ronnie Hilton was at Number One in the charts with the song “No Other Love”.

The couple started their married life living on the Mile End Road in East London. He was working as a plater at the time.

They moved to Stevenage around 1960. Vic found a job in the town. It was that wonderful time when if you got a job in the town, it came with a house.

They moved into 3, The Muntings – the house was brand new, roads were still unmade, pavements unlaid and the garden was like a building site. To Barbara and Vic, it must have seemed like moving to the countryside.

Holidays were special family times. Barbara embraced Vic's family as her own. Ernie and Marie and Rene and Stan would share those holidays.

Barbara was always very close to her little sister, Beryl and loved spoiling her.

Originally, Barbara worked too, and operated a fly press at George W Kings.

Later, she worked as a cleaner in a children's home with her friend Eileen. Eventually, Barbara became a house parent there.

They started their family with Dave in 1965. Neil arrived in 1969.

She was a good homemaker. She was very much a traditional cook. She made roast dinners to die for. Her signature dish was probably mince and mash – filling food for 'her boys'. She enjoyed her food too – she loved her kippers on a Sunday morning!

She could knit for England – she made her boys jumpers and gloves and in recent years was still knitting poppies for the annual British Legion Poppy Day appeal.

She enjoyed gardening – over the years, it matured into a beautiful space – she valued having time to sit in it. She loved the fresh air, so much so that even in the depths of winter, her windows would be open.

Vic loved his football. He never played, but ran teams. Barbara got involved with the teams – she would make bacon sandwiches for them as well as washing the strip.

He was a keen Arsenal supporter and would watch home matches at Highbury. He would go with his brother Joe. Barbara went on many occasions with Vic. She went with her son Dave until last year – she loved her big fry-ups before the game and was quite loud in joining in the general banter. "Who are you, who are you!" She'd chant along with the crowd.

Vic passed away 31 years ago after a short illness. He was just 54 years old.

With the help of family and friends she was able to move on. She had holidays abroad with a big group of friends that she met at the Times Club. Her boys are very proud of how well she coped after Vic's death. One of the challenges that she set herself was to learn to drive. She passed her driving test and then never drove again. She loved walking and was happy to walk everywhere.

When the boys were younger, holidays used to be in caravans at California Cliffs or Sandy Bay. The social clubs were always a great attraction for Barbara and Vic.

When she was older, Barbara loved going abroad with friends. Malta was a favourite destination. When she went to Portugal with Neil she would say "I'm not eating fish with their eyes looking at me!"

For many years she worked at Tesco in the Town Centre as a cashier. She was there for 20 years and made many friends there. She went out for a meal with them the Friday before she became ill.

She was still working when she was nearly 70. She would meet her grandchildren and then walk around the lakes.

Barbara lived in the Muntings for about 60 years. She was the road's oldest resident. She loved helping people out. For many years she would go and collect her next door neighbour's newspaper. She loved helping people and would be out in all weathers.

She liked to be busy. She was out most days – as Sophie said, she was around on Wednesdays. Otherwise, she was out doing things. She enjoyed going to Bingo with her friends twice a week. She went to the pictures every fortnight with her friend, Eileen.

In her quieter moments she enjoyed reading romantic fiction from Mills and Boon. She enjoyed her music – often played loudly - and liked to watch quiz shows and crime series like CSI and Murder in Paradise on TV. She also enjoyed her word search puzzles and her adult colouring books. She was very organised and knew when everybody's birthday and other special events in their lives were.

Her biggest hobby was socialising and simply keeping busy!

She remained fit for most of her life. She had the odd mishap – she broke her wrist doing an over enthusiastic twist at a wedding. She was 84 at the time.

Barbara remained in control until the very end. She was able to say her goodbyes and passed very peacefully on the 4th March. Still trying to organise things for her boys until the end, her last words were nearly “is the undertaker here yet?” fortunately, she added that she loved both her boys!

I hope that you can take comfort in the fact that she had a good life, She had a long life and a life that she was able to enjoy. She was able to spend her life with the man she loved and she leaves behind that wonderful legacy of family, friends and some lovely memories to be shared.

During the next few moments, think about the things that you've heard today. Think about your own memories of her - they will be every bit as special and unique as she was. They will be special, unique to you and her and no two of you will have exactly the same ones.

Think about why it was good to have had Barbara as part of your life - the impact that she had on you. Remember that she was very proud to have had each of you in her life too. That was especially the case with her sons – she would forever be introducing them to people.

While you do that, we're going to listen to a song that meant so much to Barbara and Vic – it was played at their wedding. As you listen to it think about the pair of them with so many good things to come in their lives.

Music for Reflection

Unchained Melody – The Righteous Brothers

Quiet Reflection

We're going to spend the next few moments in silence, a chance for you to think of something that will always trigger your memories of Barbara.

And if you have faith, perhaps you could use the time to say your own private prayer for Barbara.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen

The Committal

Sadly, Barbara has reached the end of her journey here with us. She is at total peace.

Barbara...

To everything there is a season

A time to be born and a time to die.

We are glad that we shared our lives with you.

We will cherish all of the good things that you brought into our lives.

We will remember your character and your personality,

Your love of fun and your love of life.

We will recall the things that you did with us

And the happy times we shared together.

We commit the memory of you

To our hearts and minds.

With love and tenderness we leave you in peace,

In the belief that you are now reunited with your darling Vic.

Closing Words

Each of you here will have your own thoughts about death. Some of you may feel that death is simply the end. Some of you may believe that we go on to a different existence or that we are reborn in some way. Some of you won't know what you believe.

Whatever your faith, it is in remembering that we live on.

We never lose the people we love. Be thankful that Barbara was and still is a part of your life.

Don't be shy about sharing your memories. They mean so much to Barbara's family.

After the service you are all invited back to the Peartree to share some refreshments and your memories with each other. When you get there, enjoy talking about her; laugh at stories of things she got up to, things that she said.

I'm sure that there will be far more laughter than tears. If Barbara was here, no doubt she'd be laughing along loudest and longest with that infectious laugh of hers.

There's nothing wrong with that, especially today.

Feel No Guilt In Laughter

Feel no guilt in laughter, I know how much you care.
Feel no sorrow in a smile that I am not here to share.
You cannot grieve forever; I would not want you to.
I'd hope that you could carry on the way you always do.
So, talk about the good times
and the way we showed we cared,
The days we spent together, all the happiness we shared.
Let memories surround you, a word someone may say
Will suddenly recapture a time, an hour, a day,
That brings me back as clearly as though I am still here,
And fills you with the feeling that I am always very near.
For if you keep those moments, we will never be apart
And I will live forever locked safely within your heart.

Thank you for being here today for Barbara and for each other.

Thank you to Barbara for being the wonderful person you were.

Exit Music

Supermarket Flowers – Ed Sheeran

