

# BRENDA



**ELEPHANTS NEVER FORGET**

**NEITHER WILL WE**

# THOUGHTS

Bill, Sarah and Tim, and Simon and Rachel, together with sister Myra, and brother Colin, have asked me to say some words on behalf of the family to mark Brenda's life and times with love, admiration, thankfulness, happiness and "some dignity"

On we go - Brenda you have been

The best possible wife to Bill

The most wonderful mother to Sarah and Simon and a thoughtful mother-in-law to Rachel and Tim

And proud grandmother of

Abigail- 6 yrs      Zara- 1yr      Isabelle- 3yrs      Charlotte- 1 yr

A sharing, caring sister to Myra and Colin

And their partners, Derek and Joan, sadly no longer with us

The loving daughter of Elizabeth Ann Taylor, and Brenda's father Aspland both Lizzie and Ap having died some years ago

A truly supportive daughter in law to Bill's Mum and Dad.

Easily the best sister in law, along with Barbara of course, to Bill's younger sister Janette and David,  
Barbara and Bill's elder brother Derek who died too long ago and Bill's elder sister Elsie and Stuart.

A fun loving aunt of Brian and Julie, together with Mark, Robin, Mandy and Sandy, Steven and Donna and Timothy and Shelpa and Sue and Brian.

And everyone is here today – Bill and Sarah and Simon do say thank you to all the family and also to Brenda's friends from here, there and everywhere.

Friends who she worked with at Tameside Council, Greater Manchester Council, not forgetting the Residuary Body and Arches Housing.

Friends from Wigan, Pwllglass, for the record near Rhuthun, and friends from here in Donington.

We wondered how best to re-call memories, how best to put in some sort of order a mish-mash of events, articles, happenings and people, which together created the patchwork which is Brenda's legacy – not for Bill or Sarah or Simon or anyone other than

Abigail, Zara, Isabelle and Charlotte.

So we (I) though we'd try houses

2 John Shepley Street, Hyde  
113 Grange Road North, Hyde  
34 Alexandra Road, Ashton under Lyne  
4 Higher Barr Road, Hadfield  
26 School Brow, Romiley  
(a caravan or two at Croft Caravan Park, Reynalton)  
Bryn Hyfryd and  
Holmlea, Park Lane, Donington

Or perhaps cars

The Morris Mini CJA 429B - A 21<sup>st</sup> pressie from Mother to Daughter  
The Morris Countryman – the only way we could get Sarah to sleep.  
The Ford Cortina – our first “posh” car  
The Cortina Estate – not to be mentioned again  
The Chrysler Alpine with go-fast stripes  
The Talbot Alpine – our first new car with two engines, thanks to Derek Harrison  
The VW Golf – second new car – became Bill's car  
VW Polo – Undoubtedly Brenda's car  
The Granada Scorpio – perhaps we can say undoubtedly Bill's car  
The Ford Fusion - which was Brenda's choice when Bill couldn't drive  
And so nearly  
A Landrover Freelander – which was Bill's choice really! Of course.

We won't mention Bill's motorbikes ,even though there was only three! which didn't feature in Brenda's life but that's another story.

Or should we do the pubs?

Not as long a list as Bill's but still lots of memories and no doubt some evenings when we couldn't remember.

Jimmy Scragge's pub on Camp Street, Ashton-under-Lyne The Manor House with Committee Room No.3 (Committee Rooms 1 and 2 were in the Town Hall  
Not the Napoleon or Seven Stars, Canterbury Arms, Woodcock or King Bill( William IV) these were Bill's Pubs.

But The Hare and Hounds in Gee Cross (definitely pre-Bill)  
The Jazz Club at Greenfield

and then together with Bill

The Friendship Inn Stockport Road, Romiley (not the Cow and Calf that was Bill's pub)

The Boars Head at Reynalton Wales

The Junction Inn, Turner Lane, Ashton with the Legal Eagles

The White Horse at Llanfair (not the Fox and Hounds that was Bill's pub)

The Black Bull at Donington (not the Black Swan – that was Bill's pub).

Well it is difficult. Every house is a book, every car and pub a chapter or two.

So we'll do our best.

In recent months Brenda began to do some investigations into the family history. Because of this we can mention memories which would otherwise have stayed hidden.

Brenda recalled her Mum, Elizabeth Taylor (Bill had James Dean on his side) baking bread in the Yorkshire range, for income at John Shepley Street and going to the Moulders Arms for a jug of ale, seeing her Granddad with his pipe.

A word from Cousin Sandra.....When we were children four of us used to go to Blackpool at Whitsun - my ( and Brenda's ) Grandma, Brenda's Mum, Aunt Lizzie, Brenda and myself. We had great fun of course. I used to entertain Brenda with tales of Emperor Ming - she reminded me of that when we got in touch recently. And when I started at the Junior School, Brenda being those few (5) months older had already started and I remember on the first assembly morning she stood behind me and found the correct place in the hymn book and handed it to me! How's that for kindness at an early age.

Brenda was determined to be successful in her school days – fairgrounds permitting – and at Leigh Street School she worked hard to be able to be placed in the “Commercial” stream which began with qualifications in shorthand and typing – the bottom rung of the ladder which raised her from typist to senior legal officer with perhaps her twin career pinnacles being Head of Terrier at GMC and Senior Legal Officer or was it Practise Manager of Tamesides Legal Department

We digress, back to John Shepley Street, which led to Grange Road North where she lived with Colin, 50 years an engineer with William Kenyon & Sons of Dukinfield, and Mum and Dad. Brenda's father died early in her life and memories are few – no doubt Colin and Myra will be able to do a chapter or two for us.

Whilst at Grange Road North, Brenda took on her first family responsibilities, as Aunt to Brian and Julie.

A few of Julies' memories follow

Brenda introduced me to holidays abroad, lipstick, high heels, night clubs and music

My first holiday abroad, Hotel Regina, San Sebastian, Spain, with Grandma and Brenda. I think for Brenda's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. I was 10. Brenda bought me my first pair of high heels, (red leather, with white polka dots, very Spanish flamenco with VERY

high heels, dress to match, lipstick on) “made me look older to get into night club” I loved the red shoes, wouldn’t throw them away, wore them even when they were way too small

Introduced me to music. Bought me and Brian our first LP Brian’s Rolling Stones, mine the Beatles.

Her first car a white mini, not quite sure, but I think this was also for her 21<sup>st</sup> Brenda used to always take me for a ride around the block in it. My friend said I used to think I was the Queen - sat in the front of that mini, sat upright, in the front seat, looking who could see me. Well it was a brand new mini, and I think my dad only used to have a three wheeler (Reliant Robin)

Brenda would always tell us (me and Brian) that we were her favourite nephew and niece. Of course it was nothing to do with the fact that we were her only nephew and niece. (That was of course before she met you and your family Bill)

Just a few of the things I always remember.(Julie is now the proud owner of 36 pairs of shoes and yes Keith she has the same number of feet as you.

Brian will have his say and we await with interest because Brian went to University, played a guitar, had long hair, listened to Muddy Waters, yes Brian you can’t escape that easily.

We will return and fill in some gaps with a little help from friends who will recall – Hyde Fairgrounds, Aunty Emily and Boston Street (funny isn’t it how names come around). Aunty Florrie, does everyone in the world have an Aunty Florrie? And we still have many cousins and Aunty Madge who can tell stories.

Brenda met Bill when they worked in the Town Clerks Department at Dukinfield Town Hall. Bill had his Triumph T100 (500 cc twin) and Brenda her mini. As Bill and Brenda formed a relationship Bill lost his motorbike and something else was lost, but I can’t remember what or where

Bill can’t remember Brenda ever riding pillion but her Mother did – the oldest rocker in town was in the hit parade at the time.

Brenda and Bill were married at St Thomas’s Church Hyde on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1968 and a tale or two could be told about the wedding arrangements and actions on the day to accommodate Bill’s Dad and his family butchers shop.

Went to live at 34 Alexander Road, Ashton under Lyne which was a smidgen away from Ashton Town Hall where Bill worked at the time. So Bill sold Brenda’s mini to Bill Wilkinson who he worked with, or gave it away as Brenda would have it. Eventually having to buy the Mini Countryman from his friend Michael Hibbert, and which was sold to nephew Brian – hopefully it was a good buy – if it wasn’t I don’t want to know!

Sarah was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1968 – Simon on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1971, and our lives were never the same again.

I shall reserve my several volumes of memories for another day but they may revolve around

### **Brenda and Drinks**

Bacardi and Coke - no ice.....no lemon.....after our very last family week-end Brenda had a Bacardi and Coke to celebrate

Dry sherry just a small one..... that had either had a long life or was secretly topped up by someone

Lapsang Souchong in a CHINA cup; there is only one china cup in Simon's house, only ever used by one person and there it will forever remain

Vimto

Irish Whiskey (do you remember Rosemary?)

Southern Comfort (Yvonne do you remember?)

And Water in recent times

### **Brenda and Holidays**

Honeymoon at Blackpool – 3 days then came home and bought a TV

Touring caravan - left Bill with the children at Lake Windermere and returned to work! No sickies in our house!

Static caravan (2) Croft Caravan Park- sandwiches at Amroth the beaches of West Wales but Simon never remembers Mum in the sea, just toasting gently on the beach

Gran Canaria (what a mistake of Bill's)

India-fascinating

South Africa - simply memorable

Prague- culture and dumplings Brenda and Bill managed to make three hotel bookings for a long week-end!

### **Brenda and Sports**

Never a participant but

An expert on Tennis and Rugby (but not Bill's Old Aldwinian team or to be precise the Club House and serving Herby's pies.....perhaps Lillian and Barbara could explain or not!

Enjoyed Cricket and Golf

Respected David Beckham as an individual

Laughed at football, Grand Prix and Fishing

Enjoyed Glengarth Sevens but not Sarah's entry in her school diary as a 7/8year old the day after

### **Brenda and Technology**

Many a person here today, David Fletcher, Norma Nutter, Alan Ellison and others will appreciate what we say – Brenda wanted “to understand” would never ask but

would always find the solution not like “lazy” Bill who would pick up the phone. Take shopping – did Brenda ever ask a shop assistant where an item was in the store – no – we would play hunt the article.

A fan of IT from the start.....willingly typing up from magazines those programmes that enabled Sarah and Simon to play the most basic computer games on their very first PC or VIC 20. Even typed up Sarah's undergraduate 10,000 word economics dissertation on days away from the office taken as holiday using econometrics and scientific symbols that must have made no sense at all (Dr. Simon may dispute the word scientific.....Bill doubts that they made sense to anyone then along came Gordon Brown)

### **Brenda and the Construction Industry**

Clwyd from Wales who is here today would have Brenda as Clerk of Works And Finance Director

Geoff Ellam from Romiley days got to know Brenda's views over the years as he helped us to build our house. At the time Geoff kindly gave Simon a labourers job over the summer, unfortunately for Geoff this meant that I reported back ALL details to Mum which gave her very good ammunition: Simon knew where his loyalties lay

Elgan, Plumber extra-ordinary, at Bryn Hyfryd

Alan Williams Electrician.....why do all electricians live in big houses?

Andrew Jones multi skilled polite young man

Chris and Tony at Sean Suttons were quick to realise the interest Brenda showed in how long it took to do a job.

Roger Lambert doesn't realise how lucky he was that Brenda was in St. Georges Tooting when he did his job

and others

They certainly knew who was in charge and it wasn't Bill and they certainly enjoyed tea and choccy biscuits whenever Brenda was around

### **Brenda and Animals**

Not many but always part of the family

Bess - our Labrador for many years

Suki - did well to come home with a broken pelvis after being missing for a week having been hit by a car

Katy - with us now and brings us trophies to share

and Brenda's elephants, nothing more to be said just visit the house

Not forgetting her fishes be they at Waysides pond Romiley or Bryn Hyfryd's fish tank and with whom she may now be re-united with.....is that not so Clwyd

## **Brenda and Clothing and Hairstyles**

What a cracking eye she had for quality (only expensive jewellery for Mum) and style for everyone including Simon. Except for the Brown Velour and Pudding Basin haircut period which lasted 15 years or so, but fortunately there are very few photos available - Sarah on the other hand has lots of stylish clothes, hairstyles and photographs. Indeed, Sarah was kitted out for her first job in part of Mum's wardrobe. One of those inexplicable things.

Hair styles .....superb with a little help from her chosen Hairdressers and the Afro comb!!!!!!!!!!

## **Brenda and Food**

Taught by Lillian in the intricacies of Haut Cuisine

Memorable Mushroom soup, the best walnut cake ever , original recipe courtesy of Yvonne, gravy, Christmas lunches lasting five hours and beyond.....More like a Christmas Festivities programme than a lunch.....starting on Christmas Eve with in later years (when Sarah and Simon were old enough to be allowed out) an Indian Meal in a restaurant and finishing 20 x 3course meals later on 2nd January (leftovers aside).....Sarah thinks preparations began in November.....they didn't..... when Sarah decided to become vegetarian this ensured that parallel feeding programmes had to be run causing preparations to start around August

Unforgettable lemon meringue some people say ...well one does

Bar b ques – perhaps Bill's neck of the woods

A brilliant hostess – an eye for detail.

But don't forget the pans, crockery and cutlery.....feeding 5,000 not a problem to Brenda.

## **Brenda and Music and Films**

Queen, Queen, Queen CDs and videos and Saturday nights and Sunday mornings when Sarah and Simon had flown the nest.

Robbie Williams

Simply Red

Kevin Costner, The Godfather (perhaps mainly Bill's) Robert De Niro

Al Pacino.

Hoovering with the Stereo blasting out at full volume some Andrew Lloyd Weber musical with (usually but not always ) Elaine Page and Barbara Dickson accompanied by Brenda as well as the hoover.....We won't talk about Bill's music but he enjoys it.

## **Brenda and laughter and TV**

Dallas, Dynasty and the other 80's big shows.....had to match that 1980s power dressing image  
Peter Kay in everything he did,  
Some odd balls, according to Bill, ER, West Wing, Green Wing, Earl, House, Six Feet Under, etc. etc.

Which is why Bill and Brenda had six TV's – 2 Sky plus – 2 videos – 1 DVD – 8 radios/CD's but only one hifi set between the two of them.

## **Brenda's Handbag**

The stuff legends are made of.....lists.....lists....and more.....lists.....lists.....not to mention the birthday and anniversary little book if Bill Gates could commission some software he'd really be rich but it would defeat the most brilliant minds.....Bill now has three computers to replace the handbag!!!!!!!!!!

## **Brenda's Friends and Neighbours**

So many.....Kate and Mel thank you for choosing us to sell your home to, you couldn't have been more helpful and between us we certainly got the lawyers on the go.....Ivy and Stuart at Holmelea so welcoming, members of St. Marys and the Holy Rood and IDEA so supportive.....Margaret and Sam at Wayside so sad to say goodbye to .....at Pwllglass Doug and Norma (plus family) and Edwina and family and Ken and Barbara and Margaret and Effion and Gronwyn and Clwyd and Huw and their ladies and others mentioned elsewhere and others who Bill has forgotten to re-call.....ah well.....but Glyn and Poppy did you really think it was your decision to buy Bryn Hyfryd.....no.....it was fate and Brenda.....best of luck to you all and Ali and Charlie

## **Thoughts on Brenda at work from Alan, Ron & Clem**

It's hard to believe that it is more than 25 years since Brenda first burst onto the scene, and our acquaintance, at the long gone, and much lamented Greater Manchester Council. The GMC was a 'can do' local authority and that suited Brenda very well, even when she was asked to do what many thought was the impossible task of driving through a computerised property records and management system. But it soon became evident that she had certain special qualities. In addition to being something of a human dynamo, Brenda had the uncanny knack of being able to smell what we will euphemistically call 'Bull droppings' at a distance of over 200 yards. In addition, she didn't suffer fools gladly especially not overpaid and over qualified ones of the surveying or legal professions with inflated ideas of their own abilities or importance. Watching her dealing with, and sorting out, such people was sometimes like witnessing a surreal and hysterical fusion of 'Fawlty Towers' and 'The Office'. What fun it was!

Like many of her colleagues, Brenda very much regretted the abolition of the GMC in 1986, but she found her way back to East Manchester and Tameside Council, initially in the Property Records Section in the Estates Department and then as Office Manager

in the Legal Division. The Legal Division was still in the 19th Century and sliding back towards the Dark Ages when Brenda arrived. She was instrumental in the introduction of a computerised time recording and case management system, yet another task deemed to be impossible. But, once again, Brenda did it and managed it with great success up to the time of her early retirement.

Of course it wasn't all work and some of the parties in the days of the GMC are now the stuff of legend as are the post work Friday afternoons in the Junction pub in Ashton in the later days at Tameside. It is easy to see Brenda now, fag in one hand and large Bacardi and Coke in the other, holding forth on the frailties of the human condition and stopping any dissenting voice with one of her legendary withering looks. Oh, and we have to mention that laugh, loud and joyful, but, on occasions, ever so slightly naughty!

A friend is defined as someone you know well and who you regard with liking, affection and loyalty. We are proud to say that Brenda was not just a work colleague to us, but also a valued and much loved friend. Once you had won her friendship, she never wavered in her support and loyalty no matter what the circumstances. Best of all, Brenda always told you the truth not what she thought you wanted to hear. We will miss her and our thoughts are with Bill, Sarah, Simon and their families today at what we know Brenda would have wanted to be a celebration of a life well lived.

Bill remembers earlier times of course.....as will Fred H and Jim and Sandy and Trevor and John and Roy and Bill from 1973.....a new saying was introduced to the 223,000 residents of Tameside.....Typically Tameside ..... gaffes/howlers/cock-ups ..... but amidst all ..... a damn good job was done ..... Bill feels another volume or two coming on

### **Brenda in Recent Times**

Brenda was caught between Bryn Hyfryd and the grand-daughters – so tough a decision – but no contest, and the friends, house and sheep lost.

We then went on a mission. Armed with Google  
Right-move.com  
The AA.co.uk.

And all the technology we could muster.

We sought our dream home mid-way between Wimbledon and Holme on Spalding Moor.

Not just mid-way in mileage but also travelling time

And we were successful – wonderfully so.

Holmelea and Donington are everything we wanted. Without Bryn Hyfryd we wouldn't have achieved Holmelea. Without Wayside in Romiley we wouldn't have enjoyed Bryn Hyfryd.

Brenda had her bathroom and the grandchildren enjoyed theirs.....you know the one we mean.

Brenda has walked to the hairdresser and to the Black Bull. She had found Marks and Spencer Outlet Shop, Downtown and returned to John Lewis.

Brenda was very happy at Holmelea.....her lovely home with a beautiful garden where all her family could gather so very, very easily.

As she helped Bill with Arches Housing so she has helped Bill with IDEA and St Mary and the Holy Rood.

She has given so much and now everything

But she leaves behind so much more.....not just in physical things and memories, but in having made an indelible imprint on all our lives and particularly for Sarah and Simon on who they are and what they think is important. And they'll pass that on to Abigail and Zara and Isabelle and Charlotte. ....So , although Mum won't be there to see them grow up, something that breaks all our hearts, she will undoubtedly still 'leave her mark' on them.

### **Some random thoughts from Sarah**

Never pushy, pressurising, over-bearing or over-protective mum but always there to support and encourage. Invariably gave me enough rope to hang my-self with and in so doing ensured I learned to stand on my own two feet (eventually). Gave me the confidence to think I could do anything I set my mind to, no matter how unachievable it might have seemed. Did not fly out to Thailand when she heard I was in hospital several thousand miles away even though that must have been her natural reaction (instead just ran up what was probably then a world record phone bill). And on the day my A level exam results were due let me pick them up myself with just a phone call afterwards to let her know that yes I had managed to get into Cambridge. As a package that gave me self-belief, self-confidence and independence.....the best possible package any Mum could give a daughter.

### **Some equally random thoughts from Simon**

Some of my most enduring memories of Mum will be her GMC days: going in to Manchester, very often with her Mum, to get greeting cards from Webb Ivory (somewhere in Salford I think), then meeting up with Mum in Piccadilly for some lunch, maybe only a sandwich in the park, but in later times when I was 'grown up' we would go to China town for the business man's lunch much better values Mum would say.

This looking after me continued for an awful long time and is demonstrated that when I was caught speeding by one of those nasty camera things in Mum's car (2002) (my driving style I would say I inherited from her) whilst in hospital she took the points on her licence as in her words 'if it wasn't for her I would not have been in Wrexham anyway. There is obviously a fundamental flaw in this logic but Mum had made her mind up and that was it, end of story. (Sorry Sarah.....meant to tell you when you were also caught visiting me in hospital.....Dad)

I also agree with both Sarah and my Dad in that Mum was never overbearing to the point of absolute craziness, she would never ask for something but wait for it to be offered it, hopefully this will ensure that I will be considerate to others in the same way that I hopefully was Mum , I always tried to remember to offer as it would certainly not be requested: I did not always succeed but not for want of trying. This combination of determination (stubbornness?), loyalty and hopefully consideration is what my Mum has given me and for that I will be for ever in her debt. What my Dad has given me has yet to be decided!

**Final thought from Bill**

Something tells me this story isn't finished yet!!!!!!!!!!!!!!