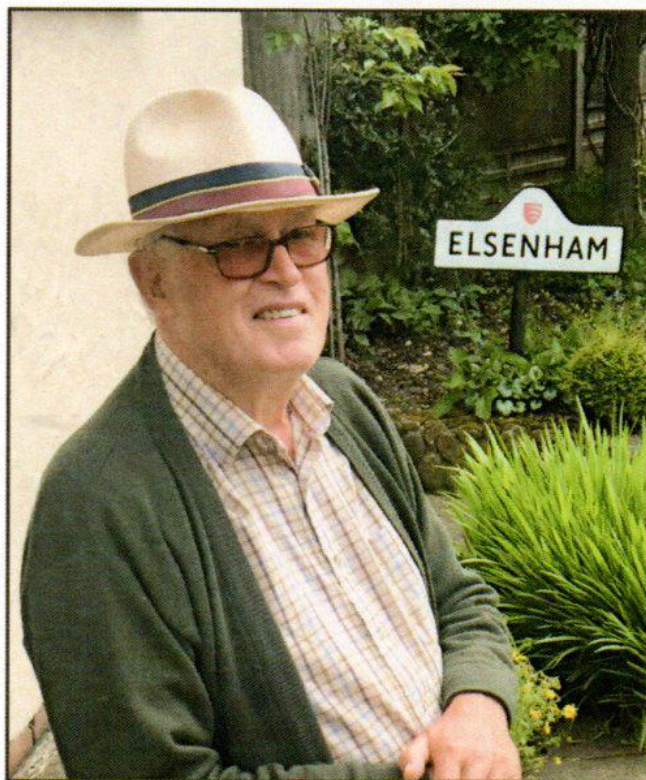


A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF



GORDON WILLIAM BARKER

8TH NOVEMBER 1933 - 7TH SEPTEMBER 2022



ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, ELSENHAM

TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2022

11.30 AM

ORDER OF SERVICE

Service led by Reverend Louis Wilson

Entry Music

Londonderry Air

WELCOME AND SENTENCES

HYMN

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

EULOGIES

Ben Jarvis, grandson

Chris Bush, friend and member of the History Society

Stewart Pimblett, friend

BIBLE READING

1 Corinthians 13: 4-10

Love is patient, love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts,
always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

But where there are prophecies, they will cease;
where there are tongues, they will be stilled;
where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

I'd like to thank everyone for coming today to celebrate the life of Gordon William Barker. For anyone who doesn't know me well, I'm Ben, one of Gordon's grandchildren. I feel incredibly privileged to be speaking today on behalf of the family for us to not only say goodbye, but also to share cherished memories of a devoted husband, brother, father, grandfather and friend. When we're young, grandparents can be some of the most important people in our lives. They're role models, people who inspire us, people who make us laugh and instil values into us that we carry for the rest of our lives. Grandad was very much one of those people.

He was someone I know that we all looked up to, a true gentleman who loved to tell a story. Grandad was above all else a joker, extremely mischievous with a smile that could light up any room he was in. He was also incredibly dedicated, hard-working and articulate, a traditionalist who devoted a huge portion of his life to his family and to the village. Speaking today in St Mary's Church feels very fitting because the village of Elsenham and the Church were so near and dear to Grandad's heart. He was born here on the high street on the 8th of November 1933 which of course means today would have been Grandad's 89th birthday. This comes with a small sense of irony as a long-standing joke he would tell for as long as I can remember was when meeting people, he'd tell them he was 89 tomorrow. I'm still not sure any one of us know where that joke originated. I'm led to believe that as a child, Grandad was exactly as he was as an adult, single-minded and nobody could tell him what to do. I think in a way, that's one reason why we all loved Grandad so much. I'm even told that when in school, he had to be minded as he was such a rascal trying to sneak off home.

During his youth, Grandad captained Elsenham cricket club through which he would come to know Heather, Nanny. Nan's brother Graham was also on the team, and this was how they first became acquainted. But I've also been told a story in which Grandad was looking out the window from the house in the high street and he saw Nan riding a bike and he said that's the woman I want to marry. And I'm very lucky that they did!

They married right here in the Church in 1962 and they would live in Elsenham for the whole of Grandad's life; something he loved to remind everyone he spoke to of. They have three wonderful children, Elizabeth, Anne and William, they have nine grandchildren, and I must mention Grandad's love of cats who were always part of the family, especially Boris and Bertie who Grandad adored so much. Using everybody's full name seems rather strange because as anyone who knew Grandad well will know that he had a nickname for almost everyone. If you were a member of the family, the

village or anyone who worked at Scotsdales, a place where I share many happy memories with Grandad, he probably had a nickname for you.

Grandad worked at the garage in Elsenham from the age of 15 alongside his parents William and Violet and his sister Audrey. When his parents died, Nan and Grandad took it on together as partners and ran it for many, many years. In total, Grandad worked there for almost 50 years and that's one reason why he became so integrated into the village and became so well known here. This was also where the inner prankster really shone as him and his life-long friend Colin were like partners in crime. Anytime a story was told from the garage days always had the family in hysterics. Throughout his life, Grandad was heavily involved in St Mary's fabric fund, raising money for the upkeep of the Church. He was also really passionate in researching the history of the church and Elsenham itself with the village history society, which he was chairmen of when it first started. This led to Grandad presenting pictures of the village and its many remarkable characters through the years at his slideshow events, which raised lots of money for the fabric fund. He was also incredibly passionate about British history; he had the most remarkable memory, and this was all village-taught. In 1991, whilst metal detecting in the village, Grandad discovered a roman burial grave with many items being donated to the British Museum. In particular, an enamelled bronze pyxis was found which is still on display today all these years later, and incredibly I believe is one of very few found across the whole world.

Grandad truly was Mr Elsenham. If you walk around the village, you see scatterings of Grandad's involvement. He was instrumental in the design of the Elsenham sign, the preservation of the snooker table gifted to the village by Sir Walter Gilbey, saving the chapel of rest in the cemetery and having buildings become listed. Several books could most likely be filled with Grandad's involvement in Elsenham there is that much he did for the village.

Later in life, when Grandad began to be less mobile, we started to use the wheelchair more often and whilst you may think this would limit the adventures and stories I have to share, rather the opposite, it seemed to make many more. He liked to tell me the irony of when I'd push him around as it mirrored when I was a young boy and he pushed me around Lakeside shopping centre like a race car. In these later years he loved going to Hatfield Forest, he loved sitting in the garden in Fuller's end watching the birds and he loved collecting postcards. Whenever I got to see Grandad, he always greeted me in exactly the same way. He'd say happy? And I would reply: I'm always happy. He used to pull my leg like nobody else I knew. He once convinced me to ask someone

behind the till if they had any Much Hadham rock, a joke which I did not understand until several years later. For anyone who doesn't know, Much Hadham is nowhere near the sea. He told me as a young boy he had a pet tortoise who once lunged at him and bit several fingers off and despite knowing he had all of his fingers, I believed him. Grandad also loved to pull faces at people, and nobody seemed to be off limits. When you're such a joker you also have to be prepared to be the source of amusement too. I've been told a story by Aunt Lisa of when Grandad tested an electric fly zapper on his fingers when he thought nobody was looking. She kindly kept that secret until I'm telling you all here today.

We all have those special memories we are going to think about when we think of Grandad. Uncle Will spoke to me about a day he particularly loved in April 1987 where Grandad drove them both to Villa Park to watch Spurs play Watford in the FA cup semi-final. They won 4-1 but sadly went on to lose the final to Coventry during extra time. Nevertheless it was a wonderful day. When speaking to my mum and Auntie Liz, we spoke about how both Nan and Grandad really instilled values into them when they were growing up and are eternally grateful for their childhoods. This has definitely been passed onto all of us Grandchildren which shows the legacy that has been left behind.

This year, Nan and Grandad celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary, a monumental achievement, mostly for Nan putting up with him for all those years. They received their telegram from Queen Elizabeth, who joined Grandad in Heaven just a day later which I think is rather fitting due to his passion for history. I can well imagine he is telling her one of his repertoire of jokes right now, possibly the fact that he was a shoe size 10 but he could fit 11's on. That is how I will remember Grandad, as a true prankster. I'm lucky enough to carry around a piece of him with me, as my middle name is William, which is a very important name passed down in the Barker family. Losing Grandad has broken my heart, but I am so very grateful for all the time I shared with him and the wisdom he has left me with. When I look at all my family today, I am so proud of them, and I know that Grandad would be too. It's impossible to put into the words the impact he had on all our lives and how much we love him and are going to miss him. Until we see you again Grandad, sleep well, we all love you so much.

Ben Jarvis

GORDON BARKER, ELSENHAM'S OWN HISTORY BOY

I first encountered Gordon through the garage, in those days it was service with a smile none of today's serve yourself.

I became aware of Gordon's passion for village history through the slide shows that he put on in the village hall with the proceeds going to St Mary's Church fund.

They were sell-out affairs and it paid to get in early to secure a ticket.

The range of village photographs and the detail that went with them always kept audiences intrigued for the two to three hours of the shows. I remember one particularly when he came down with laryngitis on the very day of the show but being a real trooper he croaked his way through it

The detail that Gordon could add from, memory turned it from a simple slide show into an entertainment.

He always said to me that a photograph was of lesser value unless details of the people shown or the story behind the picture could be added. he travelled far and wide in his research.

As I got to know Gordon better, I discussed with him the importance of writing down the information that he carried in his head because I for one was not able to absorb and retain the wealth of detail as he always did

Gordon agreed to this and there followed many visits to his home in Fullers End where he and Heather talked about the village and the many characters and anecdotes that they remembered.

I have to say that the only way to capture all of the facts was via a voice recorder because I just couldn't keep up with the flow trying to write everything down

These sessions were a delight, a revelation and an education not to mention Heather's delicious cheese straws!

My phone would ring and a distinctive voice would say "jug and bottle here, would you like to pop round I have something to tell you."

I would say to Diane "I am just popping round to see Gordon for 10 minutes"

But, we both knew ten minutes usually meant three or four hours. but they were enjoyable hours well spent.

Around 2009 a number of us discussed the formation of a village history society to focus on Elsenham to collect, record and share as much information as we could gather.

There was only one choice for chairman and Gordon agreed to take on the role.

In 2010 Gordon presided over the first meeting of the society and we are still active twelve years later, Gordon became our honorary president.

In 2013 we were able to launch a web site for the society and then all of the recordings we had worked on were uploaded and not surprisingly Gordon's conversations took pride of place. there they remain for all to share and enjoy.

Gordon over many years had collected a precious archive of photographs and post cards (and by the way forget bidding on ebay for a rare specimen if Gordon wanted to add it to his collection!)

He collected, artefacts, biographies and anecdotes connected with the village.

He used to be a keen metal detectorist and amongst his finds he had the distinction of having a rare roman pyxis evaluated and accepted by the British Museum.

Others will tell you of his other interests and activities, I want to mention his contact with a couple of people from a wide range of interesting characters.

One such person too complex to fully cover here was the mysterious Marquis D'oisy (couldn't possibly manage his full (self-styled?) title.)

well, if you insist, I'll have a go

He called himself '*Armand Edouard Ambroise Marie Lowis Etienne Phillipe D'sant Andre Tornay*'

the Marquis claimed to be a French aristocrat of Brazilian descent - but with a cockney accent!

Gordon and he seemed to hit it off!

The Marquis was an artist, a designer of costumes and whose painted furniture work can still be seen in Thaxted church - Gordon contributed to a book on his life written a few years ago by the author Julian Litten

Another friend Gordon valued was Etienne Vandriesche renowned for many things including his strength.

Gordon once challenged him to move an anvil that sat in the garage. not only did he move it he picked it up and balanced it on his shoulder whilst Gordon ran for his camera (I have seen the photo!)

The garage under Gordon's watch was a magnet for the 'good old boys' of the village and Heather often had to pick her way around such

gatherings which were no doubt the source of many of the stories and anecdotes which Gordon related to me

On the subject of books Gordon co-authored a history of Elsenham; he wrote a celebration of the 900 years of St Mary's church; he collaborated with the Takeley history society on a paper about "The Elsenham Gang" a band of local thieves who operated in the area in the eighteenth century.

Gordon was an avid supporter of the village and its history also a supporter of the Church fabric fund to which he donated income from his various slide shows and writings.

He campaigned to preserve a number of buildings in the village which were subsequently given listed status and hopefully protected from the rapacious developers.

He was prominent amongst those who helped remove a fence being erected around the Gilbey Memorial Pumphouse in the High Street. the fence he told me was "carefully" removed and stacked in the resident's garden

How to sum up?

difficult – an Elsenham stalwart born and bred, something of a self-confessed scamp in his youth; business man; sportsman; historian; practical joker, the list is too long.

Since our history society was founded, he has been an invaluable guide, contributor and go to advisor.

He is deeply missed - we will not see his like again

We offer our humble condolences to Heather and her family as we celebrate Gordon's life and his friendship and we hope that we can continue our history link with Heather in the future.

Chris Bush

Gordon William Barker.

1.

Gordon was born on the 8th November 1933 to Bill and Violet Barker at No 1 & 2 High St. Elsenham now known as Cherish Cottage and the home of Robin and Elizabeth Barker. (but no relation) Four years later his sister, Audrey was born.

Gordon started his education at Elsenham Primary School and finished his schooling in Lower St. Stansted. After he left school he worked with his father at the garage in the High St. opposite to where they all lived. Gordon's father had acquired the site in 1931 and turned the premises into a garage serving all types of fuel including pink paraffin. The Barkers also ran a taxi business, which many local people would avail themselves to as there were very few buses in those days and not many people could afford a motor car.

Local farms would also take their tractor tyres with punctures to be mended. There were no modern machines in those days to remove the tyre from the wheel rim, but Gordon always persevered with strength and determination to make the repair. Gordon inherited the garage from his father in 1976 and went on to expand the business. I still vividly remember the sign W. Barker & Son on the outside of the building.

From an early age Gordon had a passion for sport. He learnt to play snooker on the table in the old Village Hall which was later then moved into the Chapel or the Community Centre as it was known in the High St. opposite to Park Road. He later went on to win the Bishops Stortford League Singles championship and also won the League Doubles Championship with Heather's brother, Graham

Gordon was also an accomplished cricketer and Captain of Elsenham Cricket Club. It was through cricket that Gordon met the love of his life, Heather Jaggard, as her brother played for the club. Gordon was a useful right arm medium pace bowler but certainly knew how to bowl a maiden over, as he and Heather were married on the 2nd June 1962 in this church. The Reverend John Taylor officiated at the wedding and as some of you will know later became the Bishop of St. Albans.

Gordon and Heather moved to Fullers End Cottage where they lovingly restored the property, making many improvements and raised their family

Elsenham was always central to Gordon's life but I sometimes think he should have been born in a different era with his fascination for the past. Quite eccentric at times he was often seen in Edwardian or Victorian attire and needed no encouragement to dress up for a special occasion

He once borrowed a bicycle from a Mr. Ennice who was a gardener at Elsenham Place for Lady Mordaunt. The bicycle was called a step up and as the name suggests was quite an unusual contraption. Gordon was seen riding the bicycle through the High Street with a top hat on. On Mr. Ennice's death he left the bicycle to Gordon and it is still in the family's possession.

Gordon was a great advocator of traditional skills and admired true craftsmanship. One only had to visit him in his home to see how he surrounded himself with fine furniture, brass and silver which was all beautifully polished. A job he liked doing. No MFI or Ikea in Fullers End Cottage!

It was no wonder that The Repair Shop was Gordon's favourite television programme. What a shame he did not live long enough to see our present Monarch guesting on the Show.

Gordon's involvement with the History Society and St. Marys Fabric Fund has been covered and documented elsewhere here today but I just want to say what a wonderful in-depth knowledge Gordon had of this church. Gordon also had a wealth of information through his research on village families and many people would visit him in his capacity as a genealogist to seek advice on their ancestors.

Gordon in his earlier years was a Parish Councillor, and I can recall Gordon attending a Parish Council Meeting as a member of the public stating that every other village in the area had a Village sign except for Elsenham and the matter should be put right. Not only did he kick start the fund raising for such a sign, by holding one of his slide shows he also helped in the design. The sign you see standing in the

Memorial Gardens today depicting Elsenham Hall, the Pump House and St. Marys church is mainly thanks to Gordon's efforts.

For anyone who knew Gordon well soon realised he had a dogged determination in what he thought was right and certainly was not one for U-turns as his family will testify. I think if stubbornness had been an Olympic Sport Gordon would have taken Gold.

In fairness though he did have a good heart and very likeable nature.

Gordon was great pals with my father and not only did they play snooker together he loved to visit the Farm and learn of days gone by and some amusing stories of local characters and past events which happened on Tye Green.

My father had an acquaintance and friendship with a Scottish Farmer, Archie McLaren who farmed at Littlebury near Saffron Walden. Archie, a colourful character had a very good herd of pedigree Hereford cattle which he would show every year at the Royal Show. At this show the very cream of British agriculture and livestock was exhibited and judged. My father asked Gordon whether he would accompany them and drive them to the Royal Show Ground at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire.

On arrival at the gate into the show ground a gentleman came up to the car and said "Good Morning Mr. McLaren. How many invalids"? "All three of us." he replied. A vehicle was duly summoned to drive and escort them around the Show Ground.

At their evening meal in the hotel, Mr McLaren who had a hearty appetite had his plate piled sky high and observed the others saying "You boys don't eat very much" As the meal progressed the waitress brought the sweet trolley to their table and when asking Mr. McLaren what he would like said. "I would like the sherry trifle and I would like a Gentleman's portion please. I think the waitress understood what he meant and it certainly amused Gordon.

On returning home my Father announced to my mother "Gordon is a vegetarian" I think I could live and survive without meat and just vegetables alone!

I can tell you this lasted all of three days.

Another event I can recall was when my father bought an American Jeep with a huge gas guzzling engine. It had an automatic gearbox and

was very lively and responsive on the throttle. He called into the garage one day to fill up with petrol and was just getting out of the car when Gordon came out to serve him and told him to reverse up a bit as he had gone too far for the hose to reach the filler. My father climbed back into driving seat but did not shut the door properly. He put the vehicle into reverse and hit the accelerator pedal. The Jeep lurched back, causing the driver's door to fly open, striking the petrol pump and knocking it completely off its stand. I am told Gordon showed great compassion and understanding at the time.

I am sure we all have our different memories of Gordon during his life time. For me it will always be with a smile and a good story to tell.

May God bless him.

Stewart Pimblet

CONCLUDING WORDS AND PRAYERS

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

HYMN

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us –
for we have no help but Thee,
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
all our weakness Thou dost know:
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert Thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791–1867)

BLESSING

Exit Music

I'll See You In My Dreams

Joe Brown



Gordon's family thank you for attending and
warmly invite you for refreshments at
Elsenham Bowls & Social Club
Leigh Drive, Elsenham, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM22 6BY

Donations, if desired, may be made payable to
St Mary's Church Fabric Fund
and sent c/o
Daniel Robinson & Sons
79/81 South Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 3AL
Tel: 01279 655477

Alternatively, donations may be made via the
In Memory pages at www.drobinson.co.uk