**Diana Leigh Barimore**

21st September 1950 ~ 31st August 2017



On Sunday, July 30th 2017, Diana was out walking with her beloved dachshund, Bertie, on New Kings Road of Parson Green, London. It was the weekend of RideLondon, a popular and largest annual cycling event. She was involved in a collision with a competitor and sustained serious head injuries. Diana died 32 days later in hospital and her funeral was on 22nd of September, at the Mortlake Crematorium.

It was a lovely service. The order went as follows:

**ENTRANCE MUSIC** ~ Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber

**WELCOME** by Lucy Fergusson, Independent Civil Celebrant

Good afternoon. I would like to welcome to you all here today to celebrate and honour the life of Diana Leigh Barimore. A most loving lady who had charisma, charm, kindness, a great sense of humour and was also very talented. She has been taken from us too soon, but today we will try and focus on the many memories we have of Di and celebrate a good life, well lived.

My name is Lucy and it is my privilege to lead you through this service.

Today holds sadness for you all, and that is because of the love and wonderful memories we have of Di – she was such a wonderful lady, who touched so many people’s lives. It is testament to her that so many of you are here today.

You are all grieving, but let us think especially at this time of Di’s brother, Stewart and his wife Lilias, their children Jennifer and Jonathan, Jennifer’s husband Rob and Di’s great niece and nephew Abigail and Liam. Thinking of Di today is Jonathan’s wife Jen and two little boys James and Joshua, Di’s great nephews. We must also think of her cousin Judy and family and her closest friends… Peter, Kevin and Marcela. .

Let us try and share in their grief, but also celebrate Di’s life.

The feeling of grief is so personal to us all. Some of us feel shock, others anger, or disbelief. We wonder how we will ever come to terms with the fact that we won’t see Di again.

But think about the legacy she leaves behind. Your life is richer because you knew her. She made a difference to each and every one of you, and everyone will share many memories here today, even in this short space of time.

Memories and love will always remain. Keep Di’s memory close to you. I am sure you will all feel her presence at different times and this will always serve as a reminder of the love you have for her.

**READING** ~ “**A Life Well Lived**” read by Diana’s neighbour, Marcella Vielman

(Marcella has been taking care of Diana’s dog since the tragedy. As reported in the Evening Standard, she said that Diana “… was just an amazing person, really unique. She liked fashion and wore bright lipstick and dyed her hair, she was fun.”) Nb. Bertie was at the funeral.

*A life well lived is a precious gift  
Of hope and strength and grace,  
From someone who has made our world  
A brighter, better place*

*It’s filled with moments, sweet and sad  
With smiles and sometimes tears,  
With friendships formed and good times shared  
And laughter through the years.*

*A life well lived is a legacy  
Of joy and pride and pleasure,  
A living, lasting memory  
Our grateful hearts we’ll treasure*

**EULOGY** by Lucy

*I never had the privilege of meeting Di, but I have spent some time with Stewart and Lilias, which has given me a greater understanding of the sort of person she was.*

*Diana Enid Shearer entered this world on 21st September 1950 in Hove to parents Yvonne and Bill. She was the younger sister to Stewart.*

*Her early years were spent in Calcutta, India, but she went to boarding school at Sacred Heart Convent in Hove, so spent some school holidays with her grandparents Enid and Alfred Gould who lived in the same area.*

*She didn’t exactly love her time at boarding school, so would occasionally abscond.*

*At the age of 16 the family moved to Glasgow so she trained in secretarial work at Skerries College, where she was a gold medal student.*

*She used her skills to work for an insurance company in the Centre of Glasgow – but anyone who knows Di, will realise this was never going to be the job of her dreams. After not showing up for work several times, her office boss phoned her mum to say Diana needed to follow her heart and become a singer. Music has always been in the family and they would often all sing around the piano. Di and Stewart would also make home recordings with the help of her boyfriend Vic Peterson. She went on to marry Vic in 1972.*

*She did then finally follow her dreams and started a successful professional singing career with Vic, they sang as the duo, ‘Juniper Green’. There followed many happy years travelling around Scotland at a variety of theatres and folk clubs as well as performing on television and radio. They went on to enjoy successful International tours with the Alexander Brothers and published recordings with Columbia. During this time they lived in Dundee and Carnoustie and enjoyed a close relationship with Vic’s family. These were happy days, but sadly the marriage and Juniper Green broke up.*

*In 1982 Di changed her name to Diana Leigh Barimore and went solo. There followed a career in musical theatre, singing on cruise ships and performing in pantomimes. I’m told she usually played principal boy – as she always had the legs for thigh length boots! She was an incredibly talented all round performer, with an amazing voice and wonderful stage presence.*

*In her private life she lit up the room when she walked in, with her shining personality. She knew how to tell a story and once you had met her you would never forget her.*

*In the early 80s she moved to Fulham and married for a second time to Ray Holland. During this time Di had a variety of jobs, including running a line in Selfridges. Once again with prizewinning success.*

*Whilst working at Selfridges, Di discovered she had a brain tumour. The recovery process took a long time, and the hardest part for Di, was that her vocal chords had been damaged during the surgery, which sadly meant her singing career came to an end.*

*As hard as this was for Di to accept, she decided to develop new skills and change her line of work, so she became a lip speaker and signer for the deaf. She loved this new profession and was truly skilled at it. This is mostly because she was such a good communicator – she could talk to anybody; so this job really became her life and passion.*

*Di has always had many friends over the years and has always been very close to all the family, a wonderful sister, aunt and a dear loyal friend.*

*Stewart told me he loved his little sister to bits and Lilias told me how close their children, Jennifer and Jonathan have always been to their Aunty Di. She would sing to them, play with them and they would sit on her knee and gaze up at her. They both spent a great deal of time with her over the years – she was a very cool Aunty to have and they would often join Di for holidays in Carnoustie when the children were younger. Di did readings at both the children’s weddings. She then became a great Aunt – and was still just as enthusiastic in this role. Gran and Grandad brought Abigail and Liam to London on several occasions on trips to see musicals with great Aunty Di. They saw Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and The Lion King.*

*Di would regularly tell the children, ‘I love you like Jam’…*

*Di was a very proud Aunt and just adored all her nephews and nieces.*

*Twenty years ago, Di met her great friend, Peter. They have enjoyed such a wonderful friendship over the years and they were always there for one another, no matter what. Peter became one of the family and accompanied Di on her trips to Scotland. The family have told me what wonderful companions they were for each other. Peter told Stewart and Lilias how devastated he is to lose his most precious friend. He said of Di, “she just got me”.*

*Di had a big heart, and this extended to beyond human life. She loved the company of animals too and has been a dog and cat owner several times. Her little yorkie Cindy even attended Stewart and Lilias’s wedding complete with red ribbon. One of her cats, Odette went missing and after searching for several days, she found and rescued her from up a tree.*

*Then seven years ago Di decided she needed to have another furry friend in her life. She told Lilias ‘I have to come home to something with a pulse’. So one year later, Bertie arrived. I think it would be fair to say he became the love of her life. They became inseparable and the family all feel that getting Bertie was the best thing she ever did. Bertie is now living with two of Di’s closest friends Kevin and Marcela.*

*(and also joins us here today)*

*How unfair it is that Di’s life was then cut short so suddenly by a cycle accident. Di bravely fought to recover, but due to her injuries it was a battle she could not win.*

*The family feel comforted that some of those closest to her were by her bedside when she passed.*

*Di was a lady who had great empathy, was kind, incredibly generous but wasn’t afraid to speak her mind. How lucky you were to have Di in your life. She made the world a happier place to be.*

**READING** ~ “**Remember**” read by John Murtagh, Diana’s actor friend from her Scottish theatre days

*Remember me when I am gone away,*

*Gone far away into the silent land;*

*When you can no more hold me by the hand,*

*Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.*

*Remember me when no more day by day*

*You tell me of our future that you plann'd:*

*Only remember me; you understand*

*It will be late to counsel then or pray.*

*Yet if you should forget me for a while*

*And afterwards remember, do not grieve:*

*For if the darkness and corruption leave*

*A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,*

*Better by far you should forget and smile*

*Than that you should remember and be sad.*

Chirstina Rossetti

**PERSONAL TRIBUTES**

**Lesley Weatherson**

*Diana*

*Writing about Diana in the past tense does not seem possible. As a friend and colleague she was part of my life in the true sense of the word.*

*Standing here to say farewell doesn't come easy for any of us.*

*Diana was a fabulous lipspeaker who worked for deaf people who preferred lipspeaking with some sign language to support the meaning.*

*One of the few highly skilled lipspeakers who could provide this service. You may be surprised to learn that under 20 people in the UK are able to provide the type of communication support that Diana could offer.  Gifted and respected. Able and appreciated. Admired by many.*

*Diana was dedicated to her work. Not just because she had to support herself financially but she believed in the profession and wouldn't knowingly leave a deaf client without communication support.*

*A fabulous communicator. Often travelling some distance to cover a job-despite her fragility-always mindful that a deaf person could be left without communication support. She worked for many interpreting agencies including my own and would be one of the first lipspeakers to respond to a request. Always happy to go the extra mile. Staying late at a booking as she was needed. Never complaining.*

*If you needed to look for the meaning of the term Coworker, I’m certain the dictionary would include her name. She really did know how to work as part of a team. Diana would welcome student lipspeakers to shadow her. She was part of the now infamous Walks and Talks in London. Excelled in her work in the legal domain and a regular first choice lipspeaker for court bookings. A mentor and friend to all.*

*Colleagues will remember her make-up applications: mirror in one hand and a bright pink lipstick in the other. Always wrapped up save the cold chilling her through. Layers on to keep warm while we all sat in short sleeves! Strong and yet fragile. Outspoken and yet gracious. Her Feisty and forthright manner. Loyal and dedicated and yet still a free spirit.*

*I smiled when her invoices arrived. Printed off and written on by hand, and posted through Royal Mail. Diana really couldn't get on with technology.  We had to let's say ‘adapt our emails’ to suit! Despite hours of technical tuition, she just couldn’t open an attachment or upload a status on Facebook- She would be laughing now. That mischievous twinkle we all loved.*

*She was a member of the professional bodies The Association of Lipspeakers with Additional Sign, VLP and ALS. Active in personal development she would attend training days to keep herself professionally up to date. A tree of wisdom. A voice. I can’t recall ever attending an AGM without her there. Supporting and contributing to professional discussions. Clients and colleagues alike will miss her skill, enthusiasm and passion.*

*A fabulous professional who was loved and liked by both colleagues and clients. Many of whom are here today to pay their respects. Like us all, shocked and saddened by her passing.*

*It seems so unjust that her life was cut short by a tragic accident. So frail and yet you proved to be strong and fought a brave battle.  Our friend. Diana. Who would've thought we would be here to say our final goodbyes so soon.*

*We have received many messages of condolences from across the miles. Many still in disbelief that this tragedy has happened, that she is no longer with us. There has been a common theme throughout the many messages:*

*“Diana had such a dry sense of humour.”*

*“She always had a twinkle in her eye.”*

*“Loved a good story.”*

*“Such an interesting character who had a colourful background as a singer and who shared stories about her time on cruise ships and theatres.”*

*“A true professional”*

*“A lovely lady who always had a smile for her colleagues and clients.”*

*“Gracious and assertive”*

*“Charming and bubbly”*

*“Respected”*

*“Exceptional”*

*“Great sense of humour”*

*“Courageous”*

*“A privilege to know”*

*“Determined”*

*“Simply a marvellous person”*

*There are few who could be spoken of so highly-few with her integrity. She didn’t suffer fools gladly. She knew who to befriend and of whom to give a wide berth.*

*I remember a judge telling her to use sign language to instruct a deaf witness to return on bail-she didn’t take kindly to being told and most politely suggested to the judge that he find someone capable of talking a different language as she had enough trouble remembering English.*

*Diana it was a privilege to have called you my friend. My colleague. My dear.*

*Rest in peace until we meet again. Keep the white on ice x*

**Chris Harrowell**

*Like many of us here today, I read the news that a woman had been hit by a cyclist in London and then turned to the next page. It was only when I was contacted by Lynne Dubin, a close colleague of Diana’s that the news became reality.*

*Di was one of a cohort of trained lipspeakers who support those of us who are deaf or hard of hearing. She would silently repeat in clear lip patterns exactly what was being said at business meetings, conferences, training courses, court procedures and arts events. She covered a wide scope of work with a natural talent for clear communication, delivered with charm and professionalism.*

*Diana defied lipspeaking convention because she would use sign language to support her lipspeaking. This would clarify words such as Paper, Baby, Maybe, which all look the same on the lips. She believed in adapting her approach to suit people like myself who benefit from additional use of sign.*

*I first heard about Di years ago from a deaf friend who used her at business meetings and spoke highly of her. Every time I tried to book her for an architecture project meeting she was booked up, because she was so popular. When I finally did manage to book her she made a definite impression with everyone in the room.*

*Although she was tiny and stick thin, Di had this wonderful presence. Her stage background enabled her to bring this quality to her work. At any meeting or event, in a line-up of speakers she was the one that your eye would inevitably be drawn to. She also had a way with clothes, hair and makeup which was distinctively hers.*

*The measure of Diana is that when you speak to different people from separate parts of her life, they will smile and say the same things. She was kind, funny, feisty, with a dry sense of humour, loved her dog Bertie and was passionate about her work.*

*In business meetings she would be completely professional, but could express with a discreet roll of her eyes or pursing of the lips exactly what she thought if someone was speaking out of turn. She would have no compunction interrupting a speaker to ask them to speak up or slow down in order to do her job. I have seen hardened businessmen reduced to obedient schoolboys when she did this.*

*Diana particularly enjoyed lipspeaking for me on the judging team for the Civic Trust Awards, assessing new architecture around London. This gave her access to wonderful buildings that the public do not normally see. She loved architecture, art galleries and London walks.*

*Nine years ago she helped set up Walks and Talks for Lipreaders. This enabled deaf and hard of hearing people to enjoy access to guided walks around London and practice their lipreading skills in a relaxed social environment, particularly those who had recently become deafened. This is part of Di’s legacy which will continue. There is a walk in Bethnal Green this Sunday.*

*Life threw Diana challenges which she successfully overcame. Surgery for a brain tumour in her 40’s resulted in damage to her vocal chords. This terminated her singing career but brought her into lipspeaking and opened up a whole new field of opportunities both for her and for those of us that she supported.*

*Diana, from all of us, thank you. You’ve certainly given life your best shot. Now it’s time to relax in a hot bath with a glass of prosecco. Sleep tight. Lots of love.*

**REFLECTION MUSIC**

“Dreams in The Sky” ~ a piece written by Diana and performed with her group, Juniper Green (1971)

**THE COMMITTAL**

**CLOSING WORDS**

*I would like to thank you all for being here today, to pay your respects to Di and for supporting the family.*

*Life will never be the same without Di around, but try not to let the grief consume you.*

*Think of who Di was and the positive influence she had on your life and the help she gave so effortlessly to others.*

*We should all try to be a bit more like Di. Let us all live our lives in the caring manner she did. We thank her for being our sister, our Aunt, our great Aunt, our loyal friend and our dear colleague.*

*The family are so grateful for all the love and support they have received. A huge thank you to the staff at St George’s hospital. The family were blown away by the level of care Di received and felt absolutely everything was done that could have been done to help her and keep her comfortable.*

*You are all invited for refreshments afterwards at The Ship. Please raise a glass to Di and enjoy sharing some happy memories together. Picture her smile, feel her warmth, and hold your love for her in your heart.*

**EXIT MUSIC**

**Over the Rainbow** sung by Eva Cassidy

*Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high  
In the land that I've heard of once, once in a lullaby  
Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream  
Really do come true*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops  
Oh, way above the chimney tops, that's where you'll find me*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops  
Oh, way…*

*Someday I'll wish upon a star  
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me  
Where troubles melt like lemon drops  
Oh, way above the chimney tops, that's where you'll find me*

*Somewhere over the rainbow  
Skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream  
Really do come true*

*If happy little bluebirds fly above the rainbow, oh  
Oh, why can't I?*

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**DONATIONS** in memory of Diana will be divided between…

* **Mind UK**, 15-19 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4BQ
* The **National Association of Deafened People** (**NADP**)

<http://www.nadp.org.uk/donations/>

* The **National Deaf Children’s Society** (**NDCS**)

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/help_us/donate/donate_now.html>

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**Source**:

* Transcripts from Lucy, Lesley and Chris; thank you.
* Order of Service from Chelsea Funeral Directors
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/first-picture-of-gracious-and-devoted-woman-diana-barimore-killed-in-ridelondon-event-a3631711.html>
* <http://road.cc/content/news/229038-police-appeal-footage-after-pedestrian-hit-ridelondon-cyclist-dies-hospital>
* Lucy Fergusson ~ [www.serendipityceremonies.co.uk](http://www.serendipityceremonies.co.uk)

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