

**Tribute – Albert James Barnard (Jim) - 15th December 1931 - 29th April 2017**

*This Eulogy was given at the funeral service by Jim & Pat's grandson Dr James Smith.*

Albert James Barnard, or Jim to his friends (which was pretty much everybody he ever met), was the 1<sup>st</sup> born of 4 children at Broad Street, King's Lynn, to Lil and Bert Barnard.

He attended St Nicholas' Infants, St. James' Boys and then Gaywood Park schools, before leaving to face the Big Wide World at the age of 14. He told me once that the one thing he regretted about leaving school early was that he never got the chance to learn how to do algebra and square roots in maths. Personally, I really don't think he missed out on too much there!

Upon leaving school, he began working life at Bristow and Copley Timber Yard in King's Lynn, and during the early 1950s he started work on the docks, where he would spend the rest of his working life. Initially based in the carpenter's workshop, he later changed roles to the warehouses, checking cargo in and out of the port. He then became a stevedore, managing the loading and unloading of ships, and finally became an assistant traffic manager, before taking early retirement.

During this time on the docks he chanced upon a lovely young lady named Patricia, who worked in the offices. In 1955 Pat and Jim tied the knot, and in 1957 had a daughter, our mother Cherry, who herself went on to raise 3 exceptionally wonderful grandchildren for him. Jim loved his wife, his daughter, his grandchildren and recently great grandchild dearly, and they him in return. I recall the hours he spent teaching us the mysterious arts of '9-Card Brag', bagatelle and draughts. If only it had been Texas Hold 'Em I might not have fared so badly at the tables in Las Vegas a couple of years back....

Outside work and family, Jim's major passion was his dogs, at one point having 13 rough collies in his pack at once. Every last one was treated as a member of the family, and I'm sure they even took priority over us grandkids when it came to distributing Kit Kats and other treats. He was a regular attendee of dog shows and also judged the breed, with both he and Pat for many years being involved in the East Anglian Collie Association.

Another of his interests was amateur boxing. Of 129 fights at a featherweight level, he won 121 of them. Whilst in Vienna with the army, he trained alongside none other than the heavyweight Henry Cooper, who would go on to become a legendary boxer, to help increase Henry's punching speed. He also took the time to teach me how proper punching technique as a lad, which came in handy when one of the bigger lads at school tried to take my chair away from me in the classroom.

Jim's other favourite pastime was entertaining. An excellent host, for many years Dutch and German crew members from the ships in Lynn docks were welcomed into their home week after week. Jim saw it as his duty to ensure that everybody had a "wet", as he called them, and that nobody was "dry" at any point.

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This was typical of his kindness, generosity and attentiveness to others, some of his defining and most memorable traits. He was always good humoured and uncommonly friendly even to strangers, so you could often find him having a giggle with a stranger at the bar. As mentioned earlier, Jim was a loving and devoted husband, a brilliant father and grandfather, and doted on his dogs. He was an excellent host and a genuine pleasure to be around. He was, however, completely useless at DIY, insisting just about anything could be fixed with a good dollop of Araldite and nearly coming a cropper on more than one occasion where electricity was involved.

Whilst Nan's job was to teach us grandkids how to obey the rules, for example pronouncing the 't' in 'water' and saying please and thank yous, Grandad's job was to teach us how to break them. He once sparked up a cigar in the middle of Mike's wedding reception and almost set off the fire alarms; and he'd shown us the proper way to use certain Anglo-Saxon four-letter words that were part of the daily Docks banter. In fact he had his own vocabulary of regular phrases I've not heard used anywhere else in the same context, such as saying "welcome aboard" when entering the house, or using "port" and "starboard" instead of left and right; The dogs were sent to "purgatory" (the utility room) when they'd done wrong; "Well I go to Wootton" as an expression of disbelief; and the always welcome "Would you like a 'Little Bomb'?", after which he'd return with a bucketful of brandy mixed with sherry.

Jim was also good at telling tall stories. For example, he used to tell us bedtime stories to send us off to sleep. He told us one once about a boy riding a bike in the sky, silhouetted by the Moon that he claimed to have made up on the spot. It wasn't until years later I realised this bore more than a passing resemblance to the film ET that was popular at the time. He also had a variety of stories covering the loss of his hair, saying that monkeys had come down from the trees and stolen it while he was in the jungle, or that sand had got into it and made it fall out while he was in the desert.

Whilst I am grateful not to have inherited his baldness (yet), there are a hundred other things that Mike, Kate and I have taken directly from him and will be eternally thankful for. There are not many people I can say I owe as much to in terms of who I am today or who I hope to be in the future.

These past few years, both Pat and Jim have been living with mum and dad and Pat has asked me to say a particularly heartfelt thank you to them both on her behalf for looking after Jim with his declining health. I know Mum has had plenty of opportunities to put her nurse's training into practise and Nan is exceptionally grateful for everything you've done and continue to do.

So, Jim. Grandad. Wherever you are, I'm sure you're having a nice cold beer and a cigar and having a laugh with whoever's around you. That's how I'll always remember you anyway.

Sleep well