

Keith Clarke

Born 1940,

Autobiographical life story.

Available online at www.livesretold.co.uk



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1. Parents and Childhood

I was born in 1940 in Enfield, and remember the V2 that struck Gordon Hill On the 25th January 1945.

I have two brothers, Malcolm who is the Chair of the Football Supporters Association, and their representative on the FA Council, and Alan who is a retired GP.

My father (right, with my mother) was a Post Office telephone technician, a reserved occupation that was not called up. He was, however, in the Home Guard. Today, its image is defined by the TV comedy “Dad’s Army”, but for my parents his involvement caused concern. Hitler had declared that it was a terrorist organisation and that members would be executed if captured, whether or not they were in uniform. Indeed some of the tactics that they rehearsed were brutal, such as stringing piano wire across roads to decapitate German motorcyclists.



In 1947 my father became an instructor at the training school at Stone in Staffordshire. I was not considered to be bright by my teachers, I suspect because of my London accent, and they told my parents that I would fail the “11 plus” examination. In fact I passed, because I did well in the non-linguistic intelligence test. I feel that intelligence testing could have a role in improving social mobility if the tests are free of cultural bias, which is not the case at present. I went to Alleyne’s Grammar School in Stone and did well, receiving several prizes and getting good GCE results.

In 1956 my father became a Post Office Welfare Officer, and we moved to York. I was in the 6th Form at Nunthorpe Grammar School and became an ineffective school prefect. I had difficulties with a cheeky third former called Vince Cable (right) who went on to become a Government Minister. The Head suggested that I should go to University, but my father was unconvinced. The priority for his generation, influenced by the pre-war depression, was a secure job with a good pension. In Enfield, for my uncles, this meant the Civil Service (which then included the Post Office), the police and the railways. My father’s view was reinforced when the PO announced two policy changes. It would for the first time hold an open competition for ten applicants a year with A levels, to join as junior managers. Previously, apart from a few Civil Servants at the top, its recruits joined as apprentices at 16, and they had to serve years before applying for managerial posts.



It also announce that it would sponsor 20 staff a year to go to University or a College of Higher Education. Thus I was told to apply for the open competition, and was successful. I started two years training scheme, and was based in Brighton.

The new open competition was unpopular with those whose careers had been limited by the old rules. Some were rude to us, and a Society of Telecommunications Engineers (STE) speaker declared that “We have seen these people, and they are no good.” None the less I enjoyed my time in Brighton and spent the weekends cycling with Cyclists' Touring Club

2. University of Bradford



I then successfully applied for a sponsored college place at the then new University of Bradford. My sponsorship was for a “thin sandwich” course, i.e. 6 months college and 6 months industrial training. The students’ union constitution had not foreseen this, so engineers could not stand for office. I campaigned for change, and eventually became the University NUS secretary. “Thin sandwich” courses have now been abandoned in favour of better formats for industrial training.

A friend and I formed a Debating Society, and went to Bingley Training College to arrange a debate. There I met Barbara Hepworth, who became my girlfriend. We married when she finished her course. On my course (Electrical Engineering, light current), I focused on digital logic and graduated with a 2.1.

3. Treasury

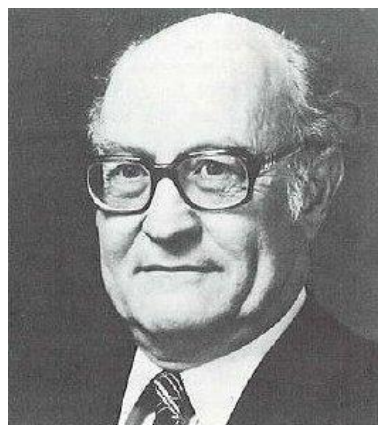
I then joined the Technical Support Unit (TSU) of HM Treasury, which was responsible for the purchase and testing of computers for Government and which was staffed by PO engineers. My projects included installations for the Meteorological Office, the RAF and the National Engineering Laboratory.

I observed that if a Teletype terminal was connected by a modem to the public switched telephone network (PSTN), several computers could be accessed from one terminal, a novel concept at that time. I wrote a paper for the BCS Journal which was drawn to the attention of Dr Jeremy Bray (right), Minister for Technology in Harold Wilson's Labour Government. He decided visit TSU and to use a terminal to access computers used for economic modelling. Treasury Civil Servants tried to stop this, and two came to the TSU. After a brief look at the terminals they wanted to see the toilets. They declared that the Minister's visit was impossible as there was no private toilet for his exclusive use. None the less Dr Bray arrived in the evening and spent time on line.



4. Back to Post Office Research

When the PO ceased to be part of the Civil Service I opted to return to the PO and was posted to the Research Department (Res .D) at Dollis Hill. Again I found myself one of a small group of newcomers in a somewhat unfriendly organisation. I was not fully aware of the background at the time, but the Department's reputation, and that of the PO with industry, had been damaged by the failure of the experimental Highgate Wood exchange. Charles May had been appointed Director and wished to bring in outsiders. I was one and Sam Fedida (right) was another.



Hitherto, staff joined as engineering apprentices, recent graduates or with Doctorates, and there was little movement in or out. This time there was no gratuitous rudeness, but the old guard had an informal network that hindered us when the opportunity arose. Charles, frustrated by the bureaucracy, asked me to advise him on the optimum organisation for Res.D. I used an informal approach, talking to people at all levels, and discovered that digital speech encoding was replicated in several Divisions. My suggestion that the groups should be consolidated in one Division was accepted and implemented. My own research was into data bases and computer aided design.

Deputy Director Dr J Tillman offered me the chance of attending, full time, a one year postgraduate course at Imperial College, leading to the Diploma of Imperial College. I also used my IC connection to register for an M.Phil. through industrial collaboration, which I obtained later.

On returning to the Research Department I joined Sam Fedida's Division. The bureaucracy had insisted that as an outside recruit he had to serve a one year probationary period, during which he could not have staff, despite his having been Deputy Director at Marconi Research. He was working on his Viewdata project. This had many of the characteristics of today's Internet, but differed in two respects. In the absence of PCs a set top box for a TV was used as a terminal, and the PSTN was used instead of a broadband network.

5. Viewdata



Experimental "Picture Prestel" terminal, developed in response to Canadian and Japanese competition.

From 1968 to 1983 I worked on Viewdata, first for Sam, and then as head of the Division R18 after he retired. The PO decided to create a public service called "Prestel" using the technology and it aroused great interest.



Charles May, Director of Research, who was supportive of Keith throughout his time at BT Labs, presenting a medal to Graham Turner, head of Prestel Software.

It won the Royal Academy of Engineering's McRobert award, and Sam featured on a postage stamp. I published numerous papers, some of which also won awards. Ten Viewdata systems were sold to overseas administrations, benefitting GEC computers. Private Viewdata systems remained in use in the UK travel industry until 2001. We successfully patented the hypertext link, although a US court has

refused to recognise this. I do not find this surprising, since there is a history of nations, including the UK, refusing to recognise the IP of others.

In 1972 PO Research moved from Dollis Hill to Martlesham in Suffolk. By then Barbara and I had two children, Julie and Vaughan, and we lived near the laboratories. We enjoyed East Anglia, and we had a cruiser on the Broads.



The family on our small motor cruiser "Whiskey Galore" on the Norfolk Broads.

An unpleasant episode occurred when a junior engineer told me that his manager was stealing equipment. I informed Personnel, who called in PO Investigations, who found technical equipment and other valuable goods worth £70,000 at the manager's home. He rejected plea bargaining and the STE employed a QC to defend him on the grounds that he suffered from technological kleptomania. I was examined for five hours as a witness for the prosecution, and BT won the case. One consequence was that I became friends with the Albert Webster of the Personnel Dept. He was a former British Olympian (Helsinki 1952) and was convinced that the prosecution had stopped quite widespread pilfering (albeit on a smaller scale) on the site.

6. Promotion and California

In the following years I was promoted to Director. When BT sought to move its managers from fixed, union negotiated pay scales to personal contracts, the STE instructed its members not to sign. I advised my managers to sign, and, alongside Dr Peter Cochrane, was depicted in the STE journal as a bully. My motive went beyond obedience to company policy. I knew that many at HQ did not regard research engineers as proper managers, and would have been relaxed if they had separated themselves from the mainstream of company management. Eventually all signed.

The BTs technical budget was being challenged. Clive Foxall recruited Dr (later Sir) Alan Rudge from ERA to champion technology and defend the budget, and I reported to him. I got on well with Alan, from whom I learnt much.

In 1992 I became bored with the job had given me so much satisfaction. This was a classic case of mid-life crisis but I also recognised that sooner or later I would be challenged by younger researchers with new, radical, ideas, and I knew who would win in if conflict resulted. BT had acquired a company in the US which needed a temporary manager, and I volunteered.

I enjoyed my spell as Senior Vice President Engineering, at Datacom located in San Jose, California. It enabled me to put Silicon Valley on my CV, which impresses people more than is justified.



San Jose, California.

7. Back to British Telecom

I returned to the UK, still reporting to Alan Rudge (right), who was now on the BT Board, and my title was Director, Technology External Affairs. My responsibilities included representing BT on international standards bodies and at the EU. I was also BT's technology representative on the team negotiating the merger with MCI. This failed partly, I am sure, because the US Government did not want MCI owned by foreigners. I believe that I was also regarded by Sir Alan and the Chairman's Office as having "safe Hands" if any unusual technology problems arose, which is ironic in view of my iconoclastic past. My last job before retiring was this.



BT Labs were involved in the development of the 2G mobile system. Immediately after aerials were mounted on the radio tower staff in the office below felt ill, and they attributed this to electromagnetic radiation. If true, this would have had serious consequences for the industry. I convened a meeting of managers from all the departments with an interest- PR, Solicitor, company doctor, radio research, site management, Cellnet, and Personnel. The site manager was accompanied by a junior technician.

After agreeing that the people should be offered a medical examination, we addressed the cause. The consensus was that it was indeed likely to be radiation. The technician pointed out that the aerials had been mounted in an unusual way, but this was dismissed as irrelevant by his boss, the site manager. I approached him after the meeting. We donned hard hats and ascended to the aerial gallery. We found that the wind was causing the aerials to vibrate mechanically at an unpleasant very low frequency. They were remounted on rubber bushes, which solved the problem.

I retired from BT on reaching 60 at the end of March, 2000, thus ending the longest and most interesting part of my life story.

8. The Next Generations

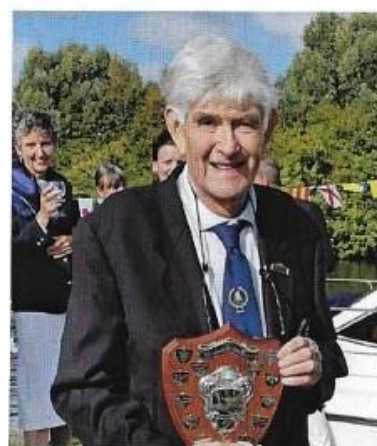
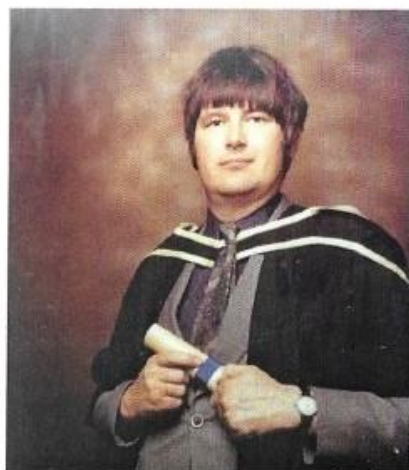
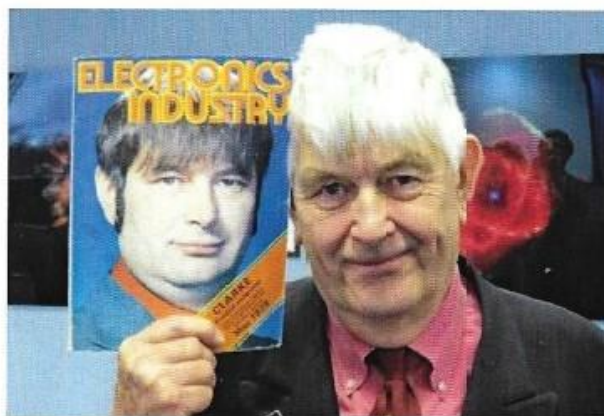
We taught our children Julie and Vaughan to swim at an early age because boating was our hobby, and Julie became a keen club swimmer. She went to Portsmouth University to read Chemistry, where she met Chris Barnett, whom she later married. They moved to Cambridge, where Chris researched battery technology at Hughes Hall. Julie worked as an analytical chemist, but did not like the job, which she regarded as dangerous after an accident involving a faulty fume cupboard. When Chris obtained his Ph.D. they moved to Peppard Common in Oxfordshire. Julie abandoned chemistry, and became the swimming teacher at the local school. They have two children, Scott who is reading Computer Science at Warwick, and Isabel who is reading Biology at Newcastle.

Vaughan went to Worcester College, Worcester, where he obtained a degree and where he met Sarah Craggs, by coincidence also from Woodbridge, and who is now a nurse. They later married and now live at Martlesham, close to BT Labs (right) where I spent many years.



Vaughan works for a small company that manages IT contractors, many of whom work at BT Labs. He is an active supporter of the Scout movement. They have two children, Max and Freddie, both still at school. Max is a keen sportsman, playing both Rugby and football, and has a place on Ipswich Town's training scheme. Freddie enjoys playing cricket.

9. Funeral Eulogies



Keith Clarke died on the 22nd July 2023. His funeral service, accompanied by many family, friends and former colleagues, took place on 14th August 2023 at St. Giles Cripplegate Church – near his City of London flat in the Barbican. The images above were included in the funeral order of service. The eulogies given by members of his family are reproduced, with the kind permission of their authors, below.

Eulogy by Malcolm Clarke

The first eulogy was given by Keith's brother, Malcolm Clarke:

Alan's and my big brother, Keith, was born in Enfield, North London in March 1940, 6 months after the outbreak of the war. Those early war years were very difficult for our parents and their baby son, as of course they were for everybody.

As a Post Office telephone engineer our father had the job of keeping the London telephones going in the blitz. He was also a member of the Home Guard, which was much more challenging than its TV portrayal in "Dad's Army". Mum told us how they put baby Keith in a drawer for protection when the air raid sirens were going off.

I arrived in 1946, 9 months after the end of the war. Three months later our paternal grandad died. Mum told us how he put young Keith on his knee to ask him to tell me all about him, which seems too daunting a responsibility for a 6-year old.

But even if he couldn't fully fulfill that big brotherly commission, throughout his life he very effectively fulfilled two others – namely providing personal support and advice when needed, and introducing us to new experiences, both of which I will illustrate.

The following year, when dad became an instructor at the Post Office Training school, we moved to Staffordshire. We lived in an unusual closed community, which comprised wooden bungalows, all heated from a central boilerhouse, and all occupied by the families of fellow Post Office employees.

We had left behind in Enfield all our extended family, which cannot have been easy for our parents. But for Keith it was an ideal place to grow up. There was a farmer's field next to our bungalow with a pond for tadpoling and a steep escarpment for sledging in the snow. There was a sports field and a cinema club every Saturday morning. We went on cycle rides in the adjacent countryside and Keith took me train spotting.

Alan had come along in 1950, and the following year, after passing his 11-plus Keith went to Grammar School in Stone, the nearest town. A few years ago, whilst on Alan and Sheila's canal boat, Keith showed them his old school, where he was once caned for the awful offence of allowing an ink blot to appear on the milk book when he was milk monitor.

He was 16 when dad became a Post Office Welfare Officer, and we relocated to the north pole, as it seemed - in fact to just outside York. It was very different to our previous life. To mum's dismay the house didn't have central heating or even street lights outside. The neighbours didn't all work for the Post Office, and our southern accents were a source of curious amusement to the locals. It can't have been easy for Keith to relocate, lose his friends and change schools at that age.

On leaving school, rather than go to University, as advised by his headmaster, Keith took dad's firm advice and joined a new Post Office management training scheme. He recalled that those on the scheme were unpopular with older employees. But in fairness to our father, that decision did, of course, lead to Keith having a very

successful career, up to a very senior level, with the Post Office, as it then was, and later BT, when the telecoms part was separated off.

But Keith did subsequently go to University when he obtained a Post Office sponsored place at The University of Bradford on a course involving 6 months study at University followed by 6 months training in industry, known as a “sandwich course”. I remember mum telling me this without explaining it, leaving me thinking it was something to do with catering.

Keith used to bring home unwanted old telephone equipment for Alan, who, in the best family tradition, set up an internal telephone system in our house with a phone in every room, although mum didn't appreciate the wires all over the place!

Alan used that same equipment and the knowledge of how to use it in his final year physics project at University, which he believes contributed to his first class degree which in turn allowed him to make his desired career change to go to medical school. So who knows ? No telephone equipment from Keith might have led to a lower degree and no medical career.

Whilst at Bradford Keith met Barbara who was training to be a teacher at Bingley College. They were married in July 1965 by the Rev. Bishop, mischievously telling friends they were to be married by “Bishop of Bradford”. I was privileged to be best man.

His involvement with the National Union of Students at Bradford gave him knowledge of other Universities. In an action replay of what had happened to Keith, dad wanted me to join the Post Office, but my school advised University. But I had support from big brother, who suggested that Keele University might be very suitable for me, which advice I took. I have always been profoundly grateful for his wisdom in guiding me to go to Keele - one of the best decisions I have ever taken.

He was there for me on other occasions too. Once a girlfriend and an old friend invited me for a drink where I thought that their intention might be to announce that I was being given the red card in favour of him. I consulted big brother on what to do. With characteristic selflessness he suggested that he and Alan should accompany me to make such a conversation impossible. So the three of us jumped on our bikes to join them in the pub, and achieved that objective.

Keith was a keen cyclist, as our parents were. He was a regular attendee at the Cyclists Touring Club Annual Rally in York, and there was a famous picture of him navigating a plank in an obstacle competition, which appeared for many years on CTC publicity and postcards.

He introduced us to the Rough Stuff Fellowship, an organisation for cyclists who like to go off-road. We went on family cycling holidays in various parts of the country. On one in Northumberland we followed a rough stuff mountain crossing but ended up still on it in near darkness. Dad was unimpressed and mum was frightened !

On one occasion he and dad had to come on a search and rescue mission when, as a young teenager, I had set off on an over ambitious solo cycle ride to another village on a windy day.

One year, he took me to the Rough Stuff Fellowship annual easter gathering in Windermere. We cycled up Swaledale, where Alan & Sheila now live, and over the top to Kirkby Stephen Youth Hostel. But as the evening drew in, I began to run out of both energy and motivation. Keith kept me going with chocolate cakes baked by mum, Kendal Mint cake, to which he was famously devoted, and constant words of encouragement.

Boating eventually replaced cycling to become Keith and Barbara's major leisure activity, at first hiring canal boats. Once he trusted me on the tiller whilst he and Barbara sat romantically at the front. After a bump I fell off the back. I can still see the look of horror on Keith's face looking back as I resurfaced in the water with the boat ploughing on dangerously at speed without a helmsman.

On another occasion Alan and I were on a boat which got stuck in the Harecastle tunnel. Eventually we saw a light coming towards us. It was the tunnel keeper coming to find out what had happened, accompanied by the skipper of a boat waiting to come the other way, which turned out to be Keith, who had no idea it was us, just as we had no idea that he and Barbara were waiting at the other end. Even Dr. Livingstone and Mr. Stanley didn't have a greeting like we had in that dark, deep tunnel.

I was also with them on a hire boat which started to sink. Cue a desperate rush to get all our belongings and the boat equipment on to the towpath. Whilst doing so a nearby boater came across but instead of offering to help, asked if we had any matches.

Always wanting to be helpful to other boaters, Keith pointed to the growing pile – "somewhere in there". After a short cursory look, our annoying boater, ignoring the urgent task we had in hand, asked "do you know where in the pile they are?". Keith's response indicated that this was one of the very few occasions when his good nature had been stretched beyond its limits!

Keith and Barbara's offering of boating experiences to us assumed a new dimension when, along with their good friends Mick and Marion Thwaite, they purchased "Quester" a full-length old canal working boat, which was big and heavy – not a vessel to be argued with. I remember Keith's nervous commands to the helmsman whenever a small fibre-glass boat came into view – "Mind that noddy boat", knowing what damage the Quester could do to such a boat if there was a collision.

Quester required extensive restoration and at first, conditions on board were very basic. Alan recalls hacking out rotten wood in the hull to the worrying point of seeing daylight. One of the tasks which skipper Keith usually did himself was to take the chemical toilet and a spade into the nearest field to dig a hole to dispose of its contents - there were far less disposal points than there are today !

Keith & Barbara always enjoyed a good night out, and a good jive. They were enthusiastic guests at Keele's various balls in my time, and civic balls when I was on the Council, including the Mayor's ball when I was the Mayor.

The most important people in his life were, of course, his family and he was a devoted dad and grandad. Extended family members were always made most

welcome at their family home in Martlesham and later here in the Barbican where Keith and Barbara often put me up on my frequent visits to London. They often offered additional entertainment such as a visit to Ronnie Scott's jazz club, recalling how, when I was in my teens, Keith had introduced me to trad jazz and Chris Barber's band in particular.

Even after Barbara developed dementia Keith willingly continued to be a very good host. The unstinting care which he gave to Barbara after she developed her illness was an outstanding example of love and devotion which was admired by all who knew them.

Keith was comfortable in any company. As Chair of the Football Supporters Association and a member of the FA Council I took him as my guest into the Royal Box area at Wembley, and to various football awards ceremonies, at all of which he enjoyed conversing with a wide range of people involved with football, despite myself having to remind him on several occasions not to call it soccer ! For example I remember him getting on very well with the late John Motson.

In recent years he was an enthusiastic participant at the annual family "pool party" and weekend gathering organised by my daughter, Zara, at Hathersage in the peak district. He was recognised by the swimming pool staff as the oldest person ever to attempt a crossing of the large, slippery inflatable called "the Challenger".

You will hear more later about his outstandingly successful career. On visits to Martlesham I remember being shown, and being amazed by, "Viewdata" in its early days. Nowadays we are all so used to the internet and modern technology that it's easy to forget just how revolutionary it was. Keith told me this new technology would eventually replace the Saturday evening newspaper football editions. I didn't really believe him but of course he was right.

We are proud that our brother was an internationally recognised pioneer in his field, and, even more importantly, judging from the tributes which Julie and Vaughan have received in recent days, was greatly respected and appreciated by his work colleagues.

At the reception after today's service there will be copies of his life story and career as he himself told it on a website called Lives Retold, which you can visit on-line at www.livesretold.co.uk.

On behalf of Alan and myself, and all the family, thank you for everything, big brother, and for a life very well lived.

Eulogy by Julie Barnett and Vaughan Clarke

The second eulogy was by his daughter Julie Barnett and his son Vaughan Clarke:

When the GPO built their new research and development laboratories on the edge of Ipswich, replacing the Dolis Hill office in London, Keith and Barbara relocated from Elstree to Martlesham, Suffolk, in 1973. The family quickly settled into their new home in the Suffolk countryside.

While at BT Keith spent several years working on and developing their Viewdata system, Prestel, which was essentially a precursor to today's modern internet. This work was something he was extremely proud of and for which the team won a Queen's award for innovation. BT's decision to sell Prestel rather than continue to develop the then world-leading technology was something that still annoyed him to this day.

During his working life he made a point of wearing bright coloured shirts, which he always claimed was to make an impression and stand out. It obviously worked as he progressed up the ranks becoming a director for BT in 1989 and eventually moving to BT global Headquarters, just around the corner at St Paul's. .

Despite a busy career which took him to the four corners of the globe, Keith was very much a family man and always made ample time for Barbara, Julie and Vaughan. He was an active member of the PTA at Julie and Vaughan's schools, and due to being a keen cyclist in his youth, willingly taught cycling proficiency classes of children at the primary school. He regularly took the family to stock car and speedway meetings, and during the winter was increasingly dragged to watch Ipswich Town play by Vaughan, which he dutifully did.

After retirement, Keith and Barbara moved fulltime to the Barbican to enjoy the London life, which seemed to amuse a lot of people as it went against the trend. They became regulars at the theatres and Ronnie Scott's Jazz club. He also developed a keen interest in London history and enjoyed leading guided walks, which so many people have commented on.

Sadly, not long after making London their permanent home, Barbara became ill with dementia. Nevertheless, he still managed to spend time with his four Grandchildren, with weekends at the flat, experiencing what London had to offer. He regularly watched Max and Freddie play football and rugby, often in atrocious conditions, and sweltered supporting Scott and Issy at their swimming galas. One year, he even stepped in as a last minute Father Christmas for the local pre-school. His main concern was that Max and Freddie would recognise the man behind the beard (they didn't). He acted the role so well, he was asked back by the pre-school the following year. He also became quite the chef in that period and surprised his family with many a gourmet dish! Keith looked after Barbara with devotion and selflessness for 6 years, until she passed away in 2013.

Being able to act the slightly irresponsible Grandparent was something Keith revelled in. The grandchildren frequently reminisce about him being laden with sweets every time they saw him, and Freddie often re-tells the story of being offered Coca Cola and kippers for breakfast during one visit to London. At family reunions he provided a sweet stall. We're not sure how pleased the parents were, but the children loved it. Please enjoy a Liquorice Allsort for him at the wake, as they were his favourites.

Keith wasn't known for his DIY skills so when he tackled a DIY job he invariably resorted to WD-40.... According to him, WD-40 was and remains the solution to all the world's problems... and if that's not available then vegetable oil will do.... Oh, well.

He had a love for boating with Barbara which developed over the years and remained his main interest until he died. His hobby started with him helping renovate a boat with his friend. That boat, called Dragonfly, came to an unfortunate end when it sank. However, he wasn't put off! His next boat, Whisky Galore, was a small 20ft cabin cruiser. Despite its tiny size, it provided many happy family boating memories of weekends and holidays spent on the Norfolk Broads. From there, he spent several years exploring the Fens, before finally moving on to the Thames.

He had an ambition of taking the boat across the channel into the French canals. This was curtailed when Barbara became ill, but he eventually achieved it with Julie, Chris, Scott and Izzy in 2016. It wasn't exactly plain sailing (no pun intended) as to be honest something always went wrong. So when Izzy noticed smoke coming from the engine compartment four miles off Ramsgate he called out the RNLi without hesitation. The crew of the lifeboat was wonderful and once the cause of the smoke was identified as a seized fanbelt they were towed into Ramsgate harbour where they were met by no less than nine members of the fire, coastguard and immigration services. Not quite the entrance he had envisaged. Later when asked why he had been so decisive, he said "my family are too important to risk". Despite this minor setback, he made it to Belgium and France, and achieved his goal.

He had no qualms about helping others in need. For instance, there was the time when they rescued a Dutch registered yacht at the entrance to the Crouch. Although he and Chris initially thought the yacht crew was waving to be friendly! Once Julie realised they were in distress he swung into action and using techniques learned from The Windsor Yacht Club boat handling competitions he successfully recovered the vessel back to Burnham-on-Crouch.

Keith was a member of The Worshipful Company of Engineers, The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, The Freemasons, The City Livery Yacht club, and last but not least The Windsor Yacht Club. He took an active role in all these, rising to Commodore of the Windsor Yacht Club and Vice Commodore of the City Livery Yacht Club. More importantly, he made many good friends.

Keith was diagnosed with cancer in 2019. Unfortunately Covid arrived a few months later and as a result his treatment was severely disrupted. Despite being isolated, he was extremely stoic in his outlook, never complained, and just got on with it in a very dignified and methodical fashion. He celebrated his 80th birthday on a family video call two days after the first lockdown, and these continued for almost two years. Family members will no doubt remember his 8pm phone calls from the nurse, who checked-in on him, with a wry smile. During lockdown, he also spent hours playing online chess with Max to pass the time, something that continued post-lockdown with Freddie.

Keith passed away peacefully in his sleep on the 22nd July 2023 after just a few days in hospital. He was conscious throughout and fought to the end, still believing he would recover. This summed up his attitude and spirit he had demonstrated throughout his life.

Wind in the Willows

*The following passage from Kenneth Grahame's book *The Wind in the Willows* was read at the funeral service by Keith's grandson Scott Barnett:*

"We the grandchildren, were very lucky to spend so much time with our grandad. I was also very privileged to take him out on his last cruise just a few weeks ago. This extract is from "The Wind in the Willows" and really captures his joy of boating."

THE RIVER BANK

'Nice? It's the ONLY thing,' said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. 'Believe me, my young friend, there is NOTHING--absolute nothing--half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,' he went on dreamily: 'messing--about--in--boats; messing----'

'Look ahead, Rat!' cried the Mole suddenly.

It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

'--about in boats--or WITH boats,' the Rat went on composedly, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. 'In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don't; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you've done it there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not. Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?'"
