

## A tribute to Gail Coldham

Gail Coldham was a popular member of our Guild from 2017 until her death in August 2024. She was fully involved in the running of the Guild as treasurer and also setting up the Charity in 2022.

Her funeral was on 3 September and several members of the Guild were present. Frances Fletcher and Nicky Footer reflected on Gail's contribution to the Guild and their words are included in this remembrance together with the Order of Service.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



GAIL COLDHAM

9th November 1954 - 12th August 2024

Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 2.00 pm

Test Valley Crematorium



### ORDER OF SERVICE

Celebrant: Jane Arnold

ENTRY MUSIC

You're The First, The Last, My Everything  
by Barry White

GREETING

by the celebrant

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES  
SHARE MEMORIES OF GAIL  
Angela West and Edwina Petts



Angela West was one of Gail's closest friends and Edwina Petts was her sister. Both wrote moving contributions about their memories of Gail.

Gavin Johns spoke of Gail's involvement with the Swanage Railway and both Nicky Footer and Frances Fletcher gave fond memories of Gail at the Guild.

Angela read a moving contribution on behalf of Randy, Gail's husband, entitled 'That's My Gail', whilst we were all treated to some wonderful photos of Gail.

Throughout the service, Archie, Gail and Randy's dog, sat quietly - he must have known how important the occasion was!

REFLECTION MUSIC  
Wonderful Tonight  
by Eric Clapton  
*with a visual tribute*  
  
Gavin Johns  
Nicky Footer  
Angela on behalf of Randy

THE COMMITTAL  
Music: Touch Me In The Morning  
by Diana Ross

FINAL WORDS

EXIT MUSIC  
Gail's favourite song from her youth



Gail and Randy thank you for taking part in this celebration of Gail's life today and warmly invite you to join them, after the celebration, to share memories at The Mortimer Arms, Romsey Road, Ower, Romsey SO51 6AF.

Any donations, if desired, to go to **Weldmar Hospicecare** in gratitude for all their support to both Gail and Randy.

The Co-operative Funeralcare  
29 Catherine Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2DQ  
Telephone: 01722 335445

**On the following page, please read what Frances and Nicky said about Gail.**

**Frances:** Everyone here today will know that Gail was multifaceted. She and I joined the Guild at about the same time nearly 7 years ago. It was all new to Gail and being Gail, she embraced all the skills on offer at the guild with tremendous enthusiasm. And being Gail, she had to make a contribution as well, so it was not too long before she took on the role of treasurer. There are around 100 such guilds in this country and they all lead a fairly hand to mouth existence, relying mostly on members' subscriptions to keep going. This was much the case with the Dorset Guild until one day, not long after she became treasurer, the unwitting Gail received a phone call from a solicitor who told her that a past member who had died had left the guild a legacy. This legacy proved to be a very large sum of money, sufficient to secure the guild's future for many years. Of course, Gail took this huge responsibility in her stride. We had to become a charity. This involved a visit to a lawyer in Bristol where Gail and I got seriously lost as we neither knew Bristol and it is a place where you can easily get lost! Happily, we eventually emerged unscathed. Gail did some very skilful research and was able to invest the money safely and profitably, which she seemed to do with great aplomb. Randy may know more about that challenge than we do!!

You all know that Gail was a very caring person and of course brought that strength to the guild as well. Particularly post covid, Gail was extremely careful to instigate several health and safety measures including a risk assessment, and in practice have the forethought to supply anti-bac wipes, hand sanitiser and sufficient ventilation to keep us all safe – thank goodness for her nursing background! Post covid we have also been lucky enough to have a lot of new members. Gail was very good at welcoming people and making them feel at home. Her influence and that of other members has resulted in there being a very warm and supportive atmosphere in the guild which has been commented on in an article in this month's Dorset Magazine. Gail would be proud of us, as we all are of her and grateful for her very valuable contribution to our current success. Thank you, Gail.

**Nicky:** One of the first times I met Gail, in 2021, was the day that she had just procured a brand-new pair of Gazebos on behalf of the Guild, for use with our demonstrations at events. Her excitement at being able to put them up so quickly and being able to attach the name banner of our Guild across the front was so evident – several “Blue Peter” moments later – the Gazebos were up, and peace had broken out! There she was, making a difference to our organisation. Every time I help put the gazebos up, or take them down, I think of that moment. One of our members, Sarah Rashley, was reminiscing about Gail, who said she was the first person to make her so very welcome to the Guild. The following year, Gail persuaded Sarah to hold an event at her farm in East Coker. The planning was forensic, Gail's attention to detail was second to none, including organising a Portaloo to be delivered to the field! Another Guild member, Gaye, recollected a time when she was sent on a first aid/life-saving course with Gail (talk about taking ‘coals to Newcastle’ – remember – Gail was a nurse?) They spent a hilarious afternoon practising CPR on “Re-sus Annie” (a dummy) and bandaging each other up. There was no going back!

Denise had bought a plaque for Gail which reads: ‘Friendship must be built on a solid foundation of alcohol, sarcasm, inappropriateness and shenanigans’; sadly, Gail didn't get to see it. But how appropriate for Gail – who was such a grafter - down to earth - practical and with a wonderful sense of humour. She seemed a bit surprised when I asked if she could bring in a saucepan of newly boiled water during a talk when I wanted to demonstrate the colourful power of dahlias – I said, “I need a glamorous assistant – that's you!”

She was the voice of reason, optimistic and more than a glass half full – she was a glass overflowing. She was our treasurer and a treasure; a super star and we were all so privileged to have had her as part of our lives.