

"Don't cry because it's over.
Smile because it happened"

Dr Seuss

Memories of BARBARA



From her Benvenuto
International Club of Monza friends



"Wherever a beautiful soul has been,
there is a trail of beautiful memories"





Dearest Barbara,
You have been a caring and fun loving friend.
We have enjoyed many happy moments together.
Thank you. You will be sadly missed.
Sinceri condoglianze ai tuoi cari.
Buon viaggio amica mia.

Francesca Belli



Barbara has always been a special person for me, always cheerful and not once did I hear her complain about her illness. I loved her sense of humour, she could always make you feel great. My fondest memory of her was when we went to Florence. I needed to buy some shoes for a wedding, I think the shop assistants will always remember the two crazy foreign women of a certain age, who joked, laughed and giggled so much that we all had tears streaming down our faces. On our way out the two young women thanked us for making their day and it was all due to Barbara being her usual zany self. The sandals I bought are called, 'Barbara's sandals'.

There are so many examples of her great
humanity, too many to name.
God bless you, Barbara for being a shining
example to all of us.

Anna Caputi





Barbara was an indomitable optimist – always ready to look on the bright side of things and reduce sometimes rather tragic situations into light hearted banter – the last occasion

I remember was her comment on her very recent hip operation – “not all beer and skittles you know”.

She was a remarkable host of our book club and kept us amused by the voluminous minutes she produced after the meetings. She was also an avid reader and inspired me to read many books I would not have otherwise encountered.

We shared a love of music and went to concerts to the Milan Auditorium together on many a Sunday afternoon.


She loved life and was an example to us all of how to persevere when times get tough.

I shall miss her above all because she was a good friend - she touched my heart, as I know she did with many other fellow Benvenuto members.

She will be long remembered.

Kate Icke





Barbara's zest for life was unrivalled. Sharp of mind and of wit, she was a life force, a ray of sunshine that filled any room and brought a burst of energy to every gathering. Over the years many of us benefited from Barbara's wisdom and wealth of knowledge; unstinting in her efforts to guide and advise, she was a vital part of the Benvenuto community. Her own problems were confronted with quiet grace and inspiring courage and at all times she presented her best 'face' to the world, right down to her perfectly manicured finger tips! Some time ago I said to a friend 'I can't quite imagine a world that doesn't have Barbara in it....' and I still can't.

Rebecca Maccagno





Barbara was my friend for such a long time and I have lots of fabulous memories of our phone chats, being together at parties, aperitivo evenings and lunches but most of all maybe at Benvenuto coffee mornings, events and trips.

Barbara really liked talking, helping people, socializing; generally she just enjoyed life to the full and she loved people. She was always ready to help, even when she was quite ill and suffering.

She was a stalwart member of Benvenuto International Club of Monza, always ready to help and do what she could, right till the end.

The Club will miss her very much.

My favourite memory of Barbara is at her surprise 80th Birthday party last year. She was just so surprised and happy. She was also a very good friend to my husband, Brian.

She will be sorely missed by all her many friends here in Italy.

Anne Stubley







Barbara called me twice in March. The second time must have been a good-bye, although I didn't realize it. She was asking how I, yes, "I" was, and she said "Now you need to think more of yourself, Elda, and let people help you sometimes". She never complained about her health. Barbara was a free, independent person and I could see in her a bit of myself.

Barbara has always been an integral part of our Benvenuto Club. She liked to be informed about us, about our lives, but I never heard her judging anybody. Also when she called me last, she spoke about the new Board and not about how she felt. She used to write for the Monza News and I loved when she commented on a trip, on a book she had read or an exhibition we had been to with Benvenuto, because her personal points of view and her descriptions were always very intelligent and full of humour.

Barbara also belonged to the "Movie Goers". Those happy days when we used to watch movies in English. At the beginning the performances were on Monday night. I usually collected her and while going to the cinema we spoke of ourselves or made plans for the upcoming Benvenuto activities.

Last week my orthopaedist called me. He never did before. Years ago Barbara and I were sitting in my kitchen. She knew I was having problems with my hip and came to see me, as she often used to do when she passed by.

That day Barbara made a couple of phone calls and then she gave me the name of an orthopaedist who could solve my problem: the one who I've been seeing ever since and who by chance called me.

Barbara came for "a reason", not for "a season" and – as a friend said "We will miss her a lot, but she has left something important in each of us".

Elda Elvedese





We have lost a true friend who has given us so much (time, humour, tips on books and films, in one word Friendship) and we will miss you so much. But as you once said to me Barbara grieving is a very personal and solitary experience, it is most important to remember the good and the happy times we shared.

A very big abbraccio.

Petra Vismara and Maria Teresa Gambaro



Dear David,
My deepest condolences to you and your family for the sad loss of your dear sister Barbara. She was so fond of you, always talked about you and every time we were together at some Benvenuto event, she said to me: "let's take a photo for David, my little brother."

Barbara was one of my closest and dearest friends, and I will never forget her kindness, her generosity and her desire to help other people, though she herself suffered for years, but never complained, just showed her beautiful smile. I will miss her so much but remember with great pleasure her endless energy and enthusiasm with which she participated or involved herself in our many activities.

R.I.P. dear Barbara.

Ursula Mosso





It is said that, when we lose someone
we love...we must learn not to live
without them but to live with the love
they left behind....

Dear Barbara..you will always be in
my heart!♥

Janu Soner





The memory I have of Barbara is that of a very caring person and always willing to help others.

I remember when she joined our group of friends, as we were trying to improve our English, she always encouraged us and telling us that yes, we were very good.

In the same way, after taking part in one of my cooking lessons, she wrote an article where she spoke of the lovely morning we spent together and how my 'caponata' was one of the lightest she had ever tasted.

Small encouragements but always appreciated which rewarded us for our efforts. Another time her precious collaboration was very helpful when I was writing an article on Liguria, a place where I used to spend my holidays.

Also after the loss of my husband, I was in search of friends for my lonely Sunday afternoons and she supported me by telling me "ask that friend, she is alone too".

So always a person who cared for others. And even when she became ill, always in a happy mood, she wanted to take part in our annual end of year Club Charity catwalks. I could not help but admire her courage.

Barbara, ti ricorderemo sempre con un sorriso.

Flores Pirola







B Beautiful Barbara,

A Adventurous Spirit,

R Resilience Personified,

B Bibliophile and Book Club stalwart,

A Arguably one of Benvenuto's most elegant and admired Catwalk models,

R Rest in Peace,

A Australian Angel.

With much love and fond memories,
Pauline O'Connor

Barbara, a brave woman defeating many obstacles, loving life to the fullest with a smile and enthusiasm.
We will miss you.R.I.P.

Katrien Stragier

I am deeply saddened by the loss of Barbara. I am honoured and blessed to have known her and she will be forever in my heart. May she rest in peace.

Christina Baker

Thank you Barbara for teaching me how to be a Warrior.
Marisa Riva

So sorry to hear about Barbara. She was so funny and ironic, always helpful. Such an inspiration really. She will finally rest in peace..... but still so sorry!! ♥

Marina Lambrechts

So so sad to hear about Barbara. I'd started to think she was invincible. I will really miss her. A truly wonderful lady and a Benvenuto role model.

Claire Wroe

I feel very sorry
Edda Boerner

Barbara will leave a hole in my soul.
She brought my Julie back to life
when she was in the worst place.
I know she has a place with the
highest because she always cheered
on with a smile.

Cheryl Stockman

She was an incredibly brave woman
and funny with a dry sense of
humour. Amazing how time and time
again she found the courage to battle
for her health and I am really sorry to
hear she has passed on.
The Benvenuto Club will miss her
great personality.

Karin Jarvis



Mario and I will always remember Barbara
for her natural elegance, her courage and
her curiosity for life.
We're grateful to have known her and had
her sincere friendship. Her books will
always keep her close to us.

Mario e Bricci Silva



There are thousands words I
meant to express in memory of my
dear friend Barbara. ♥
But any word seems so obvious
before such an indomitable lady,
as she was.


She will always be an example for
the people who loved and admired
her. I am sure Barbara can feel our
love, wherever she is.

I will always treasure her
determination also as a travelling
companion in the weirdest
situations. How can I forget her
positive approach in the cold
windy desert of Libia overnight?

All our love, from

Rinaldo and Lia Orlandi





I will miss you so much.
Your smile and your positive
energy was an example for
everyone.

Helma Reina

So sad to have lost Barbara, a truly
precious friend. With her stalwart
disposition, her willingness and her
professional knowledge, she helped
me cope through very hard times. She
was always available and ready to
jump in and help in whatever way
possible. Barbara was a great asset to
the Benvenuto Club and to our Book
Club. Never to be forgotten.

Frances Gironi

Bye Barbara, you have been a great
example for all of us.
Your strength, courage and smile
will never die.

Ester De Giuli

Dear Barbara, I will always remember
your smile, your inner strength and
your passion for life.

The courage that you demonstrated
also in your most difficult moments.
In fact, the year I was President of
Benvenuto, we made you the
Honorary Member precisely because
of the example you set us all on how
to manage the difficulties that life can
thrust upon us.

Un caro ultimo bacio
R.I.P.

Giovanna Meroni

I lost a friend! But for me you will
continue life in my memories, of which
we made so many! Walking, cooking,
baking, reading, modelling on the cat
walk, travelling. Enjoying life with you
was a pleasure. I will miss you.

With love

Irmi Sieber



Goodbye dear friend, I will miss so
much your smile, your courage,
your cheerfulness.
You were an example to all of us.

Anna Anselmi



My friendship with Barbara began in Benvenuto and gradually developed into a beautiful and personal one, which included our respective families.

Despite our move to the States 16 years ago, we kept in touch through Skype and FaceTime. Barbara loved her native Australia, but she also loved Italy with a passion and was greatly appreciative of Italy's health care services. Barbara was kind and generous, naturally optimistic and altruistic. She was always available to lend a helping hand and in times of crisis, always came up with some kind of positive solution. Stoically, she refrained from ever discussing her illness. This past Palm Sunday, I was completely blindsided by the very sad news that Barbara as a result of a recent fall, had left us. She will be greatly missed! Until we meet again, R.I.P. dear friend.

Lydia Manca



So sorry to hear about Barbara. Very sad, she was such a fighter for so long.

Sandy Wild

Last time we had real fun together was in Munich, October 2019 and you were very carefree in those days. You even managed to run to catch the bus with your stool making us all have a good laugh. You used to call me Dynamo but the real power lived in you Barb.

You will be missed.

Zizeth Maroun

Barbara was one of the first members who came to greet me when I joined Benvenuto and knew virtually no-one. Smiling, friendly, with an unmistakable voice, she was always ready to help in any initiative, as I came to discover when I was in the Board.

I will most remember her as a confident model on the catwalk, a dancer at parties and curious about everything. I will miss her.

Cristina Ferrari





Barbara was incredibly special. Everyone who knew her, loved her. Her zest for life, her empathy and interest in others, her wise words and dry humour - she was an inspiration to us all.

Among the many lovely moments I enjoyed with her, I will always hold dear the memory our evening together at the opera at the Arena in Verona.


Rain had stopped the performance on several occasions and I was worried it was spoiling the event for her. Barbara simply smiled and said

"I don't mind. It's all part of the experience". That was typical Barbara.

She always saw the positive in everything.

R.I. P. Barbara. We will miss you.

Patricia Macnamara



I knew Barbara for two and a half years whilst I was living in Monza. She was welcoming and kind. Her enthusiasm for life, her breadth of knowledge and sense of humour made her a joy to be with. And she was also very caring, calling me when I returned to the UK to know how I was settling back in. But it's her laughter and humour that I will always remember her by.

R.I.P. Barbara.

Helen Wardle





Dear Barbara for me you are always near!
I can hear your voice singing in the
first Benvenuto Choir!
I can see you smiling and dressed up
to enjoy all that life allows!
I can feel that bad times are lighter
with your special sense of humour!
Thank you for your example of strength
and always ready to help!

Daniela Di Gioia



Dear Barbara, you have been a great
example of generosity, will to live, joy
and helpfulness especially during your
long illness. I can't forget you at the last
catwalk! I will always remember you with
much affection and sympathy.

Mara Canti

It's difficult to accept that our dear friend Barbara has left us. Her friendly and pleasant presence in our Benvenuto club is something we have had the pleasure of having for so many years. She was one of the first ladies I was lucky to meet when I became a member over 30 years ago and I have enjoyed her positive and helpful companionship ever since. She was a real warrior and fought against her illness with all her might.... conquering....and keeping her spirits high throughout....she seemed invincible.

Her strength and manner will long be remembered and has taught me such a great deal. Her love for life and her interest in all new things kept her young. I wish she had stayed on longer....but I pray she will be richly blessed. She will be sadly missed! Condolences to Renato and her loved ones in Australia.....R.I.P. dear friend

Anna Bodini





I'm grateful I was lucky to know Barbara and shared very pleasant moments with her through the years.

I enjoyed her lively sense of humour and it was a pleasure to be in her company.

I'll always remember her when I bake my parmisan biscuits which she loved!

R.I.P. Barbara
sincere condolences

Laura Ricagno





I wanted to write about Barbara.
She was a wonderful lady who had time for everyone in her life that was already full. She was so supportive to me through my own situation and gave me the honesty and practical advice that helped to pull me through a very difficult time.
She will be missed I know, not only by her immediate family, but also by all those friends who she helped along the way, myself included.

Gayna Clark





Below is a book review that she wrote in the November 2014 edition of the Monza News. Reading it, I'm sure all who knew her will appreciate hearing her lovely voice in their minds.

For many years, Barbara organised and was, in my opinion, president of the Benvenuto Book Club at Cindy Brizzi's home. She was like our mother hen, reminding us of the importance of finishing our books, giving reports, organising the books, paying our fees, and other crucial duties. She had a witty, joyous way of speaking and commanding our attention that was such fun. We loved to hear her chime in with great anecdotes about the books that she had read and recommendations she had. When we were about to organise a party or aperitivo that involved food, she was quite keen to make sure that the right amount of every kind of finger food (sweet, savoury, etc.) were ordered in time. Events were taken really seriously at Book Club thanks to Barbara. She made every part of organising a party such a delight. I will forever hear the lovely cadence of her voice in my mind and remember her kindness and affection for all of the members of our club. I looked forward to going to Book Club so much every month because it meant that we would spend some time with Barbara, feeling her warmth and sharing our collective love of reading. I will always treasure these memories and remember Barbara with great fondness.

Erica Amy Kees



Members' Articles

Book: "Italian Ways" by Tim Parks – just a few comments from **Barbara de Savorgnani**



Newcomers, and those of you who have been here for "yonks", might enjoy reading "Italian Ways". The author, Tim Parks, is an Englishman living in Italy since 1981. He talks about things we've all known, been looking at or doing, for years - like the similarity in railway station locations, their position in relation to the town - near the centre (Monza, Venice), in a cul de sac (Gorizia, Morbegno) etc., things I've known but never actually "put together". He tells us (but I already knew) that the area stretching from Milan to Venice is the richest plain in Europe, but there were quite a few tidbits of which I had no knowledge whatsoever, like the Modica station's broken clock - enlightening me that in those days every area had its own time based on the rising and setting of the sun in the area; I had never heard of this, nor did I find anything about it when I googled it! It was only in 1866 that time became unified throughout Italy – it was based on Roman time even though Rome was not yet part of the kingdom, let alone its capital (present day Italy is "young"!). All railway station waiting rooms had weighing machines with a measuring stick attached so that people could check their height & weight - part of a Fascist push for health.

After Modica (southernmost station in Sicily) Mr. Parks left for the Calabrian town of Crotona. I had never heard of Crotona! But it, too, had had its heyday: It was 20 times the holder of the Olympic Games in the 4th & 5th centuries BC, second only to Sparta. It was a jewel of Magna Grecia, the area populated by the Greeks twenty-seven hundred years ago - nowadays, Modica is known as the site of one of Italy's worst toxic waste dumping scandals - 350,000 tons of zinc, lead, arsenic, mercury etc.

Did you know that the Italian railways system was associated with early studies connecting malaria with mosquitoes? At that time railway men north of Rome were constantly falling ill with the disease, but someone, probably someone in a study program, had the bright idea of putting nets on the open windows - this led to an immediate improvement in the health of the workmen.

Towards the end of the book, but still in the south there is a description of a train arriving, bearing students homewards for the summer holidays from northern educational centres; the families are waiting on the platforms - the descriptions conjured up scenes I have seen so very often! Southern Italian families are well known for their close family attachments.

In the words of a Minneapolis Star Tribune journalist, the story is "relaxed, humorous, meandering and charming." – and I felt the urge to rush out and buy train tickets to follow in his footsteps. I'll be looking for Parks' "Italian Neighbours" at our next Book Club meeting.

Barbara was one of the first people I met when I came to Monza in 1995. We have been friends for so long and share so much history. We started the off-road walking group together, we were in book club, we were on the board together, wine trips, aperitivos, ...but mainly we shared so many cups of tea, chatting about life, now and in the past, and everything else. I will miss her, but her spirit and positivity will always be with me. I leave you with a poem I wrote about her – as well as a recent picture I have of her and of our beloved park.

Barbara (Memories are)

Your essence still IS.

Of countless long walks and Intimate talks. Of breaking away and venturing into the “offroads” of our beloved park. The Solid peace of Our trees.

Of whispers of Wisdom in gently blowing breezes

Of the time you scooped up my young Children when I was in hospital. Face painting, Sugar and Lucky Dip saved the day.

Of bright daffodils, promising light and Sunshine. Reminding us of eternal joyous circles of growth.

Of eyes Sparkling with the mischievous questions of “why not?” Or “should we?” and usually “why not?”

Of crazy capers, conversations and rescues; Plots, secret and hidden, to save each other, to save the world

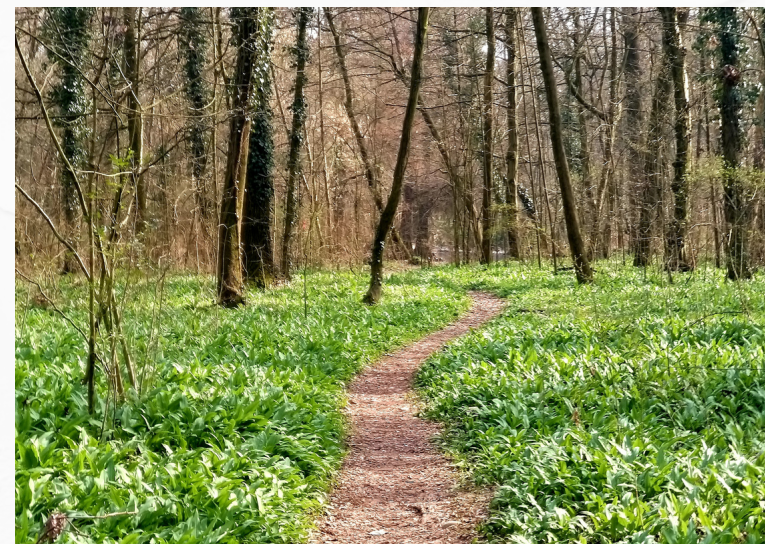
Of all the food: of keto, lavender/sage cake, cauliflower patties, vegetable samosas and unforgettable book club feasts

Of lively words, stories and books that helped us dream and travel to other lives together...or at least once a month

Of friendship Treasured beyond Boundaries and Time

I will miss you Sweet, Joyous Barbara.

Love Rose Cartolari







Rome 2015





Munich 2019







BARBARA CAREY DE SAVORGNANI

1940 - 2021

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern.

Beautiful people do not just happen."

Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

