

**Service for Francis Bernard Thompson** (4 May 1928 to 23 November 2015) **at Canley Crematorium, Coventry, U.K. on 14 November 2015.**

- (We brought our own flowers - white roses and deep pink and yellow roses with purple irises, and as it was just after the third Sunday in advent, a home made advent wreath with purple candles for mourning. Ruth and Rob sent a lovely white bouquet)
- Catherine... "We are here to celebrate the life of my Dad, Bernard and share our memories of him. First Denis is going to read a few extracts from Bernard's own memories starting in the 1930's. If anyone would like to read the complete memories, I have some copies".
- Denis... "First of all I would like to read a poem (At this point I panicked a little as I hadn't allowed time for this in the tightly packed 45 minute time slot!)... Crossing the Bar by Alfred Lord Tennyson...

"Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,  
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.  
Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;  
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar".

- "I was a bit stumped for what music to chose. Apart from Mozart and Beethoven I couldn't think of anything suitable. Then I remembered that Dad had once sung this song on a recording that we made for our relatives in Australia. He also told me that in his youth he tried to whistle the tune in front of an audience. As soon as he started they fell about laughing which made him laugh too, and as you can't whistle and laugh at the same time, I don't know how far he got, but I'm sure everyone enjoyed it. When I looked on the internet for a recording I found that it was appropriate to Dad in two other ways. The tune was composed in Kent and was originally a hymn called 'Cranbrook' and finally the version I have chosen is sung by the Lakeland Voices Choir of Kendal. (where Mum and Dad had a flat from 1997 to 2010 ) Please hold on to that image of Bernard striding across the moors while you sing along or whistle".

**Memories of Bernard by Bernard himself, and his daughter, Catherine Dowell**

**Bernard's parents, William & Clara** (nee Hindley) **Thompson**...

- William Thompson, born in 1903 at Wigan Lancashire, was a coal miner and his earlier ancestors during the nineteenth century were similarly employed...
  - ⇒ His parents had several other children but they all died young and his mother also died in 1909 at the early age of 30 years when he was only six years old.
  - ⇒ William was brought up by an aunt in Wigan.
  - ⇒ Although he was quite bright and obtained a scholarship to go to secondary school he was not allowed to do so and had to start work when he was 14 years old.
  - ⇒ He had tuberculosis in his youth and was not strong enough to work in the coal mines but fortunately he had an uncle who helped him obtain a job as an engine cleaner on the London and North Western Railway.
  - ⇒ He later worked as a porter at Wigan North Western station on the West Coast main line from London Euston to Scotland.
  - ⇒ After that he was employed at Pennington in Lancashire as a porter/signalman...this was on a branch line to Bolton of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway which was completed in 1830 and was the first passenger railway in the world. The engineer was George Stephenson and his famous engine 'The Rocket', won the First Prize of £500 offered by the promoters - attaining a speed of 30 miles per hour on the opening day.
  - ⇒ A large number of separate railway companies were formed later in the century but in 1923 one hundred and twenty were amalgamated into four large regional companies. One of these was the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, which was the one on which my father was employed. He obtained lodgings at Pennington, a suburb of Leith, when he was transferred there from Wigan...Pennington was where that he met Clara Hindley...
- Clara Hindley was born in 1904 at Leigh in Lancashire...her ancestors in the last century were mostly farmers or silk weavers in a village called Culcheth, which is a few miles south of Leigh.
- They were married at St. Joseph's Leigh on 1st June 1927.

**Bernard's early years**...

- "I was their first child, born 4th May 1928, while they had eight other children, born between 1930 and 1948, two of whom died when they were young.
- Soon after they were married my father was transferred to a signal box at Little Hulton on the railway line between Bolton and Manchester...they also obtained a railway house to rent near Little Hulton station...we lived there for ten years until the beginning of the Second World War.
- It was during this period that my eldest sister and four of my brothers were born, one of whom died in 1938.
- Although my father was never unemployed, he suffered from tuberculosis and sometimes had to go in a local sanatorium which was always full in the years before the war.