



APRIL UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL

On The Record – Tammy and Brian’s Story of Love, Hope and Music in the face of Adversity

The lyrics of John Lennon’s 1981 song *"Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)"* contain the line *"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans"* – a phrase originally coined by Allen Saunders 67 years ago back in 1957. I have no doubt that every one of you reading this will have experienced unexpected and unplanned-for events that have dramatically impacted your lives – but what follows is **Tammy and Brian’s** own inspirational story of how love and hope (and music) can triumph in times of sudden adversity.

A few weeks ago, and just 19 days before her wedding, we received a short, poignant email from bride-to-be Tammy which read: *"Good morning, my soon-to-be husband [Brian] has been involved in a motorcycle accident and is currently in hospital. If he requires a prolonged stay, are we able to change the date of our booking?"*

Brian and Tammy have known each other since secondary school - he was two years’ older, and she remembers often watching him play basketball. Brian was also good friends with the family that lived next door to her. After her school days, Tammy moved away from the area, however their paths occasionally crossed over the intervening years when they both attended neighbouring family events. But it wasn’t until just over a couple of years ago that they got seriously back in touch after Tammy returned to her childhood roots moving back from Poole (where she had spent the last 14 years bringing up her children). They soon became best friends and spent a lot of the summer of 2022 walking around our beautiful local countryside, supporting each other through the difficult situations they were both experiencing in their lives at that time. They found, too they had a shared love of popular music and would talk at length about how lyrics to some of their favourite songs could capture and reflect their own feelings in such a powerful way.

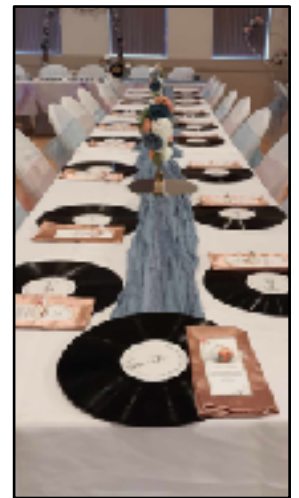
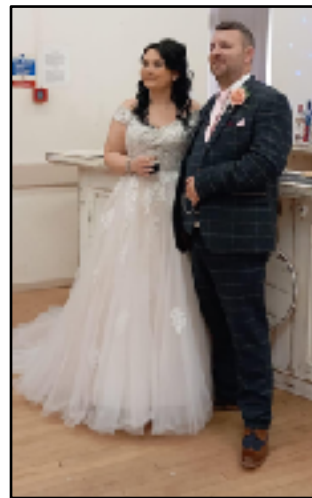
By now Tammy had begun to realise it was more than just friendship she felt for Brian and often wondered if he felt the same – so imagine her surprise and delight when, one day, Brian let her know exactly how he felt, by giving her a copy of the record *"To Be With You"* by Mr. Big. Tammy recalls that was the moment when their relationship changed from just one of friendship. As they grew ever closer over the next few months, last year Tammy decided to plan a surprise Valentine’s trip. But during that trip, sadly and very unexpectedly, Brian became quite poorly suffering a mini stroke.

Two weeks later Tammy asked him to marry her because, as she later said: *"I now knew I didn’t want to spend a minute without him as my husband."* That was despite them previously having a discussion earlier in their relationship when they both agreed that marriage wasn’t something they wished to enter into again! But, after Brian’s mini stroke Tammy realised that marrying Brian was *exactly* what she wanted – adding *"Thankfully he said ‘Yes’"*.

They quickly named the day - Saturday 24 February 2024. Brian’s local church in Malvern (where his grandparents are buried) was chosen for their wedding ceremony, and the Memorial Hall was booked for their Reception. Tammy says they chose the Hall as they *"have many friends who are ex-military, or still serving, so the Hall was a fitting tribute to those we love and care for deeply"*.

So, fast forward to Saturday 3rd February, just 3 short weeks before their wedding day. Tammy was awoken early on that fateful morning by a stream of frantic messages from Brian’s sister with the awful news that he had come off his motorcycle in Upton upon Severn and

an ambulance was on its way. He was rushed to Worcester Royal Hospital where tests showed he had sustained some very serious injuries: a grade 3 laceration to his spleen, damage to his left kidney and a completely snapped humerus bone which had become misplaced and disjuncted. To add to his trauma, he had also fractured his shoulder in two places, broken a rib, punctured his lung, and had blood collecting in his pelvis.



When Tammy arrived at the hospital she was ushered into a family room, given a cup of coffee and told to expect the worst. She was in that room for several hours not knowing what was going on and desperately scared that she was about to lose her best friend. Miraculously, and probably against the odds, the hospital successfully stabilised Brian and she was eventually allowed to see him. For most of the next two weeks while Brian was recovering in hospital, Tammy effectively never left his side.

He was under strict instructions to have complete bedrest to allow his spleen to heal, so it didn’t need to be surgically removed, as that would have resulted in him needing medication for the rest of his life. In all Brian spent four days on the high dependency ward being monitored around the clock, before being moved to a lower risk surgical ward and then, one week after his accident, finally having surgery to fix his arm – into which a metal rod had to be inserted from his shoulder to his elbow. Brian left hospital on 16th February just 8 days before their planned wedding.

Although he was still in extreme pain and discomfort, Brian was determined that their wedding should go ahead as planned, telling Tammy that focusing on their wedding gave him an added incentive to recover as quickly as possible. And, as you can see from the photographs – they made it! Their wedding, of course, had a strong musical theme. Tammy sourced lots of old vinyl records repurposing them into the place settings. Their first dance was to Chris Stapleton’s *"Tennessee Whiskey"* (Brian’s choice) as he believes Tammy saved him from a downward spiral when they first met. *"But the truth is"* says Tammy *"he saved me too"*, adding that *"in spite of everything the day was just magical"*. We wish them both a long and happy married life together. They so deserve it.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees