

Fare Thee Well – a Celebration of the Life  
of  
**Prof. Peter Hariolf Plesch Ph.D., Sc.D. 14-2-1918 ~ 5-3-2013**

Welcome and opening address by Nita (Benita Plesch)

Well, good afternoon everyone, and welcome to this celebration of Peter's life.

Thank you for being here today with us his family. Some of you have come from far away and we do appreciate it.

Some of you are from very near and you are the ones who have been very close to him these last years and months. And to you too, we are all very grateful. Welcome !

We are all here to remember a very special man, who was my father.

This is a celebration of his life. This is what he wanted and that is very much his style. After this we will have a party together, back at Richmond Village, the place in which he has lived these past 4 years.. That, too, was his wish. In fact it was one of the few things we quarrelled about. I told him we would all be too sad for a party, but he said rubbish! Have a celebration. In particular, he was always happy when a lot of us were enjoying ourselves together.

Well, we certainly are going to miss him, very much. He was bright and cheerful, determined and productive, until about a year ago. After that he had a series of setbacks and then he had had enough. As you all know, he made it to his 95th birthday, which he really enjoyed, and that really, was that. He died peacefully on the 5th of March, around midday.

So how does one look back on such a life?

It certainly was well lived. Peter, or Poo as we all called him, was a very multifaceted person. His motto – always sitting on his desk, was :

“Only he who attempts the absurd is capable of achieving the impossible”.

He attempted a lot, was an original thinker and he also achieved a lot. he was funny and kind, a great and very precise thinker, a lover of beautiful things and good music, a teacher and a philosopher.

He was also very generous and gregarious, he loved good company and, helped by Traudi, he really kept up with all his friends and they with him.  
You with him!

I would like to say, at this point, how much I am going to miss him. He has been a part of my life all my life. I will miss him and a hundred little things which remind me of him, mostly because I would have liked to share them with him, or vice versa. Such as new insights or discoveries, or a good programme on TV.

But more than that, I will remember him most for all the many things he taught me.

As we take a moment to say goodbye to this very special man, let us not pretend he was a saint. He was not!! he was loving and caring and kind and charming but he could also be very difficult, if not extremely so.

He was not good at comprehending things that were not logical, and feelings are not logical. He was a bit like Spock from Star Trek. Clever, kind, well meaning but not good at the non-logical. This combined with strong opinions did sometimes lead to frustration and conflict.

He also had a huge need to educate the world. And indeed a lot of the world liked it: I have seen ex-students' faces light up remembering his foundation year lectures. He was a very gifted teacher. However, he could also go in to 'professor mode', without checking his audience first.

Do you all remember the film 'Brassed Off'? There is a wonderful scene, where Phil, played by Steven Tomkinson has just tried to commit suicide, in total desperation. Phil is sitting in the corridor of the hospital and is being harangued by his father Danny, played by Pete Poslethwaite.

A nurse comes up and asks Phil, Sir, is this man bothering you? and Phil answers "Of course 'e's botherin' me, 'e's me Dad!"

To me, that puts in a nutshell who he was: kind and well meaning, erudite, loving and sometimes really rather difficult.

But with all of that , he had a great capacity to inspire love and fondness in others. We have had so very many, many kind tributes to the man he was and we are grateful for all of them.

He was, as the saying is, one of a kind.

We will not forget him.

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Short address by Daniel Plesch

*music: Moonlight Serenade, Miller*

Address by Dr Peter Borrell, formerly of Keele University  
Peter is a former colleague at Keele and dear friend of my fathers'

*music: Trout Quintett, 4th movt. Schubert D667, Amadeus Quartett **Let op: 3 mins!!***

Farewell from Susie, Freya and Jethro

Final words from Andrew Neilson and Traudi

[Niti's closing address](#)

Niti's closing address

Now we come to the end of this part of our farewell to Poo/Peter. And in a very special way, Poo himself will have the last word. In his life, Poo wrote a great many poems. He really wanted to have them published, but somehow that didn't happen. So we all decided to give him this final wish and we made a little book with a selection of his poems. When you leave the party later, you can take one with you, if you like.

I don't know if you are all aware that Peter was what I think it is fair to call an orthodox atheist.

This is his poem: it is from a small group of poems he wrote at the end of his life, called poems from the Waiting Room...

Irrational Hope

We who share this Waiting Room  
 From preachers learnt what is our doom.  
 Yet I, like others, believed not what we heard  
 Because to us it seemed just too absurd.  
 So I'll die confident to find a World  
 Where unimaginable novelties will be unfurled.

Dear Poo,

wherever you are, we wish you 'bon voyage....', safe journey.....

*music: Beethoven, "Kreutzer Sonate" Op. 47, Kempff, Menuhin, 3rd movt.*

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