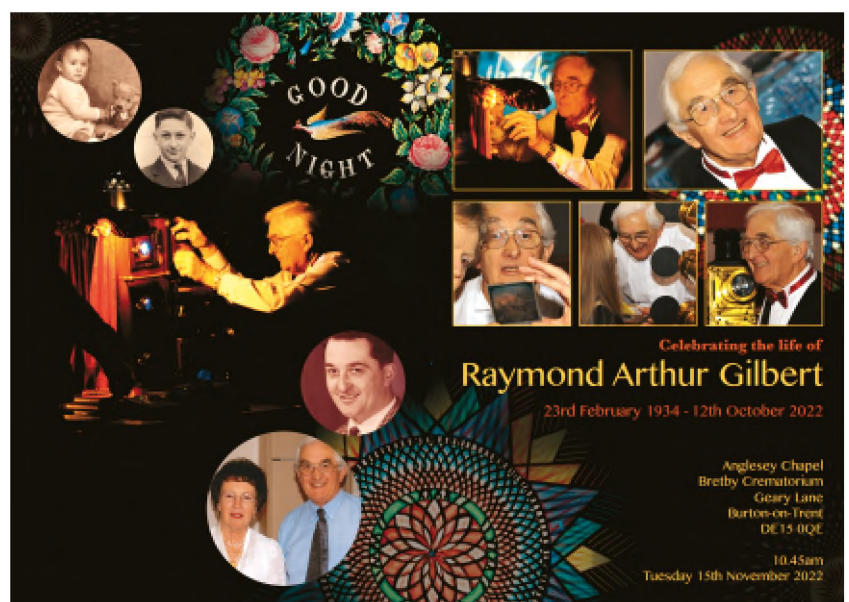


## OBITUARY

### RAY GILBERT (1934–2022)

Ray Gilbert's story began on a foggy February day, on Byrkley Street in Burton upon Trent. While his father was boiling water – the done thing in such a situation in those days – a coat hanging on the door caught fire on the stove. Everything ended happily and Raymond Arthur Gilbert made his first appearance. His early memories were of childhood holidays in Skegness and then, at five years old, the onset of World War II. He remembered: "When the siren went off during the night, Mum got me up and we went into the pantry under the stairs."

Many members will know that Ray was a teacher but his first job was in a brewery. He recalled: "Ind Coope called the school as they had a vacancy in the laboratory. I stayed there for ten years but had two years out for National Service." His National Service was in the RAF, perfectly suiting his passion for precision and technical work. However, it became a little joke in the family that he never actually took to the air until over a half a century later. The



occasion was a trip to Paris to indulge in one of his main loves – the magic lantern.

Many MLS members have seen and enjoyed the family's magic lantern performances – The Gilberts' Galantee Show – over many years. Collecting high-quality slides and lanterns, and delighting hundreds of people of all ages with shows put on locally, nationally and even internationally became a family passion, with Ray and his beloved wife, Pat,

travelling and operating together, then latterly with son Martin. Ray and Pat had met at Padgate College near Warrington in the 1960s, marrying in 1967 and settling in Barton-under-Needwood. Their house became a true home for over 50 years and the Gilberts took their place at the heart of the village.

Ray's move into teaching came via his job as a lab assistant in a physics department, leading, in 1964, to a teaching role at the nearby John Taylor High School. A quarter of a century of full time work, followed by another decade of supply teaching, meant that hundreds of pupils had benefited from Ray's calm style of mentoring and coaching.

Away from work the magic lanterns were not his only interest. He said: "I dabbled in a variety of hobbies. Stamp collecting, model trains, model aircraft and kites and looking through a microscope. Swimming and badminton took up a lot of my time." Ray also had an avant-garde choice in cars. In an era when most cul-de-sacs were full of standard British Leyland models, Ray's dashing Renaults and Saabs brought a continental flair to Church Lane.

Music and campanology were also important parts of Ray's life. Both Ray and Pat were regular bell ringers at their local church. On the night that Ray passed away in October the St James' Church bells rang out, playing 'Plain Bob Doubles', a rehearsal routine that was movingly appropriate.

But what mattered most to Ray was his family – his wife Pat, who passed away earlier this year (see *TML* 30), sons Timothy and Martin, and granddaughter Emily. Few will forget the enormous pride with which Ray showed MLS members, at the January 2017 AGM, the illuminated MLS logo beautifully made for him by Emily. We can only imagine what the shows Emily and her father Martin put on together meant too. We are all so grateful at the Magic Lantern Society that the family tradition, started by Ray, carries on in such good hands.

Ray has left us one last lesson to follow. He captured memories of his life, his family, his career and his favourite pastimes – some quoted here – in a folder, as a gift to Emily.



*Ray and Pat Gilbert on their wedding day*

***Martin Gilbert and Mary Ann Auckland***