Plymouth mum who killed ex-lover day after her wedding has died

Drug addict Wendy Shobrook got hitched to homeless Barry Johnson - a relationship described as a 'match made in hell'

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A Plymouth mum found dead after taking a deadly mix of drugs used an oar to batter to death her ex-lover merely a day after getting hitched to her new hubby less than 10 years ago.

Wendy Shobrook was found guilty of manslaughter in 2009 after she and new partner Barry Johnson left father-of-five George Auchterlonie dying in a pool of his own blood in a flat in Plymouth the year before.

The pair less than a day before the brutal killing had celebrated their wedding binging on drink and drugs - but things turned nasty when recovering heroin addict Shobrook set fire to the groom's bed, telling him to 'burn in hell'.

She fled, returning to her ex - who neighbours say had been partying together seven days a week in the months leading up to the killing - before calling Johnson to tell him where she was.

Shobrook and Johnson then battered George to death at his home in Devonport, before they were captured on CCTV in blood-stained clothes buying booze from a local shop.

Scotsman George's body was not found for more than three days afterwards, but a short while later, on June 15, 2008, Johnson and Shobrook were arrested.
Barry Johnson and Wendy Shobbrook on their wedding day, just hours before events which lead to the death of George Auchterloine.

The wedding of Wendy Shobbrook and Barry Johnson - hours later the pair went on to kill father-of-five George Auchterlonie.
Johnson, then 40, and his wife Shobrook, then 41, were found guilty of manslaughter in 2009, but were cleared of murdering George on the grounds of provocation.

In a packed courtroom at Plymouth Crown Court, Johnson was jailed for 12 years to shouts of “hallelujah” from Mr Auchterlonie’s watching family and friends.

Shobrook’s sentence of five years for manslaughter proved less popular, with groans from the public gallery.

The mother-of-three was also jailed for three years for arson after admitting setting fire to her new husband’s bed, which he was lying on at the time, but the sentence ran concurrently.

On March 14 this year, years after walking free from prison, Shobrook was found dead by her landlord Michael Baker.

An inquest into her death at Plymouth Coroner's Court this week concluded she did not wake up after taking a lethal cocktail of prescription drugs and cocaine.
Wendy Shobrook: How an innocent girl who dreamt of having the perfect family life turned into a killer
The couple - described by locals as a 'match made in hell' - were notorious characters in the area, who met at various Devonport drinking dens and quickly struck up a relationship. Their wedding day descended into chaos after Wendy set fire to her new partner's bed, telling him to "burn in hell" before she fled and

Shobrook was a recovering heroin addict who had turned to drink, while Johnson – himself a former alcoholic – was said during a trial into the murder of father-of-five George Auchterlonie to have used heroin on the couple’s ill-fated wedding day.

Born and bred in Birmingham, Barry Lee Johnson, a divorced and unemployed groundworker, originally moved to Devonport in 1993.

Two years later, often spelling his name Barrie, he moved to the Mutley area, where he stayed until relocating to the village of Newton Ferrers in 1998.
Throughout 2002 he remained unsettled, briefly living in Truro, Cornwall, and Berrow, near Weston-Super-Mare in Somerset, before returning to Devonport in
Locals spoke of a shady, mysterious past but were always kept in the dark as to why he ended up in the city. His elderly father, a painter and decorator, has been too upset to speak about the conviction of his son, but still lives in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham.

Barry met red-headed Wendy in a Devonport pub shortly after moving back to Plymouth and by 2007 had moved into her flat at 63 Clowance Street.

Unlike her husband, Wendy had spent her whole life in the area, growing up in a flat above the George Street shops – just metres from the Theatre Ope flat where Scotsman George Auchterlonie was eventually killed.

As a child she attended Mount Wise Primary School and Parkside Comprehensive School along with her two older sisters, but never got a job.

Family friend Robert Baker, whose grandchildren used to play with a young Wendy, recalled a polite and well-dressed little girl who spent her time helping disabled mum Paula.

She was nice as a youngster,” the 65-year-old said. “She was always very well-dressed, very polite, very tidy.
“She would come home from school then go straight to the shops and get things for her mum.

“Wendy was pleasant – I remember all she wanted to do was get married and have kids.”

The family – along with stepdad Sammy Hoskin – later moved to a flat in Clowance Street and Wendy began a relationship with a local man named Tony.

The couple had two children, a son and a daughter.

Wendy’s father Roy, an engineer, had died in 1986 at the age of 56 – but long-time neighbours said the death of her mother ten years ago triggered a downward spiral.

"She was a good mum..until she succumbed to addiction"

Joyce Draper, who spent almost 20 years living in the same block as Wendy, said: “She and her mum were very close – she was the youngest daughter so it hit her a bit harder.

“When I moved here she was just like a normal teenager.
“She had boyfriends, she would go out, she caused a bit of havoc but nothing out of the ordinary.

“The old Wendy was the typical teenage girl.”

In around 2000, Wendy moved to Garrison Close, where neighbours said she battled heroin addiction, entering rehab a number of times during the four years she spent there.

Neighbour Cheralee Gibson used to invite her in for tea, coffee and a chat about their children and Wendy's pet rabbits.

She described her as a “good mum” and a “lovely person” – until she succumbed to her addiction.

Then, loud music and constant visitors would drive other residents to fight for her eviction.

Mrs Gibson said: “She came back from rehab a different person – when she was clean she was such a lovely person, harmless.

“She was your typical next door neighbour and a good mum. “But when she was unwell you would try and help her and she would kick you in the teeth – that’s the saddest thing.”

Mrs Draper, who lived just below the Clowance Street flat Wendy moved to in 2004, added: “When she wasn’t on the drink and the drugs she was the perfect neighbour. “If she wasn’t in with the bad crowd she was like a normal mother – she did the best by her children.

“But you name it, she’s done it – especially after Barry moved in. “The first I knew of him was when he moved into the flat, and the amount of times the police were called... “Wendy and Barry: it was all the ingredients you needed to make something explosive.”

“She and Barry were a match made in hell,” Mr Baker added.

The wedding day and the horrific events that unfolded
The couple's wedding certificate

The volatile couple married in the Drake Suite of Plymouth Register Office on the afternoon of Wendy's 40th birthday, June 9 last year.

The service was to be the beginning of a devastating 24 hours that would leave a father-of-five lying dead on the floor of his flat.

After celebrating at The Swallow pub, in Bretonside, city centre bar Noah's Ark and The Waterfront, in West Hoe, the newlyweds headed back to Clowance Street, where neighbours heard loud rows.

By 11.16pm, Wendy had set fire to her own flat, lighting her bed with her new husband in it and telling him to "burn in hell".

According to one witness, Kerry Whincup, she was upset that heroin was being smoked in her flat – but Wendy described the incident as "normal for me".

In court, the mum-of-three described herself as "vulnerable" and said she suffered from low self-esteem.

She accused Barry of being "controlling, uncaring and inattentive" and claimed he blamed her for all that had gone wrong. During the trial the jury was told how she fled to George Auchterlonie on her wedding night.

George's neighbour Manuel Soto told the court that by May, a month before the killing, the pair were drinking and partying together seven days a week.

Another neighbour, Barbara Anniss, said Wendy was George's most frequent visitor and described his bed as "rather squeaky."
Barry had already made death threats to the Scotsman months before the tragic events of June 10, Plymouth Crown Court heard, though Wendy always denied the affair.

When his new wife called him the next morning saying she was at George’s flat, had lost her money and possibly been sexually assaulted, he admitted he went to the address in “a mess”. “My head was shot,” he told the court. “I wasn’t coping well, to be honest.”

Victim George Auchterlonie: A family man and a loving father

Tragic: George Auchterlonie

The family of tragic father-of-five George Auchterlonie said they were “ripped apart” by his violent death.

Ex-wife Nicola Gleeson was admitted to hospital during the murder trial as she struggled to cope, while the couple’s four children received counselling.

Barry Johnson and Wendy Shobrook were found guilty of George’s manslaughter, following a three-week trial.
Nicola, who was married to Scotsman George for more than 15 years, fought back tears as she told The Herald how the “selfish greed” of the couple would forever deprive her children of a father.

She spoke of a caring dad, a hard worker and a sociable music and Formula 1 fan who, despite divorcing in 2005, remained the closest of friends.

Nicola said it was “heartbreaking” to see children Samuel, Harriet, Mary, and David struggle to come to terms with life without their dad.

Distraught Nicola paid an emotional tribute to the “loving father”. She said: “He was a real family man. George always worked hard, he wanted to support his family.

“He would work on a Saturday and Sunday just to put food on our table and he always earned an honest crust.

“George wasn’t an angel in my relationship with him, but he was a loving father – he was always there for the children.

“I will always miss him. When you’re married to someone for half your life it’s hard to let go.

“George was my best friend and he was my life – no one will know me as much as he knew me.”

https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/plymouth-mum-who-killed-ex-946531