

**A musical appraisal and quality control audit of
60-year progress in the married state.
For Oscar and Annette**

... as conducted on 3 July 2010 by Peter & Marguerite Wallis (*Auditor* and *Clerk*)

..... *Picking up his guitar, the Auditor explains:*

Every 60 years of marriage, monthly meeting want an audit
And although somewhat cumbersome I think we should applaud it
So I beg you to indulge, and I regret the imposition
Because 'Ofwed' is not in any sense a Quaker Inquisition

We'll first review the wedding vows, in Hampstead they were spoken
To be sure those lofty sentiments were not some empty token
And our Friend she'll take notes *, as the evidence she'll list
To make sure we have compliance and that nothing there is missed

* *The Checklist Clerk enters with her clip board, pen and checklist to tick*

Wedding bands? Did they hold hands?
A wedding kiss?.... Then married bliss?
A loving pair? Extra marital affair?
They're faithful partners for ever after?

In sickness and in health? through poor times and in wealth?
For better or for worse? with no thought for the self?
To have and. to hold, so that right from the start
Their love it won't grow cold, till death do them part?

The Auditor continues:

We've started well I'm pleased to say, those wedding vows achieved
They've passed Part 1 of their appraisal you'll all be relieved
Outcome measures are all met, with children pets and house
And commendable commitment to one another's spouse

But! You need to delve much deeper say the scrutiny committee
To get the broader marriage picture review the nitty gritty
Those 60 years of weddedness they sure produce some facts
This bit could last for ever, so here's the headline stats:

Pulled weeds, good deeds,
Hot water bottles, tangled leads,
Cups of tea, a night time pee,
Nail clippings, a rescued bee

Shared dreams...., Ice creams,
Forgotten names...., silly games,
Mowing lawns, laying tables,
Cycle tracks, and Uncle Jacks,

Now living in a partnership is not a bed of roses
There will come times when,couples get right up each others' noses
We'll now see how this wedded pair score when the path gets tougher
When small or large there come the hardships that all couples suffer

Missed trains blocked drains
Bad backs? Any heart attacks?,
Dodgy knees? Lost keys?
Grey hairs heavy cares

Whispered fears, soothed tears
Cross words, across the years
Days spent apart, with heavy heavy heart
Back together, where do we start?

So how to keep the marriage fresh through all these years together?
And how to keep the ship afloat in times of heavy weather?
New Monthly meeting targets don't leave anything to chance
They want to check key indicators of a shared romance

A naughty tease, a surreptitious squeeze
Loving cuddles that no-one sees
Bedtime talks, romantic walks
Lazy days, Shakespeare plays

"Night night love", walks.by the sea,
Holding hands, just you and me

Country dances, and tender glances
Sharing time as the sun goes down

The checklist is looking very satisfactory, so the Auditor continues:

And finally for quality assurance a category called 'internal'
The committee want some reassurance on matters more eternal
By counting up the spiritual they want to delve still more
When adding up intangibles though it's hard to give a score

Years spent, heaven sent
Blessings counted, loss surmounted
Quiet moments, deep reflection
Shared ideals, soul connection

Meditation, contemplation, inspiration
Reading aloud, from a sacred text
Fox, Jesus, Matthew, Mark and Luke and John
Living fully in each moment, never mind what's next

5 stars, to be commended, they may even get a 'recommended'
Scrutiny committee will be thrilled, performance has been splendid!
My young friend will type this up but I think they're doing fine
No need for another check up now 'til 10 years time

Action points to work on though so here's your 6 point plan:
Less paper muddles, shorter lists, and fewer frying pans
Less committees, less decisions, time to just be still
Great grandchildren are now due, and don't forget your pills

And finally to get distinction just one last requirement
That you get a dictionary, look meaning of the word Retirement!