

World's longest Down's syndrome marriage stronger than ever after 27 years



EXCLUSIVE
Joe Roberts

Sunday 6 Oct 2019 6:08 pm



53.6k
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Gareth and Deana are showered in confetti on their big day back in 1992 (Picture: Metro.co.uk)

He revealed he was quite in demand at the time, telling Metro.co.uk: 'Before I met Deana I had three girlfriends.'

'I chose the right one, and that's Deana.'

Gareth, 55, who works three days a week at Morrisons, confirmed it was indeed 'love at first sight'.

When asked how the marriage has fared over the years, he remarked: 'I put up with Deana.'

'And she puts up with me.'



Deana and Gareth at their home in Cumbria (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)



Deana said she was first attracted to Gareth's 'ginger' hair (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)



Gareth and Deana at their home in Cumbria (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)

It appears Deana, 57, shares the same sense of humour as Gareth, and told how she was first struck by his mop of red hair.

She said: 'I thought "he's ginger". I like gingers. He had a beard at the time as well. A red one.'

She added: 'I'm ginger as well.'

What started as a friendship soon blossomed into a loving relationship, but their families didn't know how serious it was until 10 years later.

Gareth's mother Anne Tobias, 80, said: 'We didn't know an awful lot about their relationship until they started talking about getting married.'

Gareth added: 'We went away on holiday in Blackpool and got engaged down there.'

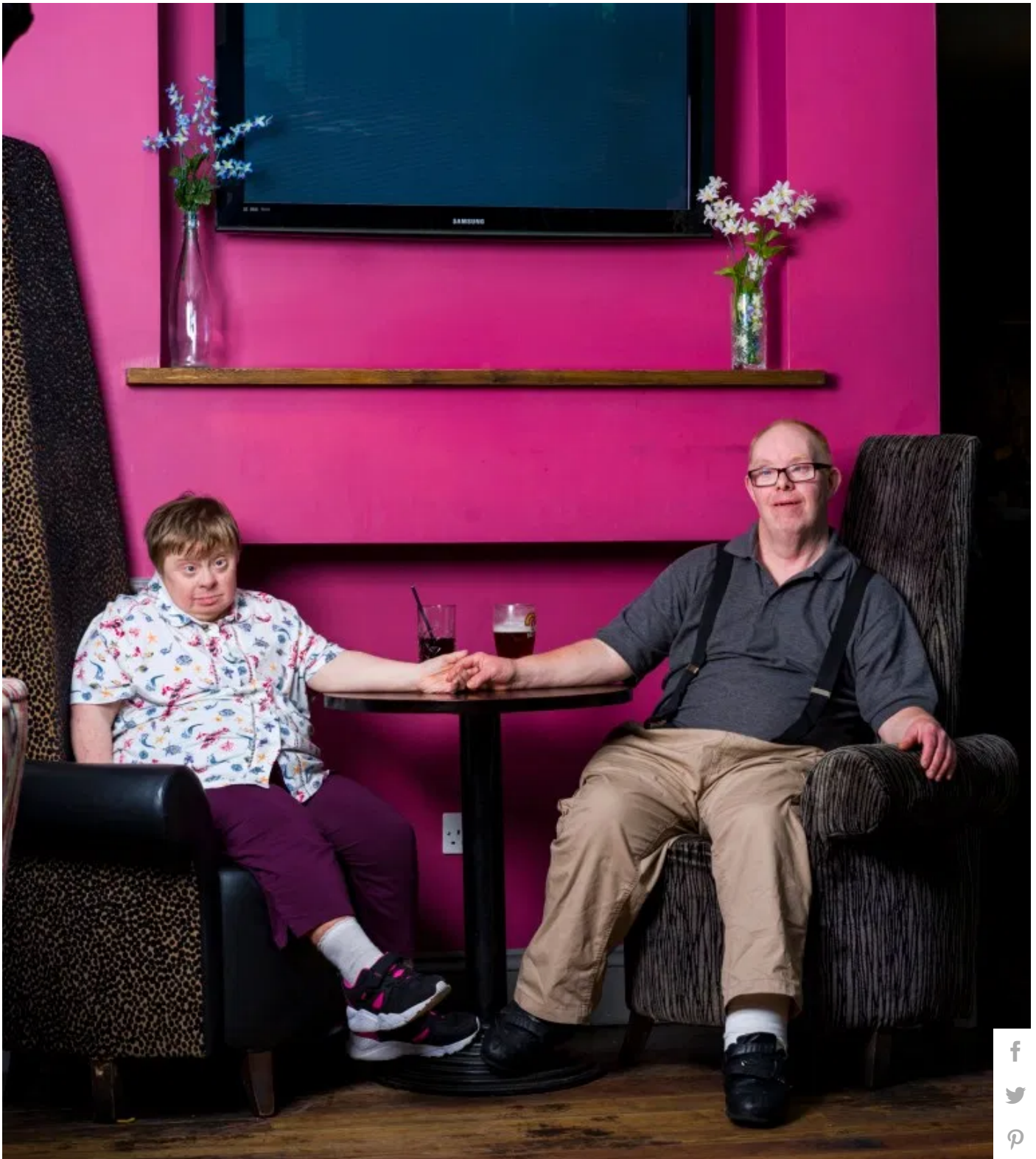
'It was Deana's birthday.'



Deana beams as she walks down the aisle with Gareth back in July, 1992 (Picture: Metro.co.uk)



Gareth and Deana celebrate their 25th silver wedding anniversary in 2017 (Picture: Metro.co.uk)



Gareth and Deana Tobias often enjoy a drink down their local (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)



Gareth and Deana share a joke at home in Cumbria (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)

The lovebirds eventually tied the knot in front of 40 friends and family on July 4, 1992.

This makes Gareth and Deana's marriage the longest of any couple with Down's syndrome.

The only other two that come close are **Paul and Kris Scharoun-DeForge, from Syracuse, New York**, whose 25-year marriage sadly ended with Paul's death last year, and **Maryanne and Tommy Pilling, from Essex**, who've been married for 24 years.

Recalling the happy day all those years ago, Anne said: 'It was so lovely. They were so prepared for it, they both knew their vows off by heart.

'The vicar started to say the vows and they didn't have to repeat them, they both just spouted them out.

'They did the song from Dirty Dancing, where the woman runs up to him and he lifts her up.

'So Deana ran towards him and he lifted her up. Then everybody got up and sang You'll Never Walk Alone.'



Gareth and Deana return to the church where they got married 27 years ago (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)



Gareth and Deana are still all smiles after 27 years of marriage (Picture: Tim Fisher for Metro.co.uk)

Anne admitted there has been some 'ups and downs' over the years but said 'they've had a happy

‘They went all over the place. Usually to Butlins or Pontins or somewhere like that.

‘They would stay in the caravan park and go out dancing in the evenings.

‘They always liked camping and they always did it by themselves.’

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The couple can often be found enjoying a drink down their local pub, while Gareth is partial to the occasional cigar.

Anne said: ‘He has a few bad habits does Gareth, he smokes cigars. We’ve all tried to get him to stop.

‘But once he’s in a routine, it’s very hard to break him out of it.

‘He says he’s smoked since he was 19. He is a character.’

Deana added: ‘I still love him. Look at him now, he’s like an old man.’



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