

Kathleen Mary Holt - Mary - Eulogy

Mum was born in Walton on Thames, Surrey on 3rd October 1929. She lived with her parents Arthur and Elizabeth Streatfield and two brothers Donald and Peter at Portmore Park Road in Weybridge. Arthur relocated with his job to Sevenoaks in Kent so the family moved there for a large part of Mum's childhood.

Mum always spoke very fondly of her childhood and then progressing into teenage years. She spoke often of going tobogganing with Donald and Peter in Knole Park – which was renowned for once having seven oak trees some of which got blown down in the great storm of 1987.

Mum also spoke vividly about her experiences of the 2nd World War. These included the story about her brother Donald who wouldn't go into the air raid shelter whilst the enemy forces dropped doodle bugs regularly over Kent.

The family kept chickens and rabbits due to the food shortages and Mary learnt at an early age how to adapt to making cakes from limited ingredients. Her mother Elizabeth suffered with ill health so Mum experienced what it was like to be a carer and manage household responsibilities in her teenage years.

Mum attended Tunbridge Grammar School for Girls, from there she went to Secretarial College in London and after this started her first job working for a firm of Accountants in the City of London. Mum loved telling us about her commute into the city of London which she enjoyed even though she often would be running into the office with seconds to spare.

When Arthur retired from the office in Sevenoaks – the family returned to Portmore Park Road. Mum then met the love of her life Francis. They married on 18th July 1953 and then they had three daughters Elizabeth, Alison and Sarah. Mum was one of those people who always put herself last.

After the loss of her mother, Arthur was left on his own and Mum and Francis looked after him in addition to the three girls. Mum also wanted to do something a little bit different so she decided to have a part time job on Saturdays at the very prestigious Bentalls Shopping Store in Kingston Upon Thames. She worked in the Children's Shoe Department which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Mum also got a lot of pleasure from gardening. She liked to read and learn about different plants. Mum and Francis could often be found pottering in the garden thinking about the next project. They loved visiting their local garden centres. Mum eventually left Bentalls and went to work more locally at Clarks Shoe shop in Weybridge.

As we are all aware Mum suffered two terrible tragedies in her life, firstly the loss of Francis in 1995. Her job at the shoe shop played a significant part in helping Mum get back some normality after the shock of losing Francis in such dreadful circumstances.

In 2000 - just five years later - , she suffered the tragic loss of Alison after her move to Shipston on Stour. Mary's resilience and strength got her through both these massively difficult events. To her eternal credit she always tried to provide care and support to family members and her friends up until the outbreak of Covid 19, at which point communicating with and seeing people became very challenging for Mary along with millions of others up and down the country.

Today we should celebrate the remarkable strength in adversity that she demonstrated and thank her for all her love, hard work, care, thoughtfulness and a wonderful sense of humour which certainly helped her navigate through life's long and varied journey.

We were so lucky to have Mum, Mary, Nanny, Nan, Mother in Law - which always made her laugh, whichever of these names you knew her by during Mum's long and happy lifetime – this gives us that connection to her. The terminal cancer that finally took her from us was extremely aggressive. It had only been formally diagnosed on 2nd February 2021. We must be thankful that she did not have to suffer a long and painful period of deterioration.

[Please let us have a minute of silence for reflection]