

Eulogy – Jean’s Funeral

Jean was born in Sheffield on 17th May 1936. She was abandoned by her unmarried mother and was in a baby home for the first 18 months of her life.

During that time her grandmother used to visit her regularly and after 18 months Jean’s grandmother decided to bring her home despite being a 58-year-old widow.

Jean has been close to her cousins; the children of her two aunts and uncle. She spoke fondly about them and they kept in close contact with her, recently taking it in turns to make regular weekly visits to see her in Water Mill House.

Jean grew up in a poor but loving family and she was not only a clever child but was happy too. While at Junior school she passed her 11 plus was sent to a girls’ grammar school in Sheffield.

She was a bright pupil and would have liked to train as a teacher, but the finance wasn’t there to support her through college, so she left school after taking her O levels.

She was very involved with the local Methodist church and one of her friends there had become a nurse and Jean decided that was what she would like to do.

But you had to be 18 to train as a nurse so she got a job as a clerk with the local council in Sheffield until she could become a student nurse.

Her Grandmother lived to see her grand-daughter qualify as a State Registered Nurse but died just before the official presentation ceremony which was held in Sheffield City Hall.

Jean then went to train as a midwife at a time we see on Call the Midwife. Traveling into the community on a push bike, with no instant communications or back up. She had to learn fast.

She then went to a large maternity unit in Birmingham before returning to Sheffield and a job as a junior sister on the Female surgical ward.

After 4 years Jean was head hunted to the Eye Ward in Sheffield and spent 13 months training at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London returning to Sheffield as the Sister of the Eye Ward – a position she held for 4 years.

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Jean describes being a Ward Sister as the most satisfying periods of her working life.

In 1966 she was seconded to the St John’s Eye Hospital in Jerusalem for 15 months.

Jean was then asked to train as a Nurse Tutor and that is where she met Tegwen. Jean went to the school of nursing at Stoke Mandeville and Tegwen became a Tutor at the Watford School of nursing.

Tegwen, her mother Florence, and Jean moved into a new house in Bourne End Lane and after a few years of illness Tegwen’s mother died and is buried in our churchyard here.

Around 1982 was a time when many of us moved into the village, the Pritchards, the Simons, the Summers, the Coopers, the Dawsons, the Lennons, Audrey. We all arrived around the same time.

Throughout this time Jean and Tegwen were always there for us as a community.

They were the people to go to for medical advice, as our children grew up they were the ones we went to for help when the children were sick, they were the ones we went to when our partners were sick.

Jean wanted to get back to hands on nursing and retrained as a Community Nurse working in Hemel until she was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis and took early retirement as she was unable to continue the work she loved.

She was fearful of dropping a baby.

Jean and Tegwen were a partnership.

We love our partnerships in this country! Some of our most trusted and loved institutions are partnerships! Think of Marks and Spencer, Morecombe and Wise, Ant and Dec!

But Jean and Tegwen were different from those pairings. They were different because whereas you would never say Spencer and Marks or Wise and

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Morecombe or Dec and Ant. You could easily refer to Tegwen and Jean or Jean and Tegwen.

Why? Because they were both individuals, two marvellous, gifted, caring individuals neither one more important than the other. And they each brought their different gifts to care for their community.

Jean loved her village; she loved the people in it. As she got older and frailer she was unable to do things for herself. People would pop in unasked and do things for her.

When she was telling me about these acts of kindnesses she would smile and say ‘That’s Bourne End for you’.

So as I reflected on Jean’s life I could see a definite thread running through it.

That thread is caring for others.

Jean had a vocation, a calling. She was called to care for others. Whether it was her family, friends colleagues or patients, she was called to care for all of them.

And she enjoyed it, she loved her vocation.

And what a noble calling it was.

Throughout her life Jean was a Christian. In her early days in Sheffield she was a keen member of the local Methodist Church and when she moved to Bourne End Jean was a faithful member of our church community.

So now it is time to say goodbye to our dear friend Jean later her ashes will be laid to rest in the village that she loved so much.

We thank God for her calling.

We thank God for her caring

We thank God for her life.

Amen.