

A Celebration of Life

Christine Patricia Vincent

15th February 1957 - 28th April 2019

Wednesday 15th May 2019 at 2.30pm

Mendip Crematorium

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Tribute

Christine was born on the 15th February 1957 in India, in Calcutta, now called Kolkata, to her mother Pat, and her father Archibald, who worked for the Remington Rand Typewriter Company. Christine had an Indian great grandfather on one side of the family and an Indian great grandmother on the other.

Christine's early years would have been quite privileged, with an ayah to help the family and an environment of heat, colour, scents, fabulous plants and although she was only two when the family returned to England in 1959, settling in Gillingham in Kent, Christine did have vague recollections of the exotic beginnings of her life and Kent must have felt very different. In 1961 the family grew to three children: Susan, Christine and now Rhiannon.

In her early childhood Christine and Sue enjoyed gymnastics and creating shows that the family were forced to watch. Rhiannon remembers Christine teaching her to roller skate down their very steep street on one roller skate. On reflection she didn't think it occurred to her that they could have two skates on and take it in turns.

In 1963 Christine's mother married Leslie Dyte and two boys were born in 1964 and 1965, Martin and Anthony, and in 1966 the family moved to Chatham in Kent. As she grew older when Christine and Sue were teenagers, they had wonderful times in the summer holidays roller-skating, swimming and fruit picking.

Sadly, this marriage failed and the family was broken up: the brothers staying with their father and the sisters and their mum moving to Bristol in 1970, where Christine began to attend St Bede's Catholic College in Lawrence Weston. Christine met her childhood best friend Carol here, and they have remained friends ever since.

Christine was working at the Berkeley in Bristol as a secretary and bookkeeper, when she met Paul on the 3rd of February 1981. This was at a company party and fortunately they found life partners in each other, there and then. They had lots of interests in common, were both get-up-and-go type of people and travelling was a passion for them both, which they indulged in during the six years following, mainly in France and the Greek Islands. They got married on June 23rd 1984 and bought a house in Martin's Close in Wells. During this time Christine had several other office jobs for security companies in Bristol and here she found more life-long friends.

Christine and Paul's two sons, Sam and George came along in 1987 and 1991 respectively. Christine stopped working to raise the family and then later when Paul was at home from work to take over childcare, she started to do a few evenings bar work at the Pheasant Inn and later at the former EMI club, and in the following years, Christine worked as a receptionist at Millican's Opticians and for Higos Insurance Company.

Christine always wanted the best for her boys, and she worked hard, saved hard and played hard and taught them to do the same. She writes a very emotional passage that can be found in the back of the Order of Service which I'd like to share with you now:

“I don’t think I’ll ever have the right words to express the way I feel about Paul and my beautiful boys. They are far more than I could ever have dreamt of having in my life. They are everything that is good about this world. I love them dearly and always will. I know you will all go on to live long, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives and I know you still have many exciting adventures ahead of you. I’m also extremely grateful to have met their life partners Nicky and Mark. I know they are both kind and caring people and it’s wonderful for me to know that my two boys have found that same bond of unconditional love and support that I was lucky enough to share with Paul.”

Holidays have always been important to Christine and she adored the sun. When the boys were at home, holidays ranged from a humble weekend in a caravan, to a luxurious villa in Europe somewhere. The caravan weekends, taken fairly locally, were often a surprise to Sam and George as she and Paul had already secretly stashed clothing and equipment in the car before they got in, sometimes reluctantly it has to be said, as they thought it was a business necessity,. They have been many times to Cornwall and France, to Jersey, Menorca, Majorca, Portugal, Tenerife and had both amazing times and also some tense moments with both boys on two different occasions having to be admitted to foreign hospitals with food poisoning. In 1999 Christine had secretly saved up to take the family to Lapland for a Christmas treat and because George had never ever seen any real deep snow. They had a wonderful, magical time and ironically their flight back to Bristol was diverted to Cardiff because of a blizzard at Bristol Airport!

Christine developed breast cancer in 2000 and after months of treatment she recovered fully. The family moved up to Elm Close in 2001.

In 2007, Christine developed oesophageal cancer and her prognosis was terrifying. She was given only a twenty per cent chance of surviving 2 years and she was heart-broken that she would never see her boys fulfil their dreams. But with a combination of fantastic treatment and Christine’s determination she made a full recovery again.

After visiting the Penny Brohn Cancer Clinic in Pill, Christine began to consider her life and future more deeply; she wanted to make the absolute most of her life.

Christine and Paul began to go on dream adventures together: first back to the country of her birth, India and then Nepal where she witnessed some of her favourite sights and experiences: in Varanasi the sunrise over the river Ganges, wild tigers, the pink city of Jaipur, the Taj Mahal and then in Nepal, the snowy white mountains of the Annapurna and the Monkey Temple in Kathmandu.

The following year in 2009 they went to China where they walked some of the Great Wall, visited the Forbidden City in Beijing, floated on a raft through the dramatic karst mountains in Yangshuo, saw pandas in Chengdu and on to Hong Kong. In 2010 they went to Australia to visit Louise, Paul’s goddaughter, where despite being taken ill, Christine still managed to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge and her highlight of the trip was seeing dolphins and whales off the Tasmanian coast.

In 2010 Christine decided to retrain as a beauty and complementary therapist at Bridgwater College and in 2012 set up her own business, Given Holistic Beauty.

To say she loved this work would be an under-statement; she devoted so much time and energy to it that most of her clients became friends. Christine writes, "Thank you, I loved every second, and felt honoured and privileged that you allowed me to be a small part of your lives." She was a natural and she had found her professional niche.

There were lots of away days, with Paul and family or with friends: Vietnam and Cambodia in 2013, another trip to India to celebrate her 60th birthday, this time to visit the city of her birth and on to central and southern India, where she had two of the most memorable days of her life on the backwaters of Kerala, and saw the most amazing wildlife, including her favourite Stork Billed Kingfishers.

Other trips included: Venice, Pompeii, Florence, The Greek Islands, Krakow which was a sixtieth birthday surprise for Paul, with all the family, Prague, Berlin, Barcelona, Amsterdam and more locally, but just as beautiful, The Isles of Scilly, Wales and Scotland, including a visit to see the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, another complete surprise for Paul, and there were always daytrips and surprise weekends away. She loved to visit the Brecon Beacons, Lyme Regis, Brownsea Island and Blakeney Point. Her favourite place of all was Black-a-Tor on Dartmoor.

But Christine also loved this area, the Somerset Levels and the Mendips, the walk out to Fenny Castle with a view to the Tor where she would sit and meditate on 'her' bench.

She remembers her Bristol friends and the parties, karaoke and Bombay Sapphire gin, all her work colleagues and friends, the animals in her life, Toby the Tortoise, her first ever pet, and of course Socks, the most loving dog in the world. Christine loved music, had an eclectic taste ranging from Carol King to Led Zeppelin and she especially loved live music. She adored the carnival, her garden and Christmas, which was celebrated to the most extreme limits.

The last months of Christine's life have not been easy, for her or her family, but she found eventual peace at St Margaret's Hospice in Bishop's Hull. Christine had an amazing life, full of love and understanding, full of pleasure, excitement, rebellious curiosity and adventure, and absolutely no regrets.

The words of Paolo Nutini meant a lot to her: "It was in love I was created, And in love is how I hope I die."