

*A Humanist Ceremony  
to Celebrate the Life of  
Joyce Woodhead*

*6<sup>th</sup> December 1930 – 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019*



*Conducted in the presence of her family and friends  
on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
at Grenoside Crematorium*

*Service taken by  
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### *The Life and Times of Joyce Woodhead (as remembered by Brian and Anne)*

*Joyce was born in Lower Cumberworth on December 6<sup>th</sup> 1930, the youngest of five surviving children of Edgar and Alice Peace. She often admitted to being spoiled, and to knowing how to get her own way.*

*The family lived on Lane Hackings for much of her formative years and she remembered the pleasures of an inside toilet or two. Holidays in her younger days were often spent at a relative's house in Blackpool, and she appeared on screen in cinemas as part of a Pathe News item on holidays – eating a large ice cream. Her love of ice cream continued throughout her life, having a great liking for rum and raisin. She had a particularly exciting trip to London with her sister Ada, one that she tried to recreate, including all the walking, at the age of 83.*

*School life wasn't very enjoyable, and the twice daily walk to school in Denby Dale, no school lunches at that time, didn't make the days any better. She liked subjects such as art and reading, but wasn't too keen on sports and maths. She progressed on to Skelmanthorpe Secondary Modern School in Scissett, and obviously the walk there and back set her up for later walks to Scissett baths and back for Saturday dances. She wasn't a synchronised swimmer, they covered the pool over for the dancing.*

*After leaving school she began working at Firth's Mill at Shelley Bank Bottom; there she met Dennis and they shared a love for travelling the Yorkshire Dales on a motor-bike, he often fishing and she laying in the grass reading. She often travelled with him over the border into Lancashire where he played football, and she remembered fondly some of the games he played and the people they met. They married at Lower Cumberworth Chapel in September 1953 and began married life up Hallas Road in Kirkburton. Their son, Brian, was born in 1954. The family then moved to Spring Grove where, in 1958, daughter Anne was born. Moving to Upper Cumberworth in 1960, their second son Andrew was born in 1965; they decided not to move any more as they discovered having a child in each new house was becoming expensive. Family time was always very special to Joyce and she always put them before herself.*

*As travelling by motor-cycle was fine for two, but not so easy with more, the family invested in a car, and took frequent holidays to both east and west coasts including North Wales. From staying in boarding houses to hiring small static caravans on the east coast, to an extremely memorable camping trip in Scotland and on to buying their own touring caravan, family holidays were special events. The camping trip was one we always looked back on and laughed about. The plan was to tour Scotland staying at B&Bs for almost all the two weeks annual holiday the mill workers got in those days.*

*Unfortunately, finding accommodation for five, in July, proved exceptionally difficult if you didn't book well in advance. Dennis, having foreseen this problem, had borrowed a ridge tent from a friend and a single burner primus stove. Joyce, having never camped, had said before departure she had no intention of starting, but after spending hours on the first evening looking for a place for five, and the ensuing expense of it, she reluctantly agreed to try camping. The first night was fine, but it was soon discovered that crockery and cutlery would be useful if this was to become a regular event. The next day they bought those essentials.*

*It was decided to buy food as and when needed, which worked well, mostly cold food as cooking on a single primus stove wasn't easy. Arriving eventually on the North Coast of Scotland, a site for the night was found near Tongue, which wasn't really suitable for camping as it wasn't level. During the night everyone slipped down the tent and finished in a heap, only the tent pole preventing them from disappearing out of the door and into the field. Never having been to Scotland before, and not realising most shops closed on a Sunday, the next day was traumatic, especially for one member of the family who required a regular intake of food. Travelling many miles, through several villages with closed shops, they eventually reached the brow of a hill and discovered a wonderful sight – Durness, a village which over the years was to become a regular destination. Golden sands, turquoise sea, an open petrol station with a small shop which was also open and a campsite behind it. Buying up a supply of crisps, biscuits, bread and meatballs the tent was pitched and that was the beginning of a long love affair with the village and several of its residents. After staying several nights, it was time to move on, Ullapool being the next stop. Unfortunately, the site was very full, but a pitch next to the bins was available. Herring gulls dancing on the ridge pole discussing the day's menu from the bins from first light wasn't conducive to a lie in, but remained a talking point for many years. Joyce could never stop herself laughing when she remembered the difficulties of trying to use the primus stove: 'It's lit, get the kettle on, too late it's gone out, go on now it's lit again, too late,' and so on. Following this eventful trip, a touring caravan was purchased and Durness was visited at least once a year for many years after. Three more very short visits were made in later life to rekindle those special times. There are many other stories to tell from some of those trips which kept Joyce amused for years. Other special holidays included Austria and an exciting visit to Florida, plus two memorable trips to Ireland with Anne where she drove many miles along narrow and sometimes unsigned roads. Having visited the Isle Of Man on their honeymoon, Joyce and Dennis returned many years later to celebrate their Silver Wedding Anniversary.*

*When Firth's mill closed down, with three hungry children to feed, Joyce took several jobs to help maintain the family lifestyle before eventually taking one at The Sovereign garage which she thoroughly enjoyed, not always the work, but the camaraderie and having the opportunity to drive to different parts of the country. She was even amused at the friendly nickname of 'the old crow'.*

*After reaching the age of 61 without grandchildren, like London buses two arrived together (well, in the space of ten days), Emily and Mathew, and this gave Joyce renewed energy, following their lives, sharing their interests and having a great input in their early development. After retirement Joyce enjoyed day trips out on local buses and trains using the day rover tickets, and trips to Blackpool every October became quite an event, especially when Emily began to go as well. The trips weren't always to see the illuminations, but the fact they were on meant the day could be much longer with a reason. Besides holidays, Christmas was a very special time for Joyce, and she tried to make it special for everyone else as well. Over the years the festivities grew and grew, with increasing numbers of family and friends involved from Christmas Eve right through until Boxing Day. Joyce was never a great drinker, but it was obvious one Christmas that she had tried a tippie which left her with a stripy forehead – she blamed it on a vodka!! Family successes were always celebrated and support was there in darker times.*

*Retirement also gave her the opportunity to follow her own interests more and she loved knitting, baking and reading, new hobbies such as painting and card making were also tried with some success. Many friends of the family looked forward to tasting her baking, and one friend of Brian's used to love taking a doggy bag home after visiting him.*

*Joyce remained close to her siblings until they all passed away one by one, and then in 2001 husband Dennis passed away too. She was always lucky at both Spring Grove and Upper Cumberworth to have super neighbours, who in the old-fashioned tradition became good friends too, always there for each other. The Johnsons, the Rawlinsons and the Mosleys were especially good neighbours over many years.*

*Joyce continued to live in Upper Cumberworth, helping several older ladies with various tasks, and remaining largely independent by still driving, until she decided it was perhaps time to hang up her keys. She didn't like having to depend on others and often lamented how she could no longer do things to help people but needed them to help her. After a serious deterioration in her health, in December 2018, she had to leave the family home and after a brief stay in hospital, she moved into Chapel View Care Home in Mapplewell near Barnsley. She was very well cared for there, and certainly made her presence felt, but continued to deteriorate until finally on August 29<sup>th</sup> she lost her battle with dementia.*

*Throughout her long and happy life Joyce touched the lives of many people, she gave a lot and asked for little in return and as a mum she gave her children all the love and care that any child could wish for. Her thoughtfulness, kindness and support were always appreciated and will be greatly missed.*

*Many years ago, Joyce made a 'life plan'; nothing fancy – just a good marriage, happy children and grand-children, with the odd holiday whenever possible. Through hard work, love and determination, she succeeded in achieving these modest goals, and today, the family would like you all to share in the celebration of 'The Life and Times of Joyce Woodhead'. We were all blessed to have her in our lives.*

*Joyce considered herself blessed too, I'm sure, to have had all of you around her, perhaps none more so than her grandchildren, Emily and Mathew. They are going to share some memories with us now, of their gran.*

## ***Tribute from Emily***

### *Emily's memories of Gran*

#### *Food*

*As a child I was brought up to eat all different kinds of food, and the phrase used was always, 'If you don't try it you will never know if you like it'.*

*Some of Gran's creations were OK. Sugar on dumplings, that one I could accept, and now everyone else thinks I'm weird as well. If she had a sweet tooth but nothing sweet in the house, a cold tea and sugar sandwich would hit the spot.*

*One creation that the family didn't take to was that of a 'cat food sandwich'. Purely by accident did this creation take place, and when Gran told us the story as a family we couldn't stop laughing. Grandma was preparing not only her own lunch, but her beloved cat Whiskers' as well. With a tin of tuna on the worktop and her bread buttered she started to make her tasty lunch; she bent down to give the cat her lunch so that she wouldn't bother Gran whilst eating her own. Gran spread the 'tuna' on her sandwich and sat down to enjoy it. It was only halfway through the sandwich that she thought something might be slightly amiss when bits of carrot and peas started falling out of her sandwich. Gran carried on eating it, as, in her own words, it was 'tasty'. When finally taking her plate back to the kitchen the realisation of what she had done set in. Above the cat's dish on the worktop was the tin of tuna, and at the side of the butter was a tin of cat food. Needless to say, I was always cautious of Gran's cooking after that.*

#### *Christmas*

*Christmas was Grandma's favourite time of the year. If she wasn't talking about it by the end of January something wasn't quite right.*

*Over the last 4 or 5 decades the Christmas Eve party had been the highlight of her year. Family, friends and neighbours all together, what more could she want!!!!*

*Although the Christmas Eve Party guestlist grew with the arrival of Mathew and myself, it also changed the focus of the evening slightly, with Gran being able to act like the big kid she was at heart. Waking up on Christmas morning to a stocking at the end of the bed – or in my case the end of the sleeping bag on the floor where I was sleeping as the house was full and we didn't have a stable, was wonderful. That was until the dreaded child nightmare occurred – 'What do you mean Santa isn't real??' Looking back, I wondered why presents would quickly be taken off me, and a silence, followed by a glare across the room would happen. Then I found out the reason: Gran was Santa. As I got older, we used to open our stockings together and it became a bit of a family joke – guess the owner. Dad sat opening nail varnish remover pads, make up wipes and the odd occasional bit of make up against my screwdriver, batteries and bird seed. This was the result of Gran wrapping things up in good time, but forgetting to put a name on things. When the Christmas list got smaller because things were more expensive, Gran used to try to trick us so we couldn't guess what they were.*

*My face once lit up when I sat down next to a fairly big box, having remembered that year the presents I had asked for were small, only seconds later to be mortified and looked over to gran and said 'What do I want an iron for?' Tears of laughter rolled down her face, along with everyone else's, when she just simply said back to me 'You might want to open it'. My face suddenly lit up again when I opened the iron box to see 3 or 4 different presents.*

*Whilst Christmas was always a fun and happy time, some years were a little less happy with the loss of family members, one year being the loss of Uncle Sam and Grandad not being well. The sleeping arrangements changed too and this year I was set up on the floor at the far side of Gran's bed. Now knowing that Gran was Santa made this arrangement slightly better – or so I thought. That was until Gran and Aunty Anne came to bed; it was always a late one, after 3.00am, but instead of going to sleep they chit chatted for what seemed hours – almost like they forgot I was there, until a head popped up at the side of the bed and a little voice said, 'Will you two shut up and go to sleep!' It was the first time either of them had laughed properly in weeks, and this remained a firm family favourite story every Christmas.*

### ***Tribute from Mathew***

#### *Grandma and the Green Cakes*

*So, those that know Grandma, which I hope most of you sitting here do, will know that she wasn't the tidiest; being clean and tidy was very much a second priority. A memory which stuck by me was the day that we found the tin, the tin which I am led to believe contained every possible variation of penicillin known to mankind growing on Grandma's favourite butterfly buns. They must have been around for years in that cupboard! I'm not sure if she was embarrassed the day we found them or quite proud that she'd managed to hide them away for so long.*

#### *Driving*

*So, throughout my younger years Grandma would travel the length and breadth of the country taking me to different churches while I rang the church bells in competitions or just rides out. The adventure would always start by going onto the AA route planner and getting the route, followed by calling Auntie Anne to say we were off. I always thought that this process was to make sure AA knew where Grandma was... looking back I think it was to know where the crashed car might be, as Grandma would often make wrong turns whilst driving. Elsie's Kind Donation, as the car was named, often became best friends with the wall outside Grandma's house and needless to say Grandma would just drive on without a care in the world; she was doing something I wanted.*

*I'd say the most enjoyable trip we had was down to London. I don't know if this is because it was London or the fact that we were on the train and Grandma wasn't driving! I think it's very clear to say that Grandma will be missed by everyone that's here today and many more people whose lives she touched.*