

17/7/51 14/8/19

Ute Bass. While there is great sadness that Ute's days have ended, all too soon, there is also much to be grateful for and we are gathered here to honour and remember her and to celebrate her life. You, her family and friends, have come from far and wide to be here for Ute, including from her homeland Germany.

My name is Rosemary Taylorson, and I'm a celebrant with Humanists UK. In keeping with Ute's outlook, this will be a simple ceremony, in which we focus on her with tributes, memories and music. There will be time for reflection and private prayer.

Music was very important to both Ute and Jim, and together they chose the music being played today. She also chose this beautiful peaceful place, Clandon Wood, after she and Jim came to have a look a few years ago. Jim knows that she would have liked that you are all gathered here today and that this beautiful natural burial ground is her final resting place.

After the ceremony in this Pavilion, we will follow Ute to the graveside for the committal of her body, followed by refreshments here afterwards.

Before we pay tribute to Ute, we recognise the sadness you all feel – she has been a central part of your lives and will be greatly missed. She fought her illness with courage for the last fifteen months – she was stoic and determined and lived for eight months longer than her prognosis last Christmas of only a few days. Her consultant called her a 'wonder woman'. This gave her extra time to spend with Jim for which they were both grateful. She was also able to see her friends from the UK and Germany. In typical Ute fashion she was the one comforting everyone else!

Ute was able to stay at home where she wanted to be with Jim's care and nursing help. In the end, it was clear that she had had enough. She died on the 14th of August and there is some comfort knowing that her ordeal is over.

Today we hope to find consolation together by recalling the Ute you all knew and loved and in that way remembering and recognising the value of her life.

Jim has written the tributes to Ute and it's my pleasure to read these for you. We begin with her early life.

TRIBUTES & MUSIC

Ute's Early Life

Ute Klein was born on the 17th of July 1951 in Westerstede in northwest Germany. She was brought up in a small farming village called Juhrdenerfeld, where her father was the village teacher. She lived in the school house with her parents and her older sister Anke and her two younger sisters, Wiebke and Make. She also had an older brother Uwe.

Ute had a simple, happy and very rural childhood, playing with the farmers' children in the moors and surrounding countryside. All the local children would be invited in for meals in the farmhouse kitchens. They spoke Platt, a Low German language of the region which is related to Old-Dutch and Anglo-Saxon languages. But when Ute went home her father insisted that she spoke High German.

The family had little money and they raised chickens in the yard. There was no running water, only a well. If the children went shopping in the village, they had two lists – one for essentials and the other if there was still money available.

One strange experience Ute used to describe was how ancient, preserved bog bodies were found in the moors by farmers digging for peat. The school house was the biggest building so the bodies would be stored in the school building until they were taken to the museum in Bremen. Ute remembered the fascination the children had with these bodies. She told how she and her sisters would creep out of bed and play with them, sticking candles in the eye sockets.

At times it was hard being the children of the school master. Ute's father expected his children to excel and if Ute did well at school, her father would say, "What do you expect from a member of the Klein family."

And then when Ute was eleven, the family moved to Oldenburg in 1962, a nearby city in northwest Germany, where they bought a house and lived with the grandmother. Ute was able to attend the local Grammar School where she did well. They were near the North Sea and would visit the coast and beaches for days out.

Ute's love of travel was fostered by her family when she was young. Every year the family would make the long journey down the length of Germany, through Austria and northern Italy to Lido di Jesolo near Venice, with its 15 kilometre-long beach. Their mother would pack the old VW Beetle car with food, a tent and sleeping bags. On the way to Italy, they would sleep beside the road on pavements.

Before setting out, their father would put all the money on the table and say that the children could have all the ices that they liked, but once the money was gone, they would have to go home. The result was, none of them dared to ask for sweets or ices. After six weeks, with all the money spent and enough petrol vouchers for the return journey, they would drive home in one go, with a flask of coffee for the father, and bread rolls for the children.

They all loved it. This was the start of Ute's love of travelling. During her life she visited 47 countries.

REFLECTION

We will pause now for your own thoughts. We'll listen to a folk song that Ute and Jim used to sing to each other. It's in the Platt language and the translation is in your order of service.

PLATT FOLK SONG

Dat Du Min Leefste Bust

Sung by Hannes Wader

That you are my dearest love
That you know very well
Come in the night, come in the night
And say who you are
Come in the night, come in the night
And say who you are

Come at midnight
Come at one
Father will be asleep, Mother will be asleep
I am sleeping alone
Father will be asleep, Mother will be asleep
I am sleeping alone

Knock on my bedroom door
Press on the latch
Father will think, Mother will think
That it's the wind
Father will think, Mother will think
That it's the wind

When dawn breaks
And the cock crows
My dearest
My dearest
Then you must be gone

My dearest
My dearest
Then you must be gone

UTE'S YOUNG YEARS

In 1971, Ute gained her A Levels and decided to study English, Geography and Education at Hamburg University. In 1974 at an Ascension Day Disco at her student hostel, she met Jim Bass. Both were in their early twenties – he was working in Hamburg. Jim asked her out to the cinema and at first she wasn't sure – she said she played with the idea of hiding in the library rather than go with him. But she did, and they began to see each other. Eventually Jim moved into the hostel with her for three months.

Then Ute left Hamburg to study American Literature at The University of Texas in Austin on a Fulbright Scholarship. During that time she travelled in Mexico and the Southern States. After her studies, she travelled around the US and Canada, hitchhiking or on Greyhound buses. This was a wonderful and special time for Ute – she was independent, away from home and travelling at the end of her studies. It was a time in her life she never forgot.

When she came back to Hamburg in 1975, Jim was still working there and they got together again. In 1976 Jim returned to England to find a job and instead, looking in the Daily Telegraph, he found a job back in Germany in Munster. He and Ute commuted at weekends between Munster and Hamburg.

In 1977 Jim returned to Hamburg and they moved into a flat together. Ute was still studying at the university and, in 1977 she obtained her MA in English, Geography and Education. After teaching at various schools in Hamburg, she obtained her full teacher qualification in 1979.

Ute taught at a Grammar school in a deprived part of Hamburg between 1979 and 1985. She was strict but very popular with the children, as they saw a kind and loving nature behind the strict teacher veneer. An example of this was during a school trip when she confiscated the children's water pistols. On the final evening, she crept into the dormitory and fired the water pistols at the children in bed, and then gave them the midnight feast she had prepared for them.

Ute was promoted to Studienratin in 1979, which meant that she was a civil servant. In 1981 Ute and Jim married quietly. They invited Ute's parents as witnesses and told everyone else afterwards.

Ute and Jim were together for 45 years, with 38 happy years of marriage, and their lives have been filled with wonderful travel and adventure.

In 1983 they went on the first of their many adventure holidays. Jim was working with a Ugandan company and they were invited to Uganda. They were escorted by armed guards because of rebels. They went across into Zaire and on the way back were ambushed by drunken Ugandan troops.

Afterwards they hired a car and drove, unescorted, through game reserves in Kenya. They had a wonderful time seeing wildlife - until they hit a major snag when the car was bogged down in an old river bed. No cars came by and they lived on a pineapple for two days. There was nothing for it but to walk alone through the game reserve bush. After walking for 15 miles they came across a male lion. They decided to walk a bit quicker! Eventually they found help and later it later turned out that the lion had been stalking them for four miles!

REFLECTION

We'll pause again for a song that Ute and Jim have chosen, with its memories of those young days.

I Can't Keep It In, Cat Stevens

LIFE IN ENGLAND

In 1985 Ute and Jim moved to England where they settled. Ute worked as a lecturer at the German Institute in London for ten years.

During this period she underwent fertility treatment several times, and eventually became pregnant with twins. Unfortunately an incompetent doctor carried out an amniocentesis in the 18th week and one baby died. In spite of the danger, Ute refused to have the second baby aborted. However it eventually came in week 22 and did not survive. After this they tried to adopt, but were considered to be too middle class.

Ute continued her teaching career, keeping busy. She taught German at John Ruskin 6th Form College in Croydon from 1994 until 2000, followed by A Level German at Guildford College and finally Basic Skills at Guildford College and Merrist Wood.

Ute retired in 2012. Jim had been made redundant in 2008 and this was a stroke of luck as they were then able to go on long adventure holidays earlier than they might have if he had continued to normal retirement age. There were wonderful trips to Norway, China, Canada, India and the USA. Ute's dream was to go to New Zealand and they were able to do so in 2018 before her diagnosis.

Ute was always filled with energy. As well as loving travel and day trips, she enjoyed walking, swimming and yoga. She started learning French in retirement.

During this last year, Ute told Jim that her only regret in life was that she had not had children. They both agreed that there had been much wonderful compensation in their devotion and love for each other and in the adventures and travel they had shared.

In 2016 two of Ute's sisters, Anke and Wiebke, had cancer and Ute went over to Germany to nurse and care for them. When her younger sister, Make, had a stroke, again Ute cared for her. Sadly her two sisters died of cancer, and then in a cruel twist, Ute herself was diagnosed with small bowel cancer, three months later. She was operated on but it was not possible to remove the tumour.

At Christmas 2018 Ute was given five days to live but she recovered, had chemo, and she battled on until the 14th of August when she died peacefully, at home, with Jim at her side.

She leaves a huge gap in Jim's life and in the lives of all who loved and appreciated her for her kindness and generosity. She will be greatly missed.

REFLECTION

We'll pause again and listen to a piece of music Ute loved, as it reminded her of her happy time in Texas.

Miles and Miles of Texas, Asleep at the Wheel

CARING, SELFLESS UTE

Ute was selfless and kind. She cared more about others than herself, and would do anything for anyone, always sensitive to others. If you were in trouble, then Ute was always there.

She was extremely intelligent, but always modest and not boastful. She was sceptical and questioned things and questioned certain people. She hated arrogance. She was open and honest and could be very direct, telling you straight what she thought.

She was determined and this showed in the way she handled her own illness with stoicism and courage. She was a real fighter – her oncologist was amazed by her fighting spirit, calling her Wonder Woman. The nurses who cared for Ute admired how she never complained – they said she made them feel special. She was the one to help everyone else deal with the situation.

Messages of love and appreciation

Jim is grateful for all the help and support he has had both during Ute's illness and since her death. He has been comforted by the many cards and messages he has received. All have common threads running through them. Here are a few messages that say it all:

From some neighbours:

Ute was a wonderful vibrant person, fabulously energetic, happy, intelligent, caring (so, so caring of other people). An amazing person.

From a colleague:

Ute was a very special friend to me and I will miss her dearly. I enjoyed her wit and sense of humour, and even throughout her difficult illness, she managed to retain her sense of humour. She was so brave and positive and was a fine example to us all.

From two old friends

Ute was a loving, caring lady. We have been good friends for over 50 years. I will remember her with great affection.

Ute has been so courageous and my admiration for her is unparalleled. She was a lovely, interesting, amazing girl – so thoughtful and caring of others. A special friend.

A friend of Ute's, Katja, will now read an email message she sent to Ute before she died. The translation is in your order of service.

Katja's Words

Even though we have seen less of one another during the last few years, you are still a large part of my life. I remember when I visited you in Hamburg, I was allowed for the first time to use the electric mixer to whip cream on my own, and that I really taxed your patience, as I simply could not get into my head the right order of week days.

So now it sounds, as if you will soon be going on your final journey and no one can come with you. I do not know how to deal with this. Eventually the time comes for everyone, but it is too early for you. I shall miss you, but I have wonderful memories, which will remain with me. It is a little crazy to wish you a good journey. I do not know where it leads or whether there is in fact a goal. At least I wish that your departure will not be painful.

I love you

Katja

A Letter to Ute from Jim

When Ute was given five days to live last Christmas, she and Jim wrote a letter to each other, which Jim now treasures. He would like us to hear his letter to Ute:

My Darling Ute,

If I could have my life again, and were to meet you, I would be the happiest man alive.

You have brought me such happiness and love during the 44 years, which we have known each other. You have always supported me throughout my life and sacrificed your own career for me.

You once asked me, why I loved you so much.

I can honestly say that I have never loved anyone in my life so much as you. You are kind, considerate, gentle, loving, intelligent, beautiful, modest and above all selfless.

Even in your present situation, you are only thinking of other people. I would have loved to have you longer with me, but we managed to squeeze more into our life than most people.

We travelled to many countries in the World and even managed to visit your dream destination, New Zealand, this year. Your tally is 47 countries.

You taught at various schools in Germany & England and made a huge impression on everyone you met, parents, teachers and children.

You have many friends, who knew that when things got tough, Ute would be there for them.

I shall miss you, when you are gone, but you will always be with me.

You are a quite remarkable person and I am so proud to call you my wife.

Ich liebe Dich so sehr

CLOSING WORDS

The first part of our farewell for Ute is drawing to an end and in a moment we will follow her to the graveside for the committal.

This has been a celebration of Ute's life and her achievements. As we say goodbye to her, there is consolation in the thought that no life is ever completely lost. We all live our lives as a consequence of the lives of others and it is clear that Ute's life made a positive impact on you all, and you feel grateful that she touched your lives.

Nelson Mandela said –

What counts is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

We can see from the tributes to Ute today that her life has been significant – she has made a difference. She will be sorely missed, but she leaves happy memories and positive influence. As we have heard, she provided a great example of how to lead a good and successful life, her greatest legacy, her kindness and caring nature that touched so many people. She was a much loved teacher, a loyal sister and friend, and a constant, faithful, loving wife. Despite the ups and downs and disappointments, hers was a rewarding life which gave joy to others. As you think about Ute's life and cherish her memory, she will live on in your hearts and minds, and the way you live your lives.

On behalf of Jim, thank you for your kind help and support and for being here today. In a moment we will make our way on foot to the graveside nearby for the committal. If anyone would prefer, there is a golf buggy so please make yourself known if you would like a lift. Jim will be very pleased if you will all be able to stay afterwards for refreshments back here. If you'd like to make a donation in Ute's memory you are invited to support Cancer Research UK.

As we leave the Pavilion, we will hear a favourite song that Ute wanted played today, *Yesterday* by the Beatles. Please will you stand

EXIT MUSIC

Yesterday, The Beatles

THE GRAVESIDE COMMITTAL

We are gathered in this peaceful spot for the committal of the body of Ute Bass.

Today we have remembered Ute's life with love and appreciation – hers was a life well lived. No-one should be afraid of death itself: it is as natural as life. All that has life has its beginning and end. What is left behind is love, in the words of this short poem:

Love Lives On, Anon

Those we love remain with us
for love itself lives on,
and cherished memories never fade
because a loved one's gone.
Those we love can never be
more than a thought apart,
far as long as there is memory,
they'll live on in the heart.

THE COMMITTAL

Here, in this last act, as we commit the memory of Ute Bass to our hearts, we commit her body to the earth which sustained and nourished her for so many years, and which regenerates all life.

Ute will be part of this peaceful place for all time; through the mists of autumn and the coolness of winter, through the freshness of spring and the warmth of summer, she will be at peace.

ROSES FOR UTE