

Hazel Mason

In Celebration



HUMANIST
Ceremonies

St Paul's Chapel, Exeter Crematorium

1 pm, 2nd December 2018



Remembering Hazel

Hazel was born on 20th January 1923 to Stan and Maud Pettitt in Birmingham where she grew up with her sisters Win and Carol.

From Colmore Road Junior School she moved on to King Edward VI School, Camp Hill and then won a scholarship to the prestigious King Edward's School for Girls. She had a great aptitude for art and English and gained her School Certificate in July 1939 'having attained the standards shown in seven subjects'.

At the start of World War Two Hazel was evacuated to the home of Brigadier General Potter in Cheltenham from August to December 1939, but she returned to Birmingham to attend the College of Arts and Crafts in January 1940. As so many people had been called up, there was a lack of trained teachers, so while she was still a student, Hazel taught part-time at a variety of schools in the West Midlands and at the College of Arts and Crafts itself.

It was at the college that she met Ted who fell in love with her at first sight. They lived in the same area of Birmingham and would cycle to and fro to college. Ted always made sure that Hazel got home safely and he mended her punctures. Hazel came to rely on Ted and affection turned to love. Ted was the love of her life.

The war shaped the next part of their lives with Ted joining the RAF and training as fighter pilot in South Africa while Hazel graduated with the Art Teacher's Diploma (ATD), and a Postgraduate Teaching Certificate. In September 1944, she was appointed to the post of Assistant Mistress at the School of Arts and Crafts, Southport, Lancashire. There she worked both in the Junior and Senior Art Schools. Her salary was £16 a month and that was for a full week's work as well as two evenings' teaching.

After returning to Birmingham in December 1945, Hazel was appointed Head of Art at Sutton Coldfield High School. Ted had returned to Birmingham after his demob to complete his Art Teacher's Diploma. They got married on 10th August 1946 and Hazel had to give up teaching - married women were not allowed to continue their careers at the time. After Sue, Cherry and Penny were born and were old enough, Hazel returned to work, part-time, teaching girls P.E. at Moseley Road School of Art. She didn't have any training but she was very well co-ordinated and would read up the rules of hockey or

netball the night before. Her sporting prowess continued late into life and when she was at The Lodge she always won the quoits competitions. In 1969 she resumed her career as an art teacher at George Dixon School.

Ted and Hazel spent their early married life in Kings Heath and moved to 73 St Denis Road, Selly Oak in the early sixties where they lived together for fifty years. Selly Oak was convenient for Ted when moved to Shenley Court Comprehensive School, as head of art and then head of the upper school. Hazel's grandchildren, David and Wendy, went to the school.

Hazel and Ted welcomed the opportunities which early retirement gave them for art, travel and then being grandparents. They had time for their creative work, holding exhibitions and selling their paintings. Hazel added to her formidable skills with courses in photography, hand and machine stitched textiles. She became the secretary for the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, and won a prestigious place for her art work at the Mall Gallery in London.

They also travelled abroad a lot, visiting Sue and Garry in Germany and the United States, and holidaying with the Woodlands Travel Club in places such as Norway, Egypt and Russia.

Grandchildren arrived in the eighties: David and Wendy; Kim and Paul. When Sue and Garry returned to live in Birmingham, David and Wendy spent a lot of time with their grandparents. Paul and Kim also visited frequently and all enjoyed art work with Hazel, who was now known to one and all as Moppy.

Moppy and Opa weren't able to be at all their grandchildren's weddings but Hazel did meet all her great grandchildren. And after she moved to Devon she was able to see more of Cherry, David and Kim and their families, and also received more frequent visits from her nephews and nieces, Peter, John, Sally, Julie and Mark. She moved into the Lodge, Spicer Road, Devon, where she joined in everything for as long as she was able to and where the staff gave her wonderful care. The family would like to thank them for that.

There was great sadness when Ted died in February 2012 after nearly 66 years of marriage, a wonderful, loving partnership, always hand in hand.

Her memory may have failed her, but positivity, kindness, and compassion to her family, friends and carers never did.

And now for memories from Penny, Cherry, Sue and Paul.



Penny

Mum, a creative, encouraging, supportive, strong, positive and most all, a fun person. Always welcoming with a big smile.

At home: the kitchen full of paints, dyes, and pastels. Her creative refuge, oblivious to its primary function. Pyjamas singeing over the boiler. But, none the less she managed to stucco the ceiling after a failed experiment of cooking rice in her favourite pressure cooker. Sprouts fared little better, but her cornflake treacle tarts and homemade ice cream were gorgeous.

Often sat at her sewing machine for hours, sewing countless cushion covers for pupils from their tie dye squares, or stringing numerous pottery pendants for them.

Holidays: Mum perched on a rock, sketchbook in hand capturing her favourite streams and waterfalls of Wales. A shriek as she swam off Dyffrin beach, soon flashing to all as she struggled to release a jelly fish from its new home of her swimming costume.

Walking often seemed more like a game of hide and seek, with Mum disappearing without notice behind some tree, rock, or rusty metal structure, camera in hand, seeking that perfect picture for future reference

Her wicked sense of humour: one day when Cherry and I had strained to get her to the top of a particularly steep canal bridge in her wheelchair she happily mentioned to passing stranger that we had only done it so we could push her in!

And, of course, that persistent question every time we left the house ... "Have you got a hanky", probably as a direct result of us never needing one as she always had paper handkerchiefs stuffed everywhere.

Fun times, and, yes Mum I do have a hanky.



Cherry

Moppy, what can I say, apart from how lucky I feel to have had you as my mother?

Witty, warm, caring, colourful, quirky, defiantly a bit scatty at times and with a streak of determination / stubbornness. She was also modest. she once told me that she'd only gone to art collage because her older sister had gone, who she thought very talented, I'm not sure she ever realised how exceptional her own work was.

Just as well she did go there as it was where she met dad, two 17 year olds who would spend a life time happily together. I remember them as inseparable, still walking holding hands on their daily walks to the park in their 80's. They loved the countryside, taking us to the Clent and Licky Hills, Mum telling us the names of the wild flowers on our walks. In the school holidays the were wonderful caravanning trip in Wales (as Penny has described) and trips to Torquay to visit family. I remember going round Bishops walk to Anstey's cove and dodgy sailing trips in Lilian's ancient dingy, Mum warning us to kick our wellies off if it capsized.

She was always "a people" person welcoming our school and university friends into the house always cheerful and pleased to see people, ready to chat to everyone. Something she continued to do, making new friends in the lodge and going to visit those less mobile in their rooms.

Lucky enough to be able to retire early Mum and Dad were able to travel extensively, Rome, Venice, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, Prague, Swiss and Austrian Alps, Norwegian fjords, Egypt, Russia, America, the list goes on. She loved just as much trips taken in the UK; one of her favourite places was north Wales where she had spent many of her own childhood holidays and taken us as children. She loved the flat in Harlech and evening strolls on the beach. The area inspired much of her art work. Mum and I would go through her photograph albums together and she would tell me how lucky she felt to have seen so much and done everything she'd wanted to do.

Looking at the family albums with the pictures of grandchildren and great grandchildren gave her even greater pleasure as did their visits. She was such a positive person always looking on the bright side, rarely complaining even when her health was less good and always pleased to see you.

It's been a privilege to have spent more time with her last years, since her move to Devon and the Lodge where she was looked after her so well. But for me the memories from

childhood and the great start in life she gave us will always be with me. The image of her and dad sat in deck chairs at the end of the day on the beach in Wales as the tide came in will last forever. Dad had made the challenge, first one to move is a sissy, so they sat there surrounded by water silhouetted against the evening sunset giggling and of course embarrassing us, we told amused onlookers we had “problem parents”. With the waves lapping around their posteriors, it was dad who moved first, Told you she was stubborn/determined.



Sue

Garry and I were fortunate to be living around the corner from Mum until she moved to Devon in 2015. We saw a lot of her and she was cheerful and good company, very rarely grumbling about anything. She paid a lot of attention to our children, David and Wendy and also knew James and his family from an early age.

Most of my memories of Mum are associated with being outside. I remember childhood holidays in the caravan at Talybont, North Wales, and later at the flat in Harlech, exploring the hills and playing on the beach. We also went on lots of walks over the Lickey Hills and picnics on Kinver Edge in the Midlands. Another memory is a trip along the river at Stratford-upon-Avon resulted in the rowing boat sinking slowly, and us all laughing hysterically as we made a frantic dash for the bank. We didn't get very wet except for our feet. Another happy memory is a camping trip with Mum and Dad in North Carolina, and the sound of zips on tents will always make Garry and I smile

Latterly, trips round Manor Park and to the Clent Hills became very special memories. I can particularly visualise a walk with David, Mum and Dad in April. Suddenly from a lovely sunny day, it started to snow, and we have a wonderful photograph of us, with smiling faces, covered in snow. A few minutes later the sun came out again and it all melted. In January 2008, on Mum's 85th birthday, she walked the length of Walton Hill with Paul and Kim. I went back to collect the car to meet them at the other end, and suddenly wondered if they knew the correct turn off to our appointed meeting place. I have never climbed up the hill from Clent village as fast!

I also remember on another occasion, after Dad had died, James and Garry pushing Mum up to the top of Clent via the invalid path, and having a picnic on a brilliantly sunny but frosty January Sunday with fantastic views of the distant mountains. Wendy and I just needed to carry the food and drink, a much easier task.

Mum loved meeting Hayley at a Boxing Day party in Birmingham, when Hayley bravely encountered the whole family for the first time. She thought Paul and Hayley were ideally suited. Also, after encountering Tim for the first time, Mum told Kim to hang on to him, as Mum thought he was gorgeous looking!

Helen provided her sterling worth to Mum on the day of Dad's funeral, as Helen stayed at home with her. Mum said that the worst thing that could happen, had happened, and she did not want to attend Ted's funeral. Mum and all the rest of the family appreciated Helen's care for Mum on what must have been a very difficult occasion.

Mum was able to meet and love all her great-grandchildren who arrived between December 2012 and April 2018; Harvey, Jasper, Teddy, Ben, Joey, Albie, Allie and Dougie. She was thrilled that David's eldest boy was called Edwin after her husband Ted. It is sad that they will mostly be too young to remember her. We now give thanks for a wonderful Mum, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother.



Paul

On behalf of myself, Kim, David and Wendy, I would like to share a few thoughts and memories of Hazel, or as we knew her, Moppy.

For all of us, Moppy has always been a huge part of our lives for as long as we can remember, with a character I know none of us would, or could forget ...

When you lose someone, however hard it feels at the time, it gives you a chance to remember all the ways they impacted your life. I know her kindness, humour and selfless nature has given all of us our fondest memories from childhood right up to recent months.

During childhood, Moppy would display superhuman levels of patience, be that with marathon monopoly sessions lasting way beyond Christmas Day, or recounting incredible memories of her days as a teacher, her evacuation during the war and my mum getting Cherry and Sue into trouble for years and her falling for it!

She was kind and generous, with Wendy and David telling me her home was the first and last place you would run away to, the best place to be on a sick day and a frequent drop

in on the way home from school. And no matter what the visit, you knew there would always be a chocolate bar or choc ice waiting for you!

Moppy was a real force of nature with a sparky personality and wonderfully weird quirks such as chocolate cake baking at the drop of a hat, which only could be counted truly authentic when complete with a white hair or two! Or leaving mid meal to wash her hair, leaving the rest of the family somewhat confused.

Her fantastic marriage to my late grandad, who were perfectly matched and their relentless mickey taking, adventurous spirit and fierce loyalty to one another is something we can all aspire to.

Most importantly of all we shall remember that as adults we all felt that she was enormously proud of us for everything we achieved, and no matter what, that she had always been there for us and that within those memories she always will be.

For those you that know me well, you will understand it has been a difficult time recently, including having to walk into this room for the second time in a month. However, as you leave today and come to terms with the loss of Moppy in your own way, I will leave you with a question that has helped me recently.


What would Moppy do?

- Whenever thing seem so busy you can't catch your breath, take the time, MAKE the time to spend it with those that matter.
- Next time you see someone that looks lonely, talk to them. No matter who they are.
- If you're thinking it ... Say it ... 'Maybe careful with that one.'
- If something seems scary, uncertain or too hard, don't shy away from it. Would She?

So to sum up, all in all, a fantastic, fun and gracious woman until the end.

She will be missed.



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