

The Funeral of

Margaret Isabel Ford

22nd July 1927 - 22nd December 2018

Hastings Crematorium, 11th January 2019, 11am

Celebrant: Felicity Harvest, accredited by



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The Tribute

Margaret was born in London in 1927, the middle child of Isabel and Charles Western. Charles worked for Spriggs department store in Tottenham Court Road, and specialized in measuring up for fitted carpets, and Margaret always remembered him as being fantastic at maths as a result. She had an elder sister, Barbara, and a younger brother, Ken, who remembers her as being very kind to him when they were small, and reading to him.

The children would walk a mile to school in the morning, a mile home again to lunch and another mile back after lunch, before finally walking another mile home in the evening. Those evenings were spent knitting or reading, while listening to the radio or the wind up gramophone. Margaret remembered going to bed with woolly jumpers over her nightie and a hot water bottle. In the mornings she would be fascinated by the icy patterns that developed on the inside of her bedroom window in the winter. And as she grew older she remembered the liquid makeup she wore freezing on her dressing table.

The three children were evacuated at one point in the war to distant relations Molly and Jack in Yatton Keynell (**pron Kennel**) in Wiltshire, where Jack was a carter on a farm. She had happy memories of that time, particularly of the shire horses, and riding on the hay carts.

Margaret didn't stay long in Wiltshire, though, but returned to the hazards and adventures of wartime London, leaving Ken behind – an introduction to farm life which served him well in the future.

She has a narrow escape when, nearing home one evening, she managed to dodge down by a wall to escape a doodlebug. Her parents, and all the neighbours, had chicken houses in their back gardens, and these were all blown down, and the chickens escaped. But the force of the blast was such that it also blew the feathers off the chickens, and it's hard to recognize a chicken without its feathers. So, the neighbours simply divided up the chickens between them, so they all had the same number that they started out with, but with no idea as to whether

they'd got their own hens back.

Margaret left school at 14, the Barratt Street Trade School, where she had studied hairdressing, and she began work as an apprentice at a hairdressers near Harrow, earning a princely ten shillings a week. She worked in London through the rest of the war, and her memories included many good times, particularly when she went out dancing with friends, which is how she met Tony.

They married on the 17th March 1952, and Jeremy was born in August 1956, just as they were about to move into a brand new house in Bedhampton. Jeremy weighed only two and a half pounds at birth, and needed feeding constantly in order to help him survive. Margaret's love of water and of nature must have meant that the views over the Solent from her new home were a comfort and an inspiration to her in those difficult times.

Tony's job with the generating board meant that they moved around as a family, leaving Bedhampton for Woodingdean, and then on to Battle, so Margaret, who loved gardening, got to create and nurture a new garden in each home. They never lived far from the sea, and the family holidays were all to the seaside, too, often to Norfolk, or to Lymington.

The difficult times continued, though, alongside the good ones. Jeremy's illness and frequent stays in hospital were demanding for Margaret, of course, and when he was in Great Ormond Street she would regularly make the journey up to London to spend the day with him, walking a mile and a half to the station and a mile and a half back, before making Tony's dinner and walking Nicky the dog: a routine which must have been incredibly tiring as well as emotionally demanding. But she always put others before herself.

Later on, Tony's heart condition meant that she had to provide him with much care, as well, until his sudden death in 1994, and Margaret herself was never in the best of health in later years.

But after Tony's death, she developed a new passion, shared with Jeremy, for birds and nature, and particularly for Rye Harbour Nature

Reserve. They had a static caravan at Rye Bay for 13 years, and spent a lot of time there. There were some very special times. Jeremy had a key to the reserve for a while, and once, for her birthday, he drove her down to the Mary Stanford Lightboat House so they could have lunch right by the sea.

Margaret already knew the area – the summer war broke out, the family took one of their rare holidays at Winchelsea Beach. Margaret's luggage went missing on the train and had to be delivered from the station by the man who drove the water cart. She felt she "had come home," when she started visiting the area again, and the connections turned out to be strong over all those years. When talking to a local fisherman who Jeremy knew, called Jimper Sutton, it turned out he was the son of the man who drove the water cart all those years ago when her luggage went missing.

She loved knitting. Ken and Yvette lived in the Transvaal for a while, working at the Jane Furse Memorial Hospital, where the nights were cold and there was a need for blankets to keep the children warm. First her mother, Isabel, and then Margaret, began to knit squares and make them up into blankets, and the children of Middleburg had some protection from the night air. She read novels, and listened to music, including some new tastes she picked up from Jeremy, including Enya who you heard when we came in. And she was a great plain cook, putting the skills she had learned from her mother to good use – a "meat and three veg" cook.

She spent the last nineteen months of her life at Saxonwood, where she received excellent care, but her health continued to worsen, and she finally died on the 22nd of last month, with Jeremy and their neighbour, Kate Southouse, at her side.