

Patricia Margaret Hosking

19th September 1953 – 4th November 2018

Tribute

Patricia Margaret Bolter was born on the 19th September 1953 in Bledington, near Stow on the Wold in Gloucestershire, to Jack and Margaret. Jack had a smallholding and was also a gardener later in life. Margaret was from a farming background, and as well as being the homemaker, worked on the smallholding and also ran a bed and breakfast concern. Pat has three older brothers, David, Anthony, Colin and a younger sister Sylvia.

Pat went to the village primary school and at eleven years old, went to the nearest secondary school, which involved a bus ride to Chipping Camden. She tolerated school, was often late getting up, and had to be chivvied to catch the bus, and although she enjoyed playing netball, she didn't feel that she was particularly good at anything academic.

Her first job, aged nearly seventeen, was as a filing clerk in Oxford and she used to travel by train. A year later, in the early part of 1972, she was set up to meet Keith, by a former school friend, who had suggested to Keith that Pat would be a suitable person to give his longish hair a cut. I asked Keith whether she did a good job and his reply was that it didn't put him off getting to know Pat better. Pat was at this time working as a nanny for a family in Ledwell and looking after their two children.

She and Keith dated: visits to the local pub, discos, the cinema, the film 'Fantasia' sprang to Keith's mind, and supper at Pat's house. She went on holiday with a friend to Austria and when Pat said that she might like another similar holiday, Keith asked, "Why don't you marry me instead?" It took her a little while to decide, but they were married on the 21st April 1973 and lived in a flat in Bledington for six months.

They then rented a house in Witney from the company where Keith worked as an electronic engineer. At this point Pat was working at the G.P.O. in Oxford as an emergency line telephonist and she drove their MGB GT to work. She then became a receptionist at the quarry firm Amey Roadstone, then as a telephonist at Smith's Industries where Keith worked, and they travelled to work together.

In 1976 they bought their first house in Great Rollright, nearby to the stone circle. Their first child, Thomas was born in 1977 but sadly their next baby, Robert, died aged only twelve days. Michael and Kenneth came along in 1980 and 1984 respectively, and the family was complete.

Debbie, a close American friend from these days, has written extensively about Pat's friendship and kindness to her in the days when she was away from home, as her husband was in the American air force, stationed in Upper Heyford.

They went on walks with their children and Pat's dog and talked a lot about all sorts of deep and thought-provoking issues, including religion. Pat initiated Debbie into British food - Toad in the Hole - and customs - Guy Fawkes' Night - and she

encouraged Debbie to look around her and enjoy the beauty of nature in the moment. Debbie describes Pat as a very special person with a 'gentle and sweet spirit'.

August Bank Holiday 1985 saw the Hosking family move south following Keith's job and their house, 'Hill View' in Croscombe, has been home for the past thirty-three years.

As well as being the homemaker, the gardener, the lynch-pin around whom Keith, the children, in-laws, grandchildren, have revolved, Pat has also had a job at Tesco, which started as a temporary Christmas job but extended for twenty-one years. Pat also worked at the Croscombe Primary school as a dinner-lady and thus got to know many children and parents in the village. In 2012 Pat took early retirement and became the carer of Keith's mother Christine, until her death in 2014.

Pat never did get to return to Austria or, indeed, anywhere abroad, but family holidays were often spent in Cornwall or Devon where the family either camped or rented a cottage. They had a memorable holiday on Alderney when the sun shone for the whole two weeks, although Pat said that it did rain on one day. There was one year that they ventured on a camping holiday into Wales, where they experienced the remains of a hurricane, and while Keith slept through it all, Pat and the children hung on to the tent. Wet through, they returned home and then to a calmer Cornish holiday.

Pat always enjoyed taking their dogs for long walks locally and further afield. She also loved gardening and her garden with a stunning view over Croscombe is indeed a place to find joy and beauty. She enjoyed watching television: crime series such as 'Midsomer Murders', gentle reality programmes such as 'Bargain Hunt' and 'Come Dine with Me'. She enjoyed pop music of all eras and dancing; she was a big 'Strictly' fan.

Her number one hobby however was her family. Pat hated photographs of herself but there is one family photo from which love, pride and contentedness emanates. Pat was a wonderful mother of Thomas, Michael and his wife Sarah, Ken and his partner Liz and an adored nana of Jessica, Scott, Mia and of Liz' children Carl and Deanna.

A particular memory of Kenneth of his mum being caring and kind, is of a day when he was at Croscombe Primary School, and he and his friends were playing a game called 'the train'. At one point he fell over and grazed both his knees and chin, and naturally enough, Ken ran to his mum but, obeying the rules of the school, Pat had to send him to another dinner-lady. When they got home however, she put her arms around him and gave him the love and attention that she has given him and, indeed, his siblings, throughout their lives.

Pat's illness came out of the blue and has progressed rapidly. Her care from the St Margaret's Hospice team in Yeovil was, as always, compassionate and faultless. Keith was able to be with Pat at the end of her life and during the weekend before she died, she knew he was there. He has the comfort and reassurance of having

been able to do that and knowing that she was, after forty-five years of marriage, quite simply, 'the love of his life'.