

Patricia Joyce Newell
29th September 1935 – 15th May 2019

Pat was born to Len and Mabel Hendy, in Swaythling, Southampton four years before the start of the Second World War. Pat's sister Jan remembers the disruption and difficulties the War brought to their family. Pat's mother did not want her children to be evacuated so once the bombing started, she took them to stay in their Aunt's house in Bournemouth. This only lasted for a short while before they returned home to Len who had stayed behind to continue his work fighting the fires. But it was dangerous, as day after day and night after night, the German bombers devastated Southampton.

On one occasion when Pat was still young enough to be taken out in her pram, Mabel had gone to a local shop when an air raid started. Mabel insisted that the shopkeeper let her out to return home even though the sirens had sounded. With Jan squashed into Pat's pram, Mabel ran home as fast as she could keeping cover under the trees. A little later, she was shocked to find out that the shop had received a direct hit and some of the people who had taken shelter underground had died.

Even though Pat was not very old during the war years, she had to do her bit to help her mother. One day Mabel asked Pat to go over the road to buy some food with the ration coupons. Unfortunately, Pat did not carry out her instructions exactly as her mother had asked. Instead of coming back with the groceries on her shopping list, she came back with several tins of baked beans and only baked beans, because they were her favourite food!

By the time Pat was of school age, Swathling Primary School had been taken over by the Army. The boundary fence of the school was at the bottom of the Newell's garden and Pat and Jan used to chat to the soldiers through the fence. Their mother, being a kind soul, often invited one of the soldiers to bring his wife to board with the Hendy's. This meant Pat and Jan had to give up their bedroom and sleep on the floor of their parent's bedroom.

Later in the war when the American soldiers were stationed at Swaythling School, much to the delight of Pat and Jan the soldiers handed sweets to them through the fence. The two girls were very good and did not eat all of the sweets in one go. They gave them to their mother who eked them out each week but kept some of the sweets and hid them. That Christmas Pat and Jan received a big bag of sweets not only from their parents but from the American soldiers who also had been squirrelling away sweets for the girls!

After Pat left school she worked in a factory making refrigerators. Being an employee, Pat was allowed a discount on a new fridge. Len, Jan and Pat all contributed some of their hard-earned money and much to Mabel's delight they acquired their first fridge, just a few years after the War.

It was in the early fifties that Pat met Jim at the Top Rank Ice Rink as she was beginning to learn to skate. Jim admitted that although he helped pick up Pat a few times when she fell over, Pat also had to help him to get back up a few times. They had much fun skating together, and a friendship formed which blossomed into romance and a very happy marriage which lasted for over sixty years. Jim said only the other day, 'Pat, my wife, she was the best'.

Both Pat and Jim shared a common interest in cycling, and they used to ride together, taking trips out to the New Forest and the coast. Jim became the proud owner of a new, rather smart Ariel Leader motorcycle. Pat loved putting on her chic ladies' motorcycle trouser suit and riding pinion behind Jim.

In 1961 Jan and her husband moved to Manchester and offered their house to Pat and Jim.

Pat and Jim moved in just after Paul was born. 17 Edwina Close became their life-long home and Gary was born five years later. Over the years Pat and Jim became close friends with many of the other neighbours, Chris and Sandra Slade, the Puckett's and the Clifford's to name a few. It was a lovely community and all the children used to play out in the street, so Pat could always be sure someone was keeping an eye on them, even when Gary was playing 'Fox and Hounds' until nearly midnight!

Pat was a very good Mum to Paul and Gary. Somehow she got them to do what she wanted without having to raise her voice, nor did they get smacked! They remember their Mum's cooking as typical of the era, plain and simple, but always good to eat, especially her beef stew and dumplings, apple pies and fruit cakes. Bringing up the children meant that Pat was a full-time mother and housewife, keeping the house neat and tidy, which was no mean feat, with three men living in the house!

When Gary was old enough, Pat returned to work. She worked in the sports shop Waterhouse and Collings, for twenty-three years. When the family went through a really tough time in 1989 Pat said she could not have got through all the bad times without having her job to go to each day and her friends to support her. It was at Waterhouse and Collings that Pat became close friends with Maureen. One of Pat's favourite nights out was with Maureen and 'the girls' going out for a meal and having a good time.

As the children grew up the family were able to enjoy a week's holiday each year normally staying in a caravan, in Mudeford near Christchurch or Devon. Sometimes with the typical British weather, the caravan roof would leak, and Pat would have to string up a bucket hanging from the ceiling to catch the drips which meant during the night there would be a regular drip, drip, drip!

After the boys had left home and Pat and Jim had retired, they enjoyed holidays abroad. Pat particularly liked going to Greece, where she found the people very friendly and in those days everywhere was so clean. In 1990, Pat and Jim had a holiday of a lifetime. Ever since Pat was a child she had kept in touch with one of the American soldiers who had given her sweets through the school fence. Pat and Jim visited Marion and his wife Elenora in their home in Richmond, Virginia, enjoying their generous hospitality for three weeks.

In her retirement Pat had more time, but she was hardly ever idle. She spent many happy hours completing intricate counted cross-stitch and tapestries. Thanks to her friend Nicole, they were beautifully framed, and she hung them with pride wherever there was a gap on the wall in their home. Another interest of Pat's was collecting anything to do with the Royal Mail. Her cabinets became full of bright red pillar boxes, dinky toys of post vans and even the odd post horn decorated the tops of her cabinets. Apparently no-one really knows why Pat started this collection, but it certainly grew to a considerable size over the years!

Another serious interest of Pat's was playing Scrabble. With Jean, her close friend of many years, the two ladies would play Scrabble whilst Jim and Jean's husband Bill watched films in the next room. In later years Pat carried on playing Scrabble on the computer and Gary would play a couple of games with her every evening which helped Pat through her final illness.

As Pat's cancer became harder for her, she found having these interests gave her some comfort. Pat did not want to 'give in' to her illness. Last year she took up an offer from Jane, Paul's wife for just the two of them to go on holiday to Shanklin on the Isle of Wight. They had a lovely time staying in a charming little hotel and Pat enjoyed the sea view from her bedroom window. The many pictures she took on her Tablet, are a lovely memento of Pat's last happy holiday.