

ENTRY MUSIC

This River, Michael Bolton

WELCOME

Good afternoon and welcome to you all. We meet here today to say farewell to Jeanette Helena Bishop, known always as Nett. While there is great sadness that Nett'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.

I'm Rosemary Taylorson, a celebrant with Humanists UK. This ceremony is for you all no matter what your belief. In keeping with Nett's outlook this will be a simple service, focussing on her life and how much she meant to you, with tributes, poetry and music she liked. Later in the ceremony we will pause for reflection and private prayer.

Before we pay tribute to Nett, it is important that we acknowledge the feeling of loss and sadness you feel, none more so than for Mike. Nett and Mike met when young and were married for 46 years. She leaves a big gap in Mike's life and she will be hugely missed by him, as well as by her family and friends.

Our response to losing a loved one is personal, and we each make our own journey through the aftermath of loss. Although there are no words to take away the pain, it is also true that grief can be eased, little by little, if it is shared and expressed. The purpose of this ceremony is to provide a measure of consolation by remembering Nett and recognising the value of her life.

Let us remember her. We will now hear a family tribute to Nett which it is my pleasure to read for you.

TRIBUTES

Eulogy to Nett

Jeanette was born at the family home in Petersham Avenue, Byfleet, on 21st May 1947. She had a brother, Michael, and two sisters, Angela and Sheila.

She attended St Mary's Infant & Primary School in Byfleet and then West Byfleet County Secondary School.

The family home in Byfleet was close to the local woods and as a girl Nett would often play there with her brother Michael. On one occasion, Nett and Michael were making their way home when Nett, wearing her first pair of jeans, new on that morning, fell in the swamp and was soaked. As she walked home, the new jeans started to shrink and by the time she got home they had shrunk so much, their mum had to cut them off her.

As a child, Nett was unlucky when it came to new things. One year she got a toy sewing machine for Christmas. She was so excited with her new toy, she sat in bed winding the handle for all she was worth, until the bedclothes caught in the mechanism and it broke. She'd had it for about 5 minutes.

Nett and Michael often went fishing together and on one occasion, when Nett was around eight or nine years old, he'd given her a piggyback across a stream that was too deep for her shorter legs, but when it was time to go home, he refused to take her back across unless she ate the minnows that they had caught, which he'd toasted over a fire. She had no choice but to eat the minnows, which she said tasted pretty bad.

On another occasion, as they were walking home across a field after fishing at Wisley, a horse started running towards them. Nett, who was always very nervous of horses, ran at the five-bar gate and dived over it head first. The power of adrenalin.

Fortunately Nett also had happier outcomes to her fishing trips. When she was eleven, she had her picture in the 'Angling Times' holding a 3 pound 12 ounce barbel that she had caught, under the headline "Youth at the helm". She also received a certificate from the 'Angling Times Kingfisher Guild'.

As a young girl, Nett would run errands for the elderly lady who lived next door. On one occasion as a thank-you, she asked Nett if she would like a drink of milk. Nett replied that she would. With that, the neighbour picked up the cat's saucer of milk from the floor and gave it to her. Nett suddenly wasn't thirsty any more.

Nett made life-long friends with Gwyneth and Diane, two sisters who lived next door but one, and Linda who lived along the road. All are here today. Nett and Gwyneth sat next to each other at school. Gwyneth didn't like arithmetic but Nett was quite good at it, so Nett used to help Gwyneth. Right or wrong, they always had the same answers. When they were in their late teens, Nett and Diane used to go to London to the cinema to see the latest films. They went to evening classes together to learn French. They didn't get on very well and only lasted one term.

When she was 12, Nett joined the Junior Red Cross. Later, Nett, Sheila and Gwyneth, who were also members, would catch the bus to Pyrford every Sunday, where they took the tea trolley round Pyrford Hospital, selling tea and biscuits to the visitors in aid of the hospital funds. She successfully completed the first-aid course and received her certificate.

That first-aid training came in useful when Nett was having a caravan holiday on Hayling Island with her Uncle Eric, Auntie Lou and cousin Les. A freak hurricane battered the island and three caravans on the site were overturned. Nett used her first-aid skills to help those who had been injured.

Nett and her cousin Les could be a dangerous combination. On one occasion, Les threw a brick onto the roof of a single storey outbuilding and told Nett to look up. She did and the brick hit her on the head. She got her revenge later though, when she told him to put his hand onto the rollers of an old mangle that was in the garden. When he did, she turned the handle and squeezed his fingers between the rollers. Luckily, neither of them was seriously injured by their experience.

Nett's first job after leaving school in 1962 was in a newsagents in New Haw. She then worked for Britax, in Chertsey Road, Byfleet, where her mum and sister

Sheila also worked. Britax's yard backed onto their back garden, so the journey to work consisted of ducking through a hole in the fence.

In 1966 she joined Charles Austen Pumps, known as CAP. Nett worked in the assembly shop for most of her time at CAP, helping out in the machine shop when needed. It was a matter of pride to her that she rarely got pumps that she had built back from the test department that had failed their final test.

Nett's sister Sheila, future husband Mike, brother Michael and his son Mark and her mum Jean, have all worked at CAP over the years. Nett got on very well with her colleagues at CAP and there was a lot of friendly banter. One day, Graham, who worked in the machine shop, walked through wearing a large weatherproof coat and wide-brimmed hat. Michael said "He looks like Orson Welles." Nett's reply was "More like 'orse 'n' cart." She worked for CAP from 1966 until 2010, when she retired due to ill health, a period of 44 years.

Nett was close to her mum, Jean, known to the family as Flo, as were her brother Michael and sisters Sheila and Angela. Nett used to take her mum and Angie to the Kingston Bingo in her old black and white Ford Prefect, with its three gears and vacuum operated windscreen wipers that slowed down as the car picked up speed and went like the clappers when it slowed down. Regardless of whether or not they had won, they would always stop at the chip shop on the way home.

Nett and Angie also used to go to Weight Watchers together, then stop at the Chinese takeaway on the way home to console themselves if the scales hadn't been kind to them.

Nett and Mike married in 1973, and moved into a tiny flat in Heathside Road, Woking. They lived there for four years, then moved into an upstairs maisonette on the Graylands Estate in Horsell. They were so excited to be moving from their cramped flat to a more spacious maisonette, they slept in sleeping bags on the floor of their new home until they could install their furniture, so that squatters couldn't move in.

Nett suffered with osteoarthritis, which over the years had been getting worse. It made climbing the stairs to reach their front door a very slow and painful task, so in 2005 they moved to a downstairs maisonette. It was fortunate that they moved when they did, as not long afterwards, Nett developed rheumatoid arthritis as well, which came on very suddenly. The move downstairs made Nett's life much easier and also gave them a garden, which she loved.

Nett enjoyed her holidays and she and Mike often went away with her brother Michael, his wife Jenny and their boys Philip and Mark. They enjoyed several camping holidays in Cornwall and when they went to Jersey by car ferry, the ship struck and damaged the loading ramp as it docked in St Helier. They had to wait on board for hours while it was being repaired. After a while, a crane started to lift cars off the ferry one by one. Michael, always the joker, convinced Nett that the passengers had to sit in their cars while they were being winched off. She was not amused.

Nett also enjoyed holidays abroad. She and Mike had several holidays in Spain with Michael and family. The first was in Pineda on the Costa Brava. Their hotel was not what you would describe as luxurious. The breakfast consisted of bacon with a thick rind covered in hair, with fried eggs floating in so much oil that it became known as the 'Torrey Canyon Special'. Fortunately, there was a hut on the beach nearby that sold very good burgers.

Nett and Mike also enjoyed holidays in Goa, Tenerife and Crete, as well as closer to home in Devon, Derbyshire, Hampshire and the Lake District, sometimes with their friend Robert. In later years, Nett's poor health made holidays impossible.

Along with Mike, Nett has been a member of Woking Photographic Society and Guildford Photographic Society, serving as secretary at Woking and treasurer at Guildford. Mike took the photographs and Nett enjoyed the social side of club membership.

She used to enjoy knitting and doing cross-stitch embroidery, but sadly the arthritis in her hands and shoulders put paid to that.

Nett passed away on 8th October at St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey. Mike was by her side, holding her hand when she passed peacefully.

Memories of Nett

From Mike

Nett was not only my first girlfriend, she was my first ever date. I had never been out with a girl before. That's what you call getting it right first time.

On our first date, we went to the pictures, but I messed up. I can't remember which film we thought we were going to see, but they were showing 'Jail House Rock' and the cinema was full of leather-jacketed rockers. We ended up going to the pub.

It was a cold December evening and I was so nervous, I forgot to put the heater on in my Mini. Nett told me later that she was frozen but didn't like to say anything.

Amazingly, I got a second date, then a third ... and the rest is history.

We met when I joined Charles Austen Pumps around a year earlier. I was 17 and had not long lost my mum. As part of my training, I started in the assembly shop where Nett worked and Alf Bruty, the works manager, had asked Nett to look after me and make sure that I was alright – something she continued to do for the next 50 years.

We were married on 18th of August 1973.

When we left work on the day before the wedding, we found that our colleagues at Charles Austen had wrapped our car in toilet paper. They'd put it up on bricks, which we hadn't noticed, so that when we tried to pull away, nothing happened. They'd also put handfuls of the tiny punched paper discs from the telex machine

into the air vents so that when we switched on the fan, they blew into the car, turning it into a snow globe.

I'm sure we must have got some strange looks when we eventually did get away, because they had put a condom over the exhaust pipe so that it blew up like a balloon as we drove down the road.

We were married at Woking Register Office, which no longer exists and had our wedding reception at Byfleet Youth Club, which also no longer exists. We had a lovely honeymoon on the Isle of Wight, which, amazingly, is still there.

Nett was plagued with ill health all her life. She suffered from respiratory problems for many years and developed an avian allergy from the parrots that we had kept for 25 years. After we re-homed the birds and removed all traces of their dust and anything containing feathers, her health improved, but sadly it wasn't to last. She was admitted to St Peter's Hospital seven times this year with recurring chest infections.

Despite all her illness, Nett didn't lose her sense of humour. One of the times she was in hospital, I was reading the description of the lunch she was eating from the menu. I said "It says here 'enriched mash'. I wonder what it's enriched with?" She replied "Lumps."

Nett enjoyed watching rugby union and she supported Leicester Tigers, as do I. She wanted to carry the Tigers logo with her, so she had it tattooed on her arm.

Our brief moment of fame, the only time either of us have been on television, came when we were watching the recording of a match that we'd travelled to Leicester to watch and saw ourselves in the wheelchair enclosure, Nett in her wheelchair and me sitting alongside

She enjoyed gardening and when she could no longer do it herself, she would sit on the patio and give me directions.

Nett was such a warm, kind, generous person. She would always put other people first, often to her own detriment. Sometimes I was irritated at how much she would lose out by putting someone else first, but I wouldn't have had her any other way.

I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to love and be loved by, Nett.

They Are Not Dead, Anon
They are not dead,
Who leave us this great heritage of remembering joy.
They still live in our hearts,
In the happiness we knew, in the dreams we shared.
They still breathe,
In the lingering fragrance, windblown, from their favourite flowers.
They still smile in the moonlight's silver,
And laugh in the sunlight's sparking gold.
They still speak in the echoes of the words we've heard them say again and again.

They still move,
In the rhythm of waving grasses, in the dance of the tossing branches.
They are not dead;
Their memory is warm in our hearts, comfort in our sorrow.
They are not apart from us, but part of us,
For love is eternal,
And those we love shall be with us throughout all eternity.
For love is eternal,
And those we love shall be with us throughout all eternity.

REFLECTION

Memory is personal and we will pause for your own reflections, as we listen to music Nett liked – Eva Cassidy singing *Song Bird*.

Song Bird, Eva Cassidy

CLOSING WORDS

As our ceremony draws to a close, it is Mike and the family's wish that Nett does not go from our view. They have brought baskets of the herb rosemary with Nett's favourite colour yellow ribbons. Rosemary means remembrance, as Ophelia says to Hamlet: 'There's rosemary. Pray you love, remember.' When you leave in a moment, you can, if you wish, come to Nett's coffin and place a rosemary sprig as a gift to say your own goodbye to her.

This has been a celebration of Nett's life. She will be missed, but as we have heard today, she will be remembered for her kindness and generosity. She always put others first. She would want to acknowledge the importance of her family to her and her gratitude to Mike for the life they have had together. Mike would like to thank the care workers who helped him and enabled Nett to stay at home as long as she did. She always wanted to be at home. He'd also like to thank the staff at St Peter's, especially the Palliative Care Team who made her comfortable.

On behalf of Mike and Nett's family, thank you all for your support and for being here today. They hope you will join them afterwards for refreshments at The Cricketers in Horsell Birch. If you would like to make a donation in Nett's memory you are invited to support the Friends of St Peter's Hospital.

As you think about Nett's life and cherish her memory, she will live on in your hearts and minds. We end our ceremony with some words Mike has chosen:

READING

Something Beautiful Remains, Anon

The tide recedes but leaves behind
bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down, but gentle
warmth still lingers on the land.
The music stops, and yet it echoes

on in sweet refrains.....
For every joy that passes,
something beautiful remains.

As you leave the chapel, you are welcome to come up to the coffin and say goodbye to Nett. We'll hear a song she listened to a lot, Billy Fury and *I'd Never Find Another You*. Please enjoy this music as you think of Nett and all that she meant to you. Thank you for being here today.

EXIT MUSIC

I'd Never Find Another You, Billy Fury

ROSEMARY FAREWELL

