

A celebration of life

Doreen Hughes

16 September 1926 – 9 January 2020

11am, Monday 20 January 2020, The Trevelyan Chapel,
followed by Thorncliffe Cemetery, Barrow-in-Furness.



a personal goodbye

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A Tribute To Doreen Hughes

Written by her son, Peter Hughes.

Doreen was born on 16th September 1926, the second daughter of John and Charlotte (Lottie) Cassells. At the time the family were living in the home of her grandparents in Duke Street. Four years later Doreen and her older sister Catherine were joined by Vera. When an aunt and uncle moved to London, prior to taking the £10 assisted passage to Australia, there was an opportunity for her family to move into their own home at 50 Robert Street.

Shortly after leaving school at 15, Doreen was offered a job whilst walking down the lower end of Dalton Road. She had been seen by Cath and her boss Maurice Wright, a well-known photographer, from their first floor window. When Maurice left to become a war photographer, Cath took over running the business.

Doreen recalled the family walking out of Barrow to seek shelter in the fields during the bombing raids. Everyone survived the war. When Maurice returned from the war, he bought a car. He and his wife took their 3 members of staff for trips into the Lake District, the first time Doreen had seen the hills and lakes. That was the start of a life time love affair with the Lake District.

Seeing an advert for a badminton club, Doreen persuaded Cath to go with her. They soon had two lads, George and Alec, eyeing them up. It was George who made the first move and who offered to take her home, on the back of his motorbike as it happened. Doreen was quickly introduced to the Duddon Valley, where George had cycled and later biked with Alec to stay and work at Black Hall Farm at the head of the valley. Along with Alec and his girlfriend, they often stayed at Cockley Beck cottage for weekends, the girls in different rooms, as Doreen was keen to point out. Badminton was also a firm fixture on their calendar.

George proposed at Birks Bridge in the Duddon Valley and they married at St George's Church Barrow on 15th January, 1949. John Cassells was delighted with his new son-in-law, having got on well with him since they first met. George already owned a house in Fife Street. Doreen stopped working once Peter arrived on the scene. Linda was born 3 years later. Weekends were always spent in the Lakes, usually with John and Lottie, in the family Morris Minor – though the passengers had to walk

up any steep hills like the one near Grizebeck. Mum's father died unexpectedly in 1963. By this time Alan had been born and Karen was on the way. Her family was complete.

Mum's life revolved around her home and family. In 1966 Dad bought a caravan and we planned a grand tour to Loch Ness and on to north west Scotland. Weekends were taken with shorter trips and caravan rallies. After a few years Mum and dad decided to keep the caravan at Elterwater (on the Langdale Estate) rather than travel further afield. They loved days spent walking at both high and low level.

In 1976 they moved to 6 Thornfield Park, a bungalow with a decent sized garden. As mum often said, one of the best moves they made. They both threw themselves into developing and enjoying the garden. Moreover they enjoyed walks from the house, climbing to the top of the hill with its superb views over the Channel and Duddon estuary. Dad retired a few years early in 1981, determined to get the most out of life while they were still fit. They joined Hawcoat golf club and decided to learn to swim at Dalton baths. They continued for several years until an injury to mum's arm put paid to both activities.

Their knowledge of the Lake District in a competition at a local hostelry achieved first prize, a trip to Minorca – a chance for Dad to take Mum abroad for the first time. Trips to the Canaries, Jersey and Switzerland followed. Disliking airports, they decided to settle for holidaying in this country, although Mum jumped at the chance to join Karen for an action-packed holiday to the west coast of America, thoroughly enjoying San Francisco. Back home Mum and Dad teamed up with Vera and Bill, making use of Karen's residential caravan near Cockermouth and enjoying various 5-day coach trips around the country.

Mum's spirit of adventure was put to the test with the present of a local glider flight, to be taken within a year. Eleven months later she had summoned up the courage and enjoyed every moment. A present of a flight over Cumbria in a small aircraft from Carlisle followed. She might have had second thoughts if she had known Alan was going to take control for much of the flight.

Mum was 65, dad 72, when their first grandchild arrived but still very fit to enjoy being involved. They adored the grandchildren.

Mum always said the advantage of having two of her children living away was being able to stay with them, exploring new areas, especially when

Karen and David lived in County Durham. At Peter's, they were always looking for jobs to do, mum always taking the view that he needed looking after.

Mum adored animals, loving the family dogs, taking Linda's dog on long walks, by herself once dad found it difficult to walk too far.

Dad's death at the age of 96 on Christmas Eve 4 years ago was a huge blow, coming after 67 years of marriage - in itself a remarkable achievement. It took mum a long time to come to terms with it, especially as her short term memory had started to fail her. Dad's photo hung above his chair opposite mum's, keeping an eye on her, she said. She never lost her sense of humour, often saying she got annoyed with him and kept telling him off for going.

Mum always looked on the bright side, seeing good in everyone, never having a bad word to say about anyone. The sun always shone in Barrow, no matter what was happening on the other side of the window. When ringing and asking what she was doing, "busy doing nothing all day long" was often the answer, usually leading to a joint singalong. She loved listening to easy music, especially her Val Doonican records.

Mum lived her life happily oblivious to modern technology. By this time mum was increasingly relying on Linda caring for her. In the end, like Dad, it was a broken hip, for her the second time, that put paid to her daily walks. This time she didn't bounce back quickly like after the first break six years previously. It accelerated her decline. But right up to the end, she was, as always, smiling and 'fine'.

Now reunited with Dad, rest in peace mum with all our love.