

A celebration of life

Ada Ivy Chapman

18 December 1932 – 20 August 2020

Thursday 10 September 2020, Grenoside Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Ivy was born Ada Ivy Damms, though she preferred to be known as Ivy, and it was only her close birth family who called her Ada. She arrived on 18th December 1932, at 6 Court, Apple Street, Neepsend, Sheffield, and was the third child of eight to Arnold and Gertrude Damms. She grew up with her brothers Walter, Fred, Joe, Arnold, Bryan and Alan, and her big sister Winnie, though Walter sadly passed away at an early age, and only Joe, Arnold and Bryan are now surviving. The family relocated from Neepsend to Parson Cross in 1938, along with the whole neighbourhood. Ivy was educated at Meynell Road School until the age of fifteen; her claim to fame was that she knew Albert Quixall there (who went on to play professional football for Sheffield Wednesday and Manchester United) – she always referred to him as a bighead. In her younger days, Ivy would often spend some of the school holidays in charge of her younger brothers in their pram, being given a bottle of water and some food and told to disappear for the day.

As a girl, she enjoyed going to the pictures, and also used to talk of nights at the dance halls with friends, the lads all on the ‘monkey rack’, watching them on the dance floor. Ivy left school at fourteen, going to work at Burdall’s, and later variously at Swann-Moreton, Bassett’s and Hadfield’s; there, she worked in the director’s dining room, and her family said they never ate so well as when she had that job, as she could bring home whatever food was left over. Ivy fetched up at Bass Charrington in the bottling plant, working alongside her daughter Linda for a time and staying there until she took early retirement in 1983. But it was working at Gilbow’s that she met her first husband, George Alan Reynolds.

They married on Boxing Day 1953, and had their three children, Linda, Pete and Alan Malcolm.

Linda’s Tribute

Mum; what can I say about our mum? She had a tough childhood, a seven year old in World War Two, in a large family. She grew up into a strong, tough lady. She worked all her life to ensure we had food on the table and when our dad suffered a severe stroke aged 35 she had to become both a mother and a father figure to us. At one point I remember her working three jobs each day; she cleaned at a pub in the morning, worked in a corner shop in the afternoon, and did her evening shift at Bassetts’s. So, Mum never had it easy, but I can remember as a child having the most wonderful Christmases with a sack full of toys, which she worked very hard for.

Mum was a strong-willed lady; she lived by routine and was very proud. My brothers and I were often given the sharp edge of her tongue, so to speak, but she protected us in her own unique way. Our mum was a ‘one-off’, a character; she was respected. She could be opinionated! But she was our mum, we loved her and we will miss her very much.

A friend of mine who lost his mum last year said some words that I found very soothing. He said Mum has simply left behind her physical pain and can be with us in our hearts, closer than ever.

As Linda said, Ivy didn't have it easy, especially when her children were younger, but she did find a second chance at happiness when she met Reg Chapman, on a blind date in 1973. They were good for each other; he worshipped her and she thought the world of him. They married on 4th May 1974, living at Heeley, and soon established their credentials as sun-worshippers. Ivy had always enjoyed the beach, though when the kids were young it would be the sands of Torquay rather than the Costa Brava. She and Alan would take the children on the all-night coach to get there, accompanied on their first visit by Ivy's brother Fred and his wife Betty. And Ivy did venture abroad a couple of times back then, with Betty to Marbella, and with Alan to Calella. But it was with Reg that she spent so many wonderful times in sunnier climes. They would usually head to Spain, where Ivy would sit back with a Bacardi and Coke and soak up some rays, though they did venture to Greece and Morocco too.

At home, Ivy would sometimes accompany Reg while he indulged his passion for fishing, and once they moved to Stocksbridge in 1976, the two of them enjoyed nights out at the clubs, from the Peggy Tub to the Legionnaire's to the Victory Club. Ivy never forgot her skills on the dance floors of her youth, and could still show off a mean jive when she got the chance.

As Linda, Pete and Alan grew up and got their own lives, they always knew they were welcome back any time, and Ivy's Sunday dinner would always stretch if they wanted to pop over. Ivy welcomed their other halves, Robert, Cheryl and Diane, and she was lucky enough to become a grandma, or Nannan, to Mark, Robert, Paul, Colette, Lewis and Jo, as well as a great-grandma to Jake, Megan, Bertie, Jessica, Harvey and Tommy. It was Bertie who nicknamed her Nannan Biscuit, which shows the perk he expected when he came round to visit! Ivy and Reg even came away on holiday with Linda and Robert and Ivy's grandsons Mark, Robert and Paul. They took them to Newquay, and also to Blackpool, despite Ivy's longstanding and oft-repeated protestation that the air in Blackpool gave her a headache! Turned out she had a fabulous time, and loved it so much they went on holiday there again.

Ivy was genuinely happy with Reg, and they enjoyed their best years together, but Reg sadly died in February 2003, and Ivy never really got over losing him. Linda, Pete and Alan all did their best to support her. Pete and Cheryl would take her to visit Fred and Betty, and Ivy's brother Joe and his wife Audrey; Alan and Diane took her all the way to France, to stay with Linda when she lived out there; and Linda and her friend Annie took Ivy out to Tenerife a couple of times. But mostly she chose to stay at home, with her telly and a packet of fags.

One thing she always kept was her dry sense of humour, though her favourite comedy of recent years may have been a surprise to many. Alan introduced her to the delights of Mrs Brown's Boys, and Ivy amassed quite a DVD collection of the show. So she was more than a bit giddy when Linda took her to Sheffield City Hall to see the show live as a Mother's Day treat. Ivy not only got to see all her favourite actors perform, but also have a chat with them afterwards (though it did take being that far up close and personal for her to have the revelation that Mrs Brown was in fact a man!). She was so excited to meet her hero that she even forgave him for swearing at her, not something Ivy would have let anyone else away with!

Lockdown was a struggle, and all Ivy's children were glad when they could go and visit her again, offering support as best they could. Linda and Robert even camped nearby in their motorhome in Ivy's final days, so they could visit three times daily; Robert even managed to earn himself the title of 'Sweetie-pie', high praise indeed from Ivy. She was never one who found it easy to express affection, but it is some comfort that, in her final months, she at last learned how to say the words 'I love you' to those she had loved, all their lives.