

A celebration of life

Joyce Holroyd

14 September 1937 – 5 November 2020

Monday 23rd November 2020
Huddersfield Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

Born on 14th September 1937, Joyce grew up in Luddenden Foot with her mum, Mary, and her younger brother Kevin. She was fiercely protective of Kevin, made it very clear to the local bully that no-one was allowed to pick on him, except her! They always looked out for each other growing up; when Kevin's toy yacht sank in the mill pond at Holywell Brook, he always thought it was a mate who had lifted the sluice gate to lower the water level and reveal its position for a heroic rescue – it was only on recent visits with Joyce that she confessed it had been her. Kevin looked after his sister too; Joyce loved to go out to the local dances in Halifax, and he would sometimes go and pick her up on his motorbike, though doing so with his L plates on got him into a spot of bother with the police! Kevin and Joyce remained fond of each other all their adult lives, and this past twelve months Kevin's frequent visits were a great support to her.

Joyce was quite the athlete in her school years, especially at hockey and tennis, and a good student too, going on to take a secretarial course at fifteen and learning shorthand. She also played tenor horn in the CEFA and the Elland Silver brass band, which is, of course, where she got to know Robert. They started out as teenage sweethearts, and in their later years of courting lit up the dance floor jiving to the rock and roll tunes Joyce loved; she was always up for jiving, even in her later years.

Joyce and Robert got married one week after Joyce's 21st birthday, tying the knot at West Vale Church and honeymooning in Rhyl before settling into the little one-up-one-down in Elland that was their first home. Joyce's mum, Mary, loaned them the asking price, a very reasonable £350, and they were delighted to make it their family home, welcoming their first son, David, to the world there, before they upsized to Greystone Avenue. David was joined by John and Stuart, and Joyce was extremely happy with her three boys; she loved looking after them all, though just feeding the household was a full-time job in itself! The lads remember her being pretty strict when they were young; she had to be, or they would have run amok! As David put it, 'She wasn't half upset when I fed laburnum seeds to John, just to see how poisonous they really were.' But she had her softer moments with them too; Stuart remembers her helping to dig out the footings for an extension on the house, and pretending to find pennies in the trench for him to take down the shop and buy some sweets. And when she worked in the local chippy the boys could always rely on a bag of bits when they popped in.

All three of them have fond memories of family camping holidays, in Wales initially, then later in the south of France, where they were sometimes joined by friends Trevor and Christine and their children. Joyce would always bring a book, a classic like *Black Beauty*, and would read a chapter to them every evening in the tent.

Once the children were all at school, Joyce went back to part-time secretarial work in the site office at Balfour Beatty, which she enjoyed, with all the workmen coming in and out. She moved on to David Brown's, where she stayed for many years, always careful to keep work and home life separate so never letting on to her colleagues that her husband was the Managing Director. She was grateful for the opportunities

Robert's job brought them both, though, perhaps especially for giving them the chance to attend one of the Queen's garden parties at Buckingham Palace. Joyce relished the excuse to get properly dressed up, always at her happiest in a posh frock.

And that wasn't Joyce's only brush with royalty; she was proud to have met Princess Anne in Birmingham, an encounter made more entertaining by a parrot wolf-whistling away through the princess's speech. That meeting was due to Joyce's work with the Townswomen's Guild, of which she was a member for upwards of 45 years. She ended up as chairperson of the Elland and Halifax branch, and was the speaker finder for many years, resulting in trips all over the country, including to the Albert Hall as Federation Chair. Joyce had many friends at the Townswomen's Guild, including Pat Stephenson, who, with her late husband Albert, were dear friends for many years. And Doreen Rothwell, who Joyce's family wanted to thank for supplying lovely photos of Joyce during happy times with the Guild.

Joyce also supported Robert in his interests, and was a staunch provider of cricket teas for many years and at many clubs. She loved it, though, making sure everyone was well-fed; the boys would have a picnic at the break, while Joyce would nod off in the car watching the second half, her work done. When Robert laid down his bat and picked up his clubs, Joyce did join him on the green, but the game of golf itself was never her forte. Again she preferred to be making tea and bacon butties at the Halfway Hut as they all played round on Captain's Day. Despite being pretty hopeless at golf, Joyce was always a great joiner-inner, and she was delighted to join in with the social events, more excuses to get all spruced up. And the golf club brought her and Robert some of their closest friends, like Kevin and Lynne, and David and Pam.

David shared some of his and Pam's favourite memories:

Playing golf during 1995 forged our relationship and we started socialising with Bob and Joyce, Kevin and Lynne and Pam and myself. We hit it off so well that we soon started holidaying together in Portugal, Spain, the Lake District and Rutland.

Portugal was our favourite haunt, staying in Quinta da Lago. On our first visit we ventured down to the beach where we sniffed out a bar set up in the sand dunes. Bob and I ordered a beer each and the "girls" wanted a G&T. We got our beers but the G&Ts were taking ages. At last they arrived, in pint glasses!!! As we walked back to our apartment, Joyce and Pam were plaiting their legs due to the amount of alcohol consumed at lunchtime!! They fell asleep in the afternoon.

The resort held various types of entertainment during our stay and Joyce and Bob were always first on the dance floor and last to leave. On these trips we always took our golf clubs and enjoyed many rounds of golf which were always recounted in the clubhouse afterwards.

Bob and Joyce may no longer be around to entertain us but these memories last forever.

And Kevin wrote:

Joyce Holroyd – our little love

Some of our memories of Joyce: as you know, she always referred to everybody as little love; well, she was ours and I'm sure all of yours, those of you are here today and many more who were not able to come.

We went on several holidays with Joyce and Bob: a week in Majorca and several weekends discovering capital cities of interest like Amsterdam, Bruges and Prague in the late 1990s/early 2000s. Two things that stick out in mine and Lynne's minds from our times together: when, in Majorca, we went to a water park and Joyce would not go down

one of the easier slides, but we eventually persuaded her and in the end she said she really enjoyed it. And when, during one of the many dinner dances at Bradley Hall, there was a turn on - someone had a feather boa and Joyce draped it round her and me

while having a dance, and the turn said, 'Oh, is this your husband?' and cheekily she said it was, giving all of us a laugh!

We will always remember Joyce with a smile and a twinkle in her eye! We know she really loved Bob and let's hope they can now be together again.

Joyce was not a great fan of flying, preferring the short hop to Portugal to long-haul journeys, but she was very glad to have seen the places she did, from Niagara Falls to Barbados with Blackley Cricket Club. She greatly enjoyed a couple of trips to both the Alps, to see her grandson, Samuel, ski, and to the family farm in Estonia visiting Sigrid and family; as ever she was happy to help with any job needing doing on the farm.

More recent holidays were enjoyed with John and Moira, and Stuart and Diane, and, of course, the grandchildren. Joyce couldn't wait to become a grandma, to Samuel, Helen, Sarah, Thomas and Emily, made the most of every moment with them and proceeded to live right up to her nickname of 'Naughty Grandma'! Thomas remembers holidays with her, particularly one in Menorca when Joyce got him and Emily up out of bed and took them all 'midnight swimming'. Emily wrote:

The amazing Christmases we always had together with her cooking, the guys all sitting around the telly and the girls setting the tables; the amazing cooking and crafts skills we would always do together when we visited when we were small; certainly my love of animals I feel came from her. Wherever we would go, she would always have a conversation with anyone she would meet and bring a smile to everyone around her.

Sarah also chose a memory of her grandma's cooking:

I remember walking with my sister and Grandma to a little patch of grass near the house. There was a stone wall there with a big blackberry bush all along one side. We'd pick the blackberries so that Grandma had some fresh fruit to put in her pies, aside from the apples in the garden of course. I know it's a cliché, but Grandma made the best apple pies.

While Helen picked a more recent moment to relate:

*One of my favourite memories is from last year; we were walking along the canal in Brighthouse when we saw a man staring at a bee. When we got close, Grandma (as she always did) started talk to him and asked him why he was staring at the bee. His response was, 'Did you know there are over 273 types of bees?' And Grandma responded by saying, 'Oh, I've never bothered to count them,' and walked away giggling to herself.
Still brings a smile to my face.*

Joyce had a wonderful capacity to bring a smile to people's faces; she could talk to anyone, would make friends wherever she went, and was like a magnet at the fair for every lost child around; they would head for her unerringly, somehow knowing that she would take care of them. Even on her trips to Asda she would find someone to talk to, and made a real connection with some of the regular characters; in recent months, when she couldn't go to the supermarket, she was very concerned about the wellbeing of the 'scruffy old man' she used to chat to there.

These months since Robert died were incredibly hard for Joyce, compounded by the restrictions of lockdown. The KOMP screen that Stuart got her, like a small TV that would answer video calls for her, was an absolute lifesaver, allowing her to feel like her family could still 'pop round'. The one family member who could come to see her regularly was her niece Carol, who started off acting as chauffeur for Kevin's visits and soon found that she and Joyce got on famously. Carol said they could have a proper giggle together, and Joyce would often reminisce about happy times with all the family, or the wonderful places she and Robert had visited. Joyce also loved to tell her how proud she was of all her lads, and her grandchildren.

The family asked me to acknowledge today how grateful they are to Carol for all she did for Joyce, from shopping to gardening to making tea, though Carol said that, whenever she went into the kitchen to sort things, it wouldn't be long before Joyce was there at her side, making sure she was doing it right!

Joyce was a true lady, genteel and refined in her ways, with a heart the size of a planet. Empathetic, caring and loving, she is missed hugely, but it may perhaps be of some comfort to think that she is no longer missing her sweetheart, Robert.