

A celebration of life

June Elizabeth Winters

3rd November 1932 - 10th December 2019

2:00 pm - 2:40 pm 3 January 2020 Vale Royal Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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June's Story

"You haven't had your face washed yet! No, you can't come with me - I won't be a second!" With those words, mum trotted down the stairs. If I stretched high enough I knew I could reach the flannel and soap dish up on the landing dresser. Nearly three years old I was not quite tall enough and the dresser and its contents plus my weight brought the whole thing crashing down. Luckily it landed at an angle against the wall with me crouched safely beneath it"

So reads the opening to June's short biographical prose "A Time of My Life and Other Stuff" ... sharing one of her earliest memories.

June was born in Islington, London on 3rd November 1932 to parents Elizabeth ("Etty") Wood and Edward ("Ted") Archer, joining her brother John who was about three years her senior.

At the time June's family rented two rooms at the top of an old Georgian town house and when she was just a few years old they moved around the corner to a similar house in Elizabeth Avenue and this time, the whole downstairs was theirs!

Brother and sister would dash off to school each morning - Ecclesbourne Road infants and junior school - their senses alive to the pungent aroma and the sounds and sights of Probyn's Guinness factory.

June learned dressmaking at school - at an early age - and, encouraged by her dad cultured a real love of reading.

With the advent of the second world war June and John were evacuated but after a relatively short period they returned to find they now had a baby brother "Ted".

An Anderson Shelter installed in the small patch of garden they had at the back of their house - became June's "hidey hole" and she would often sit there "air raid or not" drawing on the pieces of clean meat paper she'd rescued from the butchers.

As bombings in London increased in frequency, June and John were evacuated again - this time to stay on a farm in Truro in Cornwall. Farm life was such a contrast to life in London - June loved it - and the positive impact of her experiences there, stayed with her throughout her life where ever since, she harboured a yearning for the countryside.

As bombing raids in London - certainly during the daytime - lessened they returned home. They would sleep each night on bunk beds installed in many of the underground stations.

June describes the arrival of the "Doodlebug" bomb in her book *"A horrific pilot-less bomb propelled by rocket would be heard droning overhead. Its engine would stop and a deathly silence followed as it plunged to earth. This was a most terrifying time."*

All three children were evacuated again - this time mum and baby brother Ted came too - staying in a hotel in Newquay, Cornwall with other families - quite a different experience to that gained on the farm.

The family returned to London when the war ended, glad to be re-united with Ted/Dad.

But June became seriously ill and nearly died of pleurisy and had to spend several days in a sanatorium. Ill health was to dog her throughout her life.

She started work at De La Rue - a company which manufactures paper and security printed products such as banknotes and with her artistic skills, June was engaged to draw the incredibly intricate scroll patterns.

At the time though June's role was seen as "men's work only" by the Graphic Design Trade Union and she was then transferred to work for one of the Managers as a secretary. For a local party where every guest was invited to bring a record, June took a disc by her favourite, Frank Sinatra. Someone trod on it at the party - it was ruined.

Shortly afterwards a tall dark handsome young man knocked on the door of the Archer household. A dreadfully shy Donald Charles Winters stood at the door having bought June a replacement record.

The two found they shared a lot in common and their relationship blossomed.

In the March of 1954 they got married and they started a family. Deborah was born in 1957 and Kay in 1959.

Three generations lived now in a three storey building on Elizabeth Avenue - June, Donald, Debbie and Kay lived in the middle section - June's brother John and his wife Peg, their daughter Julie and her little brother, Chris at the top and in the lower section Etty (now of course also known as Nanny Archer) and Ted with Ted the younger.

The families seemed really happy.

In her spare time June made lovely clothes for her daughters and developed her needlework, crochet and knitting skills.

An avid reader of The Daily Mirror newspaper, June's political observations of current events were often printed on its 'Letters Page'. She even took Debbie and Kay on the CND marches.

In 1963 though, tragedy struck as Ted Archer - June's lovely gentle and supportive father died and she was devastated. The two were really close and June never really got over his death. She suffered a breakdown and was institutionalised for a brief time.

She was never quite the same again - she suffered on and off for many years with anxiety and bouts of depression which made it difficult for her to hold down a job.

An attentive mum, June often spent time with her daughters passing on her creative skills and during the school holidays taking them with her niece Julie out on trips to galleries and museums - to local parks.

Don and June led a fairly frugal lifestyle but always tried to ensure their daughters did not go short. The family would holiday once a year - often in Ramsgate, not something every family was able to do. When their daughters left home June and Don stopped taking holidays together but enjoyed day trips around London and to the coast, June's health permitting.

Now living in Popham Road in Islington, with John, Peg & Julie moving nearby, and Nanny Archer and Ted next door - the family were still in close proximity to one another. Here, in her new home, as her health seemed to improve for a time and she was able to find work as a Teaching Assistant in a pottery class at the local school - she really enjoyed this role.

When Kay went on to study at the London College of Fashion, mum June helped greatly - helping her daughter through her studies and through some health issues - realising perhaps that she was stronger than she had thought.

In the Nineteen Seventies and Eighties adult education was well provided for in London. June enrolled in several classes and became part of a great friendship group - Dora, Dolly and Florrie especially close. There would be swimming, crafts, creative writing, art - day trips and visits to galleries and theatres - a period in her life that June found culturally, socially and creatively stimulating.

She displayed her art in exhibitions including once at the Barbican and her artworks sold. Don supported her throughout this time helping to buy paints, easels and canvases., their kitchen became June's studio.

In the late Ninety Eighties the family enjoyed a holiday in Rhodes - Debbie and Kay taking Mum and Dad on the first of what would prove many holidays. So there were trips to Menorca, Majorca to Portugal and also to Norfolk and the Isle of Wight.

Kay went on a painting holiday with her mum to Charmouth in Dorset - June loved it. The two stayed at a B&B and joked that the number of cream teas they were enjoying might lead to one or other of them suffering a heart attack.

Well shortly afterwards in 1990 June did suffer a heart attack and had to have a bypass operation. For June the experience gave her a powerful reminder of her own mortality and heightened her appreciation of the world around her - she would point out positive things to cheer people up.

Kay lived in a flat a short way away whilst Debbie had moved to Aylesbury with husband Alan.

In the early Nineteen Nineties with the births of Chloe and then Lewis, June and Don became grandparents. June loved children - she was really good with them. She and Don would visit Aylesbury and Debbie's Family would visit London - - staying at Kay's flat. Lewis recalls "our many trips to London when his Nanny always cooked him and Chloe her special sausages and Smiley Faces on arrival"

Chloe noticed that Nanny was extra sensitive to certain fabrics and often wouldn't wear certain garments for that reason and would always cut the labels out of her clothes. A trait she has inherited!

When Debbie and Alan moved to Cheshire with Alan's new job. It meant that she wouldn't see Chloe and Lewis quite so often but when she did so it would be for longer. She would spend time with them - passing on some of her creative art skills.

In 2009 when presenting to a doctor with some further health problems she learned that during her heart by-pass operation nearly thirteen years ago she had been given a transfusion containing contaminated blood. So as a result June had contracted and been living with Hepatitis C which had been attacking her liver. There wasn't a lot that could be done after all that time.

In 2010 June's husband Don died suddenly.

June became more vulnerable - she was distracted at times and that could lead to people taking advantage.

Kay took voluntary redundancy, rented out her flat and bought a house for herself and June in Winsford. Their house allowed each their own space and independence and allowed Kay to keep an eye on mum. June loved being in a more rural setting and nearer the countryside at last. They went to the theatres in Manchester and Liverpool, took short breaks and sometimes just drove out in the surrounding countryside.

Kay and June found they had lovely neighbours - including of course Debbie and family just around the corner and Debbie's circle of friends who all lived nearby and to whom she became fondly known as "Nanna June". Now June would see her grandchildren nearly every day.

June's health - her body which had given her cause to grumble a little throughout her life - continued to deteriorate. She had back pain, Crohn's disease, osteoporosis and of course cirrhosis of the liver (from the contaminated blood). Breaks became harder - Kay was now trying to tie in visits to a garden centre - which June loved - with the inevitable hospital visits.

An eclectic mix of television viewing provided some entertainment over recent years - showing a penchant for modern irreverent humour. June enjoyed the Simpsons, South Park and the Inbetweeners! also QI and The Last Leg.

Their little dog, Lola became part of their household in 2015 and provided endless hours of entertainment and love.

June would get sleepy quicker, lose her appetite and yet - she could still pass for Maggie Smith's dowager - directing operations with an air of entitlement .. becoming more outspoken.

After a recent fall, when Kay found she couldn't get mum up - she had to go into hospital and sadly this time she didn't come out. She died in Leighton Hospital on the 10th December 2019. Clearly that body that had given her so much trouble finally gave in.



Solace

*When snowdrops proudly raise their pristine heads,
And bring with them the promised gift of Spring,
When daffodils stir forth from wintry beds,
And high above sweet songbirds start to sing,
Then I'll be there*



*When gentle breeze disturbs the sultry air,
And grasses whisper softly in its wake
When sun kissed waves dance on a sea set fair,
And from the beach the children's laughter breaks,
Then I'll be there*

*When drowsy is the hum of probing bee,
And lovers lips are bruised with berry stain,
When early mists enshroud the grassy lea
And every sweet farewell is without pain,
Then I'll be there*

*When hoary frosts enchant the wooded glade,
And the Winter's mantle casts its snowy fold,
When robin waits upon the gardener's spade,
And home and hearth bid welcome from the cold,
Then I'll be there.*

June Winters