

# A celebration of the life of Ann Mason Stone

28 June 1919 – 24 October 2022

15 November 2022, Hither Green Crematorium



*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

Ann was born in Gateshead in the summer of 1919, just a few months after the end of the First World War. She was the youngest child of Janet and James Scott, quite a bit younger than her siblings Grace, Janet and Jimmy, and so very spoilt. She was apparently “a mistake but a lovely mistake” and it was a loving and happy family. She had memories of cycling, netball, and of climbing a hill to see a solar eclipse.

As was usual in those days, she left school at fourteen and began her working career as a comptometer operator for Sinclair’s cigarette company. She met Ron Stone in the late 30’s. He worked in Vickers factory, inspecting military tanks, so when the war came along he was in a reserved occupation, a fact he was rather frustrated by. They married in 1943, with Brian being born in 1944, David in 1945 and Ken, after they’d moved to London, in 1948.

Ron, a Londoner originally, was keen to get back to London after the war, though it was really hard to find anywhere to live because so much housing had been bombed. But he got a job at Harveys Engineering, then found what the boys remember as a slum in New Cross, so the whole family could join him. However, he’d always hankered after working for himself, and a chance conversation at the newsagents where he bought his paper every day led to him buying the business.

This led to a huge change in Ann’s life, as she became the postmistress of Well Hall Road sub-post office in Eltham. It was one of those classic local shops, piled high with everything – real “Open All Hours” territory.

She loved it! In those days being a postmistress was a significant role in the local community. Ron kept on with his engineering work, Brian and Ann modernised the shop, and over time the business grew, until the family had six shops and a wholesale warehouse.

And all the next generation worked in the business at one time or another. Ron and Ann continued to live above the shop till all their sons had left home. The boys remember a happy childhood and a close family. They remember Sunday picnics, cricket club teas, not being allowed to wear jeans, and only smoking when they were well out of Ann’s sight. Although the family weren’t religious, they were involved in the social life of the church, and the boys sung in the choir. This was another way that the family made friends.

Once the boys had left home, Ann and Ron bought their first house, in Blackheath, very close to Blackheath & Greenwich Bowls Club. Ken will pick up the story from here.

*I am going to start by admitting that I have stolen the opening part of this tribute from a cousin of ours who was paying a tribute at her father’s funeral which I think is so apt.*

*And the opening was, **WHY THE SAD FACES**. This should be a joyful celebration of a wonderful Wife, Mum, Grandma, Great Grandma and friend to so many.*

*On many occasions after my father died Mum would say “do you know Kenneth”..... **she** was the only one who called me Kenneth and she did so when either in a serious mood or I was getting told off!!!!*

*Do you know Kenneth I am so pleased that your father went before me.....as I don't think he would have managed on his own" and do you know what, I think she was wrong, MUM WAS THE ONE WHO HATED TO BE ON HER OWN, she was always the last to leave family gatherings, the last to leave a bowls club do, as we found out when she was living with us in Wales the last to go to bed and again as we were told she and her best friend Mary, who is the oldest woman in Wales at 110, the last to go to bed at the care home!!!! Mind you they were enjoying a glass or two of sherry.*

*When I asked her why, she would look at me with a twinkle in her eye and say, "I don't want to miss anything"!!!! and she didn't.*

*She was a people's person she loved company.*

*Mum was an ordinary, loving Mum, and I mean that with so much affection. She had three boys and allowed us to flourish in our own way. She worked in the family business and never really dictated on any issues. She was just so proud to see her husband and children grow the business and support them in whatever she could to achieve that goal.*

*She was **also** an ordinary loyal and caring wife. Again, carried out with affection. Remember they married in 1943 when the role of a wife was to stay at home. So many happy years were spent helping her family prosper in any way she could. It was more than enough for her during that time.*

**THEN** it all changed, Mum was introduced to Blackheath and Greenwich Bowls Club.

*Now Dad had always loved sport, any sport, **MUM DIDN'T**. So when they decided to join the club it came as a major shock to us that Mum joined as a playing member but as she explained at the time, "I have been a Rugby Widow, a Cricket Widow and I have no intention of now becoming a Bowls Widow!!!!*

*What a great decision that was. Mum certainly didn't become a bowls widow, she became a Bowls Winner, and as you have just heard winning many Club, County, English and the crowning Glory, the British Isle Triples.*

*Not only did Mum excel on the green but also on the social side being Lady Captain, Lady President and Ladies President of Kent. Mum and Dad loved this time of their lives, it brought them so much joy and they made so many great friends. I will always remember being involved in a conversation with a few of her lady friends who were reminiscing on one of the Kent tours when Mum was Lady President. They were staying in a grand hotel with a large sweeping staircase and Mum was carried down for dinner ON, yes ON, a bedstead. Don't ask me why, I never found out because when asked she said in no uncertain terms raising an eyebrow "What happens on bowls tours STAYS on bowls tours". What had my ordinary MUMMY been up to? She had so much fun.*

*So, are you still sad!!! Mum had an idyllic childhood, a loving and long-lasting marriage. She saw herself and Dad improve themselves. She saw her children prosper. She saw her grandchildren and great grandchildren prosper. She had hardly any illness or hospital stays. She never experienced any tragedies to her immediate family AND she reached the ripe old age of 103!!!!*

*So no, please don't be sad, I'm not going to be. She had a blessed, fun fulfilled life which is what we are all celebrating here today.*

And now Emma will read Linda's tribute to Ann:

*Mum you've been amazing  
All your whole life through  
Never heard complaining  
As **most** women do  
You never needed much from life-----  
As long as you had Dad  
You loved him **oh so dearly**  
Even when he made you mad  
You made me feel so welcome  
Right from the very start  
You let me take your son away  
When he stole my heart  
Throughout our lives together-----  
As his wife and loving son  
We always had support from you  
Our family as one-----  
So thank you mum for all you did  
Showing me the way to be  
I'll remember you forever-----  
Your example stays with me  
-----  
She had a lovely life you know  
And now she's back with dad  
  
She'd want to leave a **happy** place  
Not one that makes us sad-----so-----  
We won't be sad and will not cry  
We'll wear a smile as we say goodbye  
**NOW**----- how about a **smile** for mum  
The last that we can do  
And-----as Ken has said before me  
She'd **really** love it too*

So, time passed. Ron retired – sort of – leaving Brian and David to continue to run the business, though he seemed to have forgotten his leaving do and would come back from time to time and cause chaos, before heading back to the Bowls club. The grandchildren started to arrive, and then the great grandchildren.

In 2005, Ron died. Ann carried on at home for a while, and Brian and Maureen stayed with her for a year to look after her, but then she decided to join Ken and Linda in Wales. She loved it there. Linda's parents would come down for long stays in the summer, and the three of them would sit on "Dad's bench", drink sherry, look at the scenery and natter. In 2014 though, she fell and broke her hip, which led as you've heard to her moving into Awel Tywi, where she was very happy. She loved her growing tribe of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

And now Vanessa, Ann's eldest grandchild, will read her tribute to Ann:

*I feel so fortunate to have had grandma in my life-and for such a long time*

*She was joyful. Positive. Warm and sociable. No nonsense. Her strength and determination perfectly matched by her cheeky sense of humour.*

*Her party catering, especially the egg and tomato sandwiches and Charlotte Russe, was unbeatable!*

*It was cheering to see her-whether at home, the shop, the bowls club, or later in Wales. The conversation and tea flowed freely.*

*I admired her and grandad for the life that they built and the pleasure it gave them. I am hugely grateful to have been a part of that.*

*She will remain an inspiration.*

We often think of death as a cruel enemy, taking away those we love, but for those who are suffering or who have reached the end of their endurance, it can come as a quiet friend, closing the curtains, turning out the light, and settling us into a last sleep, free from pain and weariness. I hope it was so for Ann.