

A celebration of the life of **Anthea Auty**

2 December 1940 – 19 August 2020

Wednesday 2 September 2020, Pontefract Crematorium



a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

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Anthea was born in Dewsbury on 2nd December 1940, to Dorothy and Albert Parnell; their marriage didn't work out and Dorothy had to work, so Anthea was brought up by her grandma and aunty until the age of eight. At this point Dorothy met and married Eric Dewhirst, who had two sons, Joe and Michael. They all went to live together as a family, and Dorothy and Eric gave Anthea two half-sisters, Moira and Lorna, so completing their family. Anthea formed an especially close relationship with Joe, that lasted a lifetime and expanded to include Joe's wife Frances as well.

Anthea was brought up a Catholic, going to the local Catholic school in Dewsbury, and recalling as a child having to go to mass twice on a Sunday; as she never had much to confess, she used to walk up the steps to the church and swear, just so she had something naughty to tell the priest – even at that young age she had a bit of a rebellious streak!

After leaving school at fifteen, Anthea worked at a local factory as a mender. She used to love going to the local dance halls when she was young, and retained that love of dancing throughout her life. She would get her mum to make her outfits to go dancing in, partly as money was tight but also because her mum was very good with a sewing machine. And it was at one particular dance hall, the Galleon in Dewsbury, that she met Keith, looking very dapper in his teddy-boy get-up. Keith said they hit it off straightaway, though Anthea was still cautious enough to bring her cousin along with her on their first date, just in case he didn't turn up! While they were courting, Anthea taught Keith how to do the 'bop' or the jive as it's known now, and the two of them became extremely good at it. When they took up ballroom dancing in later life, they became very good at this too, and achieved several medals. This was well before the days of Strictly Come Dancing, of course, a show Anthea always thoroughly enjoyed watching.

Anthea was seventeen when she and Keith started courting, and two years later, on 12th March 1960, they became husband and wife. In January 1962, they had their only child, Alison, and this was the beginning of a very close and loving mother-daughter relationship that remained such all their lives together. Anthea was incredibly proud of Alison, though she did also hold her to the same high standards that she maintained herself when it came to her appearance. Anthea was always glamorous and would never be caught out looking scruffy, not even when she was walking the dog. So she was somewhat mortified when she found herself on a night out with colleagues one Christmas, busily declaring how her daughter would never be seen in all the silly festive get-ups on show at the pub, when in walked Alison with her friend, festooned head to toe in tinsel and baubles purloined from the college Christmas tree!

Anthea had various jobs over the years, to help out the family. She, Keith and Alison left their home in Horbury in 1968, relocating to Pontefract for Keith's work, and remained there the rest of Anthea's life. In 1974 she made the decision to go into a full-time nursing career, qualifying as a nurse in 1976 and working at PGI for a good number of years, a job she really enjoyed, before becoming an industrial nurse for Rowntree Mackintosh.

Anthea also enjoyed listening to music, particularly Elvis (who we will be hearing from a little later), and in her later life leaned towards classical music, and the Three Tenors especially. She always kept her love of dancing, and she and Keith were sociable drinkers in their day, and great hosts; their parties and barbecues were very popular, and they would often have family get-togethers with Alison and their son-in-law, John.

When Alison met her husband-to-be, in 1986, and introduced him to her parents, he got the usual 'aloof' reaction from Anthea. But she soon warmed to him, and for 33 years she and Keith treated him like the son they never had. Over the years the four of them enjoyed many holidays together, from the empty beaches of Northumberland to the intense heat and history of Luxor; Anthea's last trip away was in December just gone, when Alison and John took her down to London and showed her all the sights and the Christmas lights. And they also spent many happy times over at their caravan, visits which came to include the next generation as well.

In February 1989, Anthea and Keith's only grandchild, Dale, came on the scene, and he was instantly loved by Anthea, who was a caring, loving and very giving grandma. She often looked after him in the school holidays, and one of their favourite destinations was Fairburn Ings nature reserve. One of Anthea's greatest passions in life was for animals, and she always sponsored a donkey for Dale through the Donkey Sanctuary, a tradition that she continued when she became a great-grandma.

In 2012 her and Keith's first great-grandchild, Jayden, arrived, and Anthea still had the energy to collect him from school and nursery, and take him home for tea every week. Both Dale and his wife, Kim, are grateful to her for what she and Grandad have done for them over the years. When Alfie arrived some four years later, Anthea's health meant she wasn't able to play such an active role, but she loved him just the same and always enjoyed seeing him. He would come round and play with his favourite fire engine, or sit up on Anthea's knee while she read him a story, or Alison would bring her mum home to sit and watch the two boys play in the garden.

Anthea's family were the most important thing in her life; and I am, of course, including in that the canine members. She and Keith had dogs for so many years, since the arrival of their first, Shane. It's fair to say that Shane chose Anthea, and he obviously chose well; he started to follow her as she passed the butcher's shop, and by the time she got home she didn't have the heart to turn him away. It came as something of a surprise to Keith, who got home from a day's work to find this gigantic dog barring his entry, Shane already being very protective towards Anthea! He ended up being a very loyal and lovely member of the family, and the first of many dogs in the Auty household.

Though it was when Alison came home and said she'd seen an amazing dog she wanted to get, that Anthea's love affair with her dogs really began. Samantha was their first Rottweiler, who came back in 1980, and when they got Bronson, in 1988, Anthea's love for the breed was really established. Anthea named him after her favourite film star; she had a real thing about Charles Bronson, and loved to watch his movies. She started to show Bronson, and he went from strength to strength with her, eventually beating the highest ever number of competitors to win Best In Breed at Crufts in 1992 – one of Anthea's proudest moments. Anthea and Keith went on to have a total of six Rottweilers in total, spanning well over thirty years. Their last dog was a little Border Terrier called Bud, who was a constant companion to Anthea; they spent hours walking together over the Rookeries. Sadly, they lost Bud in March of this year, just before Anthea and Keith's sixtieth wedding anniversary, but he is now back with his mum, as she requested that his ashes be put in with her.

Anthea had many people who came and went in her life over the years. She didn't suffer fools, and always spoke her mind. But there were a few people who were a constant presence: her brother Joe, who was always there for her, and his lovely wife Fran, now sadly deceased; and the two Paulines. There was Pauline, Anthea's friend, from whom she bought Bronson as a puppy and in so doing forged a thirty-odd year friendship with, and who sadly died of the same illness as Anthea two years ago. And Pauline from Keith's side of the family, who was in Anthea's life for 63 years with never a cross word between them; Pauline not only supported Anthea through her illness, but Keith and Alison also.

Anthea was immensely brave since her diagnosis; she fought to the last, and tried every single thing she could to stay with her family as long as possible. Keith told me how Anthea had nursed him through three heart attacks, and he was glad to have the chance to repay the favour, looking after her at home, with the support of all the family.

For her final days, though, Anthea was looked after by the staff at the Prince of Wales Hospice, and she and her family were so grateful for the care she received there. Keith said she could not have been in a better place, which is why Anthea's family have chosen to suggest that, if any of you would like to make a donation in Anthea's memory, that you give to the hospice, to help support the amazing work they do.

Anthea is missed in different ways by each of you, but she is missed, hugely. But in remembering her, today and in all the days to come, in talking of her and sharing your memories of the happy times you spent together, you are all reminded how much her is still there within you.