

# A celebration of the life of Kathleen (Katie) Hogan

15 April 1944 – 2 November 2023

30 November 2023, Vinters Park Crematorium



*a personal goodbye*

Humanist  
*Ceremonies*

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To set the tone for the ceremony, Katie's eldest daughter, Jill will read us *The Dash*, by Linda Ellis:

*I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.  
He referred to the dates on his casket from beginning to the end.  
He noted that first came the date of his birth, and spoke of the following date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.*

*For that dash represents all the time that he spent alive on earth,  
And now, only those who loved him know what that little line is worth.  
For it matters not, how much we own, the cars, the house, the cash,  
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard; are there things you would like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left that can still be rearranged.  
If we could just slow down enough to consider what is true and real  
And always try to understand the way other people feel.*

*And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more  
And love the people in our lives like we have never loved before.  
If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile,  
Remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.*

*So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash,  
Would you be proud of the things they say, about how you spent your dash?*

Thank you, Jill.

So now we'll talk about that DASH, about the many things with which Katie filled the years between those two dates.

She was born in Bristol, the third child of Bill and Ivy Bond, and it's great that her siblings Hazel and Ryan can be with us here today. Sadly her beloved big brother John passed away a few years ago. Hazel was eight when Kathleen – as she was called then – was born, and remembers thinking of her sister as her little doll. And for Bill, Kathleen was the apple of his eye.

A bit about names – and places. Katie was born in England, grew up in Ireland, spent her early married life in Scotland, and then moved back to England. You might wonder what she had against Wales – well presumably nothing, since her favourite singer was Tom Jones – you'll hear from him later. She moved around gracefully and flexibly, picking up the customs – and to some extent the accents - of places as she went. And she changed her name slightly with the various moves. In Ireland, she was Kathleen, in Scotland she was Kay, and in England she became Katie, which I'll use for the rest of this ceremony to avoid any confusion.

In 1948 the Bond family moved to Dublin for Bill's work, and there Katie went to the Diocesan Girls School. She excelled in every subject except geography, but most of all in maths, and when she left, she went to work as an accounts clerk for Norwich Union in Dublin where she met John.

When John moved to Edinburgh for work, Katie followed, and they married there on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1967. They lived in Dumfries at first, and then moved to Elderslie where first Jill, and then twins Linda and Brian, were born. So there she was, with three small kids, at a time when it was the norm for mums to be stay at home mums. But that wasn't for Katie. She started small, volunteering at Sunday School, and becoming active in the PTA at Wallace Primary. And as soon as she could, she went back to work, in accounts again at Cool Foods, a frozen food company. The freezer at home was always full of Victoria Sponges and choc ices – she'd say she wanted them for the kids, but really she was driven by her own sweet tooth.

Elderslie offered the kind of close-knit community where Katie thrived, and the children remember regular parties, and lots of wonderful close friends including neighbours Molly and John. Katie met other lifelong friends in Scotland including Doug and Beatrice, and Helen and Archie. Once you'd become Katie's friend, you became by definition her lifelong friend, because she wasn't one to give up on friendships.

Katie's dressmaking prowess was demonstrated over the years by making fancy dress costumes, occasionally for the children, but frequently for her and John. They would find opportunities to be Batman and Robin, or Andy Pandy and Looby Loo, or any other suitable pairing.

They spent many summer holidays in Rath in Kerry, where Hazel and her husband Barry had a caravan, idyllic summers with cousins Wendy, Valerie, Derek and Neil, punctuated by endless laughter and, Jill remembers, the sound of screaming lobsters. No wonder she's now a vegan.

If they couldn't get to Rath, they'd go to Winscombe, where Bill and Ivy had retired, and developed another circle of friends based around Winscombe Cricket Club. Even though Katie saw them only once a year, they became firm friends.

In 1981 John moved to London for work and the family moved to Chestwood Close in Billericay. She made friends again with the neighbours, the Sones. She worked for Acketts the builders, was an Avon Lady and threw herself into her role as a leader at the local cubs, which she apparently enjoyed much more than eight-year-old Brian did. But she never really settled in Billericay and was glad when in 1984 they moved to Maidstone, to Gleaners Close, where the family stayed for many years, with the children eventually heading off to work, university and to create new families of their own – and then coming back home when they needed a refuge and a bit of loving care.

In Maidstone, she loved working at JB Garage Doors in their accounts team. Long after she left she was still in contact with her colleagues, although that might have been driven by a desire to keep her staff discount when a new set of doors was needed. And she made a great group of friends – the Bearsted Fayre Crew, many of whom are here today.

In the early 1990s, John and Katie separated but remained on good terms and the family continued to be a tight unit, spending Christmases, birthdays and special events together – there was a strong bond between the whole family, and it's no accident that they've all finally settled in Maidstone. Relations weren't always perfect, like most families, but there's no doubt the Hogans stayed very close.

Once in Maidstone she found a way to really indulge her passion for dressmaking, initially drawn in through Jill's acting to make costumes for local theatre companies including the Old Bric, Roundabout and Changeling.

Artistic Director Rob Forknall will now tell us about her in this role. Katie specifically asked Rob to share some funny memories with you today. Over to you, Rob.

*Everybody remembers her voice. It's the first thing we did whenever we saw her, she had the most distinctive voice that everybody from me to all the members of Querk and Changeling to Jill and Linda and Brian - all do the voice of KT everybody knows, toast and marmalade, Roberrrrrt & anyway we all knew her voice. It was an extraordinary mix of Irish, Scottish, Bristol and Kent which made her unique. Katie was so much more than a voice. She also had hair that looked like candy floss, but everyone knew her for her sense of fun had kindness and her laugh. She would laugh at anything.*

*I first met Katie back in 1989, the Hazlitt Community Arts Project were doing a coproduction with a youth theatre in Beauvais, the twin town of Maidstone. After that I met the children Jill, Brian and Linda and her husband John who are still friends with me until now. My two theatre companies, Changeling and Querk, went round Kent for 13 years with a pantomime, and Katie was involved in the dressing, and the wardrobes of those shows, and the one thing that everybody remembers about her are her naughtiness, sense of humour, warmth and her hands and how cold they were. They would literally freeze you to the spot as they touched your back as she would do up the back of your Costume.*

*But also behind Stage. She was hilarious. I remember one time in Wormshill Village Hall, when we were getting ready behind the screen and the audience were in front of the screen, I was the dame dressed in a hourglass padded dress. It's quite heavy and I was leaning into a large box and I just as I was in, I lost my balance, ended up headfirst in this box, my legs, kicking. She didn't help me, she was bent double laughing and let me stay in there. Katie would always say I'm not going to do the Panto this year and every year she would do it. That's sort of person that Katie was. Katie was a stalwart, always laughing always there looking after us, touching so many lives. Backstage she was by far the oldest person in the world to us but she acted like a giggling teen. Many members of the companies agree she was a lovely lady, funny, kind, hilarious and made everyone feel welcome – she will be missed.*

*But also I was lucky enough to be involved in her family, my second family with John, Jill, Brian and Lindaaaaaaa at Gleaners Close. We had many evenings where we just laughed and drank. She was a mother. She was a friend, she was a party animal, she laughed all the time, and you just took the Mickey out of her without stopping and she always gave as good as she got.*

*Next year the 23<sup>rd</sup> touring season of Changeling will be dedicated to her memory – please come to the opening night in her name.*

Thank you, Rob.

Katie also played a starring role in organising Linda and Simon's wedding in 1996. She made all the bridesmaids' dresses, although this was nearly not the case after mother and daughter clashed over hymn choices! Something they both laughed about afterwards. Then along came the grandchildren, first Joseph and Olivia, then Patrick and Hamish. She asked them to call her Nana, which she said made her feel less ancient than Granny or Grandma, and out respect to her mum Ivy, who was always known as Nana too. Katie adored them all, and looked after them – driving them to university, taking them to karate classes and more - whenever she could. They loved her cooking. She made extravagant sugary desserts for Joseph and Olivia, and vegetarian cottage pie for Paddy and Hamish, that for years they thought was called "Scottish Pie". No grandchild ever left the house to go home unless they were full of ice cream, Tunnocks tea cakes and Pringles.

After her move to her final home in Allington she found yet another tribe. She joined ALLARA and developed a passion for the sport of curling, which she got surprisingly good at. She also joined the Lions and for the rest of her life was an active and much-loved volunteer regularly visiting the pubs of Maidstone with chocolate Santas and Easter bunnies as raffle prizes to raise £100s for local good causes. Her prowess at rattling collecting tins outside supermarkets will be much missed – as evidenced by the large number of Lions here today. She was also a steward at the Kent County Show every summer for over 20 years, a job she continued to do with pride, even when she had to do her duties sitting down. Every year before Christmas there was a thank you supper for the stewards, where Katie positively bolted her dinner, in order to rush to the other end of the building for the main attraction of the evening – the dodgems. Katie, the little old lady, was racing around bumping cars with everyone, while her fellow stewards watched from the sidelines, bemused and in awe. There will be a tribute to her at the stewards' supper this year.

Katie always had something on the go - a sewing project, a dinner dance, a volunteering role – there was always something to do and somewhere to be. Well into her 70s, she was driving herself to Bristol to see her big brother John and nephew and niece Sandra and Eddie. She'd think nothing of flying up to Aberdeen to see younger brother Ryan and family, or to Lanzarote or Cork to visit Hazel and her family. Her long list of friends is evident by the number of people here today and by those who couldn't be with us but wanted to. She always wanted to help others, to host others, and be part of her community.

She was a hoarder and a sucker for household gadgets. Her house, like her life, was stuffed to the gills - clearing it has revealed many unlikely objects. And she loved her 70s music – quite recently, Brian was able to take her to see Tom Jones at the Hop Farm, and Jill took her to the O2 to see Rod Stewart. Somehow she fitted in time to watch lots of TV, with a passion for soaps and reality TV. Her garden was quite 70s too, with lots of bedding plants and no weeds – when she could no longer bend down to do the weeding, she would vigilantly supervise the work of whichever one of the family was commandeered to help!

Though in her final years her back condition was letting her down, but she was not prepared to give in, and she kept up all her crafts, and even her Pilates, almost to the end. Even though she found some of the moves excruciating, she never gave up, always giving it her best effort in the hope it would do her some good. And after she was diagnosed earlier this year, she set the tone for the family with her optimism and strength of character. Never complaining, staying positive, and making the most of what she had. Something she did throughout her life. That was quite a dash, Katie – you filled every moment.