A Celebration of the Life of

# Beryl Vera Kallend

5 March 1938 – 25 September 2026

13 October 2026, Surrey and Sussex Crematorium
Celebrant: name



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## *The Tribute*

It is quite hard to sum up 88 years of someone's life in just a few minutes and this tribute is based on the recollections of Liz, Julia, John and other members of the family, some of whom you will hear from in due course.

It is absolutely clear from all that has been said that she was warm, homely and generous, and loved her family deeply. Beryl, Mum, Grandma … She was something different to all of you here, but whatever you called her you all loved her and you know for sure you were the most important people in her life alongside wider family including Margaret and Lesley who are joining on the webcast today.

Beryl was the daughter of Frederick and Ellen Hughes – younger and devoted sister to Margaret. She was, technically, a Cockney having been born within the sound of Bow Bells back in 1938. You wouldn't be able to hear the bells in Hackney today but back then, well just about!

Beryl and Margaret had a very happy childhood and early family life in Essex and Kent despite a number of nearly tragic incidents in the war including a bombing and a house fire. They were also very close to their cousin Colin, who lived next door. Beryl attended Hornchurch Grammar until the family moved to West Wickham and she transferred schools to Beckenham Girl's Grammar, where she met her life-long friend Valerie.

Stories of her mis-spent youth include her filling her white Sunday school gloves with blackberries, as the only receptacle to hand. And – so it is said – a dramatic re-enactment of the stoning of St Paul in an RE class at school when they used their bibles as the rocks. However, she must have worked hard at her music, getting her Grade 8 in piano.

And while she was at Beckenham Girl's Grammar, she met Tony, who was at Beckenham Boy's Grammar. They continued courting throughout his undergraduate time at Cambridge and her nursing training at the Royal Masonic Hospital – where of course she also made many friends for life.

Their marriage began with a marvellous and very smart wedding in the City of London, and they settled in Cambridge while Tony was finishing his PhD.

Their marriage was the very heart of her life. They were married for an extraordinary 66 years. Together they shared all the ups and downs of life, building a family and a home and creating countless memories along the way. Their marriage was a wonderful testament to the strength of love, companionship and commitment, plus what Liz described as a touch of patience on Beryl's part.

It may be a testament to the strength and length of that relationship that all three of their children have been married for many years to people they also first met when at school – their parents were clearly a great role-model for all of them.

Julia was born in Cambridge, but when she was little more than a few weeks old they began their American adventure and moved to California, where Tony undertook research at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). They travelled extensively while they were there, driving right across the country. Luckily, Julia was the perfect child! (or so she says). There are lots of pictures of them on Route 66, and by the Statue of Liberty. Eventually though, after an unforgettable couple of years, they came back to England in the middle of the swinging sixties and settled in Selsdon, near Croydon, bringing with them treasured memories and some newfangled recipes and ideas including 'chilli con carne' and a 'barbeque' – not to mention the 'impossible to get hold of' soundtrack to the newly released My Fair Lady.

John and Liz were born in short order following their homecoming and Beryl, unusually for that time, returned to work as a district nurse. They all have memories of sitting in her pale blue Triumph Herald known as Emily (the registration was MLE) while she tended to the good folk of New Addington. If they didn't squabble too much, they were allowed to play at the rec at the end of the morning. But boredom often led to squabbling, so the trips to the rec were few.

Nursing was a profession that suited her well, because caring for other people was so much a part of who she was. Nursing requires patience, kindness, resilience and compassion, qualities that Beryl used not only in her working life but in her relationships with the people around her – naturally gentle, caring and thoughtful. However, her image of a nurse continued to include the white apron and crisp hat, and she found the nurses in scrubs she encountered later in life somewhat disconcerting.

In the early 1970s, the family moved to Deepdale in Westerham, the house that became such an important part of all their lives. That house will always be associated by all of you with Beryl and with the wonderful family gatherings she created there. It was a house where there always seemed to be plenty of people, plenty of food and plenty of noise, not to mention the vizslas, and the cats.

Christmas was particularly special. Beryl loved having everyone together and, somehow, she always managed to make these occasions feel very relaxed, even though there was an enormous amount of work going on behind the scenes.

Deepdale was also the setting for some of the family's happiest occasions, including Julia and Liz's weddings, christenings, anniversaries and birthdays and all of those summer afternoons spent by the pool. Those are memories that all of you will treasure.

Beryl was a wonderful cook. She really enjoyed cooking, and feeding people was one of the ways she showed her love. You were never likely to leave Deepdale hungry particularly after a hearty lunch often including the kids' favourite orange jelly – and

probably not without being offered something else to eat before you went, or leftovers to take with you. Many of the kind words the family have received about Beryl have made mention of her cooking and her hospitality – her lamb tagine getting an honorary mention!

She also loved reading, and she was a very accomplished pianist. Some of today's music choices were pieces she enjoyed playing and singing. There was much more to her than just being the person who was always looking after everyone else.

But look after them all she did, driving them to school, and to swimming club, and to all the other things they were passionate about. Her love and support for her children remained constant throughout the years. She welcomed Mag, Julie and Neil into the fold as they became fixtures in her children's lives. And their families grew, giving her seven grandchildren: Christopher, Elliot, Freddie, Hannah, Jack, Matthew and Oliver. It brought her enormous pleasure to see her family grow again to include Amanda, Jacob, Amy, Sheri and Rebecca – another generation to love, encourage and take an interest in. More recently, two great-grandchildren have arrived – Daisy and Mia (with one more on the way!). Daisy, as the first great grandchild, was of course a particular passion, and if she was around, Beryl could not concentrate on anything else.

Chris will now read us Hannah's tribute to her grandmother

*I thought I would start with some of my fondest memories of Grandma.*

*Me standing on a chair in the kitchen with Grandma, watching her and listening carefully as she told me exactly how to make some of her finest bakes, most specifically, the best meringues I have ever tasted. And I know Jack would say the same about her "cherry on tops".*

*Wandering around the quarry with Grandma and the dog, feeling completely at one with nature, without ever really realising just how lucky we were to grow up surrounded by such beautiful surroundings.*

*Running around the swimming pool and jumping back in, with Grandma promising that it would be warmer the next time if we froze ourselves to the core outside first.*

*Jumping from bed to bed in Grandma's spare room with the cousins, until eventually someone came and told us off for doing so.*

*These are the memories that I will always treasure. They might seem like small, ordinary moments, but they are the moments that made growing up with Grandma so special.*

*There is so much that I have always admired about Grandma:*

- *Her love of cooking and baking, and her ability to host the most memorable Christmases. Christmas at Grandma's was always something special. There was always food, family, laughter and that feeling of being together.*

- *Her joy at listening to me and my siblings playing our musical instruments, even when our performances were often accompanied by the howling of Swipper!*
- *Her care when looking after me and my brothers in the afternoons after playgroup when we were younger, always making sure we had something to do and keeping us entertained.*
- *Her support throughout our school years, encouraging us with our education and making sure we were given every opportunity to succeed. She was always there, quietly supporting us and wanting the very best for us.*
- *Her love of supporting the community, being an active part of the WI and always wanting to contribute and make a difference to the world around her.*

*And then there were the little things that, at the time, probably didn't seem particularly significant, but which I now realise are some of the memories I will treasure most. Going round to help out around the house in my teenage years, only for the morning to inevitably end with a delicious biscuit or piece of cake and an Orangina.*

*When I look back, I realise just how much of my childhood is intertwined with Grandma.*

*She gave us so much more than cakes, Christmases and childhood memories. She gave us her time, her encouragement, her kindness and, most importantly, her love.*

*I feel incredibly lucky that I got to have a grandma who was such a big part of my childhood and who gave me so many memories that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.*

*Thank you, Grandma, for everything you gave us, for everything you taught us, and for all the love you gave so freely.*

Thank you for writing that, Hannah, and thank you Chris for reading it.

And here is Freddie's tribute:

*A few words about our grandma*

*There are certainly some common themes in Hannah and Chris's words, which I think are a testament to the kind of person Grandma was. So many of our memories centre around time spent at Grandma and Grandad's in Deepdale: games of sardines, vine swinging and dog walks in the quarry, hours spent with Elliot playing Beehive Bedlam on the Sky box without Mum knowing, and Grandma somehow managing to look after what was probably a fairly challenging number of lively children.*

*Looking back, it's clear just how much love, care and patience she gave to all of us, and how much those moments meant.*

*One of my most enduring memories, and the first thing that came to mind when thinking about Grandma, was breakfast. The sheer number of perfectly boiled eggs and soldiers that were eaten over the years, along with the oranges she used to put me to work squeezing.*

*It's a simple memory, but it sums Grandma up perfectly for me. When something is always there, it's easy to take it for granted, but we were always incredibly well looked after whenever Grandma was in charge. We always felt cared for, welcomed and loved. Looking back now, there's no doubt those memories helped shape us into the people we are today.*

*I've also found myself thinking about the role Grandma played in raising Mum, as well as John and Liz. Before she was our grandma, she was a mother who spent years supporting, guiding and caring for her family.*

*That's something I've benefited from too, whether through the values, love and kindness she passed on, or even through the recipes that have made their way down to me through Mum. It's a legacy I can hold on to and carry forward for years to come.*

*Grandma's kindness, generosity and care will stay with us all, and she will be greatly missed.*

*Thank you, Grandma, for everything you gave to our family.*

Thank you, Freddie

Alongside being the best of mums and Grandmas, she was generous with her time and talents. If asked, or if it was needed, she was willing to step up and get involved, though she never sought recognition for what she did. While the children were at school, she took on the immense task of running the school second-hand uniform sale for several years.

She was an ardent member of the Westerham Women's Institute, and served for many years as Treasurer on the committee for the local branch of Cancer Research UK – raising thousands of pounds during her tenure across many functions and fund raisers for this most important of causes. Both she and Tony were involved with raising money for the building of the Westerham Hall.

Once she and Tony moved to Tandridge Heights, she impressed other residents by zipping around in her electric wheelchair, and right up until the end she was the "Resident Ambassador" representing the views and concerns of her fellow residents, championing those who didn't have a voice. She tried to stand down to give someone else a chance, but they wouldn't let her go! She loved her carers, many of whom became like family to her in the years she was there.

In some ways Beryl's illness was relatively short, and although that means she didn't have a long period of suffering, it also means that you didn't have the time you might have liked to prepare yourselves for losing her. However, in other ways the end was eight years in the making. It was easy to forget all her health issues, though, because

she was always relentlessly stoic and positive. Her cup was always way more than half full!

As Liz said:

> *Perhaps what we should concentrate on today is not the end of her life, but the 88 years that came before it. There were 66 years with Dad, three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. There was Cambridge, California, Selsdon and Westerham. There were Christmases, weddings, family meals, music, books, her nursing career and countless other memories that each of us will have of her.*
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> *And, most importantly, there was the warmth and generosity that Mum brought to all those years. She gave a great deal to her family, and she created a home where people wanted to be. I think that is a wonderful thing to leave behind.*
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> *So, Mum, thank you. Thank you for everything you did for us, for the love you gave us, and for simply being Mum and Grandma. We will miss you enormously, but we will also remember you with great affection, and with many, many happy memories.*
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> *I think one of the things I will miss most is simply having Mum there. There are so many ordinary things that you don't necessarily appreciate at the time – being able to phone mum, going to see her, sitting and talking, sharing family news and photos, asking for medical advice or just knowing that she was there.*
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> *And then suddenly, she isn't.*