

## **Eulogy.**

Mum knew about bereavement and she knew about grief, we are all here today in the same boat that she was in many times and I hope that we can all ride this storm with the dignity, love and selflessness that Mum did.

Not an easy thing to do, but that's what she would want us to do, so we must try.

Over the last few years dementia hid Mum away, but her dignity, calmness, politeness, joy and love was ingrained in her and she never lost that with the other memories of her life. She may not have remembered our names, but she knew us deep down and loved us to the end.

Now, let us remember her as the fully rounded loveable and wonderful person she was before dementia stole her away.

You will all have your own thoughts and feelings about her as a Mum, Granny, Aunt, Mother in Law, Granny in Law, Cousin, Friend, Colleague or Neighbour, but I think you will all agree that:-

Mum was dignified and she was diplomatic, she had the knack of being able to smooth troubled waters and find a path through to a mutual solution to many life situations. She never took sides and could see both sides of a disagreement or upsetting situation and calmly, yet strongly she could move to an equitable place. As a young person this was not always welcomed because Mums should be on your side about everything, right?, but looking back she made sure that even broken relationships and arguments can be moved on to a place where the previous adversaries could build a new, but maybe different future.

Mum loved in all the different ways that love can be expressed as a romantic partner, a mother, granny and in many other relationships.

Her Unitarian faith was as strong as it gets, it was by her side through her whole life and it held her up through the struggles in her life. Through times of hardship and loss she unendingly stuck to her belief and faith, which I am sure many of you will have witnessed.

She was loved by three men and she loved them all in return. We will remember them here too, as they went on before her.

Christopher Davis, our father who died in 1963 when Mum was only 30 with three small children – Penny was 5, John 4 and I was a babe in arms. Penny and John both have happy childhood memories of him. Mrs Paull came to help mum at 22 Church Street after our father died and she was always a part of our family from then on.

Peter Hodge, we called him Dad and most of our childhood and teenage memories hail from those wonderful, happy days at Oak House in Haselbury and 20 Church Street before he was lost to cancer in 1976 at only 50.

I remember when Richard came in to say there was someone selling puppies at the door, Mum said we could have one but it would have to be a male. We ended up with lovely Janey. She had 8 puppies, but we didn't keep any.

We didn't have holidays away apart for one that I can remember, when we went to Pembrokeshire and all of us stayed in a large roomed B&B, Janey fell into a large pond full of flowering waterlilies, she looked very surprised.

We would often go for tootles in the car and day trips, locally to Ham Hill, Pilsden Pen, Lamberts Castle & Charmouth, for walks and games and more distant trips to Exmoor and Dartmoor to hike, build dams, paddle and play games including Grandmother's footsteps and French cricket. Sometimes on the way back we would stop at a Bernie Inn.

Mum could talk to anyone and make friends, one Boxing Day in Crewkerne while waiting for the hunt to depart, Mum was asked by a visiting American when the fox would be released, the lady didn't believe that there was no captive fox to capture. Mum invited the lady back to our house, which was always open to all.

Rod Dixon was with Mum for more than 30 years and was her husband and partner after we had all flown the nest, right up until he passed on in 2013. The grandchildren will remember the Gobbledeginks and the pretend tree house well, Rod told great stories.

Mum was selfless and tried to teach us to be the same. I think she was much better at it than we are!

Mum was strong and persistent. She always saw a job through to the end, she was meticulous, tidy and organised. I don't think we got all those genes, but I think we all got a bit of it.

Mum was a leader and set a good example to others through her involvement with the chapel, as a teacher, as a counsellor, as a lay pastor and human being.

Mum was a cheater at Scrabble! Penny remarked to me about an occasion one Christmas playing Scrabble with Penny, Marc, Amy and Paul. The game was near the end, there weren't many places to go and the letters left were small, Mum put down a word, which Penny can't remember now, this word was challenged and Mum

was asked for a definition. As bold as brass, with conviction and an air of innocence, she said “It’s a South American Wild Cat” at which point they totally believed her and she kept the word. Later on Paul looked this word up, well it didn’t exist. Good on you Mum!

Mum was fun. She loved to play the piano, sing and dance. She loved a good joke practical or otherwise.

Mum loved to cook and was excellent at it and she was a wonderful hostess. Many a fine feast were enjoyed. We particularly enjoyed her peanut butter cake and baked Alaska for a birthday treat. She could make something of nothing and it was always delicious.

She had so many gifts and I am sure that you will all be party to many of them. We look forward to hearing your stories later on. Let us not sob, weep and wail but remember Mum with pride, strength, love and many fond memories.

Let us try and live our own lives by her example.