

Memories of Ivy from the family

Thank you

On behalf of the family we want to thank you all for coming. For any who are joining us on the live link, or listening to the recording, we thank you for being part of this celebration of our mother. Thanks to Limes Avenue friends who cared for mum and became her local family, in particular Pam Butterworth and Mary Wright. We are also very grateful to the staff at Hillside Nursing Home who cared for mum during her final months.

Mum had many roles and was remembered affectionately by all.

Eldest Daughter

She was the eldest daughter of Ernest and Rose Gridley, who married in 1919, when Ernest returned from being a cook in the Royal Flying Core. Ivy was a comfort to her paternal grandmother, who had lost 2 of her 3 sons in the Great War.

Sister

Later Bernard, Hilda and Denis arrived and lived in Camberwell and then Peckham near their many cousins. She and Bernard would go out visiting friends on their scooters- Mum always liked meeting people and gathering news.

School-girl

She was a clever school-girl and went to Peckham Central High School age 11, gaining good reports. She was taught how to iron a shirt and do housework- some of the chores which were put to the bottom of her list in later life!

Sunday-school teacher

Teaching children bible stories has been one of mum's delights since she was 15 when she helped in the Beginners' Department of Sydenham Sunday School. She was persuaded to retire from Limes Avenue Creche and serving Drinks in the Pre-School in her 80s!

Secretary

High marks in Shorthand and Typing gained her a job in the Co-operative Permanent Building Society in London, now known as the Nationwide. She was promoted from the record-keeping office to the Typing Pool and became the secretary to the Mortgage Arrears Department manager. Her faith grew as God provided a Christian friend, Olive, who took her to the Building Society Christian union and encouraged her to show her faith by her actions.

Corporal Women's Royal Air Force

During the war she gained 2 stripes as she rose in the ranks of the Women's Royal Air Force. Ivy was stationed initially at Farnborough, Hants, then moved to Inverness where she was secretary to one of the squadron officers and consequently promoted to Corporal. Her tiny book of 'Hymns and Prayers for Women of the Auxiliary Forces' was well used, showing she continued to pray through her years of service.

Lieutenant Sydenham Baptist Guide Company

Ivy was not long out of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF's) and was appointed as a Lieutenant in the Sydenham Baptist Guide Company. With her recent military training Ivy decided that her girl's would benefit from sessions of formation marching.

The South East London Girl Guide Companies had a camp site at Cudham in Kent, the whole site was a definite no go area for Males. Ivy decided that she wanted a set of photos of the Sydenham Baptist girls at camp. Cameras were

not common after the War but Ivy's teenage brother Denis had a suitable camera. Consequently Denis was required to arrive at the camp early one morning, was smuggled through a hedge and let loose with his camera.

Denis managed to take a series of pictures but after a while the 'Authorities' at the bottom of the field became interested in the "guide" in check shirt and brown corduroy shorts. Denis was swiftly pushed back through the hedge.

Walker

Mum had a life long love of country walking, starting with going out from London as a young person on bank holidays. She and some of her friends and family met their husbands on Holiday Fellowship walking holidays. HF was dubbed as Husbands Found.

Derek was shy and it was not until they were returning to London from Coniston on the train that her smile gave him the courage to ask her out.

Wife, Widow

Our dad, Derek, died suddenly when Carolyn was 1 year old but Mum's strong faith kept her going. She believed what Paul says to Timothy in the Bible (1 Timothy 5: 5, 10)

'The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help... She is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.'

Ivy took what life threw at her, especially with the untimely death of Derek, to make her strong and dependent on God. She was unswerving in her commitment to God, the church and her family; a faithful prayer who upheld every member of her family daily in her prayers and showed an interest in what everyone was up to.

She was a faithful, godly example of sacrificial loving and serving of everyone who came in her path. Mum's advice when we came home saying there no one to play with in the playground, was 'Look for someone on their own and be a friend to them'. The story of her life was always looking out to befriend people whether on the train or bus, in the park or at meetings.

Lance Pibworth led a mission at Limes Avenue and taught the members to pray as they entered the hall about who to sit with. Mum regularly welcomed new members and her one complaint in later years was that there were so many new people she did not remember all their names.

Mum made detailed notes of sermons for her own devotions. She later recorded her summary on tapes to send to Vera who had moved away and every evening she visited a lady who has lost her sight and read the bible to encourage her faith.

Pianist

Mum loved music. She learned to play piano as a child and recalled happy time with family and friends at her London home singing round the piano with her mother playing. She sang in David Ayletts Aylesbury Choral Society, especially enjoying taking part in Messiah and Elijah, not to mention singing Alto in Molly Eames' church choir. She used to do the ironing on a Friday night to the accompaniment of radio 4 and 'Friday night is music night' and loved hearing John Castle our Music Teacher lodger playing the piano and watching him perform

Marmalade-maker

January was for much of her life the time for mass production of homemade marmalade, enjoyed by many. Mum also enjoyed sewing and knitting. Always thrifty from living through world war II, she believed in 'make and do' - sheets sewn sides to middle to make them last as long as possible.

Carer

Mum cared for Derek's relatives, first for his mother and brother, later sharing happy holidays with her sister-in-law, Norah, and was wonderfully caring, helping Norah with mobility and enabling her to enjoy the sea views.

In the park one day Mum met a Czech au pair in the park crying, and befriended her and gave her a place to stay. Aunt Lily, our great-aunt in Norfolk, was 89 and said she didn't want to live another winter on her own so Mum packed her suitcase and brought her back home on the train to live with us until her death 3 years later.

Mum provided a home for lodgers and visitors. We could always bring friends home for a welcome. We had people staying from Bhutan, Hong Kong, Austria, Spain to name but a few. She took in 2 girls from across the road when their family moved away. We had lodgers who stayed from a week to 9 years. Mum often said that God always sent her someone new to look after. When one stopped needing help there was always another one that came along. She took meals to an elderly neighbour across the road for many years and gradually took on all her household tasks, washing, shopping and cleaning. Another elderly neighbour from down the road used to regularly come and sit with her to while away a lonely evening. To her death Mum always had toys available for visiting children and babysat well into her eighties.

Visitor

Mum was always visiting our extended church family especially the elderly. She introduced us to visiting with her as children and Carolyn continued visiting members such as Belle Dearing and Win Driscoll on her own through her High School years. Other things she incorporated us in included collecting envelopes door to door for the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen year after year and Carol Singing at the maternity ward at the Royal Bucks Hospital where she herself spent Christmas after she gave birth to Carolyn in Dec 64

Prayer

Our abiding memory of Mum is however that first thing each morning she would get a cup of tea and take it back to bed and pray for all the family and read her Bible. I believe it is to that regular practice that we, her children and grandchildren largely owe our faith in Jesus and much of the blessing in our lives. We thank God for our godly mother, unassuming and humble who lived the best life she knew how to, always underpinned by her faith in Christ and supported by her church family and are sure that she will have been welcomed into heaven where we hope to see her again one day as a 'good and faithful servant'.

Mother-in-law

Mum always welcomed her children's wives and husbands into the family. They could never direct any 'mother-in-law' jokes at her as she was always kind and good.

She and Joyce had been very close following Joyce's father's death and, despite the pain, she managed to let Charles steal Joyce away from her. Ivy and Joyce arranged our wedding with lots of help from people at Limes Avenue Baptist Church. Since then, over nearly 34 years she was a wonderful mother-in-law. She was always there when we needed her, but never pushing herself forward. She was happy to help, and loved it when the children were young, visiting to babysit and give the parents a night off.

In common with many of her generation she had a very fixed view of the role of the man in the house. His role was to go to work and do household DIY jobs. Apart from that, he was to sit at the head of the table and be waited on.

Above all she was a tremendous role model for us all: a living example of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control: an example of prayerfulness, in meeting with the Lord's people, and in continuing to learn from the Word of God.

Grandmother

Her grandchildren believed "Nana lives on the train". Well, we always picked her up and took her back to the station and I like the idea that they thought she travelled the country on the train and occasionally arrived in Farnham to visit us!

My other memory of her visits is that, whether she came by bus or train, she always found someone to talk to. I'm sure there are people all over the country who know our entire family history!!!

Ivy was an encourager and could always find something positive to say to make others feel important. I have often quoted her perspective on her latter years "I'm still here so God must still have something for me to do". That positivity kept her actively involved in church life right up until the last few years, and even when that became more difficult for her I believe she has sustained all of us with her prayers

Auntie, Letter-writer, Card-sender

As Auntie Ivy, she has always been a big part in the wider family, sharing joyful family Christmases in Allenby road, Forest Hill with her brothers, sister and all the nephews and nieces. More recently she has astounded us by remembering every birthday of her great-nephews and nieces. Her cards sent with long newsy letters are a legend, demonstrating her energy and devotion to the family: a truly remarkable woman. She will leave a big gap, but her influences are clearly rippling through the younger generations.

Ending Well

Even towards the end, in Hillside Nursing Home she smiled, peacefully trusting God despite her deteriorating memory and failing strength.

She was a living example of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control: an example of prayerfulness, in meeting with the Lord's people, and in continuing to learn from the Word of God.

We have said goodbye to a solid prayer partner, Mum, Mother-in-law, Nana, friend, but there was a massive welcome party for her in heaven and a very big 'well done faithful servant' for a life lived well.