



A TRIBUTE TO OUR MUM

*Rosemary  
Erskine  
Turnbull  
née Robertson*

Feb 25, 1927 – June 30, 2022

Mum was a gracious person who did her very best at whatever she did. She loved music sharing this with others and always was cheerful with a great smile. The last 10 years of her life were marred by dementia and associated suffering but she bore it with fortitude and remained gracious to the last.

We have a lot of information about Mum's life as she wrote a daily diary and annual summary resulting in a book of her life. Mum was born in Boscombe, Dorset to Granny Aileen who was an elegant, fastidious lady who had been born and brought up on her father's tea and rubber estate in southern Ceylon. Grandpa, a Mercantile Bank of India manager was a kind, gentle and sociable man, who excelled in sport and enjoyed and took part in music.

At 8 months old Mum moved abroad living in India, Ceylon, Malaya and Singapore. She was brought up by governesses, ayahs and almas so she lacked a lot of formal education.

Mum saw little of her parents particularly during the second world war. She attended schools in the UK sometimes staying at school during the holidays possibly sometimes being locked in her room. In 1942 it was feared that the Japanese would invade India and so it was decided that Granny, Mum and Michael, her brother, would go by boat in convoy despite the monsoon, to protect against U-boats from Bombay to Mombasa from where they travelled to Cape Town where Mum studied music majoring on piano and 'cello obtaining her LRSM. She had wanted to become a ballet dancer but was told she did not have the necessary figure! She was good at swimming which amazed her grandchildren when she went swimming with them!

Mum had pets mostly dogs and birds all her life leading to a respect for all living things. The family had servants so Mum acquired few cooking or domestic skills. When she married she had to learn from friends and neighbours. When I asked our children what they remembered of Mum they said that she would always serve up egg and chips as her signature dish!

*From Christopher*



After the war the family moved to Tunbridge Wells. While selling tickets for the tennis club ball she met Dad who lived further down the same road. Their relationship blossomed and in 1948 they married at St Mark's Church. They moved to a flat nearby from where Dad worked in Plant Protection, the Agricultural Division of ICI. Mum continued to teach piano so Dad bought her a baby grand piano which is now in St John's Church Glastonbury. I was born in Tunbridge Wells and when I was 6 months we moved to York where Cathy was born.

When we moved to Bramhall in Cheshire Dad became involved in the local church. Dad became a Sunday School teacher. Then after many years in ICI he felt he was called to train for the ministry and went to St Augustine's theological college in Canterbury.

Mum, Cathy and I moved to Winchester to a relative's house. We had to live frugally surviving on income provided by letting out two rooms to lodgers. So Mum learnt to live economically which probably explains her later trait of spending hours out shopping trying to find the cheapest products! It was about this time that Michael Mum's brother sadly died from bone cancer at the age of 26 which brought much sadness.

When Dad was ordained deacon we moved to Brighton where Dad was curate at St Peter's Church. This was where Martin was born. Dad became Vicar of Sayers Common and Rector of Twineham two small villages in Mid-Sussex.

Mum became much involved in church life running the Sunday School, Choir and Under 5s as well as piano teaching and playing 'cello in a quartet. She was also a keen knitter knitting Fair Isle and Arran patterns while apparently asleep in the chair!

Mum agreed to host the Westminster Medical School Christian Fellowship for a weekend away. For about 10 years this became an annual event with often 30 medical students and nurses attending. What an amazing woman she was – she will be dearly missed.

*From Christopher*





Loving, happy, peaceful, kind, gentle, modest, gracious, faithful, warm, non-judgemental, considerate, patient, [understanding, intuitive, thoughtful, playful, sentimental, romantic, creative,] some of the qualities Mum showed – perhaps fruit of the spirit working in her heart.

Do these things rise with DNA and then fall to the ground as dust, or are they a treasure that is more robust and long-lasting? I believe so, and that they, and her, live on.

After Chris and Cathy left home, the baby (me) was left! It was at this time that Dad was asked to move to a church called St Julian's on the outskirts of Brighton, which had been impacted by the charismatic revival of the 1970's.

For me as a 14 year old from the country, it was really scary seeing all these late teenagers so enthusiastic about Jesus! Very ironic given that I sing enthusiastically about Jesus on the streets of various cities these days, as some of you know!

Mum was also impacted by the move, but in a positive way. She was "baptised in the Spirit", suddenly feeling the presence and love of God in a new way. She also embraced the modern music she heard, and when they moved to Glastonbury, they both responded to Celtic spirituality that became popular at that time. Mum received the gift of writing many lovely hymns, that were sung at St Julian's, and then in Glastonbury.

At the grand age of 78 she had her first hymns published in a Celtic hymnbook which was compiled by Ray Simpson, three of which we are hearing today.

*From Martin*





Then there was Glastonbury, a time of fruition of everything mum was. She loved her time with Dad after his retirement, living in a nice little semi-detached house with her neighbours by her side: especially Ivor and Elizabeth Edwards, who were always there come rain or shine. We are so grateful to them. Mum loved people from all walks of life, and she made time to listen and share.

Then there was the mother's Union and W.I. where mum gave talks on music for children, there was her music trio and appreciation of crafts as a part of religious life.

There were the Celtic Pilgrimages arranged by dad) to Iona, Wales and Lindisfarne, looking for the depth in religious life, - of healing, prayer and inspiration, of simplicity and a connection with the spirit. She and dad were a part of the Quest Community with the Sumners which was based at St Margaret's Chapel in Glastonbury.

She had a love of all things beautiful and pretty, of lace and frills and cuddly toys. Mum valued her friendships and after dad died, she bravely made a new life for herself, she had some great friends and some of them shared journeys to Lindisfarne and they joined the Aidan and Hilda Community there set up by Ray Simpson on Holy Island, she also joined the Franciscans.

Mum was very involved in the life of St Bens, playing the Organ with doggie by her side. She had also helped connect with the different churches in the town, bringing Christians together and visiting other churches and sharing their services.

*From Cathie*



Communion was always very important to mum and when she moved to Cavendish Lodge she was closer to St Bens and the Abbey and could walk to services everywhere with little Tiffany by her side.

Mum enjoyed her time at Cavendish Lodge, adjusting to living in a community, but gradually her anxiety grew, probably due to unresolved childhood fears - so then she moved to the Tudors Care Home in Glastonbury where she had a lovely room with views of Wearyall Hill.

Then after 3 years there as her confusion and dementia were increasing, it was time to move again this time to Torrwood Methodist Care Home near Wells. Here they had trained staff in dementia, who helped her accept her condition. She was happier there. She had Communion on the Monday before she died.

We are so grateful to all the wonderful staff and carers who have cared so marvellously for mum over these difficult years.

Mum passed peacefully and quickly of heart failure, in the knowledge that she was very loved by her family and friends, and was now free to join her heavenly family who were waiting with open arms on the other side. We are so grateful to her for her constant love and support to us through all our lives.

She loved her James so much and gave him such care and encouragement through their life on earth together, now they can share their dreams again as they fly to the stars.

*From Cathie*









