

Eulogy

First of all, Ron and the family would like to thank you all for coming today to support the family and to share in celebrating Gloria's life. Secondly Ron hopes you understand why he couldn't stand here at the front to share these thoughts and memories with you himself.

Gloria was born 19 July 1935, the only child of Eddy and Marcella Edwards. She attended St. Mary's Primary School and Brompton Oratory. On leaving school she got her first job at the publishers Michael Joseph on the Tottenham Court Road, a few hundred yards from where Ron was working at the time.

They met at dances at Quex Road Parish Club a couple of times. One day Ron and Gloria bumped into each other on Tottenham court road and they realised for the first time that they worked within yards of each other and they got talking. It was then that Ron asked Gloria to go on their first proper date Wednesday November 25th 1953 – they went to watch England play Hungary – the Mighty Magyas. Hidegkuti and Puskas made sure that it was a disappointing night for England and Ron, they lost 6-3, their first home defeat. Gloria enjoyed the game and after 55 years of added time the result of their marriage was more enduring and valuable.

Ron and Gloria married at Quex Road in July 1955 and moved into their first flat in Ealing. Daughters Stephanie and Deborah came along and after 12 years living mainly at 13 Birchington Road the family moved up to St. Helen's in 1967 – this must have been a considerable wrench for Gloria.

In St. Helen's Gloria spent many fruitful years working as a playgroup assistant and in particular enjoyed, along with her friend Enid, looking after the disabled youngsters. What amazed Ron and Jackie was just how far the money they earned went in paying for hair appointments, frequent social outings and birthday and Christmas presents.

Gloria was a very feisty woman who was fiercely independent. She loved going out with her friends for holidays and trips to the recording studios for University Challenge and other programmes. She was a very loyal friend to Peggy, Enid and Sue and extremely proud and protective towards her family and Lesley, Paul and Naty who looked on Gloria as their Mum.

She was very ambitious for daughters Stephanie and Deborah – the first from both sides of the family to get degrees and become teachers. Gloria was extremely proud of her grandchildren and if you don't know already she would have wanted you to know about each of them. Tom has a degree and is working in Manchester, Peter has also got his degree and is studying for a PHD in Lancaster, David is studying in America at Florida State University and has run for Great Britain, Amy is studying at Leeds University and Lorna at Oxford University – a job as a wife, Mum and Nanna very well done.

On the day Gloria died it was business as usual. She was very busy doing the washing, feeding the birds and all the other jobs she did which meant she never had time to finish reading the newspaper or watching the news. That evening she settled down to watch the TV, had a chat to Naty on the phone and tucked into her after eight mints, and bar of fruit and nut chocolate that Ron used to buy for her every day. Later on she just fell asleep in her chair. Gloria would have wanted to die like this with no pain, fuss or bother. We thank God for the way she died and we know that this is a blessing which will bring comfort. That same evening Amy and Ian were outside looking for the much advertised Perseid meteors. Through a gap in the clouds they saw just one, shooting through the sky. Like Gloria, it briefly brought a bright light into our lives and all too quickly was gone. Or was it actually Gloria's last goodbye?

Ron and Gloria were a team, sharing real lives with its many joys, setbacks and disappointments. They inspired and sustained each other – there was even a spiritual dimension, Ron could inspire Gloria to prayer at least four or five times each day – “For God's sake Ron!” would echo around the house.

When asked to put together his thoughts and feelings for Gloria he said :

“It's impossible to put it into words – where do you start and end? Perhaps 55 years of marriage is testament enough – that and the family in the front benches of the church.”

So we thank God for Gloria, a life lived to the full, enriched by love and friendship, a lasting legacy of love and achievement in her children and grandchildren. We each have our own memories of her and we will continue to share these with each other.

Our lives are limited in terms of time but love does not come to an end!

God bless you Gloria.

Ron and the family would love to meet with you in the Griffin afterwards – please feel free to go straight there after Mass where they will be expecting you – or after the brief Committal Service at The Crematorium. We look forward to seeing you.