

Jean Wendy Gilby

13th October 1951 – 25th December 2014

Jean Beavan was born in October 1951 in Clapton, London, to parents Gordon and Evelyn. Sadly, twin brother John survived only two days. Sister Sheila was born in March 1954.



The family lived in Tottenham, moving to Winchmore Hill in the late fifties. Whilst Jean's love of gardening was influenced by her father's interest, her lifelong enthusiasm for tennis can be traced to their Winchmore Hill home. Here the local tennis club, Brackendale, was sited at the bottom of the garden. Other interests included Tottenham Hotspur football club, cooking and collecting postcards.

Jean attended Winchmore School where she became a Prefect. On leaving, she worked as an administrative assistant at the Housing Department of Enfield Council, and she enjoyed the office environment. Amongst the many things she learned there included finding means of dealing with the rent collectors, who tended to play jokes on her, some practical.

Jean later moved to be a secretary at Southgate Technical College, where she worked for the principal. Jean's desire to teach gradually came to the fore. After she had achieved her qualifications, she taught

secretarial practice at Pitman's College in the 1980's. As Jean became more independent, she learnt to drive, got a car and moved to a flat in Cockfosters.

An important part of Jean's life was maintaining family and other ties. She developed strong relationships with her close family, grandmother, aunt and cousins. Groups of classmates and workmates also became lifelong friends.

Jean remained in contact with many of these, often their children as well, wherever they moved in the world, keeping a special calendar to track their birthdays. She joined the United Reformed Church, Winchmore Hill and in the mid-eighties ran a youth group there.

Jean met Tony in 1987 because of a blind date with recommendations. This meeting was highly successful to both parties and they quickly discovered friendship and love.

At times, they were so close they experienced a form of personal telepathy so that they were able to complete one another's sentences. They married in 1988, when Jean moved to Hertford. Sons Ian and Mark were born in 1990 and 1993. On joining All Saints Church, Hertford, Jean ran the Mother and Toddler Group and was also active in the Mother's Union.

The number of cribs distributed to families at Christmas expanded rapidly under Jean's leadership. An enthusiastic fundraiser, another activity included loaning jigsaws to elderly parish members. Outside of her church activities, Jean also set up and ran Morgan's school gardening club, which received the Mayor of Hertford's award for the best school garden in 2007.

Jean enjoyed a happy marriage blessed with a loving husband and two lovely sons. She provided the perfect support to commuting husband Tony, who had unpredictable working hours. If he arrived

All Saints Alive

home late in the evening he was always welcomed, and provided with a delicious meal. Living near to the boys' school, classmates sometimes dropped in unannounced; hospitality was always offered, refreshments or often a homemade pizza. Excellent mother and homemaker, her copious use of many gardening and cookery books helped her to carry out these aspects to a very high standard.

Ian and Mark's participation in the All Saints choir was a source of pride, as well as a lot of work ferrying them around to practice sessions. Trips to support them on choir tours were happily incorporated into family holidays.

With husband Tony, Jean took pleasure in supporting Ian and Mark as they each left home to study at University, learning life and academic skills, growing within a strong, loving family background.

In the final years of her life Jean was brave and uncomplaining, maintaining her sunny disposition and humour through a debilitating illness and spells of medical treatment that were frequently unpleasant and exhausting.

Periods spent with Tony on his retirement, were cherished by both parties. These included those when Jean nursed him through health problems of his own. Relationships with family and friends also assumed an even greater significance. Though she adapted to text, email and skype, a good old chat on the phone or over a cup of tea were her favourites.

In the last few months, the move to a peaceful bungalow in High Cross gave Jean a great boost. First steps in planting the new garden, choosing items jointly with Tony, were relished and leaves a pattern to be followed in the future. A recent pause in the gruelling hospital treatments gave space for a number of very pleasurable and comforting trips with Tony to several parts of England.

Rev Richard Maudsley 17th January 2015

Poem: The Garden

There is peace within a garden,
a peace so deep and calm,
that when the heart is troubled,
it's like a soothing balm.

There's life within a garden,
a life that still goes on,
Filling the empty places
when older plants have gone.

There's glory in the garden
at every time of year.
Spring, summer, autumn,
winter, to fill the heart with cheer.

So ever tend your garden,
its beauty to increase.
For in it you'll find solace.
And in it you'll find peace.

Rosamond, Lady Langham

