I shall be referring to Pamela as Peddie throughout these memories and thoughts, as that is how she was known at school where we became friends.’ Pamela Edwards’ -Peddie for short. I can’t change a habit of a life time.

I am very conscious that every single person here –either friend or family – will have their own very special memories of Peddy. Mine are far from unique, but I can only try to capture some of her genius for friendship in the specifics of our story together. I am sure that you will all recognise in it the person we all love and have felt loved by . There are indeed some school friends present who have known her longer than me, at St George’s, the junior school for St Felix . They report the same experience of a gentle, fun loving child.

Peddy and I met in the first year of senior school. She was a boarder and I was a day girl. Ped made no distinction …none whatsoever. She was great friends with Tizzie and they both opened their happy little twosome to include me. Very soon after I found to my joy that Peddy’s father was to become vicar of Westleton and from then on I had a local friend to visit in the holidays.

Memories are so rich from this time. They include taking out her mother’s pony and trap into the lanes round Dunwich and Westleton for hours, armed only with marmite sandwiches and Ribena. Peddy was always in charge, confident and happy with her love and understanding of the individual ponies. Later I was allowed to ride her mother’s ponies with her and sometimes with Tizzie, and I have very happy memories of riding through Dunwich Forest, and all around the Heath . Peddy tended to forget I had not had a riding lesson in my life and her huge patience with my nerves was sometimes overridden by her joie de vivre when she would urge her mount into a gallop and mine would inevitably follow. I had absolutely no knowledge of how to control him, and I would see Peddy ducking deftly under low hanging branches and would try to follow suit, only by a miracle clinging on. The adrenaline rush was addictive and Peddy unrepentant.

When her father retired to Walberswick, visiting became much easier. And very soon after this, Peddy asked her parents if she could have three friends to stay for a week at the Studio one Easter holidays, unsupervised. It was a measure of the deep trust both Ped’s parents had in their children, and at the time especially, their elder daughter, that they agreed. Ped went food shopping for us all and brought back for each of us a very popular steak and kidney pie ,…at the time I think designed to feed a family of four … plus some peppermint instant whip. There were no left overs that I can remember. The two others who shared this glorious and unforgettable time are both here, Tizzie and Jenny.

As adolescence approached, Peddy and I took different routes. I became very introverted and socially shy but Ped embraced the sixties and all it was offering. There were wild parties at the studio that I could not cope with and I pretended that my parents wouldn’t let me come. It made not a jot of difference to our friendship. Peddy never challenged me or scorned in any way my fears. I simply cycled over the river the next day and helped her clear up and she would delightedly regale me with stories of all the carryings on from the night before.

Soon our paths after school days began to diverge, we both went away for our further education and first jobs. Peddy and Wally met and fell in love and got married, I continued to visit whenever I was visiting my parents. I remember Peddy as a young mother, always the same , loving and patient and a tad absentminded . Min was a very shy little girl and would cling to her mother’s leg in the presence of strangers. Ped would walk around gently, as in a three legged race, with little Min clinging on for dear life. James was a dreamy little boy and Ped would chatter to him in the tender tones reserved only for her beloved dogs and her children. I’m sure most here will recognise the slightly distracted Ped…. never raising her voice in the furore of family life. Wally sometimes very kindly ran me down to the Bailey bridge if I was late. On one occasion I remember him saying with an earnestness that was really touching: ‘Lino, you know that I absolutely adore Pamela .

Over the years I have always met up with Ped whenever I came home. She was always welcoming, always interested in family matters, always deeply committed in countless ways in the village. She was much more adventurous than I and would always seize any opportunity to travel or to be beckoned towards an adventure. Many of you here will have shared these experiences and will be brimfull of memories. Her teaching life was a joy to her. I envied the children she taught, because of her genuine enjoyment of them. The only anxiety she ever shared with me was her fear that she would not be able to give them the most up to date support in the rapidly changing world of education. But as far as I know all her pupils, latterly those who had found main stream school too daunting , loved her gentle attentiveness and her unswerving commitment to them and were able to pass their exams.

All of us who knew Ped realised what a deeply spiritual person she was. Though raised in a vicarage with the best of fathers, she was always questing, embracing spiritual worlds way beyond my own understanding. But as she recounted her experiences, I learnt it was always the kindness embedded in her practice, and the love of the natural world and everyone and everything in it which was the focus of her attention. Her family suffered three terrible tragedies –the loss of her father when a teenager, the traumatic loss of Mary her younger sister and finally Wally’s premature death….all of which impacted her profoundly. Her faith, compassion and love, reaching out to everyone involved from her teenage years to her adult life were testament to the practicality of these deep convictions.

My last phone call to Peddy was short as she was happily reading with Seb in bed , but she managed in that brief call to let me know how tremendously proud and awed she was by both Jas and Ellie’s school reports. She was looking forward to weeks of what she loved most in life, spending quality time with her beloved family and friends.

All the characteristics I have described so far were tested to the ultimate in the week following the accident. All the love , commitment and depth of character that she had shown her family all her life simply shone around her in her terrible predicament, through Min and James and Harry and Inger and all the family. Nearly all her school friends who responded to the news remembered her smile as a young school girl, her friendliness and kindness. Here again, in extremis, her smile in her eyes and in her beautiful, peaceful face simply shone. There are no words to describe her courage and her total focus on her family and theirs on her. She died very peacefully, as she had lived.