Words for Mum's memorial service

Over the past few weeks, as a family we have received hundreds of cards and emails from friends and family, both local and from across the globe. It has been overwhelmingly joyous to take in everyone’s shared memories and thoughts about our dear mother, sister to Harry, grandmother to Jasmine, Ellie and Sebby, aunt to so many nieces and nephews, and dear friend to so many of you gathered here today and so many more unable to join us physically at this time.

The one thing which has been prevalent throughout so many of those correspondences has been the word LOVE and so it seems right for me now to focus on that theme of LOVE as we all celebrate her wondrous life.

During her life, Pam, Peddy, Pammie, Speedy or however she was known to you was surrounded by much love. She was a giver of love as well as a keen recipient of it.

She had a deep love of adventure, and in many ways that shaped her life and who she would become. From an early age she would be joined on her adventures by many close friends and family. Whether that be traversing the lanes around Westleton in a pony and trap or exploring Dunwich Forest on horseback with her dear friends, Lino and Tizzy. As a young lady she travelled widely, spending time hitchhiking across Australia and fruit picking in Tasmania and her stopover to explore the canals and temples of Bangkok then onto Singapore to savor high tea in Raffles, on her way over to see the Family ‘down under. She enjoyed an eventful road trip in a to Istanbul with Dad, Mandy and Jackie Batho in a tiny mini, stuffed full of tents and luggage and again those friendships have endured to this day. Her love of adventure continued as she moved to Ireland with our beloved father Wally. She returned then to Walberswick but her love for exploration continued. She travelled to France (where) with dad, Min and I where dad had taken on a building job. I vividly remember watching Harry’s beautiful VW campervan go up in flames as dad was attempting some maintenance on an oil leak, with a Jay cloth of all things. Her and dad would often travel to Ireland or Scotland on fishing trips and I’m reliably told that she could always be found with her head in a book and a glass in her hand. She had amazing adventures with Tippi and family, when she visited them in St. Vincent and I smile now as I remember the tales of boat trips and Rum Punch. As my own love of adventure grew, she joined me in Chiangmai, a place she dearly loved, and would visit several times, to explore the temples and enjoy the Thai cuisine, with myself Oiy and all of our Thai family. Quite recently she explored Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam with Mandy and Christine. It was on this trip that she realized one of her bucket list dreams which was to visit Angkor Wat, in Siem Rep, Cambodia. I was lucky enough to spend several days with her as we marveled at those tranquil ruins. These are memories which I will forever cherish. She also loved her time in Turkey with the Kybele family and the huge joy you collectively shared. But of course there were so many more adventures which I have insufficient time to share with you now and you will all of course have special memories of those times you shared with her.

LOVE

Mum also had a great love for Literature and the Arts. A love which she has shared with many of you and which she has nurtured in many of us, the younger crowd, in particular , Jasmine, Ellie, Sebby and myself and so many of those she taught over her many years in the classrooms of the schools she worked. She would delight in introducing Jasmine to new poems and novels and she truly cherished the way Jasmine passionately engaged with the stimuli and was incredibly proud of her joining the Walberswick book club and sharing collective thoughts once a month over dinner and a glass of wine. When I was a young child, mother would read to me and Min nightly and I cherish those times and the journeys they took me on. Every year on World Book Day I proudly display the cover of ‘Maurice Sendak's ‘Where the Wild Things Are' and share it as my favorite book, much to the bemusement of my students who question why the Head of English has a picture book as his favorite. I have more than once in Book Day assemblies explained that those times reading as a young child with my dear Mama are what led me to who I am today and I have so much to be thankful for the time shared reading with me and Min. As I grew older, she encouraged me to engage with things that gave me Joy. She supplied me with weekly copies of peak 2000AD in the late 80’s and subscriptions of Empire film magazine and then ‘Sight and Sound'. She would frequently ferry me to all the local cinemas, whether it be Aldebrugh, Leiston or East Coast Cinema in Lowestoft as she sought to support my love of film. I remember a particularly awkward trip to the pictures to catch Paul Verhoven's latest, ‘Basic Instinct'. She always went above and beyond to engage. For many years she enjoyed Paul’s Opera club and I at times questioned her sanity for driving in midwinter on the icy Suffolk roads between Walberswick and Woodbridge just to watch an old VHS of an Opera. But such was her loved for those times that she went regardless. She also introduced Jas and Ellie to the wonderful world of live theatre and had very recently been enjoying her trips to the Thorington outdoors theatre. She was due to take the girls to Les Miserables in a few weeks and will be remembered for all those wonderful shared experiences.

Learning was another thing which she had an enduring love for. She genuinely was a life long learner and was greatly dismayed, when in hospital, that she had broken her 528 consecutive days run of learning French on the Duo Lingo app on her phone. She studied teaching at with Naomi at Bognor Regis Teacher Training College, and aside from a few years taken out to care for Min and I in our youth, she worked as a teacher for all her adult life, first as pre prep teacher and later as a SENCO before taking on tutoring, following her retirement. Since her passing we have received countless messages from her old pupils which have focused on the positive impact she had on their lives, getting them started on their ‘letters and numbers’. She also had a great love for the spiritual learning she engaged with throughout her life, whether they came from Ram Dass, Mother Meera, Ekhart Tolle or Emanuel (no…not the movie). She also enjoyed the Buddhist connection which my marriage to Oiy brought and loved a recent road trip to ? In Thailand who took us too some of the oldest temples in Thailand. Mother found great happiness in the teachings or rather ‘messages' from P’Taah and enjoyed me reading to her from ‘The Gift' during her last few days in hospital. It is this love of learning which I know many of us will now continue to embrace as we move forward in our own lives in the hope that when our time arrives, we will be able to be ready to take the next steps, with the courage and acceptance which she demonstrated to us all in her last days with us.

LOVE

Her love of Walberswick and the many communities within it, also formed a huge part of her life. I feel that at times mother may have felt she lived a little in ‘Wally’s’ substantial shadow. But in different ways, she contributed to our beautiful village in just as many ways as he. For many years, she was involved in the Easter Egg Hunt, and every year she could be found taking charge of the ‘nearly new’ store at the village fete on the Green, having earlier in the day provided tea and bacon sandwiches to all those who had set up the fete . She much enjoyed her time with the Watts play reading group and her time on the WI. Her daily morning swims in the North Sea also brought her tremendous joy over the years. The Walberswick Dog Walkers provided great company as she took her beloved dogs out for long walks along the Suffolk Coast. Her monthly book club dinners allowed her to engage with like minded folk and introduced her to works loved by other members. She often took Jas or Ellie (and recently Sebby) around to deliver the village news and could often be found ‘running late’ to clean the church. Again she was thrilled with Jasmine’s involvement with the Village pantomime and greatly enjoyed being part of those productions. Later in her life she also had a go at yoga and Pilates and occasionally became frustrated at her lack of flexibility. Every year on the 5th November she would help organize the jacket potatoes and soup for the Village’s firework display and for a great many years, alongside dad, she led the Carol Singing around the village on Christmas Eve, always enjoying a glass or two of mulled wine. As I’m sure that you will all appreciate, her presence at these events will be greatly missed.

LOVE

Finally I’d like to talk about her love of the family. She adored her dear father and the wisdom he was able to share with her and was greatly affected by his premature departure. Her mother, Anna provided a huge amount of love to not only Harry, Mary and mother but to all those who would find their way to Ferry House and the Studio, many in the congregation would no doubt be able to attest to this. Her love for her mother was pure and reciprocated. Her love for her brother and sister, Harry and Mary was equally pure. Again she was devastated by the premature departure of her dear sister, Mary, but her love was then channeled to Mary’s daughters, Nonny, Totty and Vicky, a love which I know they strongly felt, and which she reiterated on one of our last shared times together, at a Studio party a couple of nights before her accident. After dad’s passing, mum’s brother Harry became her closest friend and when he moved into next door, not many days passed when they weren’t able to share precious time together, often over a glass of wine. As a family we truly appreciate the love and generosity of spirit which Harry shared with mother throughout her life and particularly in the last few years, as she joined Inger and his Covid bubble. Of course I can’t go much further without mentioning the love of her life, Wally. They of course met in the village, and spent time as friends of friends before ultimately getting together with one another, and as has been recounted to me recently, their union helped break down a social divide, in their local, The Bell and at many raucous parties thereafter. Their love was deep and at times complicated but ultimately it endured through both their lives and indeed continues through both Min and I, and their grandchildren, Jasmine, Ellie and Sebby. On our last night together, prior to her accident, as we remembered dad, 10 years to the day since he passed, she and I sat down on the bench beside the slipway, and as we watched the stunning sunset she told me of the great pride she had in all of her grandchildren. Of how Jasmine had grown into such a wonderful, vibrant young soul and of their shared love of so many things. She was in awe of Ellie’s blossoming artistic talent and loved everyone of her beautiful pictures. She told me of her great happiness at the close bond all of her grandchildren shared and at Ellie and Sebby’s developing connection and friendship and of the times she watch them quietly sketching with one another. And she told me of how great a companion Sebby had become, that after several years of not seeing him, how delighted she had been that he’d been able to join her for morning swims and dog walks and how she loved hearing all of his random facts about life and the natural world. I am indeed grateful that we all had this precious time together, before her time came to move on. Obviously we are all heartbroken at this time, none more so than Min and I, who were both recipients of her abundant love. She more than anyone else, guided us to become who we are today. Never were we pressured into pursuing any particular pathways in our educational lives or indeed those that followed. Indeed, far from it, mum simply supported us in the choices and pathways we independently chose to follow. She has been with us through every step of our lives and I genuinely believe that she will continue to be with us all, to guide us all, as we move through this grand, chaotic game we choose to call life.

I share with you now a song which I feel captures the joy of the life she lived, chaos and all, and of the huge love she shared with us all in the times we spent together.