

Eulogy - Gill Vine DL

Gill was born in Portsmouth on 16th October 1935 and was the daughter of John and Olive Anderson. John was a submariner and for most of Gill's childhood, she and her mum and brother were regularly on the move to different bases around the country to support John in his role during the war.

Gill left school at 18 and then attended the London School of Economics, studying politics, philosophy and economics.

She worked in London a PR organisation and first met Ted at a dance at the HAC, Armoury House, on the 8th November 1957.

They kept in touch and became an item in 61 and were married in the Harrow Registry Office on the 24th July 1965 and they honeymooned in Portugal. Those good with maths will work that out to close to 52 years of happy marriage.

Their first home was 171 Goldhurst Terrace in London but within a few months they got their own home in Chalfont Common.

This is where Paul and Helen were born and Gill stopped work to raise the children. You've heard from Helen and Paul what an important choice this was by Gill and Ted.

It meant that Gill was always there for Ted and the children. She did everything you can imagine in the home, as well as being a calm and guiding hand with school and a constant source of encouragement and support for sporting and other interests.

What it also meant for someone of Gill's intelligence and ability was that she needed additional ways to think and contribute. National Women's Register (NWR) came into Gill's life after Paul was born.

An organisation for the "lively minded woman" that grew to 20,000 +

Gill played major roles in NWR over the years particularly as National Organiser and later as a Trustee.

Gill said that NWR was one of the interests that kept her sane and her mind exercised while the children were young. As it then was provided that important outlet and was the first of a huge number of voluntary work and appointments held by Gill over a 46 year period.

Locally, Gill was involved in parish council, as a school governor, Chiltern Youth Club and various other bodies. Gill also contributed to a number of national youth organisations for about 20 years and was President and Vice President of Girl Guides, Buckinghamshire for 22 years.

Over the past 25 to 30 years, mainly since Gill and Ted moved to what they call their 'dream home' in Steeple Claydon, Gill has had three main threads to her philanthropic life:

Drugs and Alcohol Counsellor - 31 years. She was one of the last Volunteer Counsellors in Bucks and her dedication to helping others had a profound effect on many people's lives. To the end she kept in touch with two of those she counselled.

BACO - 25 years a Trustee and 21 years as Chair. Gill lead BACO from a charity remote from those it supported to one closely involved with both the 4 prisons in Bucks and ex-offenders through Probation. Under her leadership in 2009 BACO received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, a matter of great pride.

The close involvement of BACO with HMP Grendon is evidenced by two cards from both men and staff, one from A & B wings one from C & D wings, wishing her well after the original surgery. Following her death four cards of condolence. One from Jamie Bennett, one from A & B wings, one from C & D wings and one from F wing

Later in the year there will be two Amalanchier trees planted, one from Family and one from the men in HMP Grendon, in the grounds of HMP Grendon in her memory.

IMB Woodhill - 15 years. Filling many roles including Chair & Vice Chair. Gill had the ability to relate to and communicate with both staff & prisoners.

The work she most enjoyed was her work in helping ex-offenders resettle – and as someone who has worked in the prison system I cannot tell you how valuable and critical that work is. The BACO program simply wouldn't be what it is without her, working in a great partnership with Ted.

Gill's appointment as a Deputy Lieutenant of the county in 2005 was a matter of great pride to her and Ted.

As well as this amazing energy for voluntary contribution and work, Gill fitted all this in round the family so that she was always there for Ted, Helen and Paul and then the grandchildren.

Helen and Paul told me that they had a very comforting childhood and mum gave them just the right amount of nurture and distance to help them grow in adulthood and choose their own path. She never judged – only supported. Gill was also the calming influence on the family had a knack of finding the solution that everyone needed.

The family always went to North Devon on holiday every year when the children were young and all have very fond memories of that time.

Christmases were also a special time, with Gill excelling at everything she turned her hand to - an example of this were her perfect home-made Christmas crackers – and her amazing cooking.

As a mother Gill believed in giving her children the space and freedom to live their own lives and giving them the support and wisdom to do it. One of the products of that is her five grandchildren whom she loved to see whenever she could and was pleased to discover Sykpe so she could talk to the three in Australia.

Helen said she was a big part of Matthew and Daniel's lives as they grew up. And Matthew said the same when I spoke to him. He loved going round to see his grandma in the cottage and has wonderful memories of the games they shared and the hide and seek and the BBQs – walking the dogs – the holidays in Turkey.

He said that his grandma was someone you could easily talk to and get great advice from. He said that his grandma was one of the most unselfish people he had ever met – she gave her all to everyone.

Gill had said to Helen how much she valued Matthew's visits in the past few weeks.

What everyone spoke warmly about was the last wonderful, amazing Christmas that they all had together – no one knew what lay ahead at that time and Gill spoke of it a lot in recent times and so much comfort in having had that time and how precious it was.

There is so much more that could be said – and each person here could stand up and pay tribute to the place Gill occupied in their hearts – but I'm going to finish with some thoughts from the family

As a wife, Gill had a brilliant mind and easy way with people which would have taken her to the top of whatever profession she had chosen. But that her talent was never the less not wasted and she had used it to help so many.

As a mum, Gill was loving, giving, trustworthy, loyal, strong and caring, a best friend, someone to look up to - in short, the best mum anyone could wish for and will leave a huge void not just in the life of the family – but in the lives of so many.

As a mother-in-law, Gill was an inspiration – as a wife and mother and as a woman.

As a granny, Gill was very much loved, a super cook, a place of comfort, guidance and inspiration.

