

Sarah's Tribute

Hello and thank you for coming.

I am Sarah the only child of Wendy and Phillip Green. It's an honour and a privilege to tell you about the incredible lady I was lucky enough to call my Mum.

Wendy June Best was born to Vera and Lesley Pace on the 1st Feb 1936. Mum was born in the district of Alresford but lived most of her life in Kings Worthy. Mum had a sister Anne but as children they lived apart due to Mum's schooling something that Mum had always regretted.

Mum started boarding in hospital schools at the age of 2 in Lord Mayor Treloar's in Alton and then went to Chailey Heritage at the age of 6 until she was 16. In 1942 Chailey Heritage was known as the school for cripples. Mum didn't really talk about her school life, she referred to it as being brought up in a home, but I have found a piece written by Mum a few years ago for the old scholars newsletter.

'I arrived in January 1942 at the age of 6. I was scared and lonely, mainly due to the new environment, as I was familiar with not having any family around me. I was somewhat inhibited and not very socially adept. I do however have many happy memories of being in the Chapel, learning craft skills, being in the Brownies, and making new friends very quickly. '

On leaving Chailey and building her own life Mum made many friends. Her disability was never an issue and caused no boundaries to what she wanted to achieve. Mum always worked, and enjoyed her secretarial roles and was a PA to directors of an insurance firm in Winchester for many years.

Mum married Phillip Thomas Green on 28th May 1959, they had a small service with Dad's family and close friends. They honeymooned in Torquay, a place she revisited several times.

I was born on the 14th September 1963. I have many memories of a happy childhood. I have recently looked at many photographs, many I don't remember, and life looked pretty good, despite Mum having many periods in hospital.

Mum juggled working, being a wife, a mother, and long periods of being away from home. Dad became ill in 1979 and died of his cancer in 1981. We nursed him at home until he went to the local Hospice where he spent his final few hours. Mum's life changed dramatically, but despite her own turmoil, despite me going slightly off the rails, her love remained unconditional. I do remember clearly after Dad died Mum said we needed a holiday and I could pick the destination. I'm not sure Disneyworld Florida was what she had in mind, but that is where we went and had a fantastic time!

Mum has always loved shopping and this was something we did regularly. On one particular occasion some years ago I was meeting Mum at Kings Walk in Winchester for one of our many trips. On meeting Mum I asked her what she was wearing. She said "This is the coat you gave me for Christmas", I said "This is not a coat it is a dressing gown, I thought you would know that because of the Wallace and Gromit pockets!" Embarrassingly we still continued with our shopping trip!

I think Mum had a tough few years after Dad died but she wasn't one to dwell on difficult times, and she met Brian Best at a pub on a singles night. She found love again and married Brian on 14th July 1986. They loved life, partied, had holidays and they both worked very hard.

My Mum was always there for me. When I was on holiday in Greece I was taken seriously ill, so much so the surgeon phoned Mum to say she might want to make the journey to Athens. It was a Herculean task for Mum and Brian getting to Athens but, by the time they arrived in Athens, due to my Mum's genes I was well on the way to recovery.

Mum still had long spells in hospital. I found a letter from Mum's surgeon apologising for the long wait (she often got to know her surgeons personally!) He said a date had been fixed and the difficulty had been the fact that Mum needed the operating theatre all day and this required the surgeon to eat a sizeable breakfast. Most of Mum's surgery was in London, therefore visiting was difficult. Mum's friend Julia lived and worked in London and she visited regularly. The pictures show much wine and cake was consumed!

Brian had many medical issues and sadly died on the 17th December 2014 after many weeks in hospital.

Eventually Mum once again enjoyed many happy times, she rekindled her faith which had always been important. I just want to tell you a couple of stories that epitomise Mum's determination and bravery.

Mum had a routine blood test, later, that same evening, a doctor phoned to say Mum needed an injection as a result of the blood test. Mum was already in bed but gave the doctor the keypress number. In the early hours the doctor phoned Mum again as he was unable to use the keypress. Despite Mum's attempt at explanation, he failed. He told Mum the injection was essential and could not wait until the morning! Mum, goodness knows how, got out of bed into her wheelchair, went to the front door but was unable to open it herself. So the doctor handed Mum the injection through the letterbox, told her he had to witness the injection, and watched through the letterbox as Mum gave it to herself! How we laughed the next day!

On another visit from a doctor, on arrival, he was wearing a huge hat, Mum opened the door greeted him and said 'Oh can I take your hat?' He passed the hat to Mum and continued into the bungalow. Mum, realising she needed to follow, couldn't wheel herself in whilst carrying a hat ... You've guessed it she wore it!

Mum's lifeline called me one morning as she had fallen. I arrived just before the ambulance. She was on the floor. She had managed to turn the television on and her first words were 'Don't worry, Sarah I am fine I just can't get up.' She didn't want to go to hospital but the ambulance crew insisted. Following an X-ray in A&E they found she had broken her leg in four places! Mum never wanted anyone to worry, she didn't want to cause a fuss.

On hearing these snippets of Mum's life I don't want anyone to think Mum had a tragic or sad life, aside from her childhood, life was good. As an adult Mum lived her life to the full. Mum dealt with life because that was what she had to do, she was unstoppable in what she wanted to achieve, she was courageous, kind and generous. She was my lovely Mum!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mum's friends who, through lockdown, phoned regularly, always ensured she had food, and even bought meals and flowers on doorstep deliveries.

Finally, I need to say a few words about an exceptional lady, Sandra. Sandra has known Mum for many years, in the beginning as a carer, but Sandra soon became a special firm friend. Sandra has helped Mum both practically and emotionally through some special times, and some difficult and sad times. Sandra has always been there whenever Mum needed her, no question! They also had

great times, gardening, shopping, (shoplifting, which is another story!), holidaying and ladies that lunched.

The last year would have been intolerable for Mum without the love, generosity, kindness and support that Sandra provided. Thank you.