

RECORD OF REMEMBRANCE FOR BETTY DUXBURY

Our dear Friend, Betty Duxbury, died on 11th March 2014.

Betty had bravely moved to Oxford from Bovey Tracey in Devon, where she attended Newton Abbot meeting. But Judith Atkinson remembers that Betty was proud of her new flat and grateful to her daughter Fiona for finding it. Betty was a warm and loving attender at North Oxford Friends' coffee mornings and delighted in taking her turn to host these occasions, with her own light-as-a-feather signature sponge cake in the centre of the table.

As Betty became frailer and needed her stick more, she remained indefatigable, taking the bus into Summertown to do her own shopping and - often - that of her neighbours.

“Betty was full of life and light: simply being in her presence was a joy. Her smile was so warm and loving that I felt she was smiling specially for me. I have no doubt that others felt the same - which was wonderful.

“It has been a privilege and a joy to know her and her spirit continues to enlighten us all.”

To Susan Wright, “Betty was a lovely person with a particularly charming voice. She made no effort to impose herself on the world. Immensely gentle and with no airs or side at all. Betty was small, neat, with a twinkle in her eye. She had studied History in London and became a Quaker later in life.

“She took the maxim to live adventurously quite literally. To cross the Woodstock Road with her, far from the zebra crossing, felt hair-raising, yet she negotiated the crossing with deft aplomb. Would that more of us were like her!”

Tina Leonard wrote:

“Betty was a very dear friend and her death has left a big gap in my life. I got to know her shortly after my own mother had died, seven years ago, and in many ways Betty helped to fill the gap left by my mother's death. Betty's enjoyment of life was infectious. Going on a car journey with her became an adventure, she took such pleasure in the view from the window, the trees, the buildings, the sun reflected on water. And then on arrival, we would amble gently around the chosen garden admiring the flowers, trying to name as many as we could before going for a well-earned cup of tea and sticky cake. As Betty's health deteriorated, each outing became more of a challenge. Going to see the fritillaries at Magdalen and managing to get all round the meadow was a tremendous feat of endurance, and each moment was relished and relived for several weeks after.

“Even in her 90s and in failing health, Betty took a lively interest in current affairs. She was deeply concerned about a little boy in Kenya, brought to our attention by a Kenyan friend of mine. The little boy benefitted from Betty's generosity when he needed an operation for club foot. She also asked me to make sure he had something special after the operation. It was typical of Betty that she thought through the implications of a small boy going into hospital. Betty always called herself lazy because she wasn't able to do as much as she wanted, and no amount of being told that being with her was a pleasure in itself persuaded her of her worth. Before her health deteriorated she had enormous energy and would race across pedestrian crossings at great speed, not wanting to be a nuisance and hold the motorists up for a second longer than necessary! I was always worried she might trip and fall but she was indomitable,

very reluctant to ask for help and always so grateful for the smallest thing. She was always generous and I have lots of little mementoes: the sunglasses she gave me for using in the car; the fritillaries around my pond, from a bag of corms bought and shared after a trip to the garden centre; and a beautiful pink, taken as a cutting from her tiny garden. I so enjoyed sharing produce from my garden with her, taking her to the Cultivate vegetable van (she was an early member of the co-op and very supportive of it), and going for our outings. I miss her very much.”

Betty Duxbury: Born 17.11.1921 –Died 11.03.2014

Compiled and edited by Marieke Faber Clarke”