

Elinor Scarbrough

In speaking this afternoon about Elinor, I am indebted to those who have shared their memories with me and especially to Richard and Ranulf, for their assistance in gathering family thoughts.

Sometimes on occasions like these, I don't know the person of whom we are thinking, our paths haven't crossed, but in the case of Elinor, we had met and we had been together on the GB @ F'gaye HS- but that part of her story comes later.

Elinor was born of farming stock in Wales- love of all things Welsh stayed with her throughout her life- and the music played both before and at the conclusion of this service- reflects her Welsh heritage- with excerpts from Vaughan Williams' 3 Preludes founded on Welsh hymn tunes.

Memories from her sister and brother and passed down through the family remember Elinor as a child being a tomboy, into everything with a predisposition to getting herself into serious scrapes –

Putting her arm through a plate glass window at school

Breaking her leg at a Bonfire Night Party

As she got older she succumbed to bouts of bronchitis – a problem that lasted many years.

Sylvia, her sister in law writes

As her prospective Sister-in-law I first met Elinor in 1953 - she was a delightful young lady in her late teens, fun loving with a keen sense of humour which enabled her to find something to amuse her even when the going was tough. With her brothers and sister we spent many an enjoyable evening during the summer months at such unlikely events as Stock Car racing and motor cycle track racing, creating no end of dust, in the White City Stadium. On occasion in the winter we enjoyed evenings at the Theatre.

A couple of years later Elinor made her first solo train journey from Paddington to Wales to visit her Aunties. In those days ladies 'dressed up' to travel and so Elinor took me to the West End of London to search for accessories to complement her new suit. We didn't actually get the colour she wanted as gloves, for instance, in those days came in Black, Brown and White and Elinor, discerning as always, had already had acquired a biscuit coloured handbag and wanted a pair of gloves to match. The day was not lost as we had an enjoyable day. I was privileged to be asked to help her to dress for her wedding. She looked just perfect in fabulous in a bronze brocade fitted suit with a gold headdress. John, her brother was proud to walk her down the aisle to meet Richard that day.

Her friend Gillian Still telephoned me from France this evening and described Elinor as her dearest friend dating back to their meeting at Harrow Art College where they were both teaching. She recalls giving the Scarbrough family a guinea pig as a gift. Richard built a suitable house for it. Some weeks later Gillian enquired of Elinor as to how the pet was settling down and was told with great amusement that there are now six of them!

From the begg, she was clearly a person of intellect and wide in her outlook- a colleague from G Par Council- described her mind as "razor sharp". From her begs in Wales, she went to university in Manchester and read politics... and I can only guess that she was probably surrounded by fellow male students- the world of politics at that time being something of a male preserve.

She was to use her love of all things political and social in her working career in..... and eventually came to Essex University, where she worked and studied for her PhD. Colleagues speak very highly of her and of the privilege of working with her for over 22 years. One of her colleagues writes- "she was an excellent teacher, much loved and respected by her PhD and MA students and the many students who took her courses in European politics and Electoral behaviour. Elinor was diligent, thorough and conscientious- a stalwart of the dept in all aspects of teaching, research and administration. She gave generously of her time and energies as the co-director of the Essex Summer School- students came to this course from various countries.

Indeed at times Elinor attended conferences abroad- on one trip to Norway- the entertainment for the conference was rafting down a rapidly flowing river, which wasn't Elinor's cup of tea at all! Her colleagues continue. - "She was Editor of the publication "Electoral Studies" and her attention to detail was paramount. Elinor's legacy as an educator has spread over a worldwide network of alumni."

Elinor's legacy to education is also to be found locally here in Suffolk. She served on the GB at F'gaye HS at a pivotal time in decision making about how provision should be made for education- 2 tier- 3 tier- or perhaps even 4 tier. A friend and fellow parent of that shared time- spoke to me of Elinor's outstanding contribution to ensuring that F'gaye HS had a 6th form- there were plans for the 6th form to be hived off to Wb School. As a parent of a son in Yr 13, studying for A levels at F'gaye, I and my family are benefactors of her passion for state school educational provision and all that she did to ensure that F'gaye HS retained its 6th form. It is now one of the highest rated schools, not just in Suffolk, but in England- the Telegraph and The Times placing the school amongst their top schools for A level results based on A*-B grades- 31% of grades were A*/A this year- Elinor would have been so proud.

Closer to Grundisburgh village, Elinor for a time served on the Parish council and was Chairman of the Par Council for a

number of years. Iain Langdon, a fellow councillor and colleague from Essex writes

I first met Elinor in the late 70's / early 80's when we both were Grundisburgh Parish Councillors. Subsequently, she became Chairman and the two of us were the main authors of a Village Appraisal for Grundisburgh, Elinor writing the words and me providing the analysis of the vast amount of data we had gathered. As we moved towards publication of the report, Elinor kept ringing me up asking to have the data 'cut' in an ever increasing number of complex ways. She was very frustrated that this work took several hours to do for each request. But these were the days of 8 bit microcomputers with floppy disc drives and me being quite a novice programmer then! 40 years on it would be an almost trivial task to do with our modern tools and languages.

Another aspect of her attitude at that time was having a very political view on all work of the parish council. Then and now, parish councils had very little power and should essentially be apolitical bodies. Planning was a huge issue for Grundisburgh as we wanted to get as much advantage for the community when any housing development took place. Inevitably, this often involved 'planning gain', a concept which Elinor hated and saw as a very Tory driven idea totally polarised to her left wing views! I lost count of the number of meetings when she would threaten to resign if the parish council supported or commented positively on any proposed development that had the slightest element of planning gain in it. However, over the years, we did compromise a lot and Grundisburgh has benefitted from her

considerable efforts even though they were always tailored to not be seen to weaken her political views :-)

During her term of office, she fought vigorously for the maintenance of the hedgerows, her Welsh farming childhood coming through, at a time when the fashion was for them to be grubbed up. Now she would be bang on target, with the government announcing this summer that farmers must not cut hedgerows before the Autumn, in order to keep birdlife and the biodiversity of the hedgerow alive.

In this appreciation so far, I have spoken of Elinor in her professional life, as a member of the community, but not so much as a sister, wife, mother, grandmother and friend. There is a sense, in which I feel reticent in doing so, because it is you who knew and her and loved her and love her still. You who cherish memories of having shared your life with her. Without a doubt the hardest moment in her life and that of the family, was the death of Aston, which I have already referred to this afternoon. It was soul destroying and enormously hard and painful. Norman who was Rector here at that time, speaks of Elinor and his conversations with her, as being "at the edge of the mystery of faith", as she struggled to make sense of what had happened... but always willing to engage in conversation and discussion of things spiritual. Certainly throughout her life she showed forth compassion and care for friends in need- childminding for a friend each evening, while that friend's

husband was in hospital with leukaemia- not just looking after Alex- but cleaning the kitchen and setting it right- only for it to be in a mess again the next night- that kindness has not been forgotten; a concern for social justice and the importance of hospitality and welcome... all characteristic of the Christian way of life, but not uniquely Christian, but humane... outward looking and not introspective... a pride in family- and their achievements... a good friend to others in times of need.

There are probably things I have missed... I know I haven't spoken of her involvement in the French Twinning Group and that some of you here, shared that experience and time with her... perhaps there will be time an opportunity after this service over at The Dog to share those memories... but for now a deep sense of thanksgiving for the life and the love and passion that were Elinor's- we give thanks. Amen.