

Maureen Grace Mitson was born at Elm Farm on February 1st 1944 to Ray & Eva Mitson.

She was the second daughter of four, sister to Cynthia, Josephine and John.

A very happy child, she went to Stonham Aspal Primary school and then on to Stowmarket Grammar School. A keen church goer and with her love of singing and anything musical, she joined this church choir, encouraging and persuading her friends to join with her, and often going back to her Grandparents for lunch and to play with her cousins next door at Broughton Hall afterwards.

After taking her O'levels she left school and went on to work at Barclays Bank in Ipswich often going by moped. From her office she could see the cartoonist, Giles at work.

Mum was a keen member of the local Debenham Young Farmers club, and at one of the YF dances met her first husband, David. They were married in October 1966, at this Church, and she settled in to life as a Farmer's wife in the West Suffolk village of Hundon, near Clare. Here she became a keen member of the local WI and helped to set up the WI Farmers Market. As a keen baker and never one to take it easy, she regularly made dozens of cakes. On 27th October 1967 their first child, Paula was born. And 18 months later on May 21st 1969 Julie arrived.

Never one to let the grass grow under her feet, as well as being a busy farmer's wife and mother of two, she became a rep for the jewellery company Sarah Coventry. She was such a good saleswoman that she won a holiday to Tenerife for being the top sales person.

In 1978 she married Leon and they moved to Stanway Farm, Saham Toney in Norfolk. On 4th September 1979 Suzanne was born and on 22nd March 1981 Justin popped into the world. They ran a small farm shop and raised calves and pigs for the local butcher as well as managing a small holding, making sausages and cheese and growing vegetables to sell in her farm shop, all with two small children to bring up.

In October 1981 Mum moved back from Norfolk to the East Suffolk village of Grundisburgh, where she bought the local post office stores and she used her considerable business skills to expand the business. Here she quickly endeared herself into the local community and in 1985 she met and married Charles. She worked very hard and was never known to take a day off, so much so that a year later on 3rd November 1986 when her 5th child Andrew was born, she had been working in the shop in the morning.

Never one to miss an opportunity and to make sure she had no competition, when Oakenfulls Newsagents came up for sale, 100 yards down the road, she was quick off the mark and purchased the business and renamed it The Olde Forge Stores. She then moved the stores business from the post office to the new venture and turned the vacant space in the Post Office in to Hydes Cards and Crafts. She loved going to trade fairs and searching for new and interesting cards and gifts to sell. She was often seen whizzing up and down the road between the two businesses or out on a paper round when one of the boys was off sick!

When their Father Ray died in 2003, Mum and her sister Josephine decided to take on their childhood family home, Elm Farm, renovating it and turning it into a thriving Bed and Breakfast business, obviously it goes without saying that she did this whilst still running her other two businesses and bringing up her young family!!

She continued running 2 businesses right up to very shortly before her death.

When Mum was not working she loved being surrounded by her family. She was a fantastic cook and would always prepare a roast on a Sunday, followed by homemade apple pie, no one else can make them like she did.

She adored Christmas and would go out of her way to make them magical. All her young grandchildren would get an advent calendar every year without fail.

There was always a huge Lasagne produced for Christmas Eve and then a full Roast Turkey lunch on Christmas day. She only had one rule and that was that no presents were allowed to be opened until after the Queens speech!!

Birthdays were equally magical. She always sang Happy Birthday, even if it was down the phone to an answer machine, you were never forgotten. A cake was always produced and for our special birthdays they were always tailored to our particular interests.

She was so proud to be able to host the reception for Suzanne and Simons wedding in her garden, spending hours getting the flower beds to look exactly right, and even putting the bride and groom's initials in a flower bed outside the marquee!

Gardening was one of her favourite pastimes and she loved fiddling around in the garden making new borders, pruning and weeding when she had the time. Poppies were her favourite flower, and she brought the love of this flower into her kitchen filling it with anything poppyfied, whether it was on china, tea towels, pictures or just artificial arrangements, they made her smile.

Mum loved going to the seaside especially Walberswick, where she taught her children and later grandchildren the fine art of crabbing, even wading into the mud to retrieve a lost net!

A keen theatre goer she could often be found riding the train to London to see a musical or play, she went to the Wolsey theatre and would attend numerous proms concerts through August at Snape Maltings.

Mum was an extremely busy, gregarious person, oozing positivity, who thrived on challenges and loved to be surrounded by people and family and always involved in all aspects of life, whether business, running around after her 9 Grandchildren or marching around Wimbledon or the Chelsea Flower Show, where she would often come home with some treasure to put in her garden, either a water feature or foreign plant or some such like! Her house was always filled with people and laughter.

Mum adored travelling and in Auntie Josie's words 'whenever we went on holiday it was an adventure'!! She was the only person who would seriously consider going to China for a long weekend!! She also had many family holidays to Devon, Herne Bay and the Lake District.

So, when Julie and her family emigrated to New Zealand in 2006, Mum took full advantage of having accommodation on the other side of the world, and would annually hop on a plane in January and spend a month downunder making sure Julie, Roger and the boys were getting on ok! She did this every year until 2 years ago when she became ill. However, she never gave up hope that she would not be able to do it again, so strong was her resolve.

She was enormously proud of her 9 Grandchildren and to them she was 'Super Gran' or 'Granny Grundisburgh', and was so looking forward to the birth of Justin and Laurens 3rd child, her 10th Grandchild.

She had her first ever taste of camping at the age of 70, whilst in NZ with Julie, Roger, James and Sam, spending a night under canvas at Lake Benmore.

Whenever she turned up at any of our houses she would usually come bearing a homebaked cake or some such goodies.

She supported us all in our pursuits whether sporting, academic, business or whatever daft antics we got up to, being ever positive and upbeat.

Even whilst ill, in 2015 she went on a water flume at Centre Parcs. She was determined never to give up and lived life to the full right up until the end.

She had an incredible enthusiasm for life and crammed in as much as she possibly could.

Nothing fazed her.

Mum so wasn't ready to leave this earth and had so many unfinished projects! Her favourite phrase was 'Oh well never mind, we can sort it out!'

Positive until the end she had booked a week's holiday in a cottage at Walberswick, with all our family and was talking about going even on the morning of her passing.

She was Mum, Granny, Sister, Auntie and friend to so many people and will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

Mum, you were one in a million.

Written by Suzanne Denny-Pickess