

Tribute to Susan Poulson 29th April 2024

Brian has asked me to say a few words in Sue's honour and memory this afternoon and, as I grew up only a few miles from where Sue and Brian lived most of their lives, I discovered I have a little bit in common with them. Jenny and I also shared, with Sue, a love of historic aircraft - a subject about which she was very knowledgeable.

But, given just a few minutes, my dilemma was "What to say and what to leave out?" Believe me when I say the "What to leave out" was the hard one. How could I commemorate 80 years of life lived to the full, which included many good but also some very testing times in the allotted few minutes?

As I pondered on what to say I realised that I found it impossible to speak about Sue without speaking about Brian, and to mention Brian without Sue. But if I were to sum up Sue's life in 3 words they would be "devotion", "development" and "determination".

First devotion – Brian and Sue amazingly first met around the age of 5 seated at adjacent desks in their primary school. I bet they didn't know then that 75 years later they would be still seated next to one another. Their paths separated shortly after as they moved on to their next schools – Brian's was a very good one - it was "approved" – but they re-entered the same orbit in their late teens and have been inseparable ever since recently celebrating 57 years of marriage. This devotion was a two way thing between them. For example when Sue had her brain surgery in 2000 Brian travelled between the West Midlands and Liverpool almost on a daily basis after a day's work to be with her, and most recently he insisted on having her at home to be close to her and care for her in the familiar surroundings of her own home in her final days.

Secondly, development. I have already alluded to her interest in historic aircraft and, for those of you who are aircraft geeks, the Shuttleworth name will be a familiar one – home of the museum at Old Warden in Bedfordshire with Sue being distantly related to the Shuttleworth family. Indeed, Jenny and I discovered during one of our conversations that we had both been at the same air show there at one point in the early 2000's but neither of us knew the other at the time!

By profession Sue was a librarian serving at the library in Dawley – now part of Telford new town - where she was widely respected by colleagues as a valuable source of information. She knew exactly where to find what people were looking for – so much so that when the Telford Central library opened Sue, still serving in the local Dawley branch, was often asked by colleagues to help find obscure stuff. And in retirement she continued to learn and be a sponge for information helping here in Fressin with local historical research, and delving into family backgrounds using Ancestry. She was always to be found with a book near to hand.

In their travels she researched before, during and after, their frequent trips to Malta and Gozo and their less frequent ones to Australia and the USA.

And thirdly, determination. I have already alluded to Sue's surgery in Liverpool to remove a brain tumour in 2000. At the time this was ground breaking surgery with a very uncertain outcome. Sue's determination to recover showed through and, as Brian said to me the other day, they enjoyed another 24 years together as a result. Sadly the tumour grew back and gradually Sue's senses were robbed from her; her hearing, then her speech and her sight as the invader pressed into her brain and this was the direct cause of the stroke she suffered a few weeks ago. But Brian's devotion, in having her home to care for her, showed another steely side to her determination. She had said last year, before she started to decline in health, that she was determined to make her 80th and that

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determination resulted in her reaching this landmark birthday just a couple of days before her death - even though her failing body meant there could be no celebration.

For us, it has been a joy and a pleasure to know this devoted, determined lady with a hunger for knowledge and she will be missed by all who knew her

SCATTERING OF THE ASHES

We now come to the committal; and so, it is with love, respect and appreciation, we commit Sue's ashes to their natural end - through the elements - with nature in this beautiful forest which she loved.

Sue – Into the freedom of wind and sunshine, we let you go –
Into the dance of the stars and planets, we let you go –
Into the wind's breath, and the elements that surround us, we let you go
Go... with our love... in peace.