

In Loving Memory of

Diana Evans



18th September 1929 - 4th May 2024

Brilliant mother to Viv, Mali, Charles and Lizzy, wonderful grandmother to Joe, Rosie, Peter, Katie, Harriet, Annie, Ned and Roo and loving great-grandmother to Fred, Willoughby, Edie, Jenny and Albie

Celebration of Life

Thursday 13th June 2024 at 2 pm

Pier One, Plymouth Hoe



Memories of a brilliant mother

Viv

Mum was an early version of Shirley Conran's superwoman- although she did probably find the time to stuff a few mushrooms! She was an excellent needlewoman and cook but also taught almost every school subject at Southway Comprehensive, coming home in the evening to cook a full meal with homemade cakes always available. She taught me to cook, sew, knit, change nappies and care for the little ones - Mali, Charles and later Liz - all useful life skills but also how to strive for my own goals. I taught her to play bridge but, in typical fashion, she went on to be much better than me at it. She had strong political beliefs. I remember how angry she was when she discovered that Dad had to sign a hire purchase agreement for some new furniture even though she was buying it from her own salary. Amazing as it seems now women didn't get financial equality until 1975. She continued to embrace changing ideas and social mores until the end.

Mali

Throughout her adult life, Mum sewed, knitted, crocheted and later painted. She made many of our clothes, as well as dressing-up and dolls' clothes. She taught herself several different styles of embroidery and made tablecloths and placemats. She was a good teacher - I remember her bringing home some of the work the Southway girls produced. Against all odds, she taught me to sew. After she'd retired, she became even more creative and productive. She learnt to card and spin wool, which she then knitted into jumpers. She also learnt tailoring and made a jacket for Dad. Most impressively, she made numerous beautiful patchwork quilts, again learning the various techniques required. For a while she painted with watercolours, including Dad in this hobby by getting him to photograph scenery and frame her paintings. A collection of all she produced would have made a wonderful exhibition.

Charles

I was always impressed by how hard Mum could hit a tennis ball - serious power! Savoury pancakes to die for and gorgeous sticky peach caramel. Saying 'I'll knock your heads together' - different times - she didn't. Entertaining on Christmas Day with the Mays. Ted Mercer observing that 'Diana likes a party'. Leftovers in the morning after a party. Telling me about: her rich aunt saying that she should aspire to be a lady of leisure; Uncle Stan being a stone at birth; another uncle with a 'fancy woman' in St Budeaux. But mostly I think I was so taken by her vast knowledge of history and geography and literature and politics and so many other things. Looking at her school reports she was top of the class in grammar school, should have gone to a top university and worked in the Foreign Office, as she would say herself. She loved her family and had a good life, but what might have been had she been born 20 years later? When I visited Mum in recent years what she really liked was a serious conversation about politics or philosophy. Mum was a lifelong Liberal: Lizzy would try to push her to the Left and I would try and nudge her back a little bit the other way.

Lizzy

Mum was a complex woman, determined to be independent, and having to negotiate that in a very male world. She passed on to me her feminism, her passionate dislike of injustice, her tigress-like love for her children and her love of the Cornish Coast. She was remarkably resilient and remained independent until the end.



Memories of a wonderful Grandma

Joe

She will be forever loved as Grandma Diana, a caring and often serene woman who was dedicated to the children in her life. It was a pleasure to be able to know an articulate and inspiring individual with a timeless soul. If it was possible to defy the physically inevitable, as she did in tennis and sport, she could have carried on shining a light in our lives.

Rosie

During my A level in textiles, I had a last minute panic making trousers and a top for a fashion show and needed help. Grandma of course saved the day, teaching me how to finish them whilst managing my artistic temperament expertly. She was always encouraging me to pursue my creative side, showing me how to use watercolours and giving me paints to take home. On many of our holidays at Treyarnon, I remember being amazed and proud of how Grandma marched into the sea holding a plank of wood, then somehow zoomed past us when she caught a wave.

Peter

Long conversations on topics ranging from interwar Plymouth to being evacuated to Newquay to modern politics ("Grandad wouldn't like it"), always ending with "well we've really set the world to rights today". Her savoury pancakes. And her joy at meeting Jenny for the first time.

Katie

I would ask Grandma if I could be an ice skater/teenage mutant hero turtle/anything I wanted to be. We'd have a quick measuring session and within the week the outfit would be ready and would always fit me perfectly. The same thing would happen with birthday cakes - they were magic!

Harriet

Grandma introduced me to the immense joy of having a full English breakfast for supper. She'd make it all in one frying pan, flip the fried eggs (to get rid of the horrible clear stuff) and serve it up for tea every Thursday when I would go to Michael Road after school. I never have a full English without thinking of her! She also made me the best fancy dress costume I have – or will – ever own.



Annie

I learnt more than I realised from Grandma, about family, what to value in life and how to make soup, although I've never quite mastered it and probably never will. Thank you, Grandma for the love and lessons.

Ned

Best Grandma ever! Felt like the happiest grandchild sat at the table eating pea soup with a smiley face, roast dinner on the way, listening to stories of Newquay. Love you loads and loads xxx.

Roo

I'm so grateful to have had such a talented grandma. Seamstress, sportswoman, amazing at watercolours - I adore how creative she was. Aside from that, what I learned from her about the importance of family is something I hope to pass down like she did. I loved her very much.



This last picture captures Diana/Mum/Grandma perfectly.

Diana was a liberal, a supporter of freedom of choice, including the freedom to die when the time was right. She was not religious, not a traditionalist and disliked pomp and ceremony. When Mali raised the subject, she asked for a direct cremation and that we had a party and not a funeral. Diana liked a party!

Thank you for attending today and sharing your memories.