

SMITH
Faith Elizabeth
"Fay"

Suddenly on 8th August, aged 88. Wife of the late Vic. Much loved mother, grandmother and great grandmother who will be sadly missed by her family and friends. Funeral Service to take place at St Mary's Church, Bampton on Friday 1st September at 1.30 pm followed by burial. Family flowers only please donations if desired for The British Heart Foundation may be sent c/o R. A. Jones, Unit G, Three Michaels Yard, Carterton South Industrial Estate, Carterton, Oxon, OX18 3EZ. Tel: 07931979750

AUGUST 30 2017

Fay Elizabeth Smith

In the face of death, Christians have sure ground for hope and confidence and even for joy. Those words which I used at the beginning of our service set the tone for everything we are doing here this afternoon, as we remember that Jesus, who suffered death himself and defeated its hold on us, rose again to new and eternal life - a life he promises to share with us.

Of course, there is sadness in every death, as someone we have known and loved dearly is no longer within reach of our sight or hearing or touch. But in the midst of the sadness, there is also hope - and, in particular, the hope that what Jesus promised to his disciples in our reading from John's Gospel is the plain and simple truth: *I go to prepare a place for you* - a place for all whom he loves - a place for all those whose lives have been changed for ever because of his death and resurrection.

In that hope, confident that Jesus never made idle promises, we can thank God today with joy for Fay's life, knowing that death hasn't brought it to an end, but that the gift of life continues on that other shore and in that greater light of our Father's house of many rooms, many mansions.

So we think of Fay today as God himself thinks of her - a unique individual made in his image, with a capacity to love and create...

Fay was born in Bampton on April 17th 1929, the only child of Cecily (Cissy), who died when Fay was quite young. So Fay was then brought up by her Grandmother whose name was Elizabeth, but who was always known to Fay as "Granny Fairclough". As well as Fay's mother, "Granny Fairclough" had another daughter, Amy, who also lived in Bampton. "Aunt Amy", as she was always referred to by Fay, had 8 children. Both families lived on Mill Green. Granny Fairclough lived in number 3 and Aunt Amy lived across the brook on the other side of the green. Fay and her cousins were brought up together, their families sharing everything, and Edie, Joan, Kath, Shirley, Frank, Bill, David & Denis were like her brothers and sisters rather than cousins, and were always known to John & Carolyn as uncles and aunts.

Fay was closest in age to her cousins Joan and Edie, and she would often tell tales

of the things the three of them got up to when they were young, such as scrumping apples and, knocking on doors then running away, and sitting in Sandford's field telling ghost stories to the evacuee children who lived in the village.

Whitsun was always an exciting time of year, and the girls would get their old pram, and go off with Granny Fairclough and Aunt Amy to the fields below the Signals camp in Weald, to collect flowers with which to make their garland. Then the girls would tie the flowers into bunches, while Granny and Aunt Amy tied the bunches of flowers onto the willow boughs. Money was always tight in those days, but the girls always had a new pair of white plimsolls to wear for Whitsun, when they followed the Morris dancers around the village with their garland.

When Fay was young, Granny Fairclough was in service at Ham Court, and when Fay left school, Granny got her a job as nanny to the Vaughan-Robinson children who lived at Ham Court. Fay would tell tales of playing games such as hide & seek with them, and how on one occasion they found a box full of old clothes and boots in an attic and dressed-up as Cavaliers. When the children became too old for a nanny, Fay left Ham Court and became nanny to the Colvile children at Weald Manor, and after that, she went to work as a live-in companion to an elderly lady at Shotover Edge, in Headington.

Towards the end of 1947 Fay met Vic. Vic came from Nottingham, and was a Sergeant in the R.E.M.E who had been posted to the Signals Unit at Bampton. Vic & Fay were married on 10th November 1948, and their first child, John was born the following year on 23rd May. Their second child, Carolyn, was born in 1952 on the 18th October.

Fay loved knitting and always had at least one piece of knitting on the go. She could (and did) knit everything – jumpers, cardigans, dresses, socks, gloves, Arran, Fair-Isle, plain and patterned. When Carolyn & John were growing up, she knitted all of their jumpers and cardigans as well as cardigans and jumpers for herself and Vic. Fay also knitted the gown that Lindsay wore when she was christened.

Fay was also a dab-hand with a sewing machine, and made many of her own clothes, and anything else which needed to be sewn or repaired. (On the eve of her marriage to Vic, Fay unpicked and re-assembled the jacket of his army dress uniform so that he could wear it to be married in)

Fay made all of Carolyn's dresses when she was little – a particular favourite was a cream silk dress on which Fay embroidered a spray of purple pansies which ran from the shoulder to the hem.

When Auntie Shirley announced that she was getting married, Fay and Aunty Joan got together and made the bridesmaids dresses – all 8 of them!

Fay would also knit and sew clothes for Carolyn's dolls, and whatever scraps of fabric and wool were left over from Fay's knitting and dressmaking, soon became a dress or jumper for a doll. Fay also passed on many of her knitting and sewing skills to Carolyn, as she watched her Mum at work.

A lover of nice clothes, Fay's real passion was for shoes and handbags, which she had in every colour for every occasion: When she was young, Auntie Shirley would clonk around the house in Fay's stilettos, as did Carolyn when she was growing up, and in later years Lindsay could often be found stomping around her granny's bedroom in a pair of high heels with a string of granny's pearls draped around her neck.

When Carolyn & John were growing up, the family would go on camping holidays to Cornwall, and the family have many fond memories of these times. On one occasion, the car developed an engine problem, and Vic (who was a mechanic) carried out major repairs to the car in the middle of the campsite, using just the emergency toolbox he always carried in the car and some scaffold poles he had borrowed from the farmer. None of this phased Fay, she kept the children occupied, while also handing tools to Vic as he worked on the engine – they were a great team!

The family never lost their love of Cornwall, and both John and Carolyn continued the tradition, by taking their children there for their holidays. Indeed, John and Ursula loved Cornwall so much that in 1996 they sold their house in Carterton and moved to Stithians, a few miles away from Truro. When Vic and Fay visited them there they spent many happy times with Ursula, John, and the grandchildren - picnicking on the beautiful Cornish beaches or walking with the dogs along those same deserted beaches in the evening, then eating fish & chips out of the paper while watching the sun set over the sea – Fay loved Cornwall.

Following Vic's death in 1999, Fay's visits to John and Ursula became longer, and eventually, she gave up her house in Bampton and went to Cornwall to live with

John & Ursula. By now Phillip, Claire, Sally and Joanna all had children of their own, so there was never a shortage of excuses for a family “get-together” John and Ursula’s house is always a hive of activity, and Fay loved to be in the thick of it. A mother to two, a grandmother to six, great-grandmother to 25 and a great-great grandmother to 2, there is no doubting Fay’s unique place at the heart of her family. She was ‘our mum’ to all of them, and we know that you will all miss her terribly.

But let’s remember that God doesn’t throw away the good things he has made. He has made us for eternity and not just for the few decades of life we spend on earth; he has made us to love and to be loved; he has made us with gifts which are meant to be shared, as Fay shared hers, generously and freely.

So, yes, grieve to day for the person you love and cherish, but can no longer see or hear or touch. But rejoice that sickness and frailty for her are now past, that death is behind her, and she is now in that place prepared for her by our Lord Jesus Christ, where life continues in a new way, with fresh horizons and unlimited possibilities.

In grateful thanks and hopeful confidence, therefore, we pray for Fay in these traditional words: Rest eternal grant to her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.