

Marie Hart -- by her daughter [Anne Marie Atkinson]

We are gathered here today, with great sadness and no doubt tears being shed, to say farewell to a very dear mother, granny and great granny - but also to celebrate a very long and fulfilled life.

Mum was left as a single parent during the 1940's to raise and support a young daughter and son - albeit with valuable help and assistance from her mother - another dear loved granny. About 1950 the family moved to Harrogate and Mum was employed as personal assistant to the chief Education Officer in the local government offices in Harrogate. During this period of time after work she travelled by train twice a week to evening classes in Leeds to study for local government exams and she was also Akela for several years to the St Robert's pack of cub scouts.

In 1956 she decided on a life changing career move and went to Newcastle to undergo teacher training, a profession from which she gleaned a great deal of satisfaction. She taught in secondary schools in Leeds and Harrogate for approximately 15 years. In addition to teaching during the day she also embarked on an Open University degree course and obtained a B.A. Honours Arts degree in English when she was in her early sixties. After her retirement, despite increasing ill health, she continued to give extra curricular tuition to pupils in her own home, coach A level students by correspondence and also marked external examination papers. She continued the latter until well into her eighties. Although living by herself for many years she was always happy with her own company with her beloved dogs, garden and books. It was with great sadness on her part that at the age of 88 and becoming increasingly frail, she had to give up her home and garden and move into care. The past seven years have not been easy for her as despite very limited mobility and near total loss of hearing she retained a fiercely independent streak and would only reluctantly accept help from others. Some people found her very difficult to cope with until they got to know her and then they came to respect and admire her.

She has always been a very supportive mother and grandmother and greatly encouraged the career and achievements of her son Michael as a university lecturer and professor and those of her grandchildren.

Hilary, on her way to becoming an English graduate and teacher, recalls often burning the midnight oil by reading her university essays to her on the phone before submission - mum never retired early to bed - and she was also proud and supportive of Kate's progression into the world of journalism. Although Mum's academic life revolved around the arts and literature, she was also very proud of her three grandsons - Martin, Graeme and Mark and was always interested in hearing of their successes and learning of events and happenings in their lives.

Mum was fortunate to live long enough to see the arrival of 5 great grandchildren and Heather at nearly 16 will remember with affection her great granny, but Cleo, Finn, Eliza and baby Charlie are not yet old enough to be able to appreciate the benefit of her love, but she did love them and was always asking for news of them.

Goodbye and God bless. Mum. We love and thank you for the wonderful times we shared with you and the memories we will always cherish.