



St Margaret of Antioch, Leigh
Mothers' Union
Tributes and Special Memories
For
Mothering Sunday
March 14th 2021



My Mum and Me

Jackie Eastland

My Mum...always there for us,
My mum loved us so much ,
She never complained,
She lit the bedroom fire, when I was ill.
She cooked and cleaned and knitted and
made the best apple pie and custard...
She was happy to take us out when Dad
was working overtime on a Sunday..
My mum was so kind and caring
and sadly died far too young.



ANGELA BRIDGE

My mother was born in Leigh on Sea in 1905. She married in St Clement's Church and by the time I was born in 1944 my two elder brothers were aged 13 and 11. We had a very happy, if somewhat chaotic home life in Leigh made harder, I suspect, by my arrival.



I was not allowed to join in the boys' *roughhousing*, but this caveat did not deter me from acquiring a black eye (attempting to field in cricket) and being winded and knocked out falling off our dining room table (can't remember what that was about) at the age of four! My mother bore that and other similar mishaps with equanimity and was always there for us and for our cousins when needed. She had a literal mind and when my father used the expression "*jumping five barred gates*" to describe my very robust pregnant cousin, she asked in surprise "Whatever does she want to do that for?"

My father died suddenly when my mother was in her fifties and it was evident by his provision for her, how deeply he had loved and cared about her.

In the last years of his life they had travelled to the near and far East on various occasions. My mother had become adept at providing cups of English tea and biscuits for them both, and for other travellers in need, in the days before electric kettles, tea bags and powdered coffee was provided in every hotel room. They always travelled with a camping stove, saucepan and a packet of *Petit Beurre* biscuits and I still have a postcard from St George's Hotel Beirut, with her message on the reverse:

"Weak with fasting and with prayer, Sustain yourself with Petit Beurre".



She reluctantly took over as enrolling member of the St Margaret's Mothers Union just before my father's death. With the help of her committee, they worked to keep the MU active in Church life and to support members in the Christian family. I think it is true to say that for them membership was a truly lifestyle choice.

Her love of God and her beliefs were central to her existence. Because of her example and that of my father we grew up in a Christian home with the love of God surrounding us. Her life was one of simple Christian duty and faith and I know that all three of her children would echo these words.

Diana Chisnell:

The main thing I remember about my mother was how she kept us all going throughout the war. People forget how difficult it was with the rationing.

We lived in Acle, between Norwich and Yarmouth. There was my mother and father – he fought in the First World War, and my three sisters, so my mother had her work cut out.

I was six when the Second Word War broke out. We were used to enemy planes coming over. They dropped a lot of bombs on Norwich and we got to know the planes by their engines.

I was only frightened once when I heard a doodlebug coming over. For those who don't know, it was pilotless flying bomb and when its engine stopped it would just drop and you just waited for the explosion and hoped it wasn't going to drop on you! I distinctly remember this one time when I was with friends and we heard the engine suddenly stop and my mother very calmly got us in to the Morrison shelter, an indoor air raid shelter. She always kept us calm. She never flapped.

She was a wonderful cook. We had a very large garden with apple and plum trees so we always had home made jam, she wouldn't have dreamt of buying a jar of jam. She made bread and we had chickens of course and ate them and the cockerels too and rabbits we chased from surrounding fields.

She was a very Christian lady and we all had to go to Sunday school. But most of all I remember her love and how she looked after us during a very difficult time.



**Pauline Swenson – My wonderful Mother Evelyn Hicks
(seen here celebrating her 90th birthday).**



Throughout my life, my Mother was my best friend and my mentor.

I had several changes of direction, sometimes quite drastic and through them all she supported and believed in me.

She had a quiet, deep faith and trust in God which saw her – and me - through many difficult times.

I will never forget her sense of fun, the twinkle in her eye and her sideways mischievous glance when doing something 'naughty'! Together with her common sense and profound wisdom distilled over the years.

I will always miss her.



Sheila Moore

My Mum

A loving, caring lady, hard working with beautiful handwriting and not much self confidence. That is not a very comprehensive picture of someone so dear. By the way this is me when I was 18 on my first holiday abroad with my Mum in Rimini.

Words are very cheap and we use superlatives so easily they tend to lose their value and that makes it very difficult for me to describe her.



Were my Mum to make a miraculous return there is so much she would enjoy, her four grandchildren, three great grandchildren and all the changes in the world.

The changes are so many and so varied, things we just take for granted like Decimal coinage, like Credit and Debit cards, Roving and mobile telephones, portable computers, the internet and all the magical things that work with it, Digital cameras, Microwaves and the list goes on and on.

As the world has changed so have we. I have already lived nearly 30 years longer than Mum and the years are etched into me. I look very different, but my Mum hasn't aged. She, in my head, is a similar age to my children, eternally young.

I trust that she, along with her Mum, is with the Lord, risen in glory and that one day I too will be there and I hope that my children will be able be happy for me.



Joyce Taylor

My Mum was an amazing lady. She was nearly 106 when she passed away!

Her name was Sybil. She lived in her own home until she was 103 and kept her mind. She finally went into a care home for the last 3yrs.

I remember my mother's lovely smile. When she was young she had curly dark hair. She was quiet. Never one to push herself forward. She worked for the Red Cross for many years, making the tea. She was happy to be in the background, helping. She was a very sweet and kind person a bit shy.

She did not have an easy life. She was born in 1907. Her Dad died when she was 10 years old. Her mum had to go out to work, so my mum and her younger sister had to leave their home in London and go and live with Grandma in Vange, Essex.

She did all kinds of jobs to earn a bit of money. At 12 years old she used to scrub door steps and whiten them. She washed the dishes and pots and pans for the big house up the road when they entertained. At 14 she went to live in with another girl at a newspaper shop in Leigh. They had to get up early to pump up seven bikes to get the papers from the station and later deliver them when they had been marked up.

Sadly, her sister died when she was 21yrs of consumption.

Mum married and had 3 children which she brought up while Dad was away in the War. We lived in Shoeburyness. They then lived in Upminster for 45yrs.

I used to go up once a week to see her. When mum was a widow she moved to Leigh which was lovely for me.

By then she was 90 years old so sadly wasn't able to travel far. But she was able to be part of family celebrations and see her grandchildren. I saw her every day and looked after her. She loved music so I took her to the Cliffs Pavilion to see ballet and concerts and she loved *The Sound of Music*.

I was so pleased I was able to do that for her in the end.



LORNA GREEN

Memories of my Mum.

I begin by saying it was hard to do this as so much comes flooding to mind.



Mum was a positive, optimistic, supportive, happy lady and full of fun. These were days before TV was on all day and we were surrounded by gadgets and computer screens, but she devised things to do and used to tell me a bored person is a boring person.

She did not like fog at all and was married on St. Andrew's Day in 1940 and in spite of my Dad having leave, all arrangements made and with food shortages a Wedding Breakfast prepared, she declared she really wasn't going to go as it was a thick pea-souper of a fog that day. However, she was eventually persuaded to chance it and a very happy marriage followed.

She passed her great love of books on to me saying "a book is a friend". I remember happy hours we spent at the library and was proud when I got my very own ticket. She had a lovely singing voice and I have wonderful memories of being little sitting at the kitchen table whilst she cooked and her singing the recipes out to me.

I must say too that I had a lovely Mother-in-law. Again a positive lady with a lovely, sunny nature who was always "in my corner".



All in all I was truly blessed.

Rebecca Pirie

Lorna's Daughter



There are so many wonderful things to say about my mum that it is hard to know where to start.

She is good company and I love spending time with her. She can make me smile, give me the giggles or make me laugh out loud!

We have spent some really good times together and I have lovely memories of our weekends away, days spent in London shopping and not to mention a brief go at line dancing which was a lot of fun!

She is my rock and gives me support and unconditional love. I'm certain I can take on anything with my mum in my corner.

My brothers and I all had a very happy childhood, my mum made it special (my dad as well!) and if my children love me half as much as I love my mum I'll be very happy.



Carolyn Goodall

My Mother

My Mother, Evelyn, was born in 1945 in Aberfan South Wales. She came to live in Essex when she was 19, where she met my Dad and was married in 1968 and had me in 1969.



She was born with a congenital heart defect which caused her to have many hospital admissions and operations during her childhood. It wasn't until aged 39 that she had a pigs valve replacement that she had a new lease of life. Even playing squash and keep fit classes!

We nearly lost Mum a few times over the last 10 years due to poor health, but she keeps bouncing back. She is an incredibly strong woman, mentally and physically. She has had to endure so much in her life and her courage and strength amazes me.

Despite her poor health she has been the most supportive loving Mother, with such a warm personality and will do anything for anyone.

During my nursing career she has always been there to listen to me when I needed her. I am sure that the distressing stories and experiences I shared with her were hard to listen to, but despite this, Mum was always the one person who would sit and listen as she knew it's what I needed at the time.

We have also had great fun times together, on holiday, parties and last year celebrating her 75th at The Savoy.



Lockdown has been so very hard as I haven't been able to see her or give her a hug. Thank goodness for FaceTime! I know if I feel down or just want to chat she is always there.

I am so grateful to still have her in my life and am looking forward to the time when we can see each other, go to lunch, dinner and just be able to give her a cuddle. I am hopeful that time will come soon.

Hillary Shallis

My parents were married in St Margaret's Church in 1927. A couple of years later they moved to Upminster where, in 1931, my brother Bob was born and in 1935 when I was a few months old, the family came back to Leigh to live with my maternal grandmother in the house built by my grandfather. By this time my grandfather had died. The whole family worshipped at

St Margaret's where both my parents were members of the choir. I had to sit at the back with my grandmother. Bob was a boat boy – a junior server - by the time he was 5.

My mother and her mother were both members of the Mothers' Union and I recall having to go after school (West Leigh, of course) on the 3rd Tuesday of the month and be very quiet for the last part of the Mothers' Union meeting. In, I believe, 1973 my mother said I should join the MU and as I still did as she told me, I duly joined. I went with my mother to meetings, but must confess, I didn't enjoy them much! I was 30ish and found sitting with a load of old ladies listening to someone talking about something I wasn't interested in rather a waste of time. My mother wasn't very pleased when I drifted away from MU.

She always strove to be a good role model after the fashion of her own mother but I think I was too rebellious to follow in her footsteps.

My mother was so different from me. Everything I love, she didn't. All I do, she never did! I think possibly the only thing we had in common was stature, although up to the time she died I was quite slim, whereas she was of a 'comfortable' build. She didn't like cooking or gardening but did enjoy housework (which I loathe). I've never before thought about our differences, but I take after my father much more.

Nonetheless, she set the example of regular worship which has been followed by her children and two of her three grandchildren. For that example I cannot thank her enough.



Lorrina Cockett

My Mum ANNE PHILIPS nee BLATCHLY

Mum was a perfect parent for Mark and me. Together with our Dad, she surrounded us with love, built our confidence and urged us to be the best that we could be. I think Mark and I continue to consider her in our decision making even now. So here come a few thoughts and memories.



As a child, Mum introduced me to arts and crafts and today I am the art and design subject leader at the school where I work. She loved books and I have her precious copy of "Anne of Green Gables" on my shelf; I don't think we ever went to bed without a bedtime story!

Continuing with her nurturing nature, Mum loved to garden, growing flowers and vegetables. But nothing in her garden was too precious because what she loved most was sitting watching us play. Years later she repeated this with her beloved grandchildren. All out in the fresh air. When John and I married, she planted a flower bed in our wedding colours for the photographs. I have a photo of her buttoning me into my wedding dress because I didn't want a hidden zip. She did admit it was a real act of love because there were very many, tiny buttons to loop!

With her support, Mark and I achieved our career aims as a police officer and a teacher. She was proud of our achievements but was always there to pick up the pieces when things went a bit wrong. Following on, I have let our son know that there is always a Plan B! I have a very happy memory of my graduation day, firstly in Brighton for the ceremony, then on the cloister lawn for a summer tea in Chichester. Every time I looked over at my parents, they were beaming at me.

My Mum was a strong person. When our son was born, he had some health scares and I was a wreck. She came with me to every hospital appointment and kept me positive until he had the all clear. She, and Dad, reassured me that our family would cope together. She nearly always had a target that she was working towards and she reached them. She showed Mark and me how to persevere and reach out.



Well, I need to close. I could say so, so much more. She loved: us, Dad, her Guiding life, her home, her crafts, cooking (Noah's favourite was her cloud cakes - perhaps you can guess what they were) and learning new things, like lace making. Mark and I could not have had a better start to our lives, than our one, with Mum and Dad. We remember them both with love.

My Mother

Barbara Southward

My mother died last May at the age of 93, but the little lady I used to visit in the last three years of her life was not my mother, although she looked like her. She was overtaken by dementia, which robbed her of all her memories.



My mother was a highly intelligent woman. She was denied the Grammar school education she won and deserved because her parents could not afford to send her. She never recovered from that disappointment.

At the age of 32, when I was 10 she embarked on a two year training course to become a teacher. It was hard work as in those days we had no fridge or freezer, no automatic washing machine or tumble drier. She would stay up every night, late, to study and get through her college work.

She had an insatiable appetite for books. She read all the time, even when cooking or ironing she had a book propped up. She loved poetry and instead of Nursery Rhymes taught me to recite poems. I learned the value of books from her. She was also a particularly good cook and taught me to cook from an early age. One of my earliest memories is of standing on a chair in the kitchen, measuring the ingredients for a Victoria sponge, balancing two eggs on one side of the old-fashioned balances, and weighing out equal quantities of butter, sugar and flour.

Mom loved the theatre and living as we did in the Midlands we were able to go to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford upon Avon. Mom took me quite often, by train. My first visit was when I was ten years old. She told me the story of 'Romeo and Juliet' then I was taken to see the play. I remember the seats were prickly velvet and made my legs itch. I spent a lot of time using the binoculars which you could hire for 6d watching Dorothy Tutin (Juliet) after she had 'died' to see if I could see her breathing, (I couldn't). Mom and I had lots of trips to the theatre and we saw many well-known actors. She continued sharing her enthusiasm in later years with her grandchildren.



Mom liked things 'done properly'. Tables had to be laid correctly, flowers arranged (I can't do that), food served well, curtains drawn neatly. When she could afford to be generous, she was very generous, especially to older, less well-off people in the congregation at church. This was done quietly and without fuss.

Up until she became ill with dementia, we would discuss books we had read and TV programs we had watched. In all things she would say 'You have to see or read the bad to appreciate the good'. I missed her as her mind slowly slipped away and I miss her now she's gone.

Janet Hill

About my mum. Well, I could write a book, but in a nutshell she was a lovely lady, liked by so many. She helped lots of people in many ways.

For myself, I remember her lovely smile and the way her face would light up when she saw us. Her cooking was great (oh for some of that now). David and I often called to see her and dad on our way home from work. She always asked if we would like to stay for tea. David, who didn't know how many things one could have on toast before he married me, would ask me what we were going to have and hearing my answer would say, "We'll stay please! "

Mum was brought up in West Wrating in Cambridgeshire.

She went into domestic service and worked in the big houses. She lived in so she could send all her money home to her mum. It was a hard life. May be it was at one of these houses she picked up her culinary skills! Her roasts, especially her roast beef, was to die for.

She also gave me a piece of advice I have always remembered: You must always have your hair well cut. Your hands well looked after. And your shoes must be clean and polished. It doesn't matter how much you have paid for a new outfit, it won't look anything if the rest of you is uncared for.

When mum married and had me and my brother we lived in Cambridge. I remember how cold the house was, it had no damp proof course and mum did everything to make it warmer. But it didn't matter how much decorating she did or how many layers of wallpaper was on the walls, it was still so cold.

I remember going to St. Philip's church in Cambridge every Sunday for Evensong and can still recite it. She was also a member of the Mothers' Union.



When I got married and came down here to Eastwood she used to visit and stay and revelled in the central heating! It was so lovely to have her.

She was always very hardworking and supportive to my brother and I. We really couldn't have done better.

Thelma Lovell

My mother Ivy Clara Coford was born in 1912 in Mile End, E1 London. Like her mother she was private and reserved in her personality but had a strong sense of injustice and would speak up fiercely when necessary.



She had two sisters. One sadly died of meningitis when she was 6 years old. Her mother two days later with consumption – or tuberculosis as we know it today. It left mum with a horror of funerals especially as in those days the bodies of loved ones were laid out in the front parlour surrounded by lilies. Poor mum would run past the room in fear. The cortege was always the same, black horses with black plumes.

I loved mum and was her only child, but I am certainly more like dad, who understood that I was spirited and more akin to instinct, as he was.

Mum taught me to behave in a restrained manner and was conscious of social etiquette about which I couldn't care. Nothing has changed!

When bombing began during the War mum and I were evacuated to Suffolk and luckily billeted with a Dairy Farming family, a Mr & Mrs Mobbs. Coming from Dagenham Mrs Mobbs thought that was London and expected us to be cockney and probably with lice! Our room was over the stables. However, when Mrs Mobbs saw Mum was 'ladylike' we were moved inside the farm! We became good friends and spent many a holiday on the farm after the war.

One Christmas I asked mum who taught her to fold parcels so well, she told me she had worked for Twinings Tea as a packer and learnt how to mitre sharp folds.



On my first day at school mum looked through the window reluctant to leave me. I waved her away, delighted to be out in the world to make of it what I may.

Mum had remarkable auburn wavy hair which everyone remarked on and she used to brush it out thoroughly each day and I used to sit and watch as it was so beautiful.

I was always lovingly cared for and as the years have passed and I hear the memories of others, I realise how very fortunate I was to have mum.

SHARON FIRMINGER

ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE.



Alvina Audrey MaryMy Mum.

Her motto for life was "Always look on the bright side of life" Mum always had a smile for everyone and truly was happy with her life!

She used to say she lived a 'charmed life'. It hadn't been easy for her, but she had her Faith and that everything happens for the best.

When Dad died she was 61, she picked herself up learnt to drive and passed her driving test, first time!

We had moved from London down to Leigh, so she was able to drive down to us, many times just for the day!!! The boys loved their "Nanna Audrey" and she loved them dearly.

She used to drive up to Lowestoft, to Potters Resort when we all holidayed there and where our son Paul now works. She drove Norman's Mum up to spend her holiday or just weekends with us all ('I really feel safe with you driving, Audrey!').

She moved from Wanstead to Leigh and a flat looking out over the Thames at Westcliff. Again she would say it was a 'charmed life' when she got the Flat.



She finally moved into a sheltered life at Crowstone House, Westcliff. still facing the sea. She was pleased with her life. R.I.P. Mum

"Always looking on the Bright Side of Life!"

Lucia Curthoys

I had two 'Mums'. My blood mother Daphne and my beloved Grandmother who brought me up.

I lost both my parents during the War. Every time my grandmother visited the cemetery, she could hear Daphne's voice calling 'look after my baby mum, look after my baby'. At 52 my grandmother thought she was too old, but the voice became ever insistent. So, one day she said, 'all right Daph I will.' And she did. She even adopted me so I would feel chosen. I always called her 'mum'.



As well as losing her daughter, she also lost her son from tuberculosis (on active service) and her husband from cancer, all within eleven months. To the surprise of many she would still be seen going off to church on Sunday mornings with her little black prayer book clutched in her hand – a testament to her faith for sure.

It was to her that many turned to when *the* telegram arrived. With me in tow she would go and I would sit quietly, watching, as she gently took the hand of the bereaved and just let them talk. Often, that is all they needed, someone who understood.

She was always there for me too.

There to wipe my face with a soft warm flannel after an asthma attack. There beside my bed at 2am with the doctor, waiting and praying the crisis would pass.

There to teach me to read and write and answer my endless 'why' with patient answers.



There to teach me my faith. Sunday school failed to grip my attention, but her stories of the parables never failed.

There to make me feel safe and loved, but not to be spoilt.

She had me christened as a baby. I was confirmed in my twenties. She was a loyal member of her Mothers' Union. MU days were her special days.

Despite the periods of asthma, it was still a wonderful childhood, full of optimism and adventure. I was an avid reader, but best of all I loved my grandmother reading to me. She had a lovely voice.

There were the classics of course and Dickens, but also stories set abroad which ignited a desire to travel. 'Where shall we go tonight' she would say.

The best stories were of her own life. She was born in Staffordshire in 1888. She married a First World War soldier and came down to Essex. I never tired of hearing her tales. I was engrossed – she was living history.

Steroids helped keep the asthma attacks at bay and changed my life. I caught up on my education and eventually gained a scholarship and my grandmother bought my college scarf with tremendous pride.

It was poignant too. Daphne, my blood mother, had gained a place at Art college, but the War came and her dreams were dashed. She was talented, she could draw, write and make the piano 'talk.' My grandmother spoke of her often so I knew her.

When she was a child my grandmother used to write. She called them her 'scribbles'. When she saw I had inherited the writing 'bug' she supported me all she could, but was never pushy. She was there for me when the rejection slips came telling me to keep going, never give up. But above all she wanted me to be happy. When I finally got into journalism, she was very proud and it was her turn to listen to my daily stories!

In her last years my grandmother would say, "I don't want you to spend your life mourning me when I'm gone. The world is your oyster. Go. Explore. You can achieve anything. But promise me; You will never lose your Faith and you will never stop writing."

She lived to be 86 and loved listening to the schools programmes on her 'wireless'. 'You're never too old to learn something new' she would say.



I can picture her lovely smile and soft brown eyes.

There was a very special bond between us.

She was so much more than My Grandmother. She was my best friend and I miss her still to this day.

THE MARY SUMNER PRAYER

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as
possible for thee;
and every life I touch, do thou by
thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.
Amen

Written in 1876 by
Mothers' Union founder,
Mary Sumner

