

Sue Keal 1966 -2025 Eulogy

Sue was born on 10th March 1966 in Liverpool Maternity Hospital bringing joy and happiness with her which was a feature of her personality which never left her. At about 6 months old Sue and family moved to north wales. Nearly two years later she moved to Maghull where she lived until her marriage to Barry. Part of growing up she made friends with the children who lived nearby and in particular with Susan and Jane Rankin. They had hours of fun playing in their respective gardens. There were also games played at Crosby Beach, the dunes over in Formby, swimming in Ormskirk baths and sometimes going to the cinema. On one such visit we went to see the Pink Panther but the children were more interested in watching the antics of a nearby courting couple than the film itself.

Time flew by and her school days began. Sue's first school was Maryvale prep school and she went with her cousins Catherine and Julie. Sue was a quiet child and she amazed us when she sang a Solo during the school Christmas Concert.

After the summer holidays Sue joined St George's Junior School in Maghull where she was very happy. In her second year there she had an enjoyable short break with the school in Scotland. Although excited to be going there on the actual day of departure she wasn't keen to be leaving home for the first time.

Sue enjoyed many school visits to the nature reserve, to Rufford Old Hall and other interesting places. In fourth year of junior school she was often chosen to take part in the Offertory Procession at the nine o'clock Mass, an activity she enjoyed and felt privileged to participate in.

Sue had precious memories of her childhood such as the holidays in Rome, France, Wales and touring Scotland. She was quite the accomplished traveller. Sue, with her mum and Nana often caught the Early Bird Train to London on a Saturday and enjoyed having breakfast in the Restaurant Carriage once we left Runcorn. The return journey enabled the family to have their evening meal. From an early age. Sue always said she wanted to be mummy when she grew up but, after her first train journey, she changed it to wanting to be a waitress serving food to customers on the train. Later in life she partly fulfilled that ambition working in the cafe at her friends garden centre cafe.

After spending four years in the juniors Sue started at Maricourt high school where new friends joined her, group, Sue soon settled there and worked hard giving every satisfaction to all of her teachers. Her favourite subjects at secondary school included English and biology. She wasn't too keen on games and PE however. After clearing the last hurdle during a hurdling lesson Sue went back to pick up the hurdles she had knocked over without realising she was being timed for the race.

One event which she frequently talked about was when her precious and much loved golly had been put in the washing machine with disastrous consequences. An event she always described, with her immense sense of humour, as the "murder of her golly."

Not normally phased by things Sue was very pragmatic but she did have one phobia. She did not like frogs. Something she has been teased about by Jane and Barry. Even for her last Christmas she received a delightful frog ornament, a gesture she really enjoyed.

In the early 1980s Sue, along with her friends Samantha and Alison, joined the Maghull Amateur Operatic Society. At that time Sue had no idea of what a tremendous change to her life was about to

occur by participating in a musical show. One of the new members who joined shortly after was a young man called Barry. At first Sue took a dislike to him because he appeared very flirty with one of the cast, a lady called Barbara. She wasn't aware though that Barbara's husband worked for Barry's dad and he referred to her as "sis".

After one rehearsal Sue and her friends all went out together to the Royal Oak in Aughton. A thunderstorm broke out and Barry took off his cervical collar and put it over her ears in fun. This broke the ice between them.

After leaving school Sue found employment at Liverpool Museum. She was working in the education section of the natural history unit. A job she thoroughly enjoyed. Unfortunately it wasn't a permanent position and she changed to a finance company where she was a financial adviser.

Barry in his teens had been a ballroom dancer and suggested that Sue might like to go to dancing lessons at night school in Ormskirk. It was there that they met Joan and Ray, their dance teachers. Sue took to it like a duck to water and they went to many of the local sequence dances and frequently started off dances for the others. Such was her love of sequence dancing and their dancing friends that Sue had a sequence dance at her wedding.

The 18 July 1987 was the day that Sue and Barry got married. The wedding took place at St. George's church in Maghull. The celebrant was Canon Mullen, the parish priest from the church in Kirkby where the two worshipped each week. Following the service the reception was held at the Royal Clifton in Southport. The Sunday, the day after the wedding Sue and Barry left for their honeymoon in Jersey. Sue had always joked about open top cars so they hired for the week a Ford Escort cabriolet. Sue purchased specially a Queen cassette which she played while they were driving round the island.

For the next few years Sue was a resident in Ormskirk and worked for a short time at Supersnaps, the photograph print shop. Barry's best man and friend Steve owned a garden centre and he invited Sue to come and work for him in the cafe there. This was a job she really enjoyed and got on exceedingly well with all the staff. She was affectionately known as "our Sue" to avoid confusion between Steve's Sue and sister Sue. This was a reflection of how much she was loved by them all.

Sue and Barry were looking to start a family and wanted a larger house. The house that Sue had grown up in, her mum's house, became available when Marie married Harry and moved to the bungalow next door. Moving to this house proved very fortuitous when she developed Multiple Sclerosis.

December 12th 1992 was an amazing day. It was the day that Jane was born in Ormskirk. Naturally Sue and Barry were delighted to welcome her into their lives and Sue devoted her time to looking after her gorgeous daughter. She would take Jane in her baby seat everywhere. She used to pop her onto the work top while baking and she'd spend hours reading to her and talking to her. Jane and Sue spent many hours together either on the computer playing Noddy or Bongo's Bingo. Sue was a musical person, playing both the flute and the piano. She also had a lovely singing voice, a talent she put to good use when Jane got the PlayStation game SingStar. There was great competition between them. Jane inherited Sue's singing ability and Sue attended and really enjoyed all the events that Jane participated in at school.

Despite Sue's MS she went on many great holidays with Jane and Barry. Some memorable ones which, judging by the recollections she talked about, were Euro Disney, Butlins in Bognor Regis, Bournemouth, Southend, Barry Island and Lytham St Annes.

Sue was always a happy person and despite having the MS she still remained positive in her outlook in life. Never once did anybody hear her complain about her disability, quite the opposite, she'd often joke about things. Recently her legs began to abduct, that is they'd splay outwards,, she always called them her Kermit legs. Given that she hated frogs calling them this was yet another example of her fortitude and keen sense of humour.

A few months ago Sue was diagnosed with inoperable bladder cancer. She received a dose of radiotherapy which stemmed the bleeding. The urologist thought that she would have two to five years and this incentivised her to fight the hardest she could in order to be at Jane's wedding to Mark. She was incredibly pleased to have known Mark and was delighted beyond belief when they announced the engagement. She was always showing people the picture of Jane's ring and telling them what a great couple they made.

Although living with the diagnosis of cancer she never lost her positive outlook on life, she never asked why she had it and never lost her sense of humour. A sore developed on her bottom and as this sore worsened it became very infected. Several stays in hospital failed to get on top of the infection which went so deep it reached the bone and despite the best endeavours of the medical and nursing staff with blood transfusions and antibiotics it just got worse culminating in her very unexpected death on the 14th January.

She had excellent care from everyone who looked after her and she had so much respect and gratitude to her carers from Local Solutions who visited twice a day and the district nursing team who did their very best to fight the sore and resulting infection.

Sue would love to be able to tell everyone who looked after her, who was a friend to her, or who was a loving relative. There will be a huge hole in everybody's lives now she has gone but she left us with so many happy memories.

Susan Marie Keal ABC
14 January 2025