

Anne Harrison

Anne, daughter of Janet and Robert Allan, was born on 13th March 1929 in Heaton Norris in the district of Stockport, Greater Manchester. Yes, you heard that correctly, Stockport, Greater Manchester. But Anne had two good reasons to feel Scottish and to claim to be a Scot. Firstly, her father was born and grew-up in Dunoon, Argyll and her mother's parents were Scottish born and bred. Secondly Anne's father died when Anne was 3 and her mother, Janet, moved herself and Anne to Dunoon so that Anne would grow up supported by the Allan family. For those that don't know where Dunoon is, it is on the west coast of the Firth of Clyde.

There is an interesting story about how Anne's parents met, starting with her grandfathers, Arthur Allan and William Ferguson. They were friends who grew up in Lochwinnoch, 15 miles to the west of Glasgow and as young men worked in the Lochwinnoch Co-op, Arthur worked in the Grocery department and William in the Drapery department. They decided to emigrate and make their fortunes, so each saved-up £10 and off they set. Arthur made it to Dunoon and William to Stockport. They both showed entrepreneurial talent and were successful. Arthur opened a grocers and William a drapers, in those days known as a penny tailor as customers bought on credit which was paid off one penny per week. William employed young lads from Scotland, one of which being Robert, his old friend Arthur's son. The 1911 census shows Robert Allan as a Boarder and Janet Ferguson as Daughter. Robert and Janet married in 1921.

In Dunoon Anne had a cousin, Arthur, who was 3 years older and was like a brother to her. She told a story of sailing with Arthur on the Clyde when the dinghy capsized. Arthur looked after her by immediately righting the boat and helping Anne back aboard.

Anne had several summer jobs while growing up. She worked in the Dunoon post office which she hated, especially toting up the books in pounds, shillings and pence at the end of the day. She told a story of having to balance the books on the day of the Highland Games in Dunoon. With marching bands, playing bagpipes and drums, continuously passing the Post Office, just to make the task more difficult. But the jobs she loved were at Benmore Botanic Gardens and the Forestry Commission which must have fostered a love of horticulture that endured throughout her life.

At age 17, after taking her Highers, Anne headed off to Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow for a teacher training course.

On completing her teacher training, Anne became a teacher at Strone primary school. She went on, for the time, adventurous holidays. One was to the Netherlands and another, in 1952, to Nervi in Italy where she met Harry. After a long distance romance, where talking on the phone was only possible by agreeing a time and both going to the local phone box, they married in 1957. The wedding was held in the Cruachan Hotel in Dunoon, hence the name of number 32 Harpesford Avenue. Initially after the wedding Anne and Harry lived with Harry's parents in Wokingham while waiting for their house in Harpesford Avenue to be built. During this time Anne found work by replying to an advert requiring a "Capable

woman". This involved helping a vicar's wife who never told Anne to do something but always asked "would you like to".

When they moved into 32 Harpesford the garden was a complete blank canvas, being completely devoid of any plants, it was just mud. Photos of the house being built and the empty garden can be seen on the website. Those of you who know the garden will appreciate the transformation that Anne and Harry achieved, and I am sure they were proud of what they created. The garden was a lifetime passion both Anne and Harry and gave them great pleasure.

Once they moved into Harpesford Avenue, Anne found a teaching post at Christchurch Infant C of E school in Virginia Water where she taught until Robert was born in September 1959. Andrew followed in March 1962, being born at home.

Both boys went to St Anne's Heath primary school and shortly after Andrew started at school Anne was persuaded, by the headmaster of St Anne's Heath, to come back to work. She soon started to specialise in teaching those who were struggling with learning to read. Anne was certain that taught the appropriate tools and techniques anyone could learn to read and write. She did much research in her own time and became an expert in teaching reading and writing, and over the years she helped many to improve their reading and writing skills. Teaching was a vocation to Anne, she just loved to help her pupils and got great satisfaction from seeing improvement.

In the early 1970s Anne's mother was becoming less mobile as she suffered from arthritis. Anne had obviously become worried about her mum so, to both her and Harry's credit, space was made available in 32 Harpesford Avenue and Anne's mum lived with them until she passed away in 1979. Another example of Anne's kindness occurred when her cousin Alan, died in a car crash. Alan's wife Dorothy was hospitalised so Anne took in their 16 year old son Ian, while he was studying for his 'A' levels. Robert and Andrew have happy memories of the time Ian spent at 32 Harpesford Avenue, they say that it was like having a big brother.

When Andrew was young he suffered from epilepsy, an unpleasant and debilitating condition. When first diagnosed in the 1970s the medical conclusion was that, if the drugs available did not suppress it then Andrew would have to live with the condition. Anne and Harry never gave up and once again research led Anne to the Epilepsy Society and eventually the National Hospital where new brain surgery techniques held out hope of a cure. After extensive scanning, the source of the epilepsy episodes was identified and a successful operation removed the offending brain tissue. Since then Andrew has been free of epilepsy. The help and guidance provided by the Epilepsy Society is the reason Anne wished donations to be made to the society in lieu of funeral flowers.

Andrew and Robert can verify Anne and Harry's love of horticulture. While the boys were growing up Anne and Harry had an allotment and the mealtime conversations centred around what needed to be done with the garden and allotment, what was to be planted, what was growing well and what was not. The boys became a little bored with all this gardening talk and named Anne and Harry 'The Vegibores'! Not that that stopped them. They were

founding members of the Virginia Water Horticultural society and Anne was attending meetings until recently.

In 1990 Anne was pleased to gain a daughter-in-law, as she would have liked to have had a daughter, when Rob married Hazel.

Anne wanted to paint, pictures not houses, and when she retired found time to take up the hobby. Harry, wishing to have a common interest, also started to paint. They combined this with their love of travel and had many happy painting holidays in groups with the same interest. Both Anne and Harry turned out some remarkably good work. For example, Rob and Hazel have a watercolour of their first house, painted by Anne, hanging in their living room. Both Anne and Harry were members of the Virginia Water Art Society and Anne had been attending Art Society meetings until recently.

Another great love of Anne's life in retirement was Raffles, the golden retriever. Raffles was a great character and both Anne and Harry appreciated the walks which helped them keep fit. When Rob's children were young they loved the fact the Raffles rather liked ice cream. After a meal if ice cream was mentioned, Raffles would suddenly appear and would move from person to person to see who would be willing to share their ice cream with him.

In 1992 Anne and Harry were in a café in Windsor. Anne asked for mayonnaise but due to her accent and their waitress's limited understanding of Scottish English it took a while to be understood. They chatted with their waitress, Merita, and found that she had recently arrived in the country from Kosovo. They recognised that she was a long way from her Mum and Dad so took her under their wing. Their friendship helped Merita to successfully settle in England and make a great success of her life. As Merita says it was a 30 friendship that changed my life.

The list of how Anne helped others is extensive and I am sure everyone here can think of a personal example.

After Harry's sudden death in 2008 Anne rebuilt her life, by keeping herself busy. After Rob arrived on the morning of Harry's accident Anne said she thought that there were mice in the pantry in the kitchen. So rather than sitting and moping they emptied the pantry and at that point the Police Liaison Officer turned up. Quite what he thought about what he found is not recorded. Anne told her daughter-in-law Hazel, that she kept busy by accepting all invitations. She maintained her longstanding interests such as Pilates, painting and gardening, and also started new interests such as Ballet which she only stopped, at the age of 91, when covid struck! Anne said she loved her Ballet classes for 3 reasons, the beautiful music, the fun they had and the laughter. She would join in the warm-up exercises on the bar, oh to be a fly on the wall, but sat out for the real dancing which she enjoyed watching. And yes, she did own a pair of ballet shoes.

In 2009 Anne was pleased to gain a second daughter-in-law with the marriage of Andrew and Mable.

Another new interest for Anne was joining the congregation of Holy Trinity and the Mothers' Union. In her youth Anne had been brought up as a member of The Free Church of Scotland, known as The Wee Frees. During the 1930s and 40s The Wee Frees were an austere church

with, for example, no organ. Hymns were started by the sound of a tuning fork to give the congregation some idea of the key required for the hymn. Anne fell foul of their view that going to the pictures, as the cinema was then called, would not lead to a good God fearing life and was expelled from the church. Luckily the Anglican Church and I do not hold the same view and I was privileged to help Anne prepare for her confirmation by our Bishops. Their loss was our gain.

I have another lovely memory of Anne. She looked after our dog while we were on holiday one time. Knowing what I know now I suppose I should have been worried about the dog gaining a love of ice cream while staying with Anne. Anyway, after the holiday my mother was visiting and we invited Anne round. The two ladies spent a happy afternoon in the garden chatting. Due to the amount of chatter I am not wholly convinced they were completely listening to each other, but they obviously enjoyed their time together.

Anne, known as Scottish Granny to her grandchildren has always had a keen interest in how they were doing and was always asking after them. Ellie, who is an Environmental Engineer at the Port Talbot Steel Works sent some pictures of herself in her protective gear and videos of the Steel Works in action with red hot steel billets and copious amounts of steam which Anne loved. She couldn't imagine petit Ellie in such an environment, but was very proud.

Her grandson Tom is an accomplished guitarist and Anne had been hoping to hear him play, so earlier this year Tom took his guitar to Anne's and played for her. This encouraged her to head to the piano once Tom had finished, and she played a couple of songs for him. Tom is studying Maths at University, Anne's idea of purgatory.

I have it on good authority from Rob and Andrew that Anne's driving skills were never on a par with Lewis Hamilton and there was much relief, especially among the other drivers in Virginia Water, when she gave up driving, aged 91. She very kindly gave her car to her grandson Danny. When he got it home to Thame and looked round the exterior it seemed that every corner was showing battle damage. But the car has been a real boon to Danny and he has made good use of it for travelling to and from Sheffield, where he is at University.

Anne's kindness to others was repaid by those who helped her both in managing to run 32 Harpesford Avenue and keeping her busy doing the things she enjoyed. A special thanks must go to Wendy who acted as Anne's PA and was a good friend. Anne enjoyed being taken to Wendy's sister, Linda's house when she was holding open gardens and the gardens visiting holidays that Linda organised.

To conclude, Anne recently had been saying to Rob and Andrew not to be sad when she was gone. They thought at the time that this was a big ask. They now know that it is an impossible task. I am sure that Anne will be missed by many of you here today.