

## Commemorative Account of Doris Joyce Smith

6<sup>th</sup> December 1945 – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Paul and Anna Rucklidge-Smith

Dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Doris was born in Clerkenwell in London in 1945. She had one brother, <sup>[personal/sen]</sup> and two sisters, <sup>[personal/sensitive]</sup> She grew up in the swinging 60's in the east end of London. She went out with friends and had lots of stories to tell about what she used to get up to. They would sleep on the beach in Brighton, go dancing and people said she was the life and soul of the party.

She had her only son, Paul in 1977. She was a single Mother but gave Paul an amazing, happy childhood. They would spend hours in Victoria Park with their dog Misty, Paul on his bike, the dog running after him and eating ice cream. In the summertime, they would often visit family in Clacton and spend time on the beach. Doris and Paul went on holiday to Cornwall on the train and he would get his Mum a cup of tea from the buffet cart. Doris would tell Paul not to put his head out of the window of the train but of course he did!

From the mid 80's, Doris worked as a typist for Hackney Council and before Paul went to school, she worked in the local pub. She worked for Hackney Council until she retired and made a couple of good friends there however, she did not really stay connected with them after retiring.

Doris lived in Hackney until 2001 and then moved to Chadwell Heath. She then moved to Clacton in 2010 to be nearer to her sister, <sup>[personal/sensitive]</sup> and her childhood best friend, <sup>[personal/sen]</sup> Doris did not have many friends however she was remarkably close with <sup>[her childhood best friend and her sister]</sup> however they both passed away after some time and we feel this impacted her mental health. Doris cared for her elderly Mother until a couple of years before her mother's death, her mother became too frail and went into a residential home in Clacton.

Doris was a homely person but liked to go on holiday with her sister <sup>[personal/sensitive]</sup> and friend <sup>[personal/sensitive]</sup> they liked going to Jersey and went back to the same hotel each time. She would also go away with both sister and her Mum on weekends away in the UK. When living in Clacton, Doris always made sure she went out each day, she would walk into the town, have a wander round, and get anything she needed; she loved M&S and was upset when this closed in the town!

In 2008 Doris was diagnosed with breast cancer however she recovered well from this following surgery and did not have to have any follow up treatment.

Paul met his wife Anna in 2007, and they married in 2009. Doris had an amazing day at the wedding, she spent all the evening on the dance floor with her family. She said it was the best wedding she had been to, and she was enormously proud of Paul.

Doris's Mother was from the Northeast of England originally and her mother had wanted to go back there before she passed away. Doris had also spent some time in the area as a small child. Paul and Anna took Doris and her mother back for a trip back there and we drove round the street, visited the angel of the north, and walked along the seafront in the freezing cold, windy weather but we had a fantastic time together.

She loved animals and adopted a cat, Meggie when she lived in Chadwell Heath and then Meggie moved to Clacton with Doris. Meggie was Doris's world; she was her little mate, and they had a lovey life together. Meggie passing away also had a significant impact on Doris's mental health. Doris also loved to read and to knit, her knitting was stitch perfect and Anna always wanted her to teach her how to knit but unfortunately never got round to it.

Doris was an amazing Mother and Mother-in-law, I mean she would drive us crazy at times, but she was loving, kind and support us with lots of things. We had some great times together over the years and she used to like coming to stay with us as Doris was not the best cook and she would love eating Anna's cooking. She would eat a couple of plates each mealtime, we are not quite sure where she put it for such a little lady! She had a very silly sense of humour and Paul and her had a lot of inside jokes!

When Doris became unwell, our concerns were not listened to by the Community Mental Health Team. Anna is a registered nurse and both she and Paul were very concerned about her behaviour [details to be considered during the substantive stages of the Inquiry's investigations]

Doris passing away has left Paul with no parents.

Following her death Paul had to become very practical, clearing the house, arranging the funeral, sorting her finances, he and Anna had to get on with it all. We do not feel we have had time to grieve for her as there was then the inquest into her death and then campaigning for the inquiry to happen and the nightmare continues. One day we hope to get closure on this awful period of time and be able to grieve for the Mum that Paul lost.

Doris had always said to Paul that following her death that he should spread her ashes on the runway at city airport (half joking!) and had not mentioned anything else so Paul contacted the airport about this. It was her happy place, the place where she would be flying with her sister and friend off to Jersey. The airport allowed this to happen, they were amazing and one Saturday afternoon we went through security, crossed the runway and spread the ashes between the runway and the water. We often visit there and think of her.