

**COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT OF DAWN JOHNSON**  
**REGARDING IRIS SCOTT (DOD 01.03.2014)**

Mum was loving, strong, energetic, bright, vibrant and full of life. Mum's favourite colour was red, and it truly reflected her personality. Red was the chosen colour of her bridesmaids in February 1960 and represented her favourite time of year... Christmas, family time.

Born in Stepney in December 1940 mum grew up living in the east end of London with her parents and elder brother John. Mum had a loving and fun childhood and often recounted her family summer holidays in Kent working on the hop farms and the family gatherings of a Sunday.

Mum was an intelligent child and at school she was both sporty and academic, she had a mathematical and problem-solving brain, she loved to learn. From the age of 12 mum attended The Robert Montefiore School in Whitechapel.

When applying for a job in 1955, her headmaster wrote a reference for her saying:

'Hardworking, intelligent, she is of marked organising ability and well behaved, bright in manner and possesses powers of leadership. She is careful of her appearance and always found to be honest, truthful and reliable'.  
How accurate he was!

From her late teens mum worked as a secretary and bookkeeper in Holborn and she carried these skills through life.

Mum met Dad through mutual family friends. They married in 1960, mum aged 19 and dad 24.

They honeymooned in Porthleven Cornwall a place that would become dear to us all.

I was born in June 1961 and when I was 5 we moved from London to Essex, in fact to the same road as mum's brother John.

I grew up living 5 doors away from Uncle John, [my auntie] (Uncle John's wife) and their children (my cousins) [personal/sensitive] We did most things together, socialising both at home and family holidays in Essex, Kent and the Isle of Wight. They were great times. We were and remain a very close family.

Sadly in 1967 my uncle John was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Mum was pregnant with my brother Craig at this time and in the October two weeks after Craig was born my uncle died aged 31.

Despite just giving birth and being devastated by her brother's death Mum rallied round to help [her brother's wife].

Our family doubled overnight. Mum helped take care of [my cousins, aged 8 and 3] so that [my auntie] could come to terms with her loss and return to work.

My Grandfather suffered a breakdown on the death of his son, so mum had even more to deal with. But she was strong, and nothing phased her.

In May 1969 my brother <sup>[personal/sensitive]</sup> was born.

At this time, dad was working two jobs, his job as a salesman and also working some evening and weekend shifts on the pleasure boats from Westminster Pier.

We did not have a lot of money, but we never seemed to miss out on fun. Mum had the ability to make a little money go a long way.

With two young brothers, I was Mum's little helper which she somehow made fun for me. As a result I learnt a lot of skills from an early age.

When we were growing up Mum worked 1 day at the weekend and 1 night a week at Sainsburys. On other evenings she used to cover lamp shades, clothes hangers and clothing buttons to earn extra money. She could turn her hand to anything. The button machine was good fun I have lots of memories helping to choose the pieces of material and working the machine sitting on her lap. I was probably slowing her down significantly, but she was very patient and gave me the time.

We had a happy childhood; Mum and Dad's house was always centre of any activity for both adults and children.

Over the years mum organised many parties at Christmas, New Year, birthdays, Jubilee and charity events. It was always Mum. She was the life and soul of the party and very happy to organise. Mum was happy if everyone else was enjoying themselves and always put others before herself.

Mum also loved to keep fit. She was a member of a keep fit club with [my auntie] and used to perform in displays across the eastern region. She would join in all sporting events, participate in our school sports days {she was very competitive} and support us in all our chosen sports.

But it was Christmas that Mum came into her own. Christmas was family time often planned from the summer! The more people the merrier. It wasn't just a one-day event it was a 3-day package. Everyone had a job, it was a well-oiled machine. The season got even better when the grandchildren were born.

In August 1991 mum's first grandchild was born and like any grandmother she couldn't have been happier. Over the coming years she welcomed another 5 grandchildren. She could not do enough for them; they meant the world to her. Mum took pleasure in all their achievements and was interested in everything the children did.

She was keen for them to learn and do well at school. She helped with all manner of creative things for school plays, Christmas, schoolbook days and alike.

In the school holidays, again she kept them entertained taking them to many attractions in both Essex and London.

Mum and dad also took all the grandchildren to Cornwall where they had honeymooned in 1960 so that they could share their special place. We all have very fond memories.

In the home mum was in charge of most things. She was very organised and looked after the accounts and filing and the general running of the household. If I'm honest I don't think dad got a look in, she liked to be in control. She worked tirelessly.

If she couldn't do something she would learn. She didn't shy away from anything.

When I started driving lessons when I was 17, Mum did too at the age of 38. She also took it upon herself to attend a starter computer course at the library and then taught herself at home on Excel. Always eager to learn.

When my brothers were in their teens mum returned to work at a local company as a secretary and bookkeeper.

Mum and dad made lots of friends over the years. When we grew up they took advantage of travelling as much as possible and maintained contact with those they had met on their travels. In their 60s mum and dad embarked on a 6-week road trip around Europe.

They lived their lives to the full.

My sons were 17 and 22 when mum died. They both knew I was struggling to write this statement especially the impact it had on the whole family.

Both wanted to contribute and have their voice heard.

My youngest son wrote; -

"I've always said I've had the privilege of being brought up by my entire family. My grandmother 'nanny' especially. The woman who taught me to cook. Who took me to every swimming practice. Sowed every outfit for every fancy dress party. Who taught me to always be both the first and last person on the dance floor and told me to put family and friends before anything else.

But the last months of her life sullied the memories that she built with the people she loved more than anything else.

Her care-or the lack of, humiliated her and her condition.

The failings of those entrusted to keep her safe, not only led to her horrific and avoidable death but also undermined and riddled her nearest and dearest of the right and ability to grieve properly and wholly. Today, they are to blame for a family torn apart by unimaginable wounds that have remained open and bare for the last 10 years.

For me and the rest of the grandchildren, they also took away the loudest voice at our Christmas table, the proudest smile at all our life events and the

most infectious laugh at the end of the phone call we knew to expect every evening.

And regardless of the result of this inquiry, those are the injustices they will never be able to pay for and the scars they will never be able to heal and like our entire family they need to carry that burden for the rest of their lives so that other families do not have to go through the same inescapable pain.

My eldest son wrote; -

"I was doing my Masters at University when my Nan passed away, and for a while I didn't know how to deal with it and it had a huge impact on my studies. When I was told of her death I was so sure suicide wasn't possible and I considered she must have been really ill without presenting, or had a heart attack. So the news of how she died made me question so much of what I assumed daily, and still cover this in therapy that I have been an active participant in for the last ten years. I still don't truly understand how or why this was allowed to happen, and I am hoping for some more answers by the end of this inquiry.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2014 my life and that of my family changed forever. My mother had died [found hanging in her bedroom on Ruby Ward], whilst under the care of Essex Partnership NHS foundation Trust.

On that day, despite a note on my mum's file stating that any news should come through to Craig and I (I would like to add that my mum insisted on this), the ward sent the police to my father's house where he was asleep alone, to inform him of mum's death. In turn dad contacted Craig and I. When I answered the phone on that fateful morning my distraught dad just said 'she's done it, she's done it'. I cannot start to explain the emotions that took over my body at that time.

We had lost our mum in such tragic circumstances, my sons lost their grandmother. They also lost me, their mother, as I too was lost. Our whole world fell apart.

My dad could not cope with the loss of mum, a lady he had fallen in love with nearly 60 years ago, his soulmate and rock. My dad gave up, he had lost his zest for life and no longer wanted to be here.

Mum was admitted into the Ruby ward for what should have been a three week 'quick fix', never to return to us.

To the Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust she was one person. To us she was our world.

Finally I have attached photographs. They include:

- Photographs of mum at her 65th party in 2005 with Craig's daughters and my sons; photographs during happier times

- [personal/sensitive]