

**COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT OF JANE STANFORD
REGARDING DOROTHY (DOT) REDITT (DOD 16.3.21)**

Dot as she was known to all, my mum, was born in 1936 she was given a long life but cut short shockingly and tragically at age 85 in 2021, when she died alone, locked in her bathroom, the room in terrible disarray, surrounded by the paraphernalia of self-harm, the door smashed down by the police. Many may think that someone else cleans up after this type of death, but they don't. The family are left with a horrific scene that can never be erased from their memories. One must identify the body and this must be done by someone that knew them. We never got to see mum treated and well. Her right to a normal old age free of mental torment denied to her. There was to be no normal decline which is expected in old age, no family at her bedside at her end, to say our goodbyes and hold her hand.

Mum came from a family scarred by World War I PTSD. A great grandfather sadly took his own life. This was along with mum's own issues of dealing with the upheaval of being evacuated during World War 2 at the tender age of 4, being separated from her brother and her parents, and [the traumatic events that she endured] whilst evacuated.

Mum married Dad after a short courtship in 1956, having met at their place of work. They had been married for 64 years when mum died. Dad passed away recently, after a gradual decline in his physical and cognitive capacity, nearly 3 years after mum. He was a mild mannered, gentle man not given to confrontation and was always supportive of mum through her long mental health difficulties. Even if he did not always fully understand her difficulties, no matter how they impacted him he remained loyal and supportive, her "rock", knowing and believing mum's cyclical ups and downs in her mental health would somehow always ease with a little time and patience.

When my sister and I were born in the 1960's, mum had the family she so wanted, but the pressures that come with motherhood were totally

overwhelming for her and she did not cope with the demands, which affected her already fragile mental health. Mum, looking back at that time, believed she had suffered with post-natal depression, but in the 1960's there appeared to be little awareness or help for this or any mental health difficulties.

The cyclical nature of mum's mental health difficulties thankfully did mean we saw times when mum shone past her difficulties. Mum was a very creative and a talented artist, many friends and family still have her beautifully painted stones. Mum's love of nature, flowers, animals, and birds meant these were her favourite subjects. Mum could recognise bird song easily and identify birds in a flash. She also loved her garden and when she was able, there would be a small veggie patch, fruit trees and bushes. She would nurture her plant cuttings until they were healthy and thriving and these plants still live on in our gardens today.

Mum was also a very good seamstress, she made clothes, toys and dolls, was always knitting when there was to be a new baby in the family or neighbourhood. There were also many very intricate embroideries framed on the walls of mum and dad's home. Mum would make amazing fancy dresses for me and my sister and often we would do well in competitions and win a prize.

Mum learned to play the piano, the memories of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata 1st movement, resounding through the house is very poignant for me. Mum was involved with amateur dramatics, where she would enjoy singing and acting and I remember her performance in the panto Cinderella very well.

Mum was also a very good baker of bread and cakes. The smell of a newly baked cake or bread is one I love and her old-fashioned deserts, a gooey jam roly poly always went down a treat.

Like many older couples, as they moved towards retirement, mum and dad enjoyed caravanning and visited many places in Britain and France, in later years travelling further afield to Canada and the USA. Dad recalled very fond memories of their wonderful trip to Bryce Canyon National Park Utah, sitting

with Mum after a meal, just admiring the stars, which with so little light pollution was magical. Later as they aged, travelling abroad became more difficult and so Mum and Dad would often go to Southwold or Orford Ness for a short break, always with one of their rescue dogs in tow. They would hire a beach hut for the day and me my sister and our four boys would come for a day by the beach. Mum's four grandsons gave her great pleasure and she was always interested in their achievements and how they were making it in the world.

Mum was confused and frustrated, when it came to her mental health difficulties, full of contradictions in her search for answers. She always seemed to be searching for answers to her difficult thoughts and feelings that so clearly caused her pain and sadness. She could articulate well what she felt were the causes, events which occurred deep in her past, but she found confronting these thoughts and feelings extremely difficult. She sought solace in her faith at times during her life. She sought answers from her GPs over many years, but became increasingly frustrated by the fact that medical treatment for her mental illness did not seem to work. Mum felt no one understood her or seemed to be able to alleviate her depressed state. She sadly took a lot of her frustrations out on her family, friends and neighbours seeking to blame those around her for not making her happy, understanding her or being able to relieve her clear pain. This caused immense difficulties with her relationships.

The final 5 years of mum's life, Dad recalled, were a period where mum's frustrations gradually increased. We all gradually noticed this trend. The cyclical nature of mum's mental health difficulties seemed to change to a more stable constant low mood, with very challenging bouts of aggression. She lost interest in her creative interests, music, her garden, the little holidays she so enjoyed. She was clearly in distress and would wander off having to be bought back by the police. But once persuaded by the police to seek help in A& E, she would convince the staff that she was fine, even though it was clear to us that she was not.

The months that led up to mums' death were the most terrifyingly anxious times of our lives as a family. The impact on our lives will never go away. Both my sister and I have had to seek professional counselling and our dad suffered dreadfully and needed lots of support. The wider family, namely our partners and grown-up children should not be forgotten they have been invaluable in supporting us and saw us suffer so much.

Writing this and recalling the terrible memories of my utter feeling of helplessness, failing at every point to get anyone to listen to our concerns and get mum the help she needed and deserved, brings on overwhelming physical symptoms of anxiety. I cannot breathe, my heart it is thumping, there is a knot in my stomach, my head is light, I panic, I am crying. My thoughts are "I must help mum, but no one is listening to my pleas, and no one wants to help us, mum will hurt herself and dad too I need to prevent this catastrophic scenario. I hear my dad crying, he is 93 and not in the best of health, he has been hit by mum, she has threatened to kill him, pushed him into the wall, locked him outside in the cold, the phone wires ripped out so he cannot call for help, he is afraid mum will burn the house down as she has threatened, she is verbally abusing him, he cannot leave her as she is threatening to harm herself and he wants to keep her safe, Dad wants to take his own life because he cannot cope anymore, he just needs peace he says. Mum is in a severe mental health crisis but there is no one to help her get well, or see and accept the risk to dad physically and psychologically.

We as a family also went through several very distressing police incidents.

In the weeks prior to mum's death, we as a family foolishly felt some relief once mum agreed to a voluntary admission to Ruby Ward. Mum's experiences according to her journal notes and our experiences of Ruby ward over the weeks are to be recalled and will be dealt with later in the inquiry. However, it is safe to say that the majority of our interactions with Ruby Ward were not good ones. [details to be considered during the substantive stages of the Inquiry's investigations]

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these failings left mum's mental health issues effectively untreated. Discharge occurred without adequate support and into an environment that was not appropriate, within 5 days mum had attempted suicide again and six days after that mum was dead.

My sister and I spent hundreds of hours writing emails, letters, making phone calls, video call meetings [details to be considered during the substantive stages of the Inquiry's investigations]

I am sure there is more I cannot recall. Much of our efforts were whilst mum was still on Ruby Ward trying to get our concerns listened to and acted on. A box of files proves our ceaseless effort; it did not appear to prevent mum's tragic loss or provide explanation for the errors and for mum's death. All our efforts have been in vain. This is the unending impact of what we have been through as a family.

Mum, you lost your battle against a cruel and unkind illness, let down by those that should have cared for you and helped you get well, your struggles were immense and life long, but it was a full, valuable life. Your family all did the very best they could to support and care for you, especially Dad, by your side for 64 years. Even when it was impossible to reach you, locked in your pain and anguish, we were still fighting for you, to try and make things better for you and get you well. It is so sad it was all in vain.

We know you believed that you would someday go somewhere better, with the angels and where there will be peace forever, I hope you are there now, because if any one needed and deserved somewhere better and peace forever it was you Mum.

Photos of Mum and Dad (Fred)



