

Peggy Gizinski 1924 - 2013

At her funeral service on 23 January at Mortlake Crematorium, we learned of Peggy's younger days and how fondly she is remembered by her niece, Joyce Col, who gave the eulogy.

Peggy was for many years a regular member of St Nicholas's congregation and she and her husband were part of the Edensor Gardens community. I remember so many Thursday mornings when Peggy arrived on her bike to come and polish the brasses on the wall at St Nics. And once I had a long conversation with her about doing the laundry and starching – something I never got the hang of, but which Peggy probably learned from her mother, who had been in service.

We heard from her niece that Peggy, known as Peg originally, had grown up and been to school in a small Oxfordshire village near Henley, called Nettlebed. When wartime came she joined up and worked as an army cook, and later as cook in a school. She met her husband, Stan, at the local village dance and married him in 1952. Some time later they moved to London and worked in Hammersmith, Peggy as a cook at Bute House, St Paul's Girls' Prep School, and Stan at Millers Bakery. He often brought home doughnuts, with extra jam, and lardy cakes ! For several years he also made the beautiful Sheaf Bread displayed on the altar at Harvest Festival.

Joyce's memories of Nettlebed are vivid and enduring, because she spent her childhood in the same house where Peggy grew up, and went to the same school twenty six years later, where there were still a few of the same teachers who had taught Peggy. Joyce and her husband returned to live in the same house thirteen years ago, so, as she said, 'I have many memories around me: I even have the old tin bath that as a child, both Auntie Peg, and later on I, would have bathed in, in front of the fire !'

Joyce went on to tell us of her close ties with Peggy and Stan, who didn't have children of their own, but who would, she said, 'come back and visit regularly, and in summer would take me on days out to places like Box Hill in Surrey or the seaside; West Wittering was their favourite. I have fond memories of these days out, and have to smile because (Peggy being a cook and Stan a baker) food had always played an important part in her life. Well, on these trips, when everyone around us would be bringing out their picnic sandwiches, Auntie Peg and Uncle Stan would be bringing out the primus camping stove, the pressure cooker or frying pan, and we would sit down to meat and two veg, or an all-day breakfast. There used to be a lot of envious looks from people !'

Joyce paid tribute to Peggy's friends who have cared for and supported her since her husband's death six years ago, and to those who looked after her at the day care centre. Ruby Akhurst and Kath Axten, with whom Peggy came to church for so many years, remember her with affection, and especially recall the last time she decided to come with them to Parish Mass, when they 'made a fuss of her'. It was to be her goodbye to St Nics.

Christabel Ames-Lewis

