

Remembering Kathy Axten

In November 2014 one of St Nicholas much-loved characters died. When she had an extended period in hospital earlier in the year she was quickly missed by the bus drivers of the E3, on which she enjoyed taking a daily ride, talking cheerfully and without inhibitions to her fellow passengers. She was much missed by us all at St Nicholas, where she was such a happy, joyful presence, often calling out 'Gorgeous !' to our vicar, and 'Lovely-jubbly !' as the parish mass got under way.

Baptised at St George's Church in Brentford in May 1925, Kathy lived in this area all her life, moving with her parents to a recently-built flat in Edensor Gardens in 1952. Life then for Kathy revolved around her family, looking after her father and mother, keeping closely in touch with her sisters, coming to St Nicholas Church and working at Sperry's through the 1960s. Later in life she was married, at St Nicholas in 1974, and with her husband Tom she went on to enjoy her favourite hobby, dancing at Chiswick Town Hall and going away on organised dancing holidays.

It was on an outing from St Nicholas to Bournemouth that Kathy and Ruby Akhurst made friends. Ruby's husband, Leslie, wasn't feeling too well that day, and encouraged Ruby to go off and have lunch with Kathy. She asked her back for a cup of tea when they got home and the friendship was sealed. That first occasion led to weekly trips together on the bus to Richmond and Kingston, for a walk round the shops and a cup of tea, and a couple of holidays together in Eastbourne.

In the family eulogy at her funeral, Kathy was remembered as someone who valued her friends, and the networks she had at St Nicholas and at Age Concern. Her family were enormously grateful for the neighbours and contacts at St Nicholas who watched out for Kathy over the last years of her life.

As Father Simon said at her funeral, Kathy had the gifts of joy and innocence, which she shared with all she met, spreading happiness, making others feel good, and giving us a glimpse of God in her relationships.

Christabel Ames-Lewis