

Kate & Arwel's tribute to Sue

Kate and I first met Sue just over 44 years ago. I studied Chemistry at Bristol University and Sue was a fellow student in my year. She caught my eye early on as one of the good-looking girls on our course, but my first proper memory of her was when she and I attended a three-day 'introduction to industry' course in Runcorn run by ICI. There was only one part of the course that I found boring and that was a talk towards the end on life as a patent attorney. I remember turning to Sue and saying something like, "Well aren't you glad that that's all over?" only to hear her say, "Really? I think that's been the best part of the whole course!" So I can honestly say that I had the privilege to witness Sue's first love of patents, which was to remain with her for all of her life.

Sue married Terry, I married Kate. Terry and I were best men at each other's weddings. And so started a life of friendship. Our relationship with one another in our early years of marriage was so important to all of us. We have many memories of time spent together, including on several holidays, both before and after children.

Through these times we got to see Sue's truly amazing positive approach and sense of fun. One of our abiding memories is that of us all cooking together on weekends and holiday with Sue always plonked on a stool right in the middle of the kitchen - planning, organising, and directing us all on the next steps in our recipe preparations.

And as we moved through our different stages of life, it was Sue who never let what might become obstacles get in the way of what was important. Kate and I had children first and Sue bought us a travel cot so that we could continue to spend time together as friends and to deepen our relationship. When Kate and I moved to live in America, Sue was our very first visitor, travelling on her own with her two young children in tow and just ahead of Terry, who was on a business trip, so that we could celebrate Thanksgiving together as friends.

We have known Aidan and Jess, initially as babies and young children, and have watched them grow into outstanding young people with a great future ahead of them, that we know made their Mum very happy, and proud of them.

Sue was hospitable, kind, generous, considerate. Kate was her weekly lodger in Wantage while Kate was working in Reading after we had moved to Nottinghamshire. Over several late evening conversations over coffee or a glass of wine, the two of them were able to further their friendship at a deeper level.

We were devastated when Sue told us of her prognosis of MND, but it never ceased to amaze us how Sue was able to generate so much positivity out of the experience. All of us who walked the positive path with Sue not only gave willingly of our time but gained fantastically positive experiences ourselves. That ability that she had to inspire others, present throughout her life in everything that she did, was her gift to all of us.

In recent years it has been lovely for both Kate and me to see how Sue was so happy in her relationship with Brian, and we have cherished the time we have spent with them both – in Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire and Devon.

All of our lives have been the richer for knowing Sue. Our condolences go out to the entire family and friends who feel her loss, as we do.