

Thank you all for your thoughts, prayers and support while Mum was in hospital and since she passed. Some comments received about her include

unforgettable lady, truly lovely lady, beautiful, a lovely person, amazing, a pleasure to have in the home". The word I'd add is "determined".

and from somebody who knew her for over 60 years

"a life given in service and love to others. She was a remarkable woman and was one of the people who influenced and encouraged me to seek more from life by giving more than receiving. "

It's my privilege to expand on those words. If necessary, my son Martyn or Steve are ready to take over.

I was going to do this chronologically but decided to do it in chunks.

## **West Ham United**

On 14 May 1923, 16 days after West Ham played in the first FA Cup Final at Wembley, (the so-called White Horse Final) Emily

Bowers was born at 69 Neville Road, about 1100 yards from WH Boleyn Ground.

Having moved to Dagenham at age 6, she returned to that area, aged 14, to start work as a machinist in the Boleyn Castle, depicted on the club's logos for many decades.

I attended my first game in 1958 and became a season ticket with Martyn in 1993. We currently have season tickets and five of her great-grandchildren come to matches when they can and often proudly wear the kit.

On her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday West Ham sent Mum presents and a personal letter signed by their then captain and England player Declan Rice

## **Bolenium**

I mentioned Mum starting work. She had been a pupil at Lymington Road school. She was bright enough to have passed her exams to go to Grammar School, but my grandfather wasn't willing to fill in the form declaring his wages for the scholarship. So, she started with Bolenium, next to the

Boleyn Ground, as a machinist of industrial clothing. Then in 1944 to avoid bombing near the docks the factory moved to Dagenham to a mile from her parents' home. She stayed with the company till 1978, (apart from a career break when I was under school age) and became the training officer and helped them set up 2 new factories in Wantage and Daventry. So, her potential eventually was acknowledged.

### **Kingsley Hall**

A major part of her social and spiritual life was at Kingsley Hall in Dagenham.

In 1929 she moved with her parents to 364, Bonham Road, Dagenham and it was there at age 6 she first encountered Muriel & Doris Lester who, the day before, had set up a caravan and tent on the land that is now the Kingsley Hall site (100 yards from her home). KH – Kingsley Hall

Mum said she was playing over in the field when she heard singing. She ventured over and met the Lester Sisters who advised her to go and ask her mother if she could come back. Her mum thought they were probably "gypsies" but the young Emily said they were singing her Sunday School songs.

Determined. This started an association between Emily and Kingsley Hall at Dagenham that has lasted 94 of her 100 years.

When she was 8, she met Mahatma Gandhi who was visiting KH Dagenham for the day whilst he was staying at Kingsley Hall Bow. He was attending the Round Table Conference in London in 1931 to discuss the future of India. She shook his hand, but it was explained to the children that Mondays were his "silent days". Unbeknown to her, about 6.5 miles away was an 11-year-old boy, Bill Saville, who was going on daily walks with Gandhi from KH Bow.

Her family then moved to 31, Freshwater Road and later Bill moved with his family to No 10 FR and started attending KH Dagenham rather than Bow  
In her teens, Emily was active in Kingsley Hall in various youth activities, as a Sunday School teacher, and as a Camp Fire Girl, eventually becoming a leader. As well as myself there are 2 other sons of Camp Fire leaders here today, and one of their junior members.

At some point Bill started to walk Em home,

romance bloomed and in 1943 they married in KH. Over the next 57 years KH was central to their lives. They loved ballroom dancing. They'd danced during the war at Dads RAF base in Yorkshire and at The Tower Ballroom in Blackpool, then for many years at socials at KH and In the 1980s they started a Tea Dance, meeting every Tuesday in the same room in which they'd been married.

Mum also took up yoga there in her 70s. In 2008, she took part in an intergenerational project where teenagers from the local school taught graffiti to the Tea Dancers and they taught the youngsters some ballroom dancing. Graffiti at 85. Mum continued to help run the Tea Dance after Dad died. In 2006 it was used for the rehearsal of a couple for Strictly Come Dancing. The celebrity was a young actress from East Enders, of which Mum was a daily viewer. The professional was Vincent Simone. After the rehearsal he asked if anybody would like to dance. Mum's hand shot up and selected a Foxtrot as that was her Bill's favourite dance. Determined. She often was at KH 3 even 4 times a week for Tea Dance, Sunday evening service, the Friday Lester Group and sometimes a fund-raising sale on a Saturday/

Her final involvement with KH was in March last year when she was invited to “cut the ribbon” of the new building as the centre develops to meet the needs of today’s generations as it had for hers all those decades ago.

## **129**

For 76 years she lived at 129 Chadwell Heath Lane. In 1943 she cycled past noting the tank trap in the front garden. A year later she had the opportunity to move to live in the upper floor of the house which was owned by dad’s distant cousins. In 1954 the owners wanted to move, and mum offered to buy it against the advice of both sets of parents, who lived in council houses, and Dad. She went off and got the mortgage. Determined. She lived there till 2020 when she moved back to Dagenham to a Care Home. I’m very glad she bought 129 when she did. Where else could she have invested money that earned 8.5% compound interest, tax free, for 67 years?

## **Family**

Mums favourite phrase was “Blood is thicker

than water" indicating that family was most important to her. I usually responded to tease her with "Ah, you can choose your friends, but you're stuck with your relations". Family was important to her, whether it was Saville outings to Mersea Island or Hylands Park when my cousins and I were children, or holidays with Dad, 3 of his siblings and their spouses.

She was especially close to her sister, Shirley, who was 15 years her junior. In particular after Dad died. I genuinely thought I'd be standing here 23 years ago as she and Dad had been so close. Instead, she said she wanted to do things that Dad hadn't wanted to. Determined. So they went on a cruise, flew over to the US when I had a home there, spent Christmases together at Shirley's with my other cousins, and when Shirley went into a home in Westcliffe, we'd visit weekly to take her out to lunch and a Rossi's ice cream.

Mum was very fond of her 2 grandsons, Jeremy and Martyn, and her 8 great grandchildren. She treasured the large cards I made for her for each Christmas, Mothering Sunday and her birthday with family photos for each card.

## **JRS**

But I suppose most of all she loved and spoiled me. There are several theories why I am an only child (maybe later this afternoon) but it meant she poured all her love and ambition into me. She encouraged me through school and college.

She forgave me after a school parents evening when the teacher had called out Mr & Mrs Saville and when they went up was told it couldn't be them cos I had written "my parents are middle aged".

Mum was 29. (I was only 6) My logic was that Nan was old and Shirley was young, so mum must be middle aged.

She made me special birthday cakes, especially the "Sputnik" one in 1957. She got me special presents. The one I remember is a signed "Tomorrows World" book. She saw the authors Ramond Baxter and James Burke were doing a signing in WH Smiths in Ilford. When asked who to dedicate it to she told them, her son John. When asked how old her little boy was, she replied "22" ....and, added proudly "he has a degree in Cybernetics."

I hope I was able to repay some of the care



she showed me. I saw her most weeks and in early 2020 after she was discharged from King Georges Hospital after a fall. just as Lockdown had started, she came to live with me for 3 months. We had visiting carers but it became obvious that she needed more support that I could give and so she moved back to Dagenham and into Park View Care Home.

It was there in May that we, as her family and friends, together with other residents and staff, were able to celebrate her 100th birthday.

And that is how I want to remember her.