



Celebrating the Life of

*Maureen Rouse*

27<sup>th</sup> July 1940 – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017

The Vale Crematorium  
Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 1.45 pm

Conducted by  
Steve Stacey - Civil Celebrant



*Steve Stacey*

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Celebrating the Life of  
*Maureen*

**Entrance Music**  
Mama - Il Divo

**Welcome & Introduction**

Welcome here today as we meet to celebrate the life of Maureen, to pay our respects to her and to support each other in our loss.

We meet to share our love for her, our stories about her, to share our memories of her and to share our grief at losing her.

Maureen had some lovely qualities. She was unique, there's never been anyone like her before. If you look through the whole world you'll not find anyone like her again.

When she was born they broke the mould – she was larger than life!

Maureen was a gregarious person. She loved being with people. She had a bubbly personality and was full of life.

She was a kind and caring person who was generous to a fault. She loved to spend money on her family and her friends.

She was selfless. If she could help someone, she would.

There were times when she could be very stubborn. In her eyes there was Maureen's way of doing things or the wrong way – it was her way or the highway!

Her family are her greatest achievement in life and they meant everything to her. She meant the world to them as well.

Our hearts go out to Fred. To Susan, Matthew and Jessica. And to Alison and Andy. They have lost a cornerstone of their family.

Her family are the wonderful legacy that she leaves behind. They are a living and growing memorial to her and a testament to the love of Maureen and Fred.

We take a moment to remember Fred and Ada, her parents. She was always very close to them. They were always in her heart and never far from her thoughts.

Each one of you here has lost a special part of your life too.

Our service for her has been created to celebrate everything she was and everything that she leaves behind rather than simply focussing on our own loss. It is an opportunity to reflect on Maureen's life and character and to say thank you for the precious time that you had with her. It is a time to honour her place in your life.

I hope that you feel that the service for her today reflects, respects and honours the Maureen that you knew and loved and that it gives you the opportunity to pay your respects in the way you would wish.

We want the people that we love to be with us always, happy and healthy. Maureen's passing is a reminder to us that we are all living things and only here for a brief moment. However long that moment is, it will never be long enough for those that we love.

Maureen would be very proud that Susan and Alison have chosen some words to share today.

### **A Daughter's Promise**

A Daughters Promise

You were our world  
Our inspiration and our heart  
When you left us  
We thought we would fall apart

You were our friend  
Our guidance  
And that's not all  
You were our Mum

With every smile and every sigh  
We think of you  
We shut our eyes and think of all the memories  
And a tear comes to our eyes

We would give anything to have you back  
But we know it wasn't to be  
Every day we think of you  
We know you would want us to be happy  
"Life is for Living" you would say

Mum we know you loved us  
And every day we will make you proud  
We will carry on and smile

That's the promise your daughters make to you

Thank you Mum

Grief is an overwhelming feeling today. It has been said that grief is the price that we pay for losing someone we truly love. Alison is going to share some words that offer some positive ways to focus grief.

### **You Can Shed Tears**

You can shed tears that I've gone  
or you can smile because I've lived.  
You can close your eyes and pray that I'll come back  
or you can open your eyes and see all I've left.  
Your heart can be empty because you can't see me  
or you can be full of the love we shared.  
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday  
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.  
You can remember me and only that I've gone  
or you can cherish my memory and let it live on.  
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back  
or you can do what I'd want you to do:  
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

*David Harkins*

### **Maureen's Story**

Maureen was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1940 in Barnet to Ada and Fred Kieff. Soon after she was born, he went off to fight in the war and served in Egypt.

The family home was at 93 Bedford Avenue. There was no central heating and the windows would freeze over in the winter. The house had two bedrooms, a box room and a very long, well kept garden. There were chickens in the garden. Maureen always said that she hated them.

The house was on the road that led to the local Odeon. As people went by, Maureen would ask them "are you going to the Odeon?"

During the worst of the war, she was evacuated to stay in Haverhill in Suffolk with her Auntie Ann. She was very close to her cousins Helen and Iris.

'Auntie' Cotteril lived up the road from Maureen's family. She was a schoolteacher who had no family of her own and would look after Maureen. She played a big part in her upbringing.

She would take Maureen on holiday and every Christmas would take her to Owen and Owen in Finchley to buy a new coat.

Maureen left school when she was about 14. At school, she'd been good at chatting and dancing on the tables – her and school never really got on.

She started her working life in an upmarket pram shop called Treasure Cot in Oxford Street. She met many famous people there, including Tony Hancock and Michael Caine.

She took pride in her appearance. By now it was the time of Rock and Roll. Maureen embraced the music and the fashion of the day. She liked to wear her stiletto heeled shoes and always had her hair done.

Later she worked in the offices of Commercial Union as a clerk.

She met Fred through a party of a mutual friend in 1958.

He invited her to the pictures – he doesn't remember the film because he wasn't watching!

They started going out together. They enjoyed picnics together and with parents and friends and going dancing with Pat and Doris.

The couple were married in Barnet Church on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1961. It was certainly a 'white wedding' – it snowed that day. The Everly Brothers were at Number One in the charts with 'Walk Right Back'. They had a chilly honeymoon in Bournemouth.

They started married life in 2 rooms with shared facilities by Hornsey Clock Tower in Muswell Hill.

They moved into a flat in Wood Green, which was in a house owned by Fred's Aunt.

From there, they moved to a flat in West End Lane, Barnet. The house had a very strange bath – if you were sitting in the bath, your feet would be in the kitchen.

They started their family with Susan in 1964 and Alison was born in 1967.

The family moved into a house in Chapterhouse Road in Luton. They lived there for the next 18 years. In the mid 80's they moved to Bowland Crescent in Dunstable and that became the family forever home.

She was a good homemaker. Her cooking was very traditional. Her scones were legendary for all of the wrong reasons – Fred says that even the birds would throw them back! Her girls recognise the fact that Maureen spoiled them and that they didn't have to do too much!

She was an avid knitter and could knit for England. You couldn't watch TV for the click clacking of the needles. Susan bore the brunt of the hand knitted jumpers... The red mohair was a particularly painful experience.

She was good at dressmaking too, and made matching dresses for her girls. Fred remembers that his job was to cut the patterns out.

Her garden was always a special place. She enjoyed gardening and loved the spring when the daffodils would be out.

Fred remembers that she did learn to drive, but never took a test.

Fred drove a 3.5litre Rover Automatic and in his words teaching her to drive was sheer 'lunacy'! Maureen drove very fast indeed – one reason was that instead of looking at the speedometer in the car, she looked at the rev counter! Her girls remember that whenever they went out, they would shout "let mum drive – it's more exciting!"

Maureen and Fred loved ballroom dancing. They went to dance lessons in Bath Road in Luton. They were very keen, particularly of Latin American. Whenever they went dancing, Maureen never wanted to get on the floor first. A favourite song was Annabel and she would always join Fred in a waltz when it came on.

For many years, she worked in the canteen at Littlewoods. She was very generous with her portions particularly if friends of her girls were customers.

She made many friends while she worked there.

Maureen entered into the spirit of things, particularly when it came to fancy dress. Over the years she dressed as one of the Pink Ladies from Grease, a pregnant Bumble Bee, one of the Smash 'aliens', an unlikely 'Sporty Spice' and a giant packet of Benson and Hedges cigarettes. She was always game for a laugh.

Holidays were special times.

They went to Pontin's. There would be six people travelling in a mini – they would take the two mums with them. These were the Hi-Di-Hi days of holiday camps. Maureen enjoyed the evening entertainment – she enjoyed the dancing, the Bingo and watching other people make fools of themselves.

Later they went caravanning in North Wales – there would be dogs and a dinghy there – it always seemed to be raining.

The dogs were a big part of family life. They had Shelties, Toby, Tessa and Troy. And she always liked days out. When they had the dogs, the family did a lot of walking and picnics – they'd go on the Downs and to Ashridge Forest.

Grandchildren arrived 20 years ago. Maureen slipped into grandmotherhood effortlessly. They became a huge part of her life and she became an equally big part of their life.

One of the more recent and special memories of Maureen is her embracing their young friends and dancing with them at their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party. She could teach them a thing or two about the Macarena!

When Alison met Andy, Maureen welcomed him into the family and he held a special place in her heart – she always stuck up for him and in her eyes he could do no wrong. Even if she did think 13 years was a long time to wait for their wedding.

Once the couple retired, Fred did the cooking. He says that she was always 'starving' and wondering when dinner would be ready. She enjoyed her food, but could be quite fussy, particularly when it came to fish!

Their holidays became further flung – the couple would go on cruises. They went on few to the Norwegian Fjords and Russia, including visiting St Petersburg. The couple had a special cruise to the Caribbean to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. She always loved exploring and finding out about places.

Maureen was never a great packer of cases – generally, they needed repacking as she would pack the whole wardrobe if left unchecked.

She had a big circle of forever friends. Fred nicknamed them the Golden Girls. Maureen went out regularly with them for lunch on Saturday and enjoyed an afternoon natter.

They enjoyed all sorts of things together, especially line dancing and shopping. Her favourite shopping experience would be to Milton Keynes. The trips were highly planned – she would plan for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on the way.

Maureen was quite a news buff. She enjoyed watching the news and reading the newspaper – she read the Daily Mail. She would make her mind up about what was going on in the world and once she'd formed an opinion and made up her mind, there was no changing it.

The last nine months were particularly difficult for her and for those who loved her. She became unable to do so many of the things that she enjoyed doing.

She passed on the 10<sup>th</sup> March. She will be sadly missed.

I hope that you can take comfort in the fact that she did have a good life that she was able to spend with the man that she loved and leaves behind that wonderful legacy of family and friends and beautiful memories that will live on.

Fred has written some words for Maureen that express his feelings and has asked me to share them... 'You were my world and you were my best friend. We shared such happy times and I will always hold those special memories close to me.

I will miss you, but rest assured you will be in my heart forever. And remember I will always love you.'

During the next few moments, think about the things that you've heard today.

Think about your own memories of her - they will be every bit as special and unique as she was.

They will be special, unique to you and her and no two of you will have exactly the same ones.

Think about why it was good to have had Maureen as part of your life - the impact that she had on you. Remember that she was very proud to have had each of you in her life too.

While you do that, we're going to listen to Time to Say Goodbye by Andrea Bocelli & Sarah Brightman.

### **Music for Reflection**

Time To Say Goodbye – Andrea Bocelli & Sarah Brightman



### **Quiet Reflection**

We're going to spend a few moments in silence - a chance to focus on a single memory of her, one that will make you smile. There are so many to choose from.

If you have faith you could use the time to say your own private prayer for her.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen

### **The Committal**

Sadly, Maureen has reached the end of her journey here with us.

She has left behind all of the cares of the world. She is now free of all the troubles of the world - she is free of illness and of pain. She is at total peace.

### *Maureen...*

To everything there is a season  
A time to be born and a time to die.  
We are glad that we shared our lives with you.  
We will cherish all of the good things that you brought into our lives.  
We will remember your character and your personality,  
We will recall the things that you did with us  
And the happy times we shared together.  
We commit the memory of you  
To our hearts and minds.  
With love and tenderness we leave you in peace.

### **Closing Words**

It has been said that a person is not dead while their name is still being spoken. That we are only truly gone when we disappear from the memories of those who loved us.

While you remember Maureen, she will live on.

We never lose the people we love. Be thankful that Maureen was and still is a part of your life. For her family, she is part of them.

Your lives have been made all the better by knowing Maureen and having walked part of your life's journey beside her.

After the service, you're all invited to The Green Man in Offley. When you get there, enjoy talking about your memories and sharing tales of things she did, words that she said. I'm sure that there will be more laughter than tears.

Our final reading today is a reminder that Maureen will always be just a thought away. Whenever you think of her, she will be there for you.

### **Those we love**

Those we love don't go away  
They walk beside us every day  
Unseen, unheard but always near  
Still loved, still missed and forever dear

Thank you for being here for Maureen and for each other.

Thank you to Maureen for being such a very special lady.

We finish with a song that is a reminder that she loved to dance. The song came out in 1976 - a time when Maureen had so many good things to look forward to.

### **Exit Music**

Dancing Queen – Abba

