



Sue Siggers, née Allin

Sadly, Sue passed away on 16th March 2014. We are indebted to her husband Mark for the following:

I met my beloved Sue for the first time on September 18th, 1957. We were both aged 11 and it was our first day at KESW. My name was on a list for clarinet lessons and for some reason she decided she would like to learn too. What followed for us was a more or less unbroken span of 55 years of being together, nearly 47 of them as man and wife.

You could say it was music that brought us together and music that accompanied our lives. We sat side by side in the school orchestra for seven years. We went to Glyndebourne when we were 17, and then again last summer, 50 years later. Performances from her beloved grandchildren featured at her funeral and afterwards at North Star Farm, Mereworth, where she had spent the last 20 years of her life.

Sue and I were in the first year of Junior House and were mostly in the same classes until the sixth form. I was in Edward under Bertie Mawer while Sue was in Elizabeth, becoming house captain in the Lower Sixth but mysteriously missing out on the head girlship the following year. In fact there was a simple reason: these were early days for co-education at Witley and many felt the experiment was being conducted at the expense of the boys and girls. The school really didn't know how to handle what it described as "specialised friendships" and went out of its way to deter them. Letters to our parents were followed up with threats: Sue wouldn't be head girl, I didn't even make prefect.

Her parents had a small dairy farm on the Pevensey Marsh and Sue's early childhood was spent there with her brother Michael and sister Vicky. The family later moved to Eastbourne, and when Sue left school she

commuted from there to Bond Street in London whilst training as a beautician. I had joined the army and was misbehaving my way through a short service commission in Germany. Sue would join me when she could for regimental functions, and often we would meet in Amsterdam for the weekend.

We married in 1968, just as I was embarking on a journalistic career, and we lived for three years in Wiltshire where our two children Georgina and Anthony were born. We then bought a house in Haywards Heath while I worked for a time in Fleet Street, moving to Yalding in 1974 and to Graythwaite Lodge in 1984.

By then Sue had resumed working and she remained with the team at Yalding Surgery until just a couple of years ago, some six years after she had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

Meanwhile she had developed a new career, from 1994 running North Star Farm as a horse livery yard. She called this her second 'Darling Buds of May' phase - the first being when we lived in a mobile home while converting an oasthouse in Yalding. She had quietly taught herself to ride when Georgie left home for medical school and was still riding her ex-racehorse Oscar in Mereworth Woods just three months before her death. Not only could Oscar not be ridden by anyone else, he could not be accompanied by another horse, so Sue's rides were always solitary - but oh how she loved those woods. Her other loves were gardening and skiing, but in truth her life revolved around her children and six grandchildren, and pride in them was the only deadly sin in which she indulged. She never missed a school play, sports day, prize giving, concert or carol service and was always on hand to help with homework and school runs or saddling a pony. A thoughtful word from her could restore wilting confidence or repair a bruised ego or quell a rising tantrum.

She faced all her challenges with quiet good humour and a cheering smile, spoke ill of no-one and never knew an idle moment. At her funeral at St Lawrence Church, Mereworth, on March 26th the eulogy was read by one grandchild, solos were sung by two others and the lesson was read by a fourth. The two youngest had special parts to play, too, while her cranky horse and faithful Labrador paraded to bid her farewell as the procession to the church left North Star Farm.

[Sue was at King Edward's from 1957-64 and in Elizabeth House.]