

Great Aunt Marion was the eldest of 4 siblings Ken, Pat & Dorothy. She was born in Leeds to Violet & Henry Clark, and, was educated at Burley Church School in Leeds. She was a high achiever academically and physically, being captain of the netball team, she was also taught to play golf. She had the opportunity to go on to higher education, but, due to the ill health of her Father, Marion at the age of 14 returned home to help her Mother run The Royal Oak at Swayfield. Marion had beautiful hand writing and a wonderful way with words, delivered in distinctive melodious voice, with a wonderful laugh and mischievous sense of humour.

On his way home from market Great grandfather taught Marion & Ken to drive. He was in the observer core and allowed special fuel rations. She recalled filling a 2 gallon can of petrol for ½ a crown.

Learning to drive stood Marion in good stead. When the war started she made the decision not to work in the ammunitions factory at Grantham – she didn't want to turn yellow! So, when war broke out in 1939, Marion secretly sent off her application form, under the age of 18! Her Father approved, her mother certainly didn't. Marion wanted to join the MT section. She scored 98% in her test for vehicle maintenance, and would remove the rotor arm to disable her vehicle - in case it fell into enemy hands. Marion drove until she was 90, and then only stopped because of the minor stroke she had.

Marion commenced her WRAF duties at Hemswell and various locations around Britain, often working 36 hours and only admitting to falling asleep at the wheel once! She said how bitterly cold it was and how she cried when her hot water bottle burst. Marion drove the length and breadth of Britain, without Sat Nav. or road signs! Delivering supplies and chauffeuring Officers and Generals to meetings, and air crew to and from their planes.

It was whilst in the forces Marion became engaged to Peter Ball a B17 bomber pilot, Peter was billeted at Stocking Hall, they met at a dance at Swayfield.

Unfortunately, like many other brave young men he failed to return from his mission, along with his crew. Marion was left to deal with the loss of her first love.

At the end of the war Marion was recruited into the W.V.S. She had postings in Germany, Singapore, Burma and Kuala Lumpur. Whilst in the Far East, Marion learnt to fly, she went solo in 1951 and gained her

pilots licence in a Tiger Moth, under the tutorage of Don McFail and Freddy Fisk – she said he smoked such a lot his teeth were almost brown. Marion remembered delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday cake to a soldier chasing communist bandits. She parachuted the cake over the side of the Auster aircraft.

Marion loved all creatures, great or small. She remembered an Orangutan while in the Far East that lifted her skirt and looked at her face through the material, he was fascinated he could see through the material. Her friend Elizabeth used to collect moths, so, she used to make sure they flew off before Elizabeth could stick a pin through them! Marion and her flying instructor Don, also tried to save a baby elephant, when its mother was mistakenly killed.

Marion was especially fond of dogs and had many throughout her life, given or rescued. Jumpy Foster, she looked after him in Germany, he was a border terrier. Knick named Jumpy Foster because he used to jump with the parachute regiments whilst training. When Marion left Germany leaving Jumpy Foster broke her heart, she said “he came to me and looked down at my suitcase, then looked up, and he gave me a wet nose kiss goodbye. With a heavy heart, she entrusted him to the house keeper.

After the war 1949 – 52 period. Marion had a wonderful time in Fallingbostal, the invites to Balls littered the door mat. There was so much to do, squash courts, Polo ponies to ride and race, skying – Three very happy years there with The 7<sup>th</sup> armoured division that had fought in Middle East, beside the desert rats, 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars and the Queens bays. Marion was posted to Berlin but didn't want to go, she was enjoying herself so much at Fallingbostal – Marion said they were 3 of the best years of her life.

Marion returned to England in 1955 decorated with The Defence Medal, British War Medal and General Service Medal. She resumed her life, but continued to put others first, working for Lincolnshire County council, where she gained her qualifications as a Social Worker, working with Children Services and still supporting her mother in running the Three Tunns pub at Castle Bytham. She was also an active member for the Parish Council.

Marion & her mother had a caravan at Heacham in Norfolk, spending many happy hours walking with their dogs and socialising. The Clark family have always been great believers in the restorative powers of fresh air and a tippie or two. Many reckling pigs, ducks, lambs, birds, cats,

dogs and family members have been restored with a generous dose of Brandy!

When Marion retired, she moved to Bourne with her mother. Marion now had the time to pursue her love of art and caring for animals.

Marion loved all her dogs the latter being Dachshund's Sarus, Pippa, and Brigg and finally tiny Amber her Jack Russell, her last little love, rescued from the back of a van.

Marion looked after her mother at home until she passed on, with only a brief spell in hospital at the very end. Marion was also able to stay in her home, which was her dearest wish. With the help of her carers and good neighbours:- Amber, Richard, Anne & Dave. Marion's final weeks were filled with Christmas and visits from friends and family. Her last little adventure was down to the Nags Head pub, to have lunch with her dearest friend Joan, before spending Christmas day with her family.

Marion loved to dance and Dorothy as a little girl remembers Marion frequently dancing around the kitchen, with her in her arms. Both Beverley & Tracey remember being taught to do the twist at the Three Tunns pub, with much laughter and merriment.

Life was an adventure and although towards the end of the 2015, Marion's infirmities could have laid her low. She would have none of it, she lived her life on her terms, determined, and with great dignity and strength of character.

Marion would not deviate from her chosen path, which was a good, kind one.

If she ever took your suggestion, it was because, she had already chosen that route!

We say this with great respect for a Gentle Women of a stoical era.

We will always remember her tickling laughter, when relating the recent story of her Knight in shining armour Dave. Who climbed through her upstairs window to rescue her! And Richard guiding her home from town when she was caught in heavy rain and soaked to the skin.

Last but not least a big thank you to Amber and Ann for keeping a close eye on Marion, sharing their meals with Aunt, and the most precious gift of all to Marion, their time.

***We thank you all – “God Bless”***