

Angela Margaret Hill (18th May 1942 – 1st July 2016)

Angela was born in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire on 18th May 1942, the only child of Norman and Doris Jones. Sadly, Angela never met her father, as he was killed in action whilst serving away in NE India as a doctor in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Childhood was marked therefore by Angela and her mother Doris as the core partnership. And they developed a lifelong and very rewarding relationship and friendship which culminated in Doris coming to live in Bournville at Queen Mother Court. Angela went to school at the Parish School in Gainsborough. Her connection to teaching began early, as her mother was a teacher and head of a local village school in nearby Marton, where they lived for a time in the school house. Angela also had the experience of being taught by her mother when Doris moved to teach at the Parish School. Here Angela achieved top of the class, notwithstanding their connection! She then went, via the 11+, to Gainsborough High School for Girls. Here she preferred arts to sciences and gained a place at Bedford College for Women in London to study sociology. During these years the family leaning for teaching was clearly at work, as Angela went on from London to do a one year 'Cert Ed' at Homerton College, Cambridge, living in Hinton Avenue, Cherryhinton.

One key feature of Cambridge was that it was also where David was studying. This was, however, more than a complete coincidence!... for Angela and David had got to know each other some years earlier on SPG Summer School during their early teens (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel). In subsequent years letters went back and forth and brief meetings in Birmingham were achieved. If I've got it right, it was only when Angela moved to Homerton that you were finally in the same place at the same time. It soon became apparent that you were meant for each other – something that time has confirmed with great clarity – and you were married at the Church of the Holy Spirit Scunthorpe on 26th July 1965. And today we salute you both as you look back on over 50 years of marriage, and we say a very big thank you to God for the

love you found between you – for all that you received from Angela and all she enjoyed through your love for her. It was a great pleasure to celebrate with you both your 50th anniversary last summer and few of us will forget the moving way you spoke David of the blessings you found together, which were only increased following Angela's first stroke.

Angela's first teaching post was at Yorkswood Primary School in Kingshurst, Birmingham aged 22. At the time, she lived in lodgings in Castle Bromwich. Following your marriage you moved into Flat 3 No. 30 George Road in a house owned by the architects you David were working for. There was then a short return to Cambridge where Angela worked for a year in St Matthew's Church Primary School while you David were completing your architecture training.... It was then in 1967 that you took the major decision together to set sail for Canada. For Angela this meant working at the Willow Park Public School in Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario. She taught kindergarten (our reception class) and this confirmed her particular pleasure and aptitude for teaching at this age level. Her strong preference was towards learning through play, and she was asked by the school to pilot a project to teach reading and writing through this methodology. This she did with relish. In Canada Angela made many friends and you travelled widely in the VW 'beetle', Angela being the principle driver. One feature for her was to visit Nova Scotia, where one of her favourite novels was set that she'd read as a child, 'Anne of Green Gables' – and Emily will be reading an extract from the book shortly. Canada began as a one year visit and turned into a three year stay. In 1970, however, you decided to return to the UK and came back to another flat in 30 George Road. It was at the end of this year that two things came together: first Tim was born and secondly you moved to 7b Augustus Road. And so Angela became a mum and Augustus Road became the family home. In 1972 Giles was born and in 1974 Emily arrived. And I am sure that there will be very many fond memories of Angela as your mother for which you will want to give thanks today, both from the early years of childhood and forwards across the years. I am sure we will hear more in a minute about this, but I understand that as a

full time mother at this stage, Angela took great pleasure in looking after you, supporting you and encouraging you in a range of activities from swimming at Moseley baths, to piano lessons, to the planning and enjoyment of holidays and to accompanying you to hospital when the cuts, bumps and breakages required it! It was also at this stage of early motherhood that Angela made many new friends and met you Sandy, as a fellow Mum, and you struck up a friendship that was to endure all the way through.

In due course Angela took on additional commitments outside the home. When Emily was two years old, she ran a playgroup in Bearwood, taking over from you Maggi, I gather, when James was on the way! This was succeeded by a part time teaching role at Park Grove School, Edgbaston and later by a full time reception teacher's position at St Mary's Primary School in Handsworth in 1984. Unfortunately, however, following to the introduction of SATS tests at 6 years old, Angela was unable to continue operating according to her preferred practice of learning through play. Feeling strongly about this, she chose to resign on principle. Happily, in 1994, while doing supply teaching, she took a role at Brearley Street Nursery School in New Town. Here Angela was in her element, and she thoroughly enjoyed a succession of assignments at the school.

It was some years into this time, at a point when Brearley Street had asked Angela back to do an additional stint in October 2000, that she suffered her first stroke and life changed very significantly. You said David that the stroke was very severe causing weakening of the right side and impairment of speech in dysphasia. In the early days Angela received excellent treatment at Selly Oak Hospital and later at Moseley Hall with speech therapy and physiotherapy and later hydrotherapy. Naturally, this was a very challenging event for her and in the early days in hospital it could get her down. She was very determined however and wouldn't give in, and with your help and support David, and I'm sure from all the family and those close to her, she adapted herself to the new circumstances and in your words, "she never looked back".

The point perhaps is that Angela was as much Angela after her stroke as she was before it. Various physical challenges had of course to be negotiated, yet holidays were still organised and undertaken to Sussex Suffolk and Cumbria, her interest in the family was as great as ever – in fact she was probably the one most responsible for keeping everyone in touch with each other, always on the button sending cards and remembering birthdays – and she continued to put love and energy into sustaining her important friendships; and, not least, her eagerness to support you David in your commitments, especially as a magistrate at court, was undaunted and selfless. After the stroke her laptop and i-pad became very important, especially for sending and receiving cherished family photos. She enjoyed also her regular Friday lunches with St George's friends. And one of her great pleasures more recently was to join in with the One Voice Choir who will be singing for us later in the service. This choir for stroke-affected patients and survivors of head trauma, and their partners and friends, was a splendid place for Angela, with you David, to make some real therapeutic strides through the medium of shared singing. It was here (if I am remembering accurately) whilst singing memorable Christmas carols at Moseley Hall Carol Service that she first discovered her capacity to render memorised pieces word perfectly, which was a source of great encouragement. Just as conversational discourse could sometimes be very frustrating for her, and words would not come, so this other brain facility of direct access to stored memory could come into its own and shed rays of light.

At St George's we feel deeply privileged to have known Angela. She first attended church here when you were in George Road in 1965 when you both came to the 8.00 o'clock service. After your return from Canada, with family life gaining momentum, it was the 10.30am that Angela attended including stints in Junior Church. More recently she has been a committed member of the Monday cleaning team, always a strong, talkative and lively presence. When we were talking in preparation for today, David, you described Angela as kind, loving and caring which we recognise instinctively. She was always someone to reach out to others. Her WRVS volunteering at the QE was a good example

of this. You also spoke of her as assertive, organised and decisive, in fact the leader in much decision-making: many of the characteristics of the teacher, perhaps! She was also a very warm person and very expressive. She was someone who gave of herself very generously and in a remarkably undemanding fashion. This has endeared her greatly to all of us here at St George's and I'm sure more widely. She has also been a great friend to many and a wonderful grandmother to her six grandchildren. My suspicion is that her delight in you as grandchildren was matched only by your happiness when being with her. The pictures of her with little Beatrice in the USA tell a wonderful story of mutual appreciation. And all the photos on the mantelpiece at Augustus Road tell you just how much you meant to your grandma.

Angela's final days after the second stroke three weeks ago were distressing, yet also calm. As family members you were able to be with her and accompany her on her last steps of life. You have talked to her and sung to her and held her hand and this will have been appreciated beyond measure I have no doubt. In our reading from John chapter 16, those familiar words of Jesus describing himself as the way the truth and the life deliver a message of great hope. "Lord we do not know where you are going" say the disciples, like grief-stricken observers, "so how can we know the way?" To which Jesus says, "I am the way". This tells us surely that our beloved sister Angela is on a journey in whose destiny we can have deep confidence. She is on the way to the Father's house, making her way with her Saviour who is her truth and is giving her life, eternal life, just as he has always done. For this reason, like her, we hear the words of Jesus addressed to us in that closing verse: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.... Do not let your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid". Let us bless the Lord for the gift Angela has been to each one of us and let us rejoice in her perfect rest in Christ. Amen.