

A Celebration of the Life of  
**JEAN BIRKBY**

31st August 1924 - 16th August 2020



Wednesday, 2nd September 2020  
Oldham Crematorium, 3pm  
Rev. Jane Hyde

Jeans family wish to express their sincere thanks for the love, sympathy and kindness shown to them at this very sad time and for your attendance here today.



An invitation is extended to everyone to join the family at the Roebuck Inn, Brighton Rd, Oldham OL4 3RB for a socially distanced funeral meal commencing around 4.00/4.30.

Donations in Jean's memory for Alzheimer's Research UK can be left here at the crematorium or sent c/o G. Barlow and Sons Ltd, 17/19 Union St West, Oldham, OL8 1DQ  
Tel: 0161 624 4301.

### Order of Service

#### Life of Jean Birkby

##### 31st August 1924

Born the youngest of three daughters, to Harold and "Flo" Sugden, in Thornton, Bradford. Harold was a "chapel" man and Flo a Christian scientist.

##### 1935-1942

Attended Bradford Girls Grammar School (with Arthur's sister Millie). A good pupil - "She is alert in mind, but more anxious to talk than to absorb thoughtfully." Studied music and the piano, took part in drama, won prize for verse speaking.

##### 1939-40

Evacuated with the school to Settle - an unforgettable experience, with inspiring teachers.

##### 1942 onwards

Jean's mum died young, and it fell to Jean to take on the management of her fathers household. He then remarried, but Jean did not get on with her stepmother. Family circumstances meant that Jean could not pursue further education after school.

After the war, Jean worked for a time at the YWCA in London, and met Arthur again. They married in Bradford in 1946 (not long after Jean had reached her majority.)

The family moved with Arthur's work from Bradford (Sylvia born) to Nottingham (Gillian), Halifax (John), and finally Werneth, Oldham (Peter), where Birkbys Chemists was established in 1951. Jean said recently that looking after four small children was hard work, "but it was lovely".

Jean and Arthur had many lifelong friends (and many dear relatives, both Birkbys and Sugdens) and Jean always made sure contact was maintained with them all. When it was not possible to meet up, she was a great letter-writer. The friends all seemed to have strong personalities, were hard workers, had a sense of humour (usually dry!), and knew how to enjoy themselves. Sidney and Brenda Hitchin, Harold and Bess Andrew, the Blackburns, the Tweedales, the Warrens, Carole and Tony Fitton and Anne and Fred. Jean enjoyed entertaining and was a wonderful cook.

##### 1950s

Jean became a long term member of Christ Church, Chadderton and its choir. Jean took piano lessons from Donald Hargreaves and became an accomplished and expressive classical pianist. She also forced all four children to have lessons!

##### 1960s

Jean put her foot down and insisted she take a larger role in the business. She added shop duties to her other duties as wife, mother and business partner.

##### 1970s

Jean got sick of being a "golf widow" and became an active member of Oldham Golf Club.

##### 1980

Arthur retired but Jean didn't. She continued the work of housewife, friend and family "matriarch".

##### 1980s onward

Too many incidents to mention! Many holidays in their beloved Portugal, many parties and get-togethers with relatives and friends, lots of golf and bridge. Jean had a keen sense of duty and was always willing to help when friends or family were in need.

##### To sum up

Jean was a tough, hardworking Christian lady, well respected and loved by friends and family, with a strong sense of duty and responsibility, talented in many ways, devoted wife and mother, and with a gift for enjoying life.

Jean spent her last years at Longwood Lodge care home, and loved her regular trips around Alexandra Park. Jeans family are indebted to the staff at the Lodge for their excellent and sympathetic care.