

BERYL FRANCES NEWTON

The eulogy today (8 January, 2105) is a mixed bag of contributions from people close to Grandma, her son Paul and Grandma herself. Lets face it... can anyone here picture Grandma not having some role to play today? There was only one way that things were going to get done properly and that was if she did some of it herself!

Still I suppose after 101 years, you probably earn that right... besides... who was going to argue?

So without further ado... Heres Grandmas story... the first part in her own words. Beryl said she didn't want an eulogy at her Funeral (everyone was expected to know her story anyway) - just a few plain facts.



Beryl was born in a farmhouse at Devil's Mountain near the railway siding at Sexton west of Gympie on the 27th October 1913. The youngest daughter of Sam and Hetty Roberts, she went first to School at Rosewood, then Virginia followed by Brisbane State High School.

She joined the Education Department, serving as a relieving teacher in many Schools throughout south-east Queensland. While teaching at Curramore she met and married Bill Newton, a dairy farmer, on the 5th November 1938. Three sons followed, Paul born 27th June 1940, Ron born 26th June 1943 and Ken born 22nd June 1946.

In 1970, with the boys grown up and married, the farm was sold and Bill and Beryl moved into Maleny, where they built the first brick home in the town. Bill completed all the inside work as well as the built-in furniture. Bill died in 1997 at the age of 89, and from that time onward Beryl lived alone in the home that had been built for them.

Beryl was the foundation President and Patron of the Senior Citizens Club and the Maleny Historical Society. She was also President of the Ladies Bowls Club six times and president of the North Coast Ladies Bowling Association, as well as a lifetime member of the Anglican Church.

Beryl was also a member of the local LNP branch and one of its staunchest supporters. This was despite the fact that her father, a gold mine manager, was deeply involved with the labour movement in the Gympie area.

Bill and Beryl took two trips overseas to England, Scotland and Europe. She also won a trip to New Zealand's North Island as a quiz prize and they travelled all over the east coast of Queensland visiting friends and relations.

Beryl loved reading, history, quizzes, card and board games and certain programs on TV. She also wrote a bit of poetry.

She dearly loved her sons, Paul, Ron and Ken (deceased), their dear wives Desley, Jan and Judy, her grandchildren Leisa, Stephen, Cameron, Kathryn, Mark and Andrew (both deceased) Peter, Natalie, Suzanne, Karin, Melissa and Simon.

Additionally great Grandchildren – Tahlia, Jacob, Grace, Brandon, Mitchell, Jackson, Lily, Jasmin, Christopher, Sam, Neve, Will, Max, Miela, and Levi.

She also had Nieces and Nephews to the third and fourth generation.

Beryl's strength of character was made up from her drive, determination, fierce independence and unflinching faith in her abilities to achieve whatever she set her mind to.

Many years ago in the early 1950's a school bus was required for the small community of Curramore but there was an insufficient number of children to gain a government subsidy and the application was rejected. A group of locals got together and decided a visit to the Minister by someone pleading for a relaxation of the regulation to get approval. All the men in the group took a giant step back leaving Beryl with the job, and away she went on a mission to Brisbane direct to the top. NO one ever knew how she did it but Curramore got its school bus. Maybe it was just the fact that a family of three school age children living into the district was enough to make the difference.

Paul can relate a story that while laid up in Hospital following a serious car crash, he nearly fell out of bed when in stormed his Mother followed by the matron and staff with worried looks. Beryl had found out about the crash, but not from official RAAF sources and organized a flight from Brisbane to Wagga. In those days air travel was not common. She demanded to know why the family was not officially informed and who was in charge. The next day she made her way on the base to get an explanation from whoever was "in charge" and finished up with the officer commanding the base, an Air Commodore no less. While with him, she demanded, just for good measure, an explanation as to why her son had not got a long overdue posting away from Wagga, which was on just about everyone's wish list. Well, Paul never got his posting as a result of the meeting, but he was addressed on first name terms by the OC thereafter. The OC seemed anxious to know if his mother was able to return home, safely.

Beryl thrived on debates on any subject including politics and religion, two topics which ordinary people avoid. Life on the farm did not offer many opportunities for these things, and Bill had obviously learned very early not to get into anything he was never going to win. Although, he was good at starting a debate and then leaving what resulted to others.

On one occasion, an unsuspecting Salvation Army Officer complete with heavy woollen uniform, horse and sulky, (this was the late 1940's) called in just after breakfast expecting maybe a small donation in exchange for some good words of moral support. After about six cups of tea, lunch and whatever was the subject of some heavy debating, he finally made a break, fleeing down the road way. The horse had a terrified look on its face getting a gee-up that it had never had before and it seemed certain they would not have stopped until the top of the hill on the way from the farm known as the "Corker". The Salvation Army Officer obviously did not have a very successful day but, Beryl appeared content with hers.

Recent years saw the passing of Grandmas' youngest son, Ken. It was a deeply sad time for her and Ken's family, as he lost his long battle to illness after fighting for so long. She was a proud mother who loved her children deeply, so to lose a son too soon had a profound effect on her.

For myself, and I'm pretty sure the rest of her grandchildren, Grandma had that special ability to scare the pants off of you with a single look.

She found it hard to lose the school teacher in her for a long time and children were to be seen and not heard.

No trip to Grandma's would be complete without the little wooden box filled with metal cars and nick naks... they were the first things to look for once the welcome hug and kiss was done... but heaven help you if you left something out when putting them away or made too much noise... the consequences were dire!

As time passed however, we wore her down ever so slowly and soon her stories were just anecdotes of her past and not some lesson we were meant to learn. She stopped being “not the grandma” as we took to calling her, to being exactly that.

There would be lots of “dearies” or “my dears”, “fair enoughts” or “so on and so forths” thrown in for good measure... sayings that will be Grandma – isms for the rest of my life. Just as locking myself in her pantry will be, or escaping with Pop down to his shed so he could get some peace. Or the birthday card that turned up without fail as a child, always signed off with “love from poppy and grandma”... although it may have been the \$10 tucked away inside that made them seem special.

Lastly and importantly, on behalf of the family we would like to thank everyone who provided the support for Grandma over the recent years. These people include various home help, carers, and organisations who went out of their way to support her. Their patience, understanding and dedication has not gone unnoticed. To her close and special friends who helped in many different ways, both small and large, we also extend a special thanks.

Finally, after a recent fall at home and her final months in the Soldiers Memorial Hospital, our thanks and appreciation must go to the Medical, Nursing and all supporting staff who gave their all to Grandma's final stages of her life.

Rest in peace Grandma. You will be missed.



Paul Newton & Grandchildren Stephen Newton & Leisa (Newton) Mazzer