

MY FATHER'S TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER.

At my mother's funeral in Southwell Minster.

Warn re possible change of presenter (*dad was too upset to continue, so I had to take over*)

I think that anything I say cannot compare with the tribute you have paid Rita by being with us today. Simon's & Susan's parents travelling from Southampton. Christopher, Susan's brother coming from Woking to look after his ill father to enable his mother to attend. our first and dearest neighbour [1957]] Freda. Sister Amanda Smith , ward manager at Kings Mill hospital. So many, so moving.

Do you believe in fate? I first met Rita aged 11 yrs, in a potato field. Children were allowed to pick potatoes as part of the war effort. 3/6 per week take your own bucket. Rita and her partner in crime, Joyce Tilston were present and decided that they would have the end of row stint which I wanted, they won.

Fate. Fast forward to 1947 when I was sent to school at Ollerton. about 500 yards from Rita's home. I found the school headmaster's office and waited outside. Not another soul about. The first person to pass was Rita. She stopped, looked at me and said '**what are you doing there?**'

She adopted this tone throughout our marriage whenever she admonished me.

Leaving school, I went to work at Boughton Co-Op. Rita went to work at Woolworth's at Mansfield.

Fate. Some time later, she decided to try the Co-Op and was posted to the drapery dept. at Boughton. I plainly remember her first day there when the staff left at closing time Rita, went with them.

I went in a different direction. The second night she was with me and we were together ever since apart from my army service. I only joined the police in order to get a house provided to enable us to get married. we moved about the county, struggled on abysmal pay but always together

Rita was a wonderful wife and mother - she carried me for 58 years. She ran the house, managed our non-existent finance, brought up and educated the children of whom she was very proud. She did most of the garden and even cleared the drive of snow when I was at work.

Buying the bungalow in 1970 to save the children having to move yet again, Rita went to work at the local chemist: 8am to 6pm having 2 hrs lunch break to feed the boys, worked Saturdays and all for £8 per week. She never stopped working. It's in the Atkin genes. They are all the same.

In retirement, just as life was rosy, 'this'.

The only blessing is Victoria having a daughter on Rita's birthday this year. Rita held her at three weeks old, which she loved.

Rita loved dancing, and we did a lot in the fifties, and a lot to Rod Stewart in the eighties.

Just listen for a bit before you leave, it's totally what I feel for Rita.

Please join us for a cup of tea at the Saracen's Head.

