

DR MARGARET PAYNE 9 August 1926 – 3 October 2017

It is a great privilege to be the one to speak for the family today as we say goodbye to our greatly beloved and esteemed mum, nana, auntie, friend and family doctor: Margaret Payne. Looking back on her remarkable life of just over 91 years, we have all shared a different part of it. Since her death, we have as a family received such enormous kindness from everyone who knew mum - it has helped the family to embroider the full picture of Margaret Payne, our mum.

Elizabeth Mary Margaret Price was born on 9 August 1926 in Troedyrhiw, to Elizabeth Meridien Price, one of the first Health Visitors, and David Venallt Price, a congregationalist minister. She grew up in a happy family of 4, along with her older brother, David Hugh. The family moved to Swansea, then Llanelli, and later Llandovery when David Venallt changed to become a priest in the Church in Wales, finally settling as the Vicar of Rhandirmwyn in Carmarthenshire. Mum spoke Welsh during her childhood, and loved ancient local legends, which she would tell us - stories like the Monk of Ystradffin, and especially the Lady of Llyn y fan Fach - whose descendents became the Meddygon Myddfai. I think mum felt a particular affinity with that one, being a doctor eventually in a family of 5 doctors.

Margaret's childhood was happy - her own accounts of her daddy teaching her the Greek alphabet, and her mummy's cooking and brilliance on the piano, were legends in the family. We have since found her school report - she was clearly highly intelligent, and - we hadn't realised - was head girl at Llandovery Girls' Grammar School, before going on to Cardiff University to study medicine. As well as being intelligent, mum was above all a good sport. You see her on the order of service as captain of Cardiff Meds hockey team - she was a very good player, and could have been an international, but by this time her father had died (when she was only 19), and the family were extremely poor; she could not afford to travel to the trials at Brecon that she had been called to.

It was at Cardiff she met Eric Payne, our dear dad. I think it was love at first sight for them both. It was a fancy dress dance, and dad, with typical understatement, had gone wearing a Llandovery College scarf as his 'fancy dress'. Unbeknownst to either, the common factor was David Hugh, who had been a near contemporary with dad at Llandovery College. Mum spotted Eric's scarf, said 'that's Llandovery College' and was swept up into a dance that continued for over 53 years until dad's death in 2005, but has still not really stopped.

When they married in 1951, at St John's church in town, Mum was working as a junior doctor in St David's Hospital, dad still a medical student. They moved to 23 Blenheim Road, along with her mother in law Rachel Payne, by then widowed, who lived with them until her death in 1954, and also at times her mother, Meridien, who died from rheumatic heart disease in 1952. Mum 'set up her plate' and opened her General Practice from the house. As children we would answer the phone or the front door to the request 'is the Doctor in?' and we would be trained to say 'I'll go and see' - this was

before the days of safeguarding, nobody worried about a 6 year old apparently home alone. In fact the Doctor always **was** in - she always responded to people in need or distress, borne out by the kind messages we have had from all those who were her patients.

So Blenheim Rd was her palace – the place of home, family and work - and indeed we all saw her as its queen: The Queen of Penylan, she would say in her mischievous way. Like all palaces, its walls are adorned with paintings - some painted by Margaret herself, by Eric, by Rita Waite, Grace Cashmore, Mildred Hudd - the art of friends and family, and also innumerable photos of her children and grandchildren. If you can read a life, and a personality, in the pictures thought worthy to decorate the walls of a home, these indeed tell us what Margaret cherished.

The sporting theme is strong - team pictures abound at home, from mum's own hockey team photo, children and grandchildren in a variety of rugby, netball, ballet, surfing, frisbeeing or a host of other action modes. Mum was physically strong and was proud to show off her biceps which she always said she built up from shovelling manure as a child. She was very competitive especially for Welsh rugby, and she always got us all to blow at the TV screen every time Wales' opponents were taking a penalty or conversion. When, as if by magic, it would swerve past the uprights, she was always pleased with her team effort. In the 1990s, there is nothing Margaret liked better than to sit with Eric in the front room, on a balmy summer's evening, and watch the Ath-a-letics (as they called it), with a can of lager and a packet of salt and vinegar crisps. She also encouraged us all to make up our own games - her last effort just a few weeks ago was a spoon-hurling competition - savoured at our regular family Sunday lunch.

There are also lots of pictures of Nana in a group: with members of the Cardiff Medical Society; with former fellow students from Cardiff Medical School; many with her family, and almost always in a pose of doing, or helping others, especially the grandchildren. Her auburn hair is omnipresent- she still has hardly any grey, to this day - and her dress in these photographs reveals her action focused personality, set off by the dimple in her chin (she always used to say dimple in the chin, devil within) - I'll leave you to judge. She always dressed in bright colours - all the pictures of her show her trim figure in a selection of mostly blue based, colourful dresses. She is today wearing her beloved blue and white Nike tracksuit, set off with green trim, which led Gary Mullins to re-name her Sporty Spice.

There are several paintings which Nana herself had painted - Inveraray Castle on the shores of a Loch in Scotland; and, of course, The Dream – which she had jokingly insured for a vast sum. It is a deeply enigmatic painting – of many colours, of swirling lines, of mythical impressions, and it speaks of Mum's mystical quality. We always saw her as a Celtic princess, with the auburn hair and the instinct of a princess, the sense of drama and control that made her a wonderful story-teller, using images of her childhood at Llandoverly, at Rhandirmwyn, and in the Valley of the Witch (Cwm Gwrach). She made

up bedtime stories about Mr Nic Nac the acorn man, who lived on carrot juice - and Felicity the Fairy - these passed down the generations. She also loved poetry: reciting line after line at family meals- 'Is there anybody there said the traveller knocking at the moonlit door' - was the mainstay. Her love of poetry wasn't surprising: her Auntie Annie won the Trehebert Eisteddfod in the 1930s – Annie's bardic chair is at the head of the table in the dining room, and mum loved to sit in it. Words in general were precious to her: she was a stickler for proper speech – 'here' not 'by yer'; 'lavatory' not 'toilet'. Music likewise: a great supporter of music and performances here at St Edward's; she also loved to sit and meander at the piano, to sing a solo over lunch, and to listen to piano music, especially Gary and Norman playing. Indeed Norman played the piano for her on the morning she died - the Pilgrims' Chorus - she said it was 'heavenly'.

In her front room, which became her bedroom over the past 2 years, is a Michelangelo sketch for a madonna and child; there are many prayers framed on the walls all around the house, exhorting her to do good for others. These pictures reflect her extraordinary talent – her instinct – for caring, healing and medicine. It was such an achievement to win a place in 1945 to study medicine at Cardiff, where she and Eric fell in love, and we heard stories of drain-pipe climbing into Aberdare Hall at the dead of night; of student dances; of hard work. And it paid off - Margaret qualified – her husband qualified, her children qualified, 5 doctors in the family. She practised from her surgery in 23, 'the shop' as we used to call it when waiting for her to come out to the kitchen for tea. Cards and gifts from her patients over the years speak of her devotion to medicine, her zeal for looking after people, and the affection and esteem with which they held her: 'Margaret was a gentle, kind, and selfless lady'; Margaret was 'so kind and loving with a little chuckle'. Her intuition for medicine was just like the *meddygon myddfai* – the Physicians of Myddfai, the village near her childhood home at Rhandirmwyn . Like these medieval herbal doctors, Margaret too somehow learnt and practised the art of instinctive medicine. She actually experienced severe illness herself, including lupus nephritis, and was unable to work for some years in her 40s and 50s- but underwent a miraculous healing after a visit and anointing from a medical colleague of dad's who was also a Hindu Swami. She bounced back to full life when her Cardiff grandchildren Rachel, Liz and Edward arrived, and was never off duty after that.

Mum loved to be surrounded by paintings and photos of her family: Eric's self-portrait; Eric's portrait of Simon; Simon's drawing of Mark making mischief around the caravan in the depths of the New Forest; a portrait of Heather; countless photos of all the grandchildren, including ones she kept in her pocket to look at every day. Our Blenheim palace Margaret's family homestead. Supremely matriarchal, she wanted, and produced a home that was a place of wonder and warmth. In the old days we would rotate for Sunday lunch between 23, Aunty Nesta and co in Bonvilston and Aunty Mu's gang in Cowbridge, mum encouraging all us cousins in our football and rugby games. She organised hands-on the re-development of 21 Blenheim Road. She would walk arm-in-arm with Eric around the hanging gardens of Penylan. She would teach us all snippets of Welsh to preserve her heritage. Pre-mobile phones, she would ring up a pub

where we were enjoying a bank-holiday lunch to make sure we had arrived safely. She would over-see homework, fetch and carry. She would preside at Sunday lunch and orchestrate its mathematical quizzes - whilst holding a calculator on her lap under the table to ensure that only she had the right answers! She would travel by mini-bus to Twickenham to see Ed play rugby in the Varsity match. She would give each family member a St Christopher and a one-pound coin to spend wisely on holiday. She would host carol singing on Christmas Eve. She would map-read happily to visit Mark, Lyn, Victoria, David and John (and now Emma) in Birmingham. She would enjoy the Boxing Day invasion of Marty and Mag's home to enjoy the revels with them and Nesta, Del, Marie, Kate, Dave, Jo and latterly their children. She would send half-way around the world tapes of Wales' rugby games to Mick and Angie in Trinidad. She loved the New Year train-trip to London to Tom and Pico to celebrate birthdays. She would sponsor the studies and interests of the wider family. She would embellish in the most imaginative ways the birthday cards of us all, with little token gifts to be redeemed. And she would challenge us all to do the best we could. Margaret was a force of nature – a severe critic whilst at the same time the focus of love for a generation.

So as we say goodbye to our dear mum we are privileged to reflect on a life of the greatest fullness, of enthusiasm, a have a go spirit, of kindness and generosity, and unconditional love. There was always another chance with Mum, always 'let's start again'. She leaves us with a fragrance, like the perfume she would habitually spray on one of her pocket hankies to give the children when we went away on holiday, to remind them her essence was with them even if her person was not. It worked then and it works now - we have indeed been fortunate to have her for so long.