



Kathleen Blanche Thompson

7th September 1906 to 15th March 2007

Kathleen was born in Fulham and was raised in Clancarty Road SW6. Her father, William Starns was the steward at the nearby Fulham Hospital. Kathleen told us she remembered that every Christmas there was a big tree in the hospital and that there was always a present on it for her.



Her mother's Maiden name was Lucas and her mother's mother had run a laundry and as a child she had to work in it. She would be so tired in the morning that while she was still in bed she would bang her boots on the floor so that her mother would think she was up. As she had to work so had as a child she vowed that her daughter Kathleen would not have to do anything as a child. The consequence of this was that Kathleen was totally unprepared for the household duties of married life. She hardly knew how to boil an egg. Her first rice pudding was like concrete. However, she developed quite a flair and became a very good cook.



Kathleen's life in Clancarty Road was shared with big brother Bill and we understand she was quite a tomboy. They used to climb over walls and go

scrumping. He used to take her up to Wimbledon Common to catch creepy crawlies. This was one of her first connections with Wimbledon. She loved to roller-skate and in the winter they made ice slides along the pavement until neighbours rushed out with ashes from their open fires to make it safe again. Tomboy that she was she still delighted in dolls, a passion she carried on to the end of her days to amass a large collection of dolls and soft toys.



Kathleen went to the Anglican Convent School in Fulham Road where she struck up a life long friendship with another Kathleen who Maureen and I knew as Auntie Kath. It seems they were always up to mischief and getting into trouble and when they got older they hit the London club scene together. I believe it was in one of the clubs she met Leslie, her future husband. When she was not living it up she worked as a sales girl in one of the large London stores in the fashion department. The sales girls were not allowed to sit down at all when they were working which was very tiring. As part of her job she was required to model outfits to potential customers. Kathleen's mother was one of seven daughters, which resulted in a large



extended family of female cousins. Kathleen kept in close

contact with Sybil and Estelle and continued to speak of them and Estelle's boys in her latter years. She married

Leslie Humphries Thompson in the summer of 1932. Leslie also known as Tommy was a Civil Engineer and a Chartered Surveyor. At that time he worked for the local authority in Leatherhead and was responsible for the design and construction of the Leatherhead Bypass. He later joined Wandsworth Council prior to volunteering to join the Royal Engineers. They



started their married life in Tudor Cottage at the top of Wimbledon Hill. The Cottage was a wedding present from Leslie's parents who lived in the attached Hill Farm House. Kathleen decided to do a beauty course and she learnt to make her own makeup preparations. Some of her secrets she passed on to her daughter Jill.



They shortly moved to the Lynch in Clifton Road, which Leslie converted, into flats. They were soon on the move again to No.2 Belvedere Grove where Maureen was born. At the same time Leslie designed and built Belvedere Court in the garden of No.2 Maureen and Kathleen moved out of London to Kintbury near Newbury to avoid the Blitz. After the war they moved back to the Lynch. They were still living at the Lynch when Jill was born.



But it was not long before they were on the move again. This time to spend a short time down at the Jetty, a family seaside home constructed from two railway carriages at Elmer Sands near Bognor Regis prior to moving to a farm on the Sussex and Kent borders.



Leslie at this time was working on major civil engineering projects in Africa leaving Kathleen to take up the challenge of farming with her brother Bill and cousin Estelle and family. Holman's Farm was near Wittersham, Kent backing on to Romney Marsh. The farmyard pond also hosted the famous signing fogs of Stone in Oxney. Kathleen's duty on the farm was to look after the 200 Rhode Island Red chickens and one Light Sussex hen. She collected the eggs and washed them ready to be taken to market. Jill still being rather small was pushed into holes in haystacks to find craftily hidden eggs. Maureen during term time was living in Wimbledon with the grandparents to continue in the same school where

she had many friends.



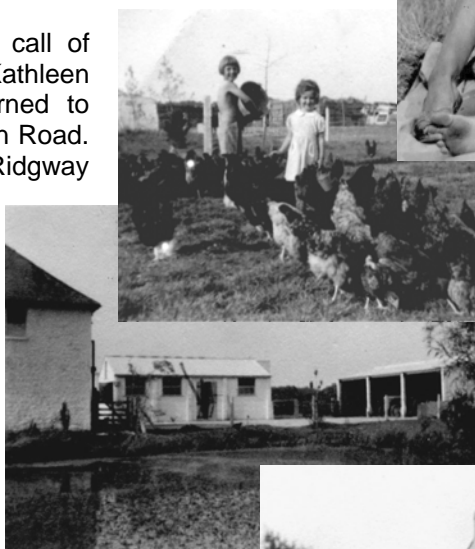
After a few years farming the call of London life was too much for Kathleen so together with Jill she returned to Wimbledon to live at 5, Lauriston Road. Jill joined Maureen at nearby Ridgway School. Kathleen brought up her two daughters mostly on her own as Leslie continued to work on projects in Africa for some years. She always went

to all school events to support her daughters. She was also kept busy looking after the property business.

The last project in Africa Leslie worked as the Chief Engineer

installing main drainage system in

Khartoum. The family spent three interesting winters in Khartoum. Kathleen and her daughters travelled there by Sea as she did not like to fly thereby visiting Gibraltar, Marseilles, Genoa, Port Said and Port Sudan. They travelled for two days from Port



Sudan to Khartoum by narrow gauge railway - then it was luxury, like travelling on the Orient Express. Kathleen also

visited Cairo and Alexandria, Yugoslavia, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Spain. After buying a flat in Spain Kathleen finally agreed to try flying and spent a number of holidays there.



Always interested in new challenges Kathleen. She decided to learn French and attended the Downs Adult Education Institute. She also joined the School of Meditation and later with Leslie became very involved with Wimbledon Spiritualist Church.

Kathleen finally became a grandmother in 1974 but declared that she knew more about chickens than she knew about babies. However both she and Leslie soon

settled into the pleasures of grand parenting.

At this time Jill, Adrian and children were living in the basement flat at the Lynch. Maureen lived not too far away in Old Windsor. The ground floor flat became available and they were on the moved for the last time back to the Lynch. This move put in place a mutual support system.

In 1982 Kathleen and Leslie celebrated 50 years of marriage. But sadly later that year while on holiday in Spain Leslie suddenly passed on. It was unexpected and was a very traumatic time for the whole family. The family supported each other through their grief and found comfort through the Spiritualist Church.



Maureen lives in Windsor. Jill, living in the flat below her mother with her husband Adrian, became primary carer for her remaining 20 years.

Kathleen resisted having a television and washing machine for some years. But latterly she loved watching tennis on television. She had followed it all her life. Before her passing she enjoyed listening to music and reading her morning newspaper.



In 2006 Kathleen became a Centenarian, the first in the family.