A Celebration of the life of

Anne Catchpole

4th May 1943 – 11th April 2020

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Ceremony at Michaels Wood Burial Ground

Friday 24th April 2020

Celebrant
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It was Anne's wish to be laid to rest in a woodland. She loved everything about being out in nature, walking through bluebell woods, being alongside a river, taking time to spot the wildflowers and watching the wildlife.

As John Burroughs wrote: "*To find the universal elements enough; to find the air and the water exhilarating; to be refreshed by a morning walk or an evening saunter… to be thrilled by the stars at night; to be elated over a bird's nest or wildflower in spring – these are some of the rewards of the simple life.*"

Welcome to Michael's Wood. I am Louise Jopling, a Humanist Celebrant. We stand together in a beautiful natural wood, where the rabbits play, the deer graze and the sun sparkles though the trees. This is a beautiful place in all seasons and no more than in the later part of the year, when the ground will be a mass of autumn leaves, russets and oranges; Anne's colours.

We gather in sadness and with the grief of loss, though we also come together to celebrate a life that has influenced you all. Humanism is simply a philosophy of acknowledging the things in life that bring us together. Living our lives in a way that benefits others and appreciating and caring for the world around us.

Anne's legacy is one of kindness, of caring, of always putting others before herself; she never asked for anything and gave so much in return.

Wiltshire born naturalist Richard Jefferies wrote of the importance of our rooting our lives in nature, appreciating the little things in the natural world; as Anne very much did.

The Hills And The Vales

" Those who go quietly about their business and contribute to the life of the community we share are the people on whom our futures rest. Nothing can take that away from them. The courage of the undefeated remain as a part of the heritage of humanity, forever.

Only by walking hand in hand with nature, only by a reverent and loving study of the mysteries forever around us, is it possible to disabuse the mind of the narrow view, the contracted belief that time is now and eternity is tomorrow. Eternity is today.

The goldfinches and the tiny caterpillars, the brilliant sun, if looked at lovingly and thoughtfully, will lift ones spirit out of the smaller life of selfish human cares, bounded by our span of years, into the greater, the limitless life, which has been going on over universal space from endless ages past, which is going on now and will forever and in one form or another, continue to proceed."

[extract of piece written by Richard Jeffries 1845-87]

We gather to remember and to celebrate, Anne and all that she was. We remember her and all that she brought to the world and the people she loved.

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In life, Anne was a private person, rarely spoke about herself, much preferring to focus attention on others. Our tribute is simply a way to remember her passions, the things, the people and the places that meant the most. A person lives on through our memories and our stories and for Anne, today is just the start.

Anne was a great communicator. Someone who understood the importance of staying in touch, of always being there for you. She was at the centre of networks for her family and friends, always making sure that everyone stayed in touch. She was the person who never failed to send a Christmas Card and who remembered everyone's birthdays and anniversaries; sometimes being the one to remind you about your own anniversaries too!

Anne was a great listener, with limitless patience and empathy. She liked to care for people, there when it mattered most; tenderly nursing both friends and family in their final months. She had a deep empathy for those living with illness, frailty and disability, always setting her own challenges behind those of others. Friends talk of how she was always so willing to give them her time that she was grounded and gave such good advice. She made and kept friends from every period of her life.

Anne was brave. Living with illness for much of her childhood and for most of her adult life; she never let on how hard it could be, never complained. Anne turned her experiences into positives, so focused on how she could use what she had learned to help others. The only sadness that she ever shared was that she wished to have been a healthier and stronger mother, it worried her that she'd not been as relaxed and light-hearted as she would have wished to be.

Anne was charitable. Showing support to worthy charities was important to both her and Richard. They sponsored a child in the Third World and they volunteered for Oxfam. Anne trained as a First Aider with the Red Cross, willingly coming to people's rescue at events. She collected on the street for charity and she even cleaned picture frames in hospital corridors; Anne would do anything that was needed. She understood that there was more to charity than simply giving money; Anne knew the value of time and she'd willingly give whatever she could.

Anne was organised. As a young woman, Anne worked in a Secretarial role for the Bank of England; her family were very proud. Many years later Anne was Company Secretary for John's business and very proud of her work in supporting him.

Anne loved to learn about new cultures and to travel. She immersed herself in a new country, even learning Spanish to be able to engage with the locals on family holidays when she was young. Spain caught her heart, the place, the people, the incredible Flamenco dancing! She enjoyed the whole family joining Richard on his work trips to America and across southern Europe. She loved France, queuing with the locals at the Boulangerie. She loved visiting her son and family in Thailand, learning about the culture, enjoying the food and spending time with her grandchildren.

Anne was creative and crafty. She could sew and mend. She sewed her granddaughter's favourite and now treasured lavender pillow. Anne was from the make do and mend generation, she still had some of her mother's clothes among treasured possessions and she was a whizz at darning! She made cushions and tablecloths and was skilled in embroidery. Anne enjoyed her sport. She liked Formula One and she followed the tennis, especially Wimbledon; loving the times that

she and Lara got tickets and were able to be in the heart of the action. She loved cricket; as teenager she'd kept scores every Sunday for her father's team and she always followed it. She liked classical music and she loved to keep up with the world on Radio 4.

Anne was a passionate and talented gardener. There was no doubting her skills; she came from a long line of gardeners, her family tending the gardens of Cotswold Estates over many generations and there was no doubt that she'd inherited those green fingers! She loved the spring flowers; the bright colours of the daffodils and the delicate heads of the fuchsia.

Anne understood the importance of a healthy diet and she was a passionate pioneer of the science of nutrition, advocating healthy, local food long before it was commonplace. With her children, she cooked from scratch, baked them cakes and encouraged healthy choices; no chocolate allowed in her household! She taught her grandson to eat his vegetables covered in her 'very nice salad dressing' and taught him so much about food to help him understand. She inspired her granddaughter to cook nice food and good desserts.

Anne was passionate in her pursuit of alternative therapies. She had learned a lot through her own challenges and experiences and she was so focused on sharing that knowledge for the benefit of others. She studied for a Diploma in Natural Health and she courageously travelled far afield, to North America and even Australia to make connections and to promote the therapies that she truly believed could help people. At events, she owed the room with her knowledge. Those she trained and mentored, found her to be so kind, patient and supportive long after the formal

mentoring time was done. She'd discovered Yoga, practising well into her seventies and for as long as she possibly could. Anne never gave up on searching for solutions and anything that could help.

Anne was independent, reluctant to delegate and determined never to bother anyone; to do it her way. She was strong, she was determined and she never gave in. She brought her children up to find their independence and she understood the importance of giving them their freedom: "*Mothers hold their children's hands a while and their hearts forever.*" She encouraged evereyone's interests and supported them to find their way through the world.

Anne valued family. She was an immensely patient and focused big sister to Jean, never bossed or pulled rank. She looked after Jean, organised games in the garden or set up their Grocery Shop under the dining room table! As a Mum she was always very caring, wanting to help and offer her support and Lara and John knew that Mum was there for them and always would be. When asked, how do you love your children, Anne wrote: "*Trust them; respect them; not interfere.*" Anne would stand back until needed, though she would go out of her way if anyone in her family ever needed help. As Grandma, she was dearly loved and a big part of her grandchildren's lives. Anne's grandchildren will remember her teaching them the fun of Pooh Sticks, on the footbridge in Ashdown Forrest's Hundred Acre Wood. She taught everyone so much.

Anne always aimed to be positive. No matter what challenges she faced, she took an optimistic view of the world. She could always find a way to make you smile. We remember Anne today, at her happiest. We find strength in those memories.

As we approach the moment that we will come together to say goodbye, we now share your image of a moment in which, you each picture Anne at her happiest.

Richard: "*Like her favourite bluebells coming into bloom now, she was very rare, English, fragile and lovely.*"

Jean: "*We had fun times together. We have a lovely photo of the two of us, laughing on a lovely costal walk in West Sussex; as Anne leans back against the wind, grabbing her hat.*"

John: "*She loved driving to events while talking about everything, where she would lead the room training people in health and nutrition and to rebalance and improve their outlooks on life.*"

Lara: *"How much she loved the spring bulbs and walking together in springtime through the bluebell woods. Mum loved the bluebells and would always seek out the best place to see them."*

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As we stand together to say our farewell, we feel Anne's strength, her courage and compassion. As we say goodbye, we remember her kindness, her caring and her love.

We let you go into the warmth of the sunshine, into the freedom of the wind, into the freshness of the rain; into the great cycle of nature and the changing seasons. With our love and the greatest of respect, we let you go.

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Anne lives on now through each of you. When we leave Michaels Wood, take now her kindness, her caring and her love with you. Remember to always take a moment to see the beauty in each of the seasons, to appreciate a delicate flower and feel that she is with you.

We finish with a final poem, read for Anne:

Come To The Forest To Visit Me

Come to the forest to visit me
Down by the roots of the trees
Waste not your tears on cold stone graves
But water a flower for me.

Give me to the earth when my winter comes
Bury me deep in the ground
Mark not my place with statues or stones
Find me where life can be found.

Come to the woods when autumn leaves turn
Golden and copper and red
Rustle up memories, seeds of joy stored
Kick up the leaves in my stead.

Visit a garden on warm, summer days

Keep company with blossoms and bees

Remember my heart blooms forever in yours

Take comfort from shushing shade trees

Let springtime surround you with the life and the living

Birdsong and budding green leaves

Look up at the sky, give thanks for sun and rain

When you think of me, smile more than grieve.

Come to the forest to visit me

Down by the roots of the trees

Live every day that is given to you

And water a new flower for me.

[by Lurana Brown]

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