

Edith Garrett, 1925–2020



Edith, a Derbyshire lass, was born in 1925 in Chesterfield, the only daughter of Elizabeth (Lizzie) and Forbes Minty, a policeman. She had two siblings, an older half-brother Syd and a younger brother George. George, who cannot be here with us in person, is following the service via the internet. Edith left school at 14, in the summer of 1939, and went to work as an apprentice seamstress for John Turner's department store in Chesterfield.

Aged 17 Edith had to make a big decision – compulsory military service or war work. Her mother would certainly have reminded Edith that war work would probably mean working 12- hour shifts at the local Robinson cotton mill where hundreds of girls, each in charge of mending broken threads on three weaving machines, turned out miles of bandages. In the summer the mill shed doors would be open and the noise from the machines was overwhelming to those walking by. The girls couldn't chat, they used sign language.

So Edith joined the WAAF and, after training she was posted to a bomber airfield on the east coast which would have been in the Lincolnshire restricted coastal zone. And during this time she met Ken and they were made for each other.

In fact, Edith was interviewed on TV for the local news here in this Church some 10 years ago, some of you will remember it. Edith wore Ken's medals as she spoke about her time in the WAAF, and Ken's time in the RAF. She also spoke about the great sadness of how many of the aircraft, having fought bravely in their missions and returning damaged to the airfield, would crash on landing. Edith said how sad was the loss of the lives of so many, who were often very young.

Thankfully, Ken did return safely home and after the war, Edith and Ken married on the 15 February 1947 in the Parish Church of St Mary and All Saints in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, the church with the famous crooked spire. It was also the winter of very heavy snow!

They came to live in Aynho as Ken was a signaller on the Great Western Railway at Aynho Junction, and family life started with Peter born in 1948. Just a few years later they moved to 1 Castle Street, Deddington and in 1953 Andrew was born.

In 1961, Ken bought the news agency from the Franklins and in 1965 the whole family moved to the Post Office as Ken and Edith took on the news agency and post office, Ken as sub postmaster and Edith as sub postmistress. All the family were involved, and Sundays were particularly long and busy as all the newspapers had to be delivered around the extra villages. The family have happy memories of this time, and Edith used to love all the children coming in and choosing their sweets from the vast range of jars that lined the counter and wall.

Edith and Ken retired in 1985 and moved to Hempton, where sadly in 1991 Ken passed away. Edith managed to settle into life on her own and enjoyed the garden Ken had helped get sorted. Over the years Edith took much pleasure in going out and about with the WI to their meetings and day trips, continuing to make many friends.

Visits from the family brought much joy and Edith also enjoyed eating out locally and the annual holidays down to St Ives in Cornwall to stay with her son Peter and his wife Caroline who live there. Andrew would drive halfway down with Edith, meeting for lunch with Peter, and Edith would continue the journey with him, reversing this arrangement two weeks later.

Edith kept as active as she could and only a few days before she passed away she was smiling as she made her way down the stair lift that had just been installed.

These are just a few memories of the long happy life that Edith lived and she will be very sadly missed by family and friends.

The Garrett family