

Theresa Elizabeth Dunford 1930 - 2013

Theresa, known to all as Tessa, was born and lived in Swansea until she was three years old, when her mother returned to Kingham. Tessa's mother, who was a widow, died in 1947, when Tessa was still a minor. She then went to live with her aunt and uncle, Minnie and William Collett, who had no children of their own. This is really all we know about her early years.



Then a newly retired gentleman moved into Greenlands, Peter Hanks and they soon became good friends. Peter had a car and they went on numerous trips, visiting local beauty spots. They regularly took the Saturday bus to Cheltenham and on Sundays enjoyed trips to Weston -Super-Mare, Southsea and

South Wales. This was a very happy time for both of them until Peter died prematurely on Boxing Day, 1996.

As a teenager Tessa and her best friend Ruth Sherborn spent their time going to dances in Chipping Norton, Saturday nights at the pictures with fish and chips on the way home on the bus to Kingham. This friendship lasted many years and when Ruth married Mike Cairns, he also helped take care of Tessa, until Ruth sadly died of cancer. Tessa moved with her family to a bungalow in Shipton, where they stayed until her aunt and uncle passed away.

By this time, 1975, Greenlands and Langston House had been built and Tessa was offered a bedsit there. Tessa was taken 'under their wing' by many of the staff, notably Irene Collier, Bet Collier and Mikki Mikkola, the matron. She had her meals there and joined in life, making friends with many. Liz Mitchell, one of the health visitors at the Wychwood Surgery helped and encouraged her to join in college courses, and helped her to keep a diary, writing down what she did each day.

Tessa remained at Greenlands, but when the stairs became a trial she moved to the ground floor. Rumours began about the closure of Langston House. What would happen to the residents of Greenlands, who relied on Langston for their meals? Tessa was moved to a flat in Queen Emma's Dyke, Witney.

She had four very happy years there and was able to keep her independence, thanks to her carers. On the 16th January Tessa had severe abdominal pains and was admitted to the JR, where she remained having tests and x-rays. She was well cared for and had many visitors. However she became very weak and sadly passed away on March 6th.

In keeping with her wishes, Tessa was buried in Kingham, in the same grave as Minnie Collett who brought her up all those years ago.

Edna Naish