

Hazel Tustain 1924 - 2014

Hazel moved her family to Ascott in 1954, when they were allocated a newly built house in Dawls Close. This was like heaven after our previous home, a squat in a Nissen hut at Gagingwell. All 'mod cons' now, such as a bathroom and an inside toilet. She soon took to being house proud and polished the awful brown Marley floor tiles until they shone.



Being a young widow with two small children it was hard for Mum; there were no 'benefits' then. She brought with her, as part of the family, Lazer, a young man from Ukraine who had been unable to return home after the war. Between them they made the house in Dawls Close a real family home. There were a few raised eyebrows - a young woman with two children, no husband and this foreigner living with her. But that was Mother; she did not care what people thought and loved to shock.

She did bar work at the Swan when Tony Clews was landlord and loved the social life and glamour that went with it. All the old boys would be knocking on the pub door at 6pm to get their pint and a game of dominoes in - very serious stuff. She would have to run upstairs to the 'Bufs'

room with trays of drink, and knock to be allowed in. Mother would love to dress up and socialise, which she did with gusto.

A vacancy came up for a Postmistress in Ascott Pound; Mother applied and got the job. She sweltered in the summers and froze in the winters in that hut. She then decided to buy the land and had a cedar hut built,

transferred the PO there and began selling groceries and gifts. Tony and Lyn Collins now have their house on the plot, which they called 'Hazel Cottage' after her. She had many problems with break-ins and in the end slept at the PO with a shot gun beside her, and I dare say she would have used it had the need arisen.

At the age of 60 she retired and closed the PO. It was a shame as it was the hub for all the villagers to gossip and enjoy Mother's sense of humour and bluntness.

She loved living in Ascott and always wanted to be buried in the churchyard. This was done and funnily she is now buried close to where the PO stood. So beware Lyn and Tony! That noise could be her swearing or maybe it could be her gun that has gone off!
I miss her very much.

Siobhan Tustain