

## **Lisa Webber née Elisita Isabela Ramona Iturralde Maza**

*Sue G:*

Mum was born on 19th January 1930 in Erandio, a small suburb of Bilbao in the Basque area of north east Spain. Her father Inacio worked in the docks and her Mum looked after her and her younger brother Iñaki. She had a very happy childhood and talked of her friends, of loving school, of her pet cat and of her Dad taking her and her brother fishing on the river.

Sadly the start of the Spanish Civil War put paid to her life in Spain. Following the bombing of Guernika, a small market town only 25 miles away, she was evacuated along with almost 4000 other children to safety in England, and her life changed beyond all imagination. The children were only meant to stay for the duration of the civil war and most did return, however circumstances dictated that she stay in England until and throughout World War 2.

She was very lucky to be fostered by a lovely couple, Mr and Mrs Reed, who gave her a loving childhood. (1) She talked of how difficult it was at first not speaking or understanding English, she was put in a much younger class at school so she could learn the language, they teased her by calling her Spanish onion and she said how painfully shy she felt. So shy she couldn't tell her new family that she really disliked the cups of tea they gave her so one day she came up with the brilliant idea that she could get rid of it by pouring it back in the teapot, along with the milk though! They never gave her tea again! And as you know Mum loved her coffee and remained a coffee drinker all her life!

*Sue W:*

Lisa settled very quickly and grew up with the Reed's extended family and was a happy, bright and popular child. She forced herself to join the drama group to build her confidence and was so good at it she was asked to act in two plays at the same time. This reflects many of Lisa's qualities - hard work, gritty determination, working well in a team and calm resilience. (2)

At the age of 15 Mum met our Dad John Webber and any thought of going back went out the window, she was staying in the UK! She now spoke English fluently, felt herself to be English and she had lost her Spanish unfortunately. Mum and Dad had a very long courtship and were married 8 years later on August 15th 1953. A year later they motorbiked down through France to Bilbao where Mum was reunited with her family after 17 years. It was a very happy reunion not least because Mum met her younger sister Maribè, who was born after the war.

Her parents, with Maribe and great uncle Fernando, visited for the first time when Karen was a baby. Maribe stayed with the family for 6 months and a seamstress by profession, made everyone clothes! After this the 2 sisters remained close and whenever Maribe came to visit they would spend hours talking together about anything and everything with nothing more than a small dictionary for help! Lisa had gone to night school classes to learn some Spanish! (3)

It's a bitter sweet story really as it was incredibly hard for Lisa obviously but must have been heart-breaking for her family in Spain.

A few words from Maribé here that Sue is going to speak.

*Spoken by Sue G:*

"Even before we met, I was so proud to tell everyone that I had a beautiful sister, 10 years older, living in the UK. When John and Lisa came that first time on their

motorbikes ,when I was 14, we got on so well right from the start, so much so that they said that they wanted to kidnap me and take me home with them.

I have so many great memories of coming to Bristol, I was always made to feel like a real sister and an important part of the family. We talked for hours just using a small dictionary. I loved my sister very much and I will always love her and remember her.”

(4)

*Paul:*

Mum was a full-time mother for many years, Sue was born in 1956, me in 1958 and Karen in 1966 but she also had several very successful careers. She dreamt of a career in hair dressing but couldn't get an apprenticeship as she was due to go back to Spain so she started work in Brights, a big department store in the centre of Bristol and was so good at her job that she worked her way up to Head of Section very quickly. When Karen started school Mum retrained as a secretary and worked for Securicor, then was headhunted by a local alarm company to be their office manager which she did very successfully until she retired.

Mum was always an incredibly hard worker, when we were growing up Dad worked abroad for long periods of time so she brought us up on her own a lot of the time looking after 3 children and our dog Rebel too.

Mum and Dad were always very active and sporty sharing a love of dancing and cycling, cycling to London once to visit friends. They were very sociable and had a great group of friends. They both loved entertaining and Mum loved cooking often with a continental twist.  
(5)

She adored gardening and when they moved out of the centre of Bristol into their house in Patchway in 1960, she set about transforming a muddy field into a beautifully designed garden which she maintained right into her 80s. She loved garden centres and buying plants and whenever any of us were together with her we often ended up at the garden centre! With afternoon coffee and cake too!

In retirement Mum had golf lessons and joined Dad at the club where as well as playing a lot of golf, they had a great social life. They organised many charity nights which often involved dressing up and singing and dancing, old Music-hall evenings and even an Allô Allô evening with Dad dressed as René and Mum as a French maid! Thanks to Mum's great social and organisational skills she became vice captain then Ladies captain in 2005.  
(6)

*Sue G:*

Mum and Dad both loved travelling and had holidays all over the world from the US to Thailand often marrying their love of dancing and golf with trips abroad. They loved spending 6 weeks every year over Xmas and New Year with Karen and family in Australia and visiting Paul, Sue and Alex in Germany.

They were fabulous grandparents to all 6 grandchildren and spent as much time as they could with them telling them amazing stories and taking them on adventures.

Mum was diagnosed with vascular dementia in her mid-80s but always remained very happy and upbeat, living in the moment. Mum and Dad were able to stay in the family home for several years thanks to live-in carers but in 2019 they moved up to Lakeview Lodge care home in MK where sadly Dad passed away later that year.

Mum was very happy at Lakeview Lodge and was well loved by all the staff there. She was always delighted when any of the family visited. (7) She loved going for coffee and cake and being wheeled around the lake to see the ducks, geese and swans.

Mum remained, as she'd always been in life, inquisitive and interested in people and in life. She had a great sense of humour, she was warm, courteous and helpful and an absolute delight to be with, right to the end.

*Poem: "My Mother Kept A Garden" read by Sue Goodchild*

My mother kept a garden, A garden of the heart;  
She planted all the good things That gave our lives their start.  
She turned us to the sunshine And encouraged us to dream;  
Fostering and nurturing The seeds of self esteem.  
And when the winds and rains came, She protected us enough;  
But not to much, she knew we'd need To stand up strong and tough.  
Her constant good example Always taught us right from wrong;  
Markers for our pathway To last our whole life long.  
We are our mother's garden, We are her legacy,  
And we're sure today she feels the love  
*Reflected back from Paul, Karen and me*