

Eulogy for Josephine Denne/Bottomley nee Paton **Delivered by Alan Bottomley, 7 March 2016**

Good morning everyone. I'm privileged to represent my brothers and all our family in giving this eulogy and I am very proud to be Mum's son.

It's wonderful to see that so many of you have been able to attend today. It's a testament to the high regard and respect that Mum had in the community and a great tribute to her and the lives of those that she touched.

Mum kept diaries that I have been reading lately. Mostly they were about parenting her babies – when they got their teeth, their weights at various dates, when they were immunized and so on.

But she also recorded some interesting stories with a good turn of phrase. One of these stories is titled "The Old Lorry" and I will read that out word-for-word a bit later. (But if I lose it I may cut into that story a bit sooner.)

Mum's character:

I can only think of positives to describe her; she was independent, hospitable, a woman of integrity. She was honest, virtuous, highly principled, and she lived by her principles. She was considerate – always putting others first, she was wise, kind and loving, especially to her three sons.

Mum wanted to make a positive difference in this world and she did this in many ways. One of her guiding principles was to be a good wife and a good mother (this was very evident from her diaries). But she also thought she should try to be a good citizen. That was expressed in ways, not least of which was through the CWA. Apparently she joined the CWA at the age of 16 and was still a member aged 92 (76 years)! She held every office in the Bruny Island branch – President, Secretary, Treasurer – some of them multiple times. She attended many National conferences where I am sure she made valuable contributions.

She also demonstrated her wish to make a difference by donating a quarter of her estate to liver cancer research.

Mum and Ross also donated and sold land to preserve a habitat for the Forty-Spotted Pardalote on Denne's Hill and her niece Susie, will read a note from Dr Sally Bryant later.

Some of the other things Mum enjoyed were: she loved flowers and was very talented at arranging them. She loved classical music. She didn't like fuss. She was a wonderful cook. She always underplayed her own woes.

Mum spent nearly all of her life on Bruny Island and on the day she left (7 February 2016), I believe she was Bruny's oldest resident. I don't know whether she approved or not but some people were referring to her as "The Queen of Bruny Island". Mum may have taken a bit of inspiration from Queen Elizabeth; For instance when we were taught table manners it was often put in the context of knowing how to behave "in case the queen was to come to dinner with us".

Yes, Mum taught us how to behave and she set a shining example herself. She was a wonderful role model for us and indeed for all those that knew her.

The Old Lorry

In a glimpse of life on Bruny Island in the 1940's comes this story from Mum's diary: Starting in April 1948, and finishing in September of that same year.

Somehow Sefton, Jo's husband, had heard of an old lorry buried in the sand at Lune River. He bought it for 20 pounds and managed to get it from Lune River to Bruny Island – on the barge "Nebraska" – and repaired it piece by piece.

April 1948

*Sefton has brought an old lorry for us. It was on the beach the other side of the Lune River. Alf Clennett told him about it. It is here now – bits of it laying everywhere. A mud flap by the pond, two tyres by the barn gate, the front and windscreen in the "garage" and the precious engine in the "shearing shed". Sefton is taking the engine apart piece by piece and washing the sand out with kerosene. He says **he can make it go!!***

September 20th

Last week Sefton spent several days on the old lorry with the result that on Sunday morning she went!

I'll never forget Sefton sitting upon it, shuddering its way up to the front gate and back yelling to the children to keep out of the way. Ralph, I noticed, managed to find himself a perch on it somewhere. It was certainly a moment of triumph – all Saturday had been spent towing it about with the horse; then rigging up the Lister engine to pull the back wheels round while Sef looked at the works. One thing after another was tried to make it go properly. Advance the spark, retard it – timing wrong – tried the carburetor off the old Hupmobile – no difference, then at long last a different condenser and lo and behold the solution! Sef was so excited after that run up to the gate and back.

"Come on, we'll go round and see Grays".

It seemed too far for the first trip so I persuaded him to go to Gran's instead.

Sefton put the seat out of the car on it and nailed a few boards on the back (Where the tray will be someday) and off we went.

We were no sooner round the first bend when Sefton said,

"Hullo, I wonder what's wrong. I haven't heard that noise before."

She was missing and jerking along. I looked at the children in the back, Ralph with his finders in his mouth, but thoroughly enjoying himself; Geoffrey and Alan cuddling each other and romping a bit. There were a few bulbs, a cauliflower, my knitting bag and our old coats bumping about too. I was sitting up in front holding on for dear life with Gran's lamp in one hand and my other on the seat – as there are no doors as yet.

We got to the top of the hill and Sef decided he had better have a look for the noise – jammed the brakes on and nothing happened. "Well, blow the thing. I didn't think they were as bad as that." So he dropped back to a lower gear and ran into the bank, had a look and found nothing so we continued still making the "noise".

Half way down the hill she suddenly threw out of gear and we went careering at breakneck speed. I looked at the children and hung on a bit tighter.

"Gosh", said Sef, "I hope she's not going to do that too much!"

So did I. We did get to Gran's safely and as I looked back after getting off, the radiator was boiling rusty water all over everything. Surely it is the funniest looking contraption ever on a road.

Gran was very dubious and we left her saying a prayer for us all. But Sef had found the noise (which was a piece of wire shorting one of the plugs) and we roared home in good

style. The switch is not fixed up yet and Sef has two pieces of wire down by his foot somewhere which he pulls apart when he wants to switch it off. There is no exhaust pipe and although it is a bit smelly it does keep my feet warm.

So much for "old lorry".



Mum was a rock for us three boys, not only when we were little, but throughout our whole lives.

In the biggest tragedy of her life – the loss of her first husband Sefton when he was only 35 years old to liver cancer, she noted in her diary that her sons saved her life. She felt that Sefton was living on through them. She wrote in a note that Ross's (her second husband) love was very precious and sustaining to her.

Thanks Mum for your wonderful life.

Tribute from Dr Sally Bryant (Read by Suzanne Skira)

"I am extremely saddened not to be able to attend Jo's funeral today and sincerely thank the Bottomley family for allowing Suzanne to read these few words on my behalf.

The Dennes Hill Nature Reserve on Bruny Island will be a lasting tribute to Josephine, her late husband Ross and the Bottomley family. Their donation of 100 acres of white gum woodland as a reserve and safe haven for the endangered Forty-Spotted Pardalote came after lengthy negotiations with government lasting nearly 5 years. I often wondered during that time how Ross and Jo remained so resolute, but in their words "It was to protect the

pardalote's favourite piece of bush on top of the hill – and because it was the right thing to do.”

Dennes Hill remains the largest breeding colony for the forty-spotted Pardalote on Bruny Island, and its protection spear-headed the national recovery program for the species, and served as a beacon for other landholders to follow. Their donation of land was an act of generosity and commitment and symbolizes what some people can achieve for conservation throughout their lifetime.

My connection with Jo went well beyond the Pardalote and its conservation and those memories will forever remain precious to me. She was a gracious woman with enormous strength of character, a wise elder, and a very dear friend.

I'm truly blessed to have known Josephine Denne and from deep in my heart – I thank her.”
