

In Loving Memory of



MARIE BANNISTER

5th February 1919 - 4th December 2013

*'Peace I leave with you,
my peace I give unto you.'*

John Chapter 14: verse 27

St Hugh's Roman Catholic Church

Friday 20th December 2013

at 10.00 am

'The Eulogy was delivered by Pat Crawford'

AUNTIE MARIE BANNISTER

I stand here before you with mixed emotions, both humble and proud, to be asked to speak on behalf of the family of Marie, Widow of Dick and Len, Mother, Mother-in-law, Stepmother, Grandmother, Great grandmother, Great/Great Grandmother, my Auntie Marie, and God Mother and friend to all of you here today.

Marie was born in Co. Durham on 5th February 1919, the youngest of five children, to Deliha and John Baptiste De Walle. Later the family moved to Eccles, Lancashire, where sometime between the ages of 6 and 10 her Mother died. Her Father, a chef at the Grosvenor Hotel in Manchester, found his irregular hours difficult to cope with two young girls. Eileen went to live with an Aunt but sadly Marie found herself being cared for by the Little Sisters of the Poor.

This is where Marie came into my family, she had become friends with my Mother, Marjorie Rheubottom and they attended church together. At 13 Marie was put into the home of people, who though not cruel, did not allow her to mix with the family. Every Sunday she would go to my Grandparents for dinner and eventually they took her to live with them and that is where she told me was one of the happiest periods of her life. War broke out in 1939 and Marie became anxious that she was not doing enough for the war effort so enrolled on the Women's Land Army and was sent to and billeted in Lincoln.

Here starts another chapter in Marie's life. It was in Branston that she met, fell in love with and married Dick Cheetham. They were so happy when Tony arrived to complete their little family.

Here I will relate a story of the Christmas Turkey. Marie and Dick bred turkeys for Christmas and it was Dick's task to ring the birds' necks. This accomplished, they retired to bed only to be woken by a loud noise. Fearing they had burglars they both crept down the stairs, Dick complete with shovel and Marie with a brush, they opened the door to the storeroom only to find that one of the turkeys was not deceased and was running around screeching with not a feather on. Dick wanted to despatch the poor thing immediately but Marie would not hear of it. She stayed up all night knitting it a jumper, knowing her she probably named the turkey "Lucky".

Sadly Dick died at a relatively young age, leaving Marie a widow, alone, to cope with all that life threw at her and cope she did. She worked tirelessly on the land, driving a tractor, dressing birds after a shoot and babysitting for some of you here today. We received long letters full of funny stories and never a complaint about her life in Branston. Marie was elated when Tony and Jean presented her with grandchildren, giving them the stable home that she was denied.

She had many friends and through them was introduced to Len. They were perfect for each other and married in 1981 at St. Peter and Paul's and enjoyed their life together. Marie grew very fond of Lennie her new stepson and his family and after she sadly lost Len to cancer, they took her to their home for many a Sunday dinner and kept a watchful eye on her.

Over many years Marie ploughed all her energy into raising money for charity and I understand that many thousands of pounds were donated to St. Barnabas Hospice, all this obtained through her famous Coffee and Bring and Buy mornings.

Marie was always the giver, never the taker; she would give you her last penny if she thought you needed it more than she did. We can all learn a big lesson from the way she conducted the 94 years of her life. She loved her family, believed devoutly in her faith, and I am sure that Branston will be poorer without her presence in the community. It is fitting that she and Nelson Mandela died in the same week, both were peacemakers and generous to a fault, and now two extra bright stars shine in the galaxy.

GOD KEEP YOU SAFE AUNTIE MARIE, REST IN PEACE.