

Bobbie Roberts

(Barbara Joan Ferrers Roberts – nee Courage, formerly Bobbie Stanbury)

Bobbie was born in Amesbury, Wiltshire, on 9 January 1924. From the age of 3 her early, and formative years, with those of her elder sister, Peggy, were spent in the rural environment of Farmcote, high on the Cotswolds near Winchcombe in Gloucestershire; from where there are views down the Severn Valley and over to the Brecon Beacons. These surroundings could only enhance Bobbie's love of riding over the hills on her pony followed by her dog Sally. Her love of dogs continued for the remainder of her life. During these "growing up years", the two girls spent many holidays with both sets of grandparents, including summer holidays in Inverness-shire by the Spey where she caught her first salmon.

Bobbie was privately educated, attending West Heath school in Kent. Apparently at school she faced a near call for expulsion probably for breaking bounds, perhaps in search of chocolate, a pony, maybe the company of boys; or perhaps she was just making a break for freedom!

In her later teens, during the World War II Bobbie joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), which was a voluntary unit providing field nursing services, mainly in hospitals in the UK and other countries.



In VAD uniform during WWII

She was posted to Pembrookshire where she met a dashing RAF officer, Maurice, who was 16 years her senior. This meeting proved to be love at first sight and, after a short courtship, in January 1945 they were married in the parish church at Edgeworth, adjacent to her grandmother's home.



January 1945 Bobbie & Maurice fall in love

During the last months of the war the happy couple moved to Maurice's home town of Plymouth. Two children were born here, John and Liz – there would have been more but, unfortunately, this was not to be.

Bobbie was very active in the community, centred around the parish church of Eggbuckland, the Townswomen's Guild and especially in the Scout movement where she led a Cub pack and eventually became District Commissioner.

Sadly, Maurice became seriously ill and Bobbie nursed and cared for him until his death in November 1965.

Sometime later Bobbie was visited by a widower and boyhood friend of Maurice. This, of course, was Frank Roberts who was well-known in Compton Dando.

Bobbie and Frank were married in Eggbuckland church in Plymouth on 27 September 1969 and thus Bobbie acquired step-daughter, Roz.



In Compton Dando, 1978

Married life for the couple began in Chandag Road, Keynsham, but they were looking for a more permanent home. They found Claytiles, Bathford Hill, Compton Dando, which was to become a wonderful home for them both.

The village of Compton Dando turned out to be a very welcoming place for them. Once again, Bobbie became closely involved with the church. Her association with St. Mary's church included being church warden, a member of Feoffees, Mothers' Union and much more.



Bobbie and Frank at Claytiles

Her strong sense of community and love of people led her to deliver Meals on Wheels and visit the elderly and the sick regularly.

Once again, sadness entered Bobbie's life when Frank became ill and she nursed him until he died in September 2004 after 35 years of happy marriage.

Bobbie continued to live in Compton Dando as she had long since grown to love it and was certainly an integral part of village life. She was never lonely here as she had a wide circle of good friends and kept an “open door” policy, especially for those who would share a glass of wine!

Many longer-term residents of Compton Dando and surrounding villages will remember Bobbie with affection, including several who knew her from when they were small children attending the village school. She is still much missed.



Bobbie's 90th birthday celebrations