

Pat Gathercole

1934 - 2012

It was a particular shock when Pat died last January after a relatively short illness. For much of last year she and her husband Wally were much in our prayers as he had a serious heart problem from which he has recovered after major surgery.

An only child, she was born in Alton and grew up in Hayling Island and Gosport where she remembered the house being bombed, luckily no one at home. At school she developed a love of sport, especially hockey and tennis. Aged 17 she went to London to join the Civil Service living in pretty basic hostels. At this time she met Wally and they were married in 1955, moving to Guildford in 1957.

She gained a diploma in Social Studies in the 1970s and was a social worker caring particularly for those with mental health problems. After some years she became frustrated that meetings and report writing got in the way of her desire to help people; so she gave up paid work and devoted herself to parish work. She attended a Pastoral Assistants course and was licensed in 1978 and in 1985 both she and Wally were awarded a Diploma in Religious Studies. Two years later she graduated with a degree from the Open University. She considered taking a Masters but her vicar persuaded her to take the Readers course and she was licensed in 1990. While all this studying was going on she and four others had started a weekly drop-in centre at the Church Hall which is still going after 30 years and a source of comfort for literally hundreds of people

With that sort of CV joining the Third Order was a natural progression and she was professed in 1996. She was a faithful member of the Area and her care for others was particularly evident when convener of our Wey Valley group. Her love of creation was often beautifully expressed in the cards she made using her photographic and computer skills with lovely pictures and well chosen words. She expressed in her life the Franciscan values of prayer, love, joy, and service with humility and these underpinned her relationships in general within and outside the church. We loved her and miss her greatly and give thanks for her life with us and all she gave to us.

Anthony Hillard (Area Minister, Guildford)
with a lot of help from her family