

Subject: The life of Jennifer Ware

The doors of beautiful St Cuthbert's Church kept on opening because people kept coming, soon it was standing room only, the church filled to the brim with over 300 people. And they came because everyone, of all different ages and all walks of life (including the now Mayor of Kensington) knew and loved Jennifer. She was an extraordinary and unique person.

Jennifer came from a strong line of woman. Her grandmother Fanny Norris was abandoned by her husband, leaving his young wife and their three young daughters, he, a respectable lawyer, had ran away to Canada with his red headed secretary and much of his clients' money! Fanny now penniless, parked her three young girls with her parents and came to London to seek work. 25 years later when Jennifer was born, Fanny Norris was now a self-made, wealthy women owning and running a large popular hotel in Earls Court Sq, another in Folkestone and a large villa she had had built in Wimbledon. With a beautiful Chauffeur driven car Fanny Norris, who refused to ever remarry, was an independent formidable women and huge role model.

Jennifer was born in The White House Hotel, Earl's Court Sq on the 8th of January 1932 to Peggy and Walter Lang. Growing up in a hotel was a fun and mad place for a child, full of characters, Jennifer the only child was adored by both guests and staff alike. Things changed when soon into the 2nd world war her beloved father Walter's boat was torpedoed by the Japanese. For two years no one knew whether he was alive or dead. With her husband missing, Peggy took a job with the war office and with Granny Norris busy keeping the hotel running during a war, Jennifer was left to her own devices a lot of the time. She took to helping Sam the old hotel handyman, She became his faithful assistant and as a young girl learned the lifelong skills of how to build cupboards and shelves, rewire and do the electrics, plaster, paint and mend virtually anything, nothing was wasted everything reused. Sam's father had been a master builder who had built the houses in Earl's Court Square and Sam's knowledge of building and construction passed down from his father became her knowledge and she loved it. Her ambition was to become an architect or engineer, something she always regretted not having done, because life took her down a different path.

Another huge influence on her childhood and future was going to St Paul's Girls School under the Headmistress Ethel Strudwick. Ms Strudwick a woman ahead of her times, was founding president of the British Federation of Business and Professional Women in 1937, she was a strong believer in St Paul's girls having a full academic education, including championing Science. It was not by chance that most of Jennifer's friends and contemporaries went on to have full and interesting careers, when the majority of women of their age remained in the home. Jennifer loved school, she loved the academic rigour, though that didn't stop her and her merry band of friends often getting into trouble for being strong willed and sometimes a wee rebellious.

When the war ended Walter came home. The Japanese prison camp had been brutal, most of his fellow prisoners had not survived, after five years away her beloved father had returned.

At 17 Jennifer's Granny Fanny Norris decided to take Jennifer (to celebrate her upcoming 18th birthday) on a cruise to Southern Africa and the Middle East, Jennifer's aunt Betty accompanied them. Aunt Betty was a very attractive, fun loving women who had sadly lost her husband a few years before. Also on the boat was a young handsome, RAF squadron-leader, a Pathfinder and war-hero called David Ware, on his way back to his squadron in Rhodesia. On boarding the ship in England, above the clatter from the dock below, David said he heard a clear, soprano voice, "Where have you put our trunks?" He leaned over the ship's rail and saw Jennifer below, arguing with a porter. David was traveling with his commanding officer, who came to David one evening and explained he had met a glamorous widow who had a young niece with her, could David join them to keep the niece entertained, while he chatted up the glamorous

Widow (Granny Norris having gone to bed). David arrived at the table and there was the young niece Jennifer. Jennifer told the story of how they sat together and started talking and talked and talked about everything, finally they parted company in the early hours of the morning. When she got to her cabin she told the women she was sharing with, I have just met the man I am going to marry. Before the ship reached Rhodesia, they were engaged.

David disembarked in Rhodesia and Jennifer went on with the cruise. A year later on a cold December day Jennifer waited nervously at Victoria Station to meet her fiancé off the train not knowing if she would recognise him! They were married on the 6th of January 1951 two days before her 19th birthday.

They spent the first two years of their married life in Rhodesia where they had great adventures, they both loved Africa, the people, the country, but not the politics. It was here that Jennifer first became aware of apartheid and its horrendous inequalities. David like many of his generation who had seen & fought the horror of fascism had become a lifelong socialist, believing in the need for a fair and equal society.

Now stationed back in Britain, Jennifer soon became pregnant & Stephanie their first was born, given the old wives tale that you couldn't get pregnant while breast feeding, she immediately became pregnant again. Having wanted 5 boys they ended up with four girls, Annabel their youngest being born March 59. Six months later the whole family were boarding The Queen Elizabeth at Southampton docks on their way to America. David had been chosen by the British Airforce to fly with the American air force as an exchange officer. It was an 'honour' to be chosen to represent your country abroad. David and Jennifer were a glamorous, fun couple and they had a ball, America was an exciting, dynamic country compared to England in the post war 50's. From Cocktail parties and dinners, to Tupperware parties & camping out in the American wild, with four younger children who at school pledged their allegiance to the American flag and come home two years later with American accents. David flew with the American air force on missions, sometimes secret, to the Congo, Beirut, the Far East and often crossed America flying nuclear weapons. They made lifelong friends and were sad to leave two years later, climbing again aboard The Queen Elizabeth to sail home.

Not long after arriving back in Britain David left the air force and he and Jennifer moved into and took over the running of the White House Hotel.

It was back in Earl's Court that Jennifer found her true vocation. Although she enjoyed being a hotelier and a mother, it was politics that became her lifelong passion. When Jennifer joined the Liberal Party in the late 60's, the party of her old Headmistress Ethel Strudwick, her life changed. Politics is not for sissies, it's a tough old game and Jennifer excelled, she loved the cut and thrust, the rigour of political debate and ideas, she soon became an active member and then the liberal PPC for Battersea South (read Tony Summers Appreciation). One of her greatest prides was helping form the Green Liberals, how Jennifer became aware of environmental issues way before it was the mainstream is sadly not reviled but she was Extinction Rebellion of the 70's. Although it took many years to come into effect, Lead In Petrol and how damaging it was especially to children, was a big concern for Jennifer and a small group of environmentalists. However hard they campaigned, the issue gained no traction with the public, the press or politicians. At a brainstorming session, someone mentioned that although the police could physically remove adult demonstrators, they could not legally touch children. A rebellious idea was formed. A few weeks later all their young children were taken to designated roads in London, at a designated time, they safely stopped the traffic sat their children in the road and forbade them to get up. Much of London traffic came to a complete halt, the police could do nothing, the press who had been informed of an event were there. The next day it was in all the newspapers, questions were asked in the Houses of Parliament and finally the dangers of Lead in petrol was an issue everyone was discussing.

When sadly the White House Hotel was forced to close in the depression and property crash of the 70's, life seemed bleak for both David and Jennifer. But with the support of their huge number of friends and family they picked themselves up and moved on. David joined the charity Shelter and went on to build a small empire of charity shops for them all over Britain and Jennifer while remaining in national politics found herself becoming more and more involved at a local level. She was aware of how much poverty, loneliness

and suffering existed in Earl's Court despite Kensington and Chelsea being a rich borough, she joined forces with many others to help these people. It was Jennifer who found the money from Kensington and Chelsea for Father Bill that went into building St Cuthbert's Centre, an open-door drop-in centre for marginalised vulnerable people in Earl's Court and the surrounding area and remained an active trustee. She helped start up Response Community Centre, creating a variety diverse courses, including training for the unemployed, elderly & entrepreneurs. She Helped form a local centre for battered women, central to all these were two themes: the health, physical, mental and emotional, and welfare of residents and for Earl's Court as a community. (See Linda Wade's Appreciation).

She along with David started up one of the first local residents' associations in Earl's Court, when she discovered a property developer was planning on pulling down many of the beautiful buildings in the Square for redevelopment. She went to war stomping around the Square knocking on every door, ringing every bell. With enough support she went to the Council and got the buildings in the Square designated as Listed and thus protected for future generations. She instigated & helped form an alliance of local residents' associations, thus giving them power to take the council to task over a multitude of things, often to do with dubious developers or business practices.

The list goes on and on and then there was the Earl's Court festival! (Read Keith Clancy's Appreciation under Eleonora Gatti.) The Earl's Court festival, her vision, has gone on and evolved, we now have the Earl's Court Film Festival, theatre events, Jazz in the Square, Outdoor films in the Square, Children's plays, Music concerts....

A Church packed full of over three Hundred people all who knew and loved this funny witty incredible intelligent dynamic woman who sadly died at 87.

She left by three surviving daughters and two grand children

