

Tribute to Auntie Nina - Nina Buckland (nee Benford) at her funeral from her great-nieces  
Melanie Adams and Joanne Harvey, granddaughters of Dora Sharp (nee Benford)  
St Andrew's Church, Shrivenham, 1st November 2016.

**Everyone here today will have their own special memories of Auntie Nina. We'd like to share some ours with you all now.**

**We loved to talk with Auntie Nina about her early life as the middle child in a family of nine – four boys and five girls. The Benford girls - our Nan, Dora, Dorothy, Edna, Nina and Joyce and her brothers Jack, Georgie, Billie and Frank.**

**Sadly for them all, especially Nina's mum, also Dorothy, her brothers Georgie and Billie died young. Auntie Nina always remembered them with great fondness.**

**Nina's Dad, George, called her his 'little peacemaker' – we suspect that this might have been because she protected her siblings when they got into trouble, such as when they came home late! Nina would creep down to open the door so they could sneak in!**

**All the family helped with the shop and the bakery at 'Pound Stores' – which is now Rafu's at the bottom of the Church Avenue here. When her sisters married and moved away, Nina worked in the shop for many years with her brothers, Jack and Frank, who worked as bakers and cake makers extraordinaire.**

**Frank took over the shop when his Dad died and Nina happily worked there with him for many years and stayed on for a number of years with the new owners after Frank retired. Eventually, when the shop was sold, for the rest of her working life Nina enjoyed being a cleaner and honorary 'aunt' to young officers at the RMCS – now The Defence Academy.**

**Nina married her husband, Dennis Buckland, at this church on the 25th August 1949 — from all accounts it was a wonderful village wedding with the reception at The Memorial Hall. Although Nina and Dennis had no children of their own they were a very much-loved and loving Uncle and Aunt to their many nieces and nephews. As we lived next door but one to them in Watchfield, they were like another set of grandparents for us. All of us cousins will surely remember the famous 'sweet drawer' at Auntie Nina's – it seemed always to be full to the brim. And her lovely**



sponge birthday cakes, sometimes four layers of different colours, will always remain a delicious memory!! And now would have been about the time of year that Auntie Nina would start stockpiling tins of chocolates ready for everyone to get one at Christmas time – her spare room was always a treasure trove! She was an incredibly generous person and she spent days wrapping all her Christmas presents for everyone .

Nina was devoted to Dennis and enjoyed life in Watchfield, living next door to her brother-in-law George and his wife Billie in the adjoining bungalows they built themselves with the help of friends. Their house was called 'Brookfields' and I remember many walks over the fields with Auntie Nina and Uncle Dennis, down to the brook to paddle.

They loved village life – walks across the fields to Shrivenham, drinks at The Royal Oak with some raucous parties at times and always kindness and thoughtfulness to their neighbours. We treasure the photos we have of Nina and Dennis enjoying their garden... Many of you will know the, now infamous, story of the time Joanne and I were playing there and Uncle Dennis gave us some 'treasure' to bury as part of our game of pirates! We took him at his word and duly buried the treasure – but then couldn't find it! It was only then that we realised that the treasure was real - two gold sovereigns, which are probably still there somewhere!

Everyone was so pleased that, despite Nina and Dennis's reluctance to 'cause a fuss', they had a lovely Ruby Wedding Anniversary party at The Royal Oak which they both enjoyed – much giggling, dancing and singing by all who were there. A day to remember they said.

Sadly, Uncle Dennis died, very suddenly, soon after and his loss left a huge gap in Auntie Nina's life. However, family, neighbours and friends rallied round and Auntie Nina continued living at Watchfield and we had many happy times with her.

Auntie Nina then moved to Shrivenham and fully entered into life of her 'home' village once more – she took great delight in looking out the window of her flat both onto the High Street and The Rec. She loved a sing-along, doing her beautiful prize-winning embroidery and tapestry,



watching and betting on horse racing – hoping always to have the winner - chatting with Eileen, Marg and her other many friends and family visitors. Playing cards with our Mum and Dad after lunch on a Sunday afternoon was another pleasure and Nina always out to win – though not for money just the pleasure of winning (of course)!

We both have such lovely memories of Auntie Nina – she was such fun – always giggling and playing the fool. She took part in our family Christmas Pantomimes and joined in all our games, including allowing us (well, Joanne!) to give her serious makeovers – leg waxing with foam, make up, hairdressing etc etc – and she loved fancy dress! She also played endless games of badminton for hours with us, even when it was getting dark! New Year's Eve at The Barrington saw her in many different guises – her Diddy Man costume was particular favourite - great fun for all.

We were lucky enough for her to come with us on several family holidays – including a trip to visit Joanne in New York – Nina had a whale of a time (although I have to say, as the person who shared a room with her, that she definitely snored!)

Auntie Nina and Maisie also came to Spain for a holiday and they both enjoyed jugs of Sangria during two sets of the Elvis tribute act there – he gave her a red rose - despite the late hour!

This may remind everyone of how much Auntie Nina absolutely loved singing! She very much enjoyed the entertainers at Wemyss Lodge, which she called home for the last six years of her life—she always joined in and she was particularly keen on the Elvis Presley tribute singer there too. We'd like to say particular thanks here to everyone at Wemyss for their devoted care to Auntie Nina, especially after her stroke, and their extra special care in the last few months. And also for their kindness and thoughtfulness to our Mum.



**Auntie Nina was a huge presence in our lives and had a heart of gold and we will all miss her so much. Our Nan, Dora, always told us that 'to live in the hearts of those you love is not to die' and that 'cherished memories live for ever'. Auntie Nina will certainly always remain in our hearts for ever and we have many, many cherished memories of her.**