

Charlotte June Lean
15-05-1926 - 16-01-2018

23-01-2018

Our mother June was born in Napier on 15th May 1926, the only child of the marriage of Ronald and Joyce (nee Heard). While she was still a pre-schooler her parents separated and she spent her childhood living between her maternal Heard grandparents, her Aunty Belle and Uncle Les Snowsill and her father and step mother after her father remarried. Actually both her parents remarried and Anne and Bruce Craven and Donald Snowsill joined her family circle. She attended school at Matamau, Hastings West and Hokowhitu. Unfortunately for her, when she finished primary school, it was the end of the 1930's depression and WW2 was about to start. Her family wasn't in a financial position to support her at High School and she had to find work. After working in Palmerston North and Hastings, with WW2 continuing, young women of her age were compelled to register as there was a shortage of labour in many vital occupations as more and more young men were conscripted to war service overseas. Mum told me that her options were to work in a munitions factory or join the Land Army. She decided on the latter-a decision which would determine the rest of her life. She was sent to work for Joyce and Trevor Fourneau at Twyford, west of Hastings, and loved it.

In 1944, when Dad returned from war service overseas, he went to live with his parents at Twyford. He met the Fourneau's young Land Girl, in the judging ring at the Hastings Show where she was leading Pedigree Jersey stock for the Fourneau's and he was leading stock for his parents who also bred pedigree jerseys. He was apparently keener than her in the relationship developing. She and her friend Lois Alderman agreed to meet him in town (Hastings). The three of them headed towards Westermans, a department store with entrances on two streets. Mum and Lois told Dad they had some personal shopping to do and left him waiting outside one of the street entrances. They went into the shop and out the other door onto the other street and left him there! He can't have been put off by this however, because they continued courting, got engaged and they married in Hastings on 18th August 1945. Michael was born in July 1946, but sadly died aged 3 weeks. Then followed me, Sharon and Beryl.

When Sharon was a toddler, they purchased a farmlet at Tollemache Rd, south-east of Hastings and they began their "Pamir" pedigree Jersey stud and began breeding and showing their own cattle, while Dad also continued with his job at De Pelichet McLeod in Hastings.

After Sharon started school, Mum applied for a licence to become a foster mother to several children. Peter Su'a was with us from a small baby to nearly school age. He showed signs of remarkable musical talent even as a small boy. The music that was playing before this service started, was played, arranged, and some of it was written by him.

In 1958, the family moved to Twyford, west of Hastings, coincidentally to the farm owned by the Fourneau family where Mum had been a Land Girl during the War. Dad had a full time farming position and Mum was also involved with farm work when required. Mum joined the Fernhill Women's Division of Federated Farmers and held several positions of responsibility. Mum won a number of prizes for her baking at inter Branch competitions and also the Hawkes Bay A & P Shows.

In 1962, Martin joined our family and 4 weeks later we all moved to Mangatoki in Taranaki.

The move back to Hawkes Bay, to Waipukurau, came at the end of 1963. Mum's love of flower gardening blossomed and she was rewarded with great results.

The desire to get back to farming land increased, and in December 1969 they moved to Masterton Rd, Woodville and farmed there until early 1996, milking cows and showing young stock at A & P Shows from Hastings to Carterton. Many of the grandchildren were born in that era and Mum sewed and embroidered baby gowns for the first baby in each family. Subsequent babies received cot blankets which she bound with satin, embroidered and appliquéd animals onto them. She also knitted hooded jackets and leggings for each family.

She also knitted woollen singlets for prem babies, and knitted or crocheted peggy squares and strips to be made into cot blankets. We all have blankets she made and many more were donated to charities.

When you view the Slide show shortly, you will notice how many of the slides involve grandchildren and animals-two loves of her life.

Mum had a love of reading which started in her childhood and was a member of a public library from her teenage years until about 18 months ago. She instilled a love of reading in her daughters and in turn, it has been passed on through each generation.

When the grandchildren were old enough she would take them to the annual Junior Jersey Breeders' camps in January each year, becoming one of the camp mothers, working in the kitchen and helping with activities each day.

Margaret, Noel, Andrew and Sarah Pinfold were Masterton Rd neighbours. Andrew and Sarah were like grandchildren to Mum and Dad. Noel and Margaret continued to be a great support to Mum and Dad after they moved to Gordon Street and we thank them for that.

Mum and Dad celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August 1995, with a surprise dinner party attended by many relatives and friends. When they moved into 39 Gordon St Woodville, retirement meant a busier life than ever. They had enough land to graze a few sheep and Mum developed an interest in coloured sheep and played an active part in the Coloured Sheep Society based in Masterton. They owned also owned hens, Corgi dogs and assorted cats, many of whom adopted Mum, not the other round. Pet lambs were an annual event-often the weakest of triplets.

Her empathy ,patience and skill with them as newborns meant that most survived and lived to join the flock.

A highlight of Mum & Dad's Jersey Breeding years was being guests at the Ferdon Jersey Stud at Otorohanga, when the Queen visited in 1990 to inspect the Ferguson Family's herd from which she had purchased a number of animals. Mum and Dad hosted a number of Jersey Breeders from UK over several years and were invited to travel to England in 1992 to stay on the Royal Farm at Windsor, preparing the Royal herd show team for the World Jersey Conference show. This was Mum's first trip overseas. The commitments Dad had to the show team meant that Mum didn't get to do many touristy things, including places her ancestors had immigrated from several generations previously. This resulted in Mum and I heading off to UK in 1995, meeting up with Bridget, hiring a car, which I drove, and touring right up to the top of Scotland and down to Lands End in Cornwall, our route chosen to include as many places of family history interest as possible.

Back home again, Mum's involvement in the Ngawapuru Country Women's Institute, continued and she was the Secretary for many years. She was presented with a Good Service Badge by the Bush Federation of Country Women's Institutes in 1996.

She joined a local choir and twice they joined other Southern Hawkes Bay choirs and were filmed for "Praise Be" in TV1 on Sunday mornings. She was renowned for her baking and cooking skills. At family gatherings her signature dishes were beef casserole, Lemon Delicious pudding, trifle and pavlova. She was renowned for the quality and height of her sponges. Some of the local businesses received these as thank you gifts at Christmas time. She made amazing fruit cakes and a number of these became wedding cakes. She attended craft classes weekly in Palmerston North.

Dad's health began to decline in the late 1990's and Mum and Dad swapped roles in some ways. She took on the outside work and Dad learnt to do housework at 78 years of age! Dad died in December 2000 and Mum adjusted to living alone and coping with the complexities of banking, paying accounts etc which had always been Dad's domain.

She continued active community activities, including driving elderly non-drivers to Dannevirke to do visiting at a Rest Home there, and to the weekly Wednesday lunches at the Lindauer Restuarant in Woodville.

In January 2011 she had a fall and fractured the top of her right leg. This was, in many ways, the beginning of her lost of independence. She was very reluctant to have a ramp at the back door, which was essential for her to be able to stay at 39 Gordon St. It was fortunate that she was able access home help from WINZ and Lavender Blue for lawn mowing, housework, showering etc and this increased as the years went by. We are very grateful to Pauline Sigvertson for all the care and attention she gave to Mum. Mum surrendered her drivers' licence when she turned 85, becoming dependent on Sue and Sharon for transport. Fiona took Mum Christmas shopping each year, helping with choosing and wrapping the gifts. Mum became increasingly dependent on others to be able to live at home. Because Beryl & I live away from here, Sharon, Martin and Sue became her on call personnel. Rest home care was discussed periodically, but Mum was determined that she was going to stay at home. Preparing meals became too difficult and the cake tins were permanently empty.

In Autumn last year, with medical advice, we considered a number of rest homes and in May, just after her 91st birthday, Nelson St Residential Care Centre in Feilding was our choice of a rest home where Mum would be cared for by committed staff in a warm, comfortable environment. She was less than receptive to the idea, but ten days later the move was made. The transition took about 6 months and it was only in the last couple of months that she accepted that the care home was her home now. Our grateful thanks to the staff at Nelson St, who patiently assisted her transition process.

Saturday week ago, Sharon was rung to say that Mum was very unwell and being admitted to Palmerston North Hospital. The diagnosis was that she was seriously ill and her health deteriorated until she died on Tuesday morning. The staff at Ward 29 were very gentle with her and considerate towards us visiting at any time.

Through Facebook, some of Mum's grandchildren have posted messages and memories.

Fiona and Angela remember Mum's love of Trumpet ice-creams.

Angela also wrote-There are so many memories --- being on the farm with the animals, trips to Hawke's Bay to collect fruit, the A & P shows, family gatherings and celebrations through to the last visit we had where Nannie enjoyed eating the chocolate topping off her ice cream before stating she had already had ice cream for lunch and gave the rest to Sarah to eat!!

Fiona learnt about false teeth when she saw Mum cleaning hers one night and freaked out.

Bridget remembers there was always a variety of home made biscuits in the tins, cats in the hot water cupboard, over cooked veggies; trifle at Christmas, triangle pens, drying dishes that were so hot from her extra hot water in the sink; the collection of bath toys and the large panda toy they fought over...

Angus remembers the smell of mixing milk powder and feeding calves on the Masterton Road farm, feeding the bantams, the many birthdays and Christmas dinners there too. There was always a cup of tea and biscuits when we called in and a good lunch after shearing the black sheep or dealing with the lambs.