

Daphne Harper (7 November 1937– 6 April 2023)

Daphne was born in St Thomas Street Deddington on 7 November 1937, the eldest child of Les and Betty Harper. Daphne had a younger sister Lesley (1942–1995). She moved to the Paper Mill cottages in Deddington Parish which is on the Stilgoe's Grounds Farm, Adderbury.



Daphne attended Deddington Primary School and then later the Windmill Secondary School on the site where Mill Close now is. Daphne was good at most subjects, particularly maths. She was known and trusted to count money for whatever organisation she belonged to. She sat her exams a year early and left on her 16th birthday when she started work at Banbury Co-op in Broad Street. She soon rose through the ranks becoming assistant/relief manager by 19. She worked at several Co-ops in the area including Adderbury, Charlton, Sibford and Deddington. During this time Daphne delivered and collected money from customers' homes, including taking groceries to big houses in Charlton Newbottle where members of the Royal Family often stayed. In later life Daphne loved reading many books about the Royal Family.

Daphne was made manager of Deddington Co-op in 1964, a role she held until it became Acorn Stores in 1987. Edward has heard many stories of Daphne's time there: the friendships with staff and customers and the somewhat tall stories of how she kept them in line.

In 1986 the BBC filmed 'Blott on the Landscape' in the Market Place. The Co-op doubled as the fictional village garage and there was a problem with the pyrotechnics that could have damaged the building. Daphne was on the Director's 'brick' mobile phone to Co-op HQ while the stunt took place.

Daphne did a lot of travelling, including ski trips to Switzerland and Austria with other local girls as a teenager and in the 1980s with fellow WI members and local businesswomen. She particularly enjoyed going to France.

Daphne was a member of the WI from 1977 till 2019 and on the committee from the early '80s. During this time she wrote the article 'A Walk Round Deddington' which was featured in the *Deddington News**

Daphne retired in 1988 due to injury from Acorn Stores and looked after her mum and sister until they died. Illness became Daphne's curse in later life with a stroke and cancer in 2007–08 as well as Edward's own mental and physical illness. She had a stroke on 7 February 2022 which was so severe she couldn't come back to Deddington, and spent the final 14 months of her life at Fairholme House, Bodicote, with Lewy Body Dementia. She died of complications of the stroke.

Daphne will be missed by friends and family and neighbours in the Paddocks where she lived from 1976 with her parents who died in 1988 and 2005 respectively. Edward says: 'I think the death of her cousin Tracy Howard who predeceased her by 14 days made her give up life. Daphne, I will love you till the day I die'.

Eulogy delivered by Revd Annie on Edward's behalf from his notes

* Daphne's walk can be found here:

https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/14124/DaphneHarperwalk.pdf

