




9th August 1951 – 17th December 2020



Memories from current Church
Members and 'old' Tiddlywinks
mums from the 1980's

Vanessa was one of those very special people in life, someone for whom things seem so tough and yet who seem also to rise to overcome in each situation. Lucy and I feel very honoured to have got to know her well as a friend and a sister in Jesus through being in the same house group for all our time at Fairfield.

Vanessa was not defined by her physical limitations but by her strength of character, determination and continued trust in God and His love and care for her. She was a very independent person yet was able to receive love and support when she needed to with thankfulness, dignity and humour. She was a wonderful wife and then carer for Frank in his last couple of years as well as playing a loving, caring and supportive role in the lives of all in her family. In our House Group each week she would share news, good or bad, about different members of her family or SAMS or a social issue she was engaged with, and we would pray with her for God's will to be done and for her to be equipped, sustained and given wisdom. She was a very brave person too and was able to speak to organisations and local authorities to get fair outcomes, whether for wheel-chair-using bus passengers or for her mother in finding a residential home.

Vanessa was very strong-willed and knew just what she wanted and she didn't like to compromise. She worked hard to keep her garden under control and on one occasion I foolishly offered to come and help. This quickly turned into four of us working through a very hot day on a major 'water feature' construction project that involved shifting a huge amount of clay and large rocks – under the direction of her engineer friend, Steve! She wanted it done well. (contd on the next page)

We met as a House Group this week and felt deeply the absence of Vanessa who was such an integral part of our fellowship. She was there most times when we met during the 12 years we have been in the group or, if she was missing, there was a reason which she told us in advance. With support from Alan she was able to set up her phone and computer so as to join our zoom house groups during this last year too. She will be greatly missed.

Especially over the last few years, I have had many opportunities to meet with her to talk and pray, frequently dealing with hard topics and yet mostly I came away so glad I had had the opportunity to spend time with her. Her faith in her loving and good God enabled her to face so many challenges and, even when we were without words because of the circumstances, she still held on to God trusting him because, as she said at times, 'what else could she do'! In one of the last conversations I had with her we talked about the high risks of the operation that she was hoping for that might have restored some strength in her left arm (which was failing). It was clear to me that she wasn't concerned about dying if that was the outcome of the operation but that she would have hated living in a totally dependent state. We prayed together and I sensed she was ready to go to be with her Lord and was starting to anticipate having a new and transformed body in the Kingdom of heaven! Vanessa, we love you and we will miss you for now.

Chris and Lucy Reveley

We remember the way Vanessa's life opened up to the Lord through her involvement with Tiddlywinks and increasing friendships across the Fairfield family. Step by step, in her own way, she recognised the way of Christ, & the changes needed.

Vanessa had great courage, seen in her huge determination to manage the challenge of her MS limitations, fighting for every possible way to enable as full a life as possible, and campaigning for so many years on behalf of others with similar needs.

More and more, her faith was the driver in all this energy. She gave support to her family, and she played a big part in the caring ministry of the church family.

When Vanessa and Frank came together, after their marriage in 1997, a lovely partnership of caring resulted.

We give thanks to the Lord for Vanessa's life, faith, & friendship.

Roger & Frances Pearce

Vanessa was an enduring example of determination, perseverance and positivity in the midst of chronic pain and illness. Her faith in God was rock solid which provided an anchor for her in the midst of storms. She was selfless, always looking out for the interests of others. It was important for her to keep independent, managing her symptoms rather than allowing these to overwhelm her. Self-pity was not in her vocabulary.

Her charity work with SAMS was a big part of her life, tirelessly organising events, raising money, devoting time for administrative tasks. I will miss her and the regular visits and opportunities to chat with her.

Susanne Wigram

The first time I saw Vanessa she was struggling to walk, on crutches, up to the front during a healing service, 27 or so years ago. She was not healed of the MS which had been robbing her of strength and mobility and her health continued to decline, but her faith and her determination to get on with living did not.

I have a lasting happy memory of Vanessa in her wheelchair at the end of Tiddlywinks, whizzing around with a basket on her lap picking up toys to be put away.

Catherine Staff

Vanessa Rumble: my thoughts about this lovely lady

Vanessa and Frank (and Honey of course!) were all wonderful neighbours. Frank used to come whizzing down Highland Road on his mobility scooter to walk Honey in the park behind our house, and it was from these encounters that we started helping out by walking Honey for them (along with others). This dog walking routine was something that Eva and Eli enjoyed doing too when they were at school and we all felt Vanessa loved and appreciated each and every visit. She was always smiling and interested in our lives and doorsteps chats over the years have been such good fun.

But it was Vanessa's deep love and understanding that I especially appreciated. At church she was a friend who listened and laughed but understood sorrow and hardship, without ever moaning or complaining and I really mean that. I remember one special time when I was very upset and I went to her for comfort and advice at the end of the service, I knelt down on the floor and she took my head in her hands and prayed for me and my family. I will never forget that. To me Vanessa was full of strength life and love and life. She was gracious and beautifully dressed and so pretty; she twinkled! She loved fiercely and her determination to keep going meant she did just that. What a wonderful friend and what a wonderful lady.

Rachie Ross



Away weekend House Party

Whenever I met with Vanessa, she was always cheerful, positive and with a genuineness that was refreshing. She never let her physical disability stop her from being an active and helpful member of society, whether it was campaigning for improved disabled access on buses or buildings to fund raising for outings for disabled people.

Her deep love for Jesus strengthened her to serve Him by putting others first and think about what she could do, rather than what she couldn't.

Vanessa was a treasured member of our house group and we were always glad to be able to help her when she wasn't well. She was a lovely person to work alongside of....wrapping Christmas presents for charity in Uxbridge, making cards, helping her in the garden....conversation flowed as she was interested in so many things.

It is lovely to think that now she is with the Lord she served, without physical limitations. She was a true woman of God and follower of Jesus.

Chris Pearson

Vanessa has been a lovely friend for well over 30 years when she started coming to Tiddlywinks at Fairfield. I remember her 40th birthday party in the old building! We saw a lot of Vanessa as she lived in the next street to us in Northwood Hills. Richard and I always enjoyed time together with the family as the children were growing up and we often gave Vanessa lifts in our car as she didn't drive then. Vanessa was part of our house group and we saw her faith develop. Even when we moved to Hampshire I would visit Vanessa or meet her at Jean's on girlie nights! I will miss her greatly but am so pleased to have known her and look forward to meeting her in heaven now that she is at peace with her Lord.

Anne Carter

My thoughts and prayers are with Vanessa's children & grandchildren especially at this time.

- I will miss seeing Vanessa when we are next in Northwood.
- I am grateful to have known her; her warmth, interest, great sense of humour, and smiley eyes.
- I admire how she persevered through so many difficulties, and yet always managed to care for others.
- I know she trusted deeply in her Saviour, and know she is now with Him, 'which is far better' (Phil. 1:23).

With love and gratitude, Rachel Alberti xx

Away weekend House Party





Lise and I knew Vanessa and her family from her earliest days at NHEC. We saw her selfless giving in care for others, despite her severe health restrictions, and we knew her children as they grew up.

In more recent years, with Frank and even after he passed away, when attending services at Fairfield on Sundays, we were so pleased to see a special space reserved for Vanessa, which happened to be right behind the seats where we usually sat. Lise had a special rapport with Vanessa, and they gave each other encouragement and were able to pray together. Vanessa's example of coping with the acute limitations and challenges of everyday life was so much admired by us both, and now my heart goes out to her children and wider family as they grieve at her loss. I thank God for her faith, her life of service to others, and for fellowship with her through so many years. She will be so greatly missed by us all.

Jeffery Wilson

As long as I have known her, Vanessa was a wonderful challenge to me. When I first knew her she had only recently committed her life to Jesus, was a member of Tiddlywinks with baby Jessica and then was newly diagnosed with an aggressive form of Multiple Sclerosis.

For many people such an overwhelming challenge could have resulted in rejecting the faith she had so recently professed, but for Vanessa it was a time when her faith grew steadily despite the circumstances. Life had not been easy for her previously, but it grew harder as the years passed. Yet when she heard the Holy Spirit speaking to her heart and convicting her of something wrong in her life, she was willing to obey - even though such obedience seemed to reduce the support she relied upon day by day.

As the years passed, I had the privilege of sharing in so many aspects of her struggle caused by the MS, valued her friendship and marvelled to see her growing as a Christian. Her marriage to Frank enriched both their lives, but as he grew less able to drive, Vanessa, by then age 60 and never having driven before, learned to drive. She obtained a suitable vehicle for her limitations and continued driving right through until last year's medical crisis. The last time I actually spoke to Vanessa face to face was before lock down, and her words to me then were "I am determined to drive again".

Vanessa's courage in the face of adversity, her faith in a heavenly Father who loved her, and her smile, were all precious aspects of someone I delighted to call my friend. One day we will meet again, but meanwhile she is free of all those limitations and in the presence of the God she loves. I miss her.

Sandra Michie

A valued member of our House Group, Vanessa was always keen to attend even after busy tiring days. Vanessa stands out as a shining example of a lady having strong faith in God despite the many difficulties she has faced for so many years. Her dogged determination, her strength and fortitude in trying and testing circumstances stand as an inspiration to us all. She was always willing to help others in whatever way she could. She will be greatly missed.

Alan & Jackie Barton

Vanessa was an amazing lady who never let her disabilities limit or define her. She had a strong faith and, despite the many set backs she had in life, never wavered in her love for and her trust in God.

Jean Kessel



We first met Vanessa in the early 90's when she was able to walk into our house with her walking frame. Vanessa used to whizz past our home on her scooter with Jessica on her lap. In later years Jessica was replaced with Penny and then Honey (adorable dogs).

We served together in "Tiddlywinks" our toddler group for many years.

It was a privilege to know Adam, Marcus, Donna and Jessica as they grew up. I will miss Vanessa's updates as she always loved talking about her children and grandchildren.

It was a great occasion when Vanessa married Frank and it was wonderful to witness God's blessing on their marriage for many years.

Vanessa was such an inspiration to so many, her strong faith carrying her through such adversity at times. She was part of our housegroup which she loved to attend. She will be deeply missed.

(picture below)

Angela and Steve Rogers



Vanessa attending House Group

I first got to know Vanessa when her daughter Jessica, and our children were looked after by Hazel, a mutual friend and childminder, 30+ years ago.

She always displayed her faith and lived her life with great stoicism, throughout her many trials.

She had a cheerful disposition, a twinkle in her eye, and a great sense of humour. She always managed to look her best - I was always envious of the way she effortlessly (or so it seemed!) managed to coordinate everything she wore.

I remember when she passed her driving test, opening up a whole new world of possibility and opportunity for her.

Vanessa grabbed life and made the most of every opportunity. She made a major contribution to improving the lives of other disabled people, while also keeping a watchful eye on her family.

What an inspiring woman! She will be greatly missed.

Wendy Holdsworth

Many years ago, we used to enjoy seeing Vanessa and Jessica at Tiddlywinks and we used to give them a lift to church sometimes too.

Vanessa was such a truly lovely person, entrusting Jessica in our care when she had to go into hospital for several days or weeks. I feel privileged to have been trusted with the responsibility of providing emotional and practical care for Jessica in a way I know how Vanessa would have wanted.


Vanessa was always so positive, even on a day when she didn't feel 100% . She was a caring friend, always happy to take time to help others where she could.

God Bless.

Hazel Coleman



Amba, Jessica and Tia

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- My strongest fond memory of Vanessa was when we met at Tiddlywinks playgroup many years ago . We formed a lovely bond and I loved having Jessica as she was the same age as Amy so I was able to help with the school run and Ballet classes. The girls grew up together .
 - Vanessa had a great roaring laugh and I absolutely loved planning a surprise birthday party for her at Fairfield in the old church building .
 - She was a strong lady with a big personality . We even met up with Vanessa and Frank when she took Jessica and Amy on holiday to Cyprus, my mum used to be her hairdresser and we loved being able to be part of her life .

Jane Fletcher

I first met Vanessa at Tiddlywinks in the late 80's. We used to meet up weekly on a Tuesday at Tiddlywinks at NHEC and ended up being helpers. Vanessa did have MS but at that time only required a walking stick to get around. Later we joined the same house group at the Carter's home and later on at the Rogers' home. It has already been said, she was a very independent woman who wanted to do everything herself. Jessica was a similar age to my children and we would often spend time at Hazel's (her tribute is above). In the early nineties quite a few of us from church, mainly mums and children went off to Spring Harvest for a week at Butlins in Barnstaple. The only drawback was that Vanessa and Jessica were a long way from where the rest of us were staying and it was a real trek to get across to meet her. We also arranged a surprise 40th birthday party for her in the old building (Jane was the main organiser) and we had a country dancing theme where Heather was the dance caller! Good fun had by all. Vanessa was always a very positive person who always asked after everyone else and wanted to know all the family news. When she got together with Frank, despite their age difference, they shared their faith together and enjoyed the same sense of humour. Their marriage was a tremendous union which lasted over 20 years. Her faith was very strong despite her health issues and other trials that she came across during her life. She was a very special person and I shall miss her. My love and thoughts go out to Marcus, Donna, Adam, Jessica and their families.

Debbie Crossan

I remember meeting Vanessa when Jessica was tiny. It was through Vanessa that I started to 'call' at Barn Dances as she wanted one for her 40th and it was a really fun evening in the old church hall. I only saw Vanessa a handful of times after we moved away but each time her sense of humour and smile were still very much there.

Heather Wildsmith

Difficult to remember Vanessa with anything other than a gentle smile on her face - calm, cheerful, often despite really difficult circumstances, thoughtful, kind hearted and mindful of others.

What remains special to me was her determination not to give in to any difficulties or limitations. I remain challenged, for example, by her courage and willingness to take driving lessons later in life to provide the transport needed for herself and Frank! She was a 'can do and will do' person even though much in her life was not easy.

She showed the same thoughtfulness and determination in caring for the different generations of her family. Refusal to give up, ongoing practical help, support, a listening ear, all speak of her commitment to be all that she had been created to be. Her dedicated attention to the needs of each person was a lesson in real love and showed the genuine outworking of her faith.

I often thought it would have been easy - and certainly understandable - for her to bow to her own physical limitations and give up on some of the activities and caring. But she didn't! That perseverance and her generous heart will not be forgotten.

I, along with many others, have lost a friend of many years standing, but she will remain an encouragement and inspiration to me.

I thank God often that she has been part of my life and pray that family and friends will be comforted and spurred on by her example.....

You'll be missed, Vanessa - but it's only 'Au revoir'.....!

Ikey Absalom



Vanessa and Frank