

Elsie was born 9th January 1936 to parents, Delia and William Fitzpatrick. Elsie was one of 9 children, her father William had been married and widowed once before with six children when he met Elsie's mother, Delia and they went on to have three children, John, Elsie and Margaret. Her father William was from Cork, Ireland and her mother Delia from Liverpool. With 9 children to care for, money was in short supply, however, Elsie recalled that although her parents did not have much money, they were happy at home and for the most part had a good life. Elsie recalled long hours playing on the street, looking after her younger sister Margaret and spending time with her extended family who also lived in Liverpool local to her own home. Like many families of this time they were a close family and had their ups and downs but they would all stick together and help each other because family was important.



Elsie recalled being evacuated from Liverpool during the time of the second world war, she recalled going to live with a family in Wales, which she said she enjoyed and remembers the family had a farm and chickens running about the house and on her bed which she thought was funny however, she said she did not stay long as her mum brought her back home. Elsie also recalled going to a boarding school for deaf in Liverpool and recalls nights where the children could feel the vibrations from bombs during the war, this was a scary time that she never forgot and perhaps shaped her views in later years that Peace and Tolerance was important for everyone in the world.

Elsie was the only person within her family who was deaf, but she remembers that her mum and dad included her in family, and she never felt her disability stopped her or held her back. When Elsie left school she had been taught skills to sew, knit and cook but she always regretted that the school did not do enough to develop her reading and writing. In later years, as an adult, she returned to education to improve her reading and writing skills and as a mother to three children she impressed upon them the importance of reading and writing, learning and keeping busy. Elsie's favourite things to read was crime, thrillers and history. Elsie loved to knit, crochet and she had favourite programmes such as Poirot, James Bond and Coronation Street but she was often asleep before the programmes finished.

After school, Elsie left school and started work in Crawfords and Cadburys factory. Elsie worked hard but she also enjoyed her social life and was a regular attender at Liverpool deaf club. Elsie met and married her first husband Benjamin Bott in 195... Elsie recalled being happy with Ben and they had many years of happiness together, going on holidays, saving for their own home and then moving to a new home in Maghull, Liverpool. After 12 years of marriage, Elsie and Ben had two children: Debbie and Beverley. In 197... however, Ben died unexpectedly leaving Elsie to care for her two young children. Elsie went to work, kept her own home and looked after her children even though this was a sad time for her. Despite the

challenges this brought as a single parent with limited money, she remained a constant stable, predictable and secure parent for her children. In 1973, Elsie met Gerald Aldridge, Gerald was also deaf but did not live in Liverpool. Gerald and Elsie met through social events in the deaf club and they married in 1974 and moved to Manchester with Debbie and Beverley. Mark, younger brother to Debbie and Beverley was born in 1975. Mark was Elsie's third child and Gerald's only child. Elsie and Gerald remained married but they separated in 1980 as they both found they got along better with one another living apart and although they were no longer together, Gerald and Elsie remained good friends and would still go shopping, have occasional days out and support each other to look after Mark. Elsie never stopped being mum to Debbie, Beverley and Mark and she welcomed into her home and life the partners of her children. In these last few years she would enjoy a joke and a laugh with Mike and Gary and even managed to raise an eyebrow or smile at them in these last few months.

In 1984 Elsie's first grandchild, Ben was born. Elsie loved looking after Ben. Elsie was very very proud of her first grandchild and loved to make a fuss of him, taking him out with her, playing with him and caring for him when Debbie was at work. Ben also spent many hours with his grandmother, and she cherished this time with him as her own children were now grown up. Elsie had four other grandchildren, Micheal, Thomas, Emma and Zoe. She loved them all very much and during their childhood, Elsie would look after them, pick them up from school, care for them in the school holidays, play games, buy treats and cook their tea. Just as she had been with her own children, she was a constant person in their lives, and she loved them all as they brought her joy and happiness and as adults she has met their partners Emma, Maria, Sam and Antony and she made them feel welcomed and loved them as much as her own grandchildren.

Elsie also has five great grandchildren, Alice, Charlie, Emmellia, Ellie and Ophelia, she loved them all very much and she took great joy in seeing them, spending time with them and watching them grow. Their visits to see her brought her great joy and brightened up her day and there was much laughter and love shared. In these last few years, she had photos of her great grandchildren in her living room and every day she would greet them in the morning and sing hello to them. As a Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother, she was always loving, kind, and caring, she would always be there to offer comfort, put her arms around us or put a reassuring hand on ours, smile, tell us that everything would be ok, she would do anything to help, she never judged but she would be honest and straight forward and her home was always a place of love and comfort.

If there were words of advice that she would want her children, grandchildren and great children to remember and live by it would be this:

- Be Kind, Be Fair and Truthful
- Have fun
- Show love not anger
- Forgive
- Keep going, never, never give up.

Elsie would also want her family to know that she is with them always, in your hearts and mind, she is there always.

Elsie attended St. Joseph's Mission for the Deaf in the 1980s and was a regular attendee at the Deaf Club and Mass at St. Joseph's in Moss Side, later moving to St. Patrick's. Elsie worked hard to support the Deaf Club and served as Chairperson for several years. She took on the role naturally, yet always in an unassuming way. A sensible and pragmatic person, Elsie often acted as a peace-maker, but she was also the chief instigator in encouraging others to pursue positive actions. Under her gentle and loving care, the Deaf community flourished.

Elsie had a large circle of friends; she fully embraced life and was often the last to leave the party. She would spend many hours meeting friends in town. Among her closest friends were Mary Beswick and Pauline O'Toole. Elsie was always planning outings, visiting the hairdresser, going to the chiroprapist, or meeting for tea and cake—and, of course, the occasional whisky with Mary. Elsie's friend, Peter Broadbent, was also there to bring her to the Deaf Club, offering support and friendship.

In the past two years, Pauline, Maria, Peter, Anne, Mary, and Paula made regular visits to Elsie at her home. Their time, love, and care were greatly appreciated and always brightened Elsie's day, making her final years special and filled with love.

Elsie was a true leader who ensured that everyone felt valued, respected, and appreciated. She had a special talent for resolving awkward situations. For example, in the late 1990s or early 2000s, Peter (then Fr. Peter) struggled to encourage Deaf people to attend Benediction. Elsie suggested to Peter that it would be better to have a half-hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament before Mass. This idea proved successful, and it has continued ever since.

Elsie always centered her faith in Jesus Christ. Her deep understanding of Jesus as the Shepherd allowed her to take on the role of a shepherdess, serving the Deaf community for so many years. Now, Elsie looks down upon us and prays for us all, continually drawing our attention to Jesus Christ, our Shepherd.