

## *Gerald's Column* *by Gerald Fitton*

Jill, who has been my dearest friend since she stole my heart forty one years ago, died in the local Hospice on the 27th January 1999 after a two year struggle against Cancer.

Although you might not believe it, I am, by nature, a shy person so, at the Acorn Shows when Colton Software invited us onto their stand, it was Jill and not I who got to know many of you as something more than a name on our database. When your letters came in it was Jill who would remind me of who you were, the way you used your Archimedes computer, your families and your hobbies! Also it was she who remembered the things you said to her about me!

It was the same with the telephone calls you made. When Jill picked up the 'phone several minutes of social chat would ensue before she would call me to answer the technical question you wanted answering. Many of the letters which we received contained personal references which Jill would explain to me and suggest an appropriate answer.

Jill and I have shared so many experiences. These range from our 1959 holiday in Cornwall on a newly acquired Lambretta scooter to watching Placido Domingo in such exotic places as the Arena de Verona a few years ago. We have shared the joy of seeing our son, David, grow from a newborn baby to a mature 33 year old with three wonderful children. We have shared the sadness we both felt when Jill's friend Mary died early last year. We have shared the pleasure of your company, and that of the Acorn fraternity, at the many Acorn Shows we have attended. She will be missed, not only by me and her family but by many of you as well.

I would like to share with you a poem by Canon Scott Holland (1847 - 1918) which Jill and I found in the Church Shop at Beverley Minster. Not only have I found it a great comfort but it has the merit of expressing the way I feel as I write this today.

*Death is nothing at all...  
I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you.  
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.  
Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way you always used.  
Put no difference in your tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.  
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.  
Let it be spoken without effort, without the ghost of a shadow on it.  
Life means all that it ever meant.  
It is the same as it ever was; there is absolutely unbroken continuity.  
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?  
I am waiting for you for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner.  
All is well.*

'Call me by my old familiar name'. My familiar name for Jill was 'Sunshine' because, when I was with her everything became so much brighter and the world became a Wonderland of magical things. As we grew together over the years it no longer required her presence but just thinking of her, as I am now, invokes that magic spell.

It was, and still is my belief that, as the years have brought us closer together, part of Jill's spirit has become interwoven with mine and part of mine with hers.

Of course, I am in love with her and shall be for ever.

I have been asked by those who remember Jill with affection or simply gratitude whether donations to a charity would be an appropriate way of thanking Jill for the help she has given you directly or through the support she has given me in responding to your enquiries. Jill and I would like you send your donation to The Prospect Foundation, Moormead Road, Wroughton, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN4 9BY referring to Jill by her full name, Jill Kemp Fitton. The Prospect Foundation is a charitable organisation dedicated to caring for those who are terminally ill and giving support to their friends and their relatives. It is totally dependent on donations for its existence. The treatment afforded to both Jill and I could not have been bettered. Jill remarked that the service far exceeded that of a five star hotel and that all the staff without exception were totally sincere and dedicated to the service they gave. We are most grateful to them.