

## **IVY de MUSSSENDE MORGAN**

### **An appreciation. Caroline Dalton**

Ivy Morgan, who died aged 100, lived in Wheatley, at Mulberry Court from 1943 and at Chestnuts, Park Hill from 1962. She was the lynchpin of family life and an enthusiastic volunteer in the community, especially in Holton church. Married and widowed twice, she had no children but she maintained strong connections with a tribe of nephews, nieces and their offspring, including the step-children of her sister Molly. Had she been so inclined, she could have written the definitive manual on how to be an aunt. Ivy was born Ivy Leathes in Herringfleet, Suffolk but spent her youth in Warborough. She often spoke about boating at 'Shilly Bridge' and in old age a favourite outing was to have lunch at the hotel overlooking the River Thames and Shillingford Bridge. She was educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College and Reading University, where she studied Agriculture and Dairying and gained a First Aid certificate. Her university career was however cut short by ill-health and she left without graduating. Her first marriage, to Rev Anthony Wright, chaplain of Turner's Court Boys' Reformatory ended abruptly when ten weeks after the wedding, he died of an infection and her mother very soon followed him. Ivy threw herself into voluntary work becoming Air Raid Warden at Turner's Court and driving the Red Cross Ambulance in Wallingford.

In 1943, Ivy moved to Mulberry Court and the following year she joined the Oxfordshire Branch of the Red Cross as Transport Officer. Ivy also became a voluntary Welfare Officer at the Military Hospital in Holton, where she met her second husband, Lt. Col. Donald Morgan. They married in 1948 and this marriage lasted until Donald's death in 1970. Donald encouraged Ivy's pastime of serious skiing in the Swiss Alps, which only ended when she suffered an accident. It left her wearing a surgical corset for the rest of her life. Donald and Ivy gave a holiday home to nephews, whose parents were working overseas. They also opened both their houses to many nonrelatives, who needed temporary refuge. In Wheatley, Ivy was a founder member of the Bullingdon Disabled Club and the Not-So-Young Club and ran a troop of girl guides. In the early '70's, she started to give help with reading at the primary school, latterly in Wendy Whittaker's class. This commitment only ceased when she stopped driving at the age of 97 and could no longer go there.

Ivy was a magistrate on the bench at Thame from 1957 until 1978. In order to master the technical side of driving

offences, she took and passed an advanced driving course. She also visited prisoners in Oxford Prison.

With the help of a devoted rota of carers, Ivy remained in her own beloved home until the end. Her last years were somewhat overshadowed by the fact that many old friends predeceased her and the death of her last dog, Jack in 2007 was an especially hard blow. On the other hand, a spate of weddings among great nephews and great nieces gave her much joy. She celebrated her 100th birthday in August 2008 with two parties, one for friends and a second for the family. She played her last game of bridge a fortnight before her death and almost to the last attempted the quick crossword in The Times. In Ivy Morgan we caught a glimpse of the best features of the Edwardian age, hospitality, generosity, loyalty and friendship.