

OBITUARY

Christine Kelly (Day), 1948-2005

Chris was born and brought up in London. Indeed, after leaving school, her first venture into the world of work was as a British Rail clerk within the capital. Her first job in her adopted town was a secretarial post with Kraft Foods when that company was better known as Alfred Bird and Sons. Subsequent employment with Cherwell District Council claimed some twenty years of her life. Had she lived a few months longer she would have qualified for the long service award that she so richly deserved.

Although Banbury was something of an adopted home, its character allowed her to explore a considerable interest in local social history. Maybe it was this fascination with the role of individuals that encouraged her to seek a post at Banbury Museum.

It was whilst she worked for the museum at its former home at 8 Horse Fair that many people, including a large number of Historical Society members, benefited from the care and attention to detail which were her hallmarks. Always thoroughly at home here, Chris gave the impression that she had unlimited time for every enquirer and took a huge pride in finding a way through every issue and problem: older people especially were impressed by an overwhelming kindness. Whether one was just dropping in for a coffee and a chat with friends or with more serious intent, everyone, irrespective of age, was treated to that winning smile and gentle voice. Her colleague and friend of some fifteen years, Julie Rose, could only recall about two occasions when Chris was cross about something.

In Horse Fair days, Chris was the one who most personified the spirit of the place. Within its complex of rooms and passageways if there was somewhere that was exclusive to Chris it was probably the cupboard under the stairs. Here her capacious bag would often yield up its secrets in the shape of some collector's item she could not resist or had bought for a friend just in case it was what they were looking for. On one occasion this cupboard became a retreat when a visit from the T.V. personality and astrologer Russell Grant resulted in uncontrollable laughter. He and Chris had been filmed eating Banbury Cakes and attempts to suppress the giggles caused her to blow out her cheeks and reveal something of the contents of her mouth.