

Chapter 24

Betty Kathleen Ritchie (nee Turner)



Betty Kathleen Turner in 1927

My sister Betty was born on 24th September 1916 in Whitstable Kent. I suppose that it could be said that, until she got married, she was always to some extent in my shadow. If she was it was because she liked it that way. Shadow or not, she was her own person with her own views, likes and dislikes. As children we played happily together for hours on end. The occasional spat was soon over and forgotten.

She was loyal to a fault, a virtue that she carried with her throughout her life. She was also patient in the extreme. As a child, she expressed her loyalty to me and her reaction to anyone who said anything about me was immediate; she went straight for them and nobody got away with it. She was average at school but expressed herself well in writing. After she left school, she trained as a clothes alteration hand. She was extremely good at that job and she could also make clothes very well.

She had tremendous energy and everything she did, she did well and quickly. On holiday she would get up early and walk for miles along the beach all by herself and always before breakfast. I think that in those periods she felt free and only aware of herself. Her chief sports interest was playing tennis at which she was very good. Her ambition was to beat me and she did this just the once. Once was enough for this modest lady. She would join in other games but tennis was her forte.

During the war, with her husband away overseas, she took on the job of postman. No-one could understand how she managed to deliver the letters so quickly. She had to demonstrate her methods to the supervisor, but he couldn't keep up!



**Betty Turner
in the 1930s**

She married a friend of mine, George Ritchie, in 1938. Hoping to join him in Egypt, she was stopped by the onset of war. Sadly she never had children of her own but made up for this with the care and kindness she gave to my children and, in time, to theirs. She and George came to Leeds in 1946 after he had left the RAF. She was never truly happy in the North and, particularly towards the end of her life, pined to go back to Canterbury. I believe that she felt that, what



51 Leysholme Crescent in 1988

roots she had, lay in Kent. One of the most important contributions Betty made was when our Mother was unable to carry on in Canterbury looking after herself. She helped to clear the house and moved Mum up to live in Leeds with her and George. It was hard work as Mum became quite confused but Betty cheerfully carried on and did her utmost to make her happy. That was our Bet, asking nothing and giving a lot.



Betty & George at home in 1991

For me, the real Betty died some time earlier. In September 2000 I went to see her and she didn't recognise me. That was heart breaking. Her husband, George, had died two weeks earlier but I don't think that she knew. It was all so sad.

May she rest in peace.