

## Obituary

Margaret Drury

**17 January 1928 – 7 December 2019**

Growing up in Doncaster with her younger sister Isobel, Margaret was educated at Doncaster High School for Girls. The first member of her family to apply to university, she read Classics at Queen Mary's College, London, followed by a PGCE at the Institute of Education. She very much enjoyed living in the capital. Although she often described herself as 'no scholar', her many school prizes, a scholarship to university from the Company of Drapers and the Helen Morris prize at the end of her first year, as well as other university awards, belie this statement. In addition, newly mobilised troops took over her grammar school for a few months at the outbreak of WW2, so that pupils remained at home and later had lessons on a part-time basis at other locations in Doncaster. This hiatus in tuition had no detrimental effect on her academic success. Amusingly, when the school re-opened to pupils in 1940, it had to be redecorated, owing to the inappropriate graffiti left by the troops!

Margaret taught classics at girls' grammar schools - Whyteleaf, Surrey, and then Prendergast, Lewisham - before becoming Head of York College for Girls in 1969 at the comparatively young age of 41. She held this post until she retired in the 1980s. During her teaching practice at Bromley High School, the youngest member of the Classics staff had been particularly kind and helpful. This was Joan Silverwood (later Newey) who introduced Margaret to the ARLT's Weekend Course (the forerunner of the Refresher Day) in 1950 and to the Summer Schools from 1953. A close friendship spanning almost 65 years developed between them until Joan died in December, 2014. Margaret soon took office, secretary from 1958–64 and President from 1971–3, unusually having become a Vice President before the latter role. Her article covering 1950–69 in the Commemoration of 100 years of the ARLT is typical of her beautiful prose style - precise, humane, fluent, while accurately conveying the flavour of that era. Margaret was delighted to be well enough to fulfil her ambition of coming to Charterhouse School in 2011 for the Centenary Summer School, which turned out to be her last. Nevertheless, she continued to show great interest in

the ARLT, always particularly pleased to have a phone call with news of its members and activities and to receive minutes of committee meetings and AGMs, so that she still felt in touch. Her thoughtfulness was shown in that more than once, aware of the price and not using email, she sent books of stamps to cover the postage costs.

As well as being a committed worshipper at York Minster, Margaret was a volunteer there for many years, regularly manning the visitor information desk. Like many classicists, she greatly enjoyed cryptic crosswords and won competitions for the same. To reverse her lack of science qualifications, in retirement she took O Level Human Biology, gaining a top grade. She also joined Mensa. Her kindly and attentive listening skill was of much value in her 37 years working as a Samaritan where she held senior roles within her branch. Family was very important to her; as aunt and great aunt, she took a huge interest in the younger generations, making them all feel special. Her provisional driving licence, issued during the war, became a full one without the need for a test. When she bought her first car in 1962, she employed a driving instructor to check her competence and passed with flying colours.

Cognitive impairment and frailty took their toll so that Margaret spent her last two years in care homes where a sterling job in frequent visiting, as well as travelling from Doncaster to York to deal with Margaret's house, was performed by Isobel and Ian, her sister and brother-in-law. To them, their children and grandchildren we express our sympathy for their loss.

Poignantly for us, she was the last survivor of that wonderful band of post-war luminaries who gave so generously of their classical scholarship and practical teaching tips to encourage and inspire the less experienced in order to produce a new generation of enthusiasts. The ARLT owes her a great debt of gratitude. We shall long remember her gracious smile, wry humour and pithy comments and we are grateful for having known her.

Lynda Goss