

Annely Surry R.I.P.

On Tuesday 6th July, 2010, we gathered in the Old Church for the funeral of Anneliese Surry R.I.P.



Anneliese, or Annely as she preferred to be called, was born in 1924 in Cologne. She had a brother, Andreas, who died in 1989. She started to study Business Studies at the University of Cologne but because of circumstances, partly the war, she completed only 4 terms.

I love the story which Annely told of how she met her husband Arthur. She was out in the countryside, riding her bike in 1947 and had a puncture. She got off her bike and realised that she hadn't brought with her a puncture kit to effect a repair. Suddenly, a young soldier appeared on his bike and immediately offered to help her.

It was the start of something big!

Later that year, Arthur brought Annely home and they married. Sadly, Arthur died in 1998 but not before they celebrated 50 years of happy marriage together. They had no children, but Annely kept in close touch with her nephew Andreas and her nieces Annely and Marion, who are here today. Annely was a frequent visitor to her brother's children and loved telling us at Holy Cross all about her visits and the things she got up to in Cologne.

Visiting the family grave was obviously very important to her and her sense of loyalty was very deep.

In England, Annely quickly adapted to life in a foreign country. She obtained work as a Receptionist at a local Opticians, run by a Mr Howard, now very elderly and living in Australia. Despite retaining a German accent, her English was very good and very clear.

In 1974, Councillor Arthur Surry was appointed as the Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing, and Annely became his Mayoress. She told me that she really enjoyed the Mayoral year and valued the insights which it gave her into the lives of so many people of Ealing Borough. She and Arthur relished the opportunity to encourage local people in the many different aspects of work. A visit from the Mayor is in fact a statement of how much value the community places on the work of so many people, often unseen or unsung,

both paid and voluntary. It is a way of publicly recognising their efforts and thanking them. Arthur and Annely did all this with conviction and energy.

A few years ago, Annely lost her Mayoress's chain of office in a house burglary. She was very sad to lose the souvenir of her time with Arthur. She was really delighted when Councillor Ian Potts, himself then the Mayor of Ealing, made the effort to have a duplicate made for her, and paid for it out of his Mayoral expenses. She cherished her memories of that Mayoral year very deeply.

Annely was a very active person!

She was a regular at Holy Cross Church and loved going to the Greenford Baptist Church Wednesday Fellowship. She was a member of the German Circle at Greenford Community Centre and a member of the German YMCA. She supported the Salvation Army and the NSPCC. She was a bit of a culture-vulture and loved telling of the concerts and other activities she had attended.

Annely was a very generous person, and liked nothing better to use her skills at handicraft for fundraising. She was always planning a stall, to be placed in the Church, to sell all sorts of things she had made or found and these fundraising efforts were very successful. She was rightly proud of the success of these efforts.

Annely was a modest person, and always thought of herself as an ordinary person, giving herself no airs and graces, nor having an inflated opinions.

She was a vital person, bubbling away with happiness and life, and always optimistic. Her nieces said that she was a woman with two hearts, one German, one English. She certainly valued her position as an honorary English person but she never forgot or lost touch with the land of her origins. She had a collection of CDs of German songs and often sang aloud to the music when at home.

She was happy by nature, generous with her time and it was essential to her personality that she was there to help, if help was needed. She was hardly ever sick until recently and those who attended her death bed will know how she showed patience and courage as she approached the end.

We will all miss Annely, in many ways. She was unique and is irreplaceable.

Cologne Cathedral,
in Annely's home city

