

Sally Ann Bidwell – Eulogy

I would like to start by saying that I am honoured to have been asked to deliver this eulogy on behalf of Sally's family, having first met Sally over 10 years ago when I first started working with the High Lodge business.

Sally was probably one of the most remarkable people you will have ever met, Sally was kind, caring and thoughtful towards others, and would always literally do anything for anybody.

Sally was an amazing, loving and supportive wife to John for 39 years, they were the perfect team, John & Sally first met when they were 15 years old and both working at a pram manufacturing company in Lowestoft, John remembers it well and for him it was definitely love at first sight. Throughout her life Sally supported John as he travelled around the world achieving great things in his truly remarkable shooting career.

Last year Sally (and I) accompanied John to the Suffolk Sports Award being held at Ipswich, where John had been shortlisted for the Lifetime Achievement Award. I shall never forget how proud Sally was when John was announced as the winner and everyone cheered.

At home Sally was the devoted house wife and in business Sally was the one who totally supported all of John's visions and business development ideas, although not always agreeing with them all, Sally always kept John in line when times were hard and was always the one who worried ensuring that they kept on an even keel, whilst John was the eternal optimist and dreamer.

High Lodge was John's dream when it first opened at Henham, although Sally was not initially keen on this venture, but like all of John's ventures Sally stood by him and went to work running the kitchen making teas, coffee and her famous Homemade sausage rolls and cakes, something which Sally will be remembered for by customers & friends today! (Yes definitely)

Sally worked alongside John developing the High Lodge Leisure Ltd business to its current level of success. Recently Sally took a step back from working full time in the business to oversee the restaurant & catering side of the business and dedicate more of her time to her love of interior design with the Holiday Lodges.

Sally would spend a lot of her time working on the detail of the internal finish and finding the appropriate items for the lodges to enable her to achieve her ultimate goal

of creating the 'Wow' factor, which according to many guest testimonials to date has been achieved.

Sally set very high standards at High Lodge and last year these standards were recognised at the prestigious National Hosesasons Conference, where High Lodge was awarded the Diamond Award for the East of England Customer Care category. For "Exceptional quality and outstanding customer service", a true testament to Sally's leadership.

Away from the business world of High Lodge, Sally was a wonderful mother to Helen and Jane, in the early days Sally spent her time making the girls dresses when they were young, Sally's natural talent soon attracted the attention of her nieces who also wanted dresses just like the girls 'Jane recalls floral patterned dresses which she and Helen and cousin Julie wore, each had their own initial in a large lace letter displayed on the front'.

Sally was so kind she would do all she could for the people in her life, she cared for her mother and father and her in laws when they needed support in their later lives.

Another special person in Sally's life was her brother Tony – according to Tony they shared some good times together, many that Tony he will never forget, in particular the times he spent with Sally on Lowestoft Beach and in the Beach Hut where they also spent much time with their parents.

Yes Sally had time for everyone her nieces, nephew and their families.

Sally loved the simple things in life only really wanted to see her family happy, she adored her grandchildren and would do anything for them, especially babysitting as often as she could,. Sally was great help Jane and Helen providing her daughters with great support and guidance, helping to turn them into the wonderful caring mothers they are today..

Sally adored her family and spent much time with them, having seen the girls marry and have their families. Sally always said how lucky she was to have such lovely sons in law, Andrew & Robert,

Sally was such a loving and caring Grandma and Harley and Abbie loved her so much they had such good fun with her. Grandma Sally would teach them the simple things and play the simplest of games which they would enjoy so very much. According to the girls you would always hear the children laugh & giggle, as little children do, in the presence of Grandma and even the girls would laugh when Grandma put on her funny voices behind the children's teddies and dolls.

Sally worked hard in her life however she also found time to enjoy the company of her many friends, particularly according to the girls, with shopping trips.

Sally's favourite past time was her garden although a little large to look after at times she enjoyed keeping her garden looking bright and tidy including her fish pond, Sally was also a very good decorator, taught by her father she would keep on top of the home as well as High Lodge (a huge task) making sure they were always fresh and clean.

Holidays for Sally were mostly spent during the shoots which John would attend all over the world, so Sally visited many places and enjoyed her time with John and their many shooting friends.

One of Sally's other personal characteristics was a very distinctive laugh which would light up any room. Sally's laugh would often make others follow suit spontaneously; Sally also had a very good sense of humour and certainly recognised the more amusing side of human behaviour.

Another personal characteristic was the way Sally always presented herself smartly in fact she was a classy lady and took great pride in her appearance. She was also very honest and would say exactly what she thought, if she felt it was appropriate to. You could always talk to Sally she had lots of respect for the people around her, she was very understanding, always a good listener and very gracious in her praise.

Sally was also an amazing judge of character, it was always important to let Sally interview any potential recruits to High Lodge, regardless of the position, because within a very short time Sally could spot the right person for the business, time and time again. Sally's natural instincts were indeed spot on.

In summarising this brief account of Sally's life it is true to say that Sally was a wonderful person who had a heart of gold, she touched so many people's hearts and will be missed by us all, she did not deserve to be taken from us so soon and so suddenly, but we know that Sally's spirit will live on, in fact Sally continued to be a wonderful & caring person even to the end, by donating her organs to others, Sally's organs have saved the lives of four other people. Sally's spirit will also live on at High Lodge a true testament & example of someone we should all look up to and respect.