

## Mary Bayston 1923 to 2021

*Mary and Jack Bayston were well loved and respected members of our Church, local and farming communities. Thank you to their family for sharing the eulogy read at Mary's funeral.*



Mary and her sister Dolly

Blanche Mary Bayston, known affectionately to many as “Auntie Mary”, was born at Barmby Grange, Eastington on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1923. She was the first born of Sid and Dolly Atkinson. The following year Mary's sister, Dolly arrived and in 1929 the family moved to the next-door farm, Bloomhill, where the four of them would live for next 38 years.

Mary and Dolly went to school in Eastington – they walked across to Barmby Grange to join their cousins and they all walked the two miles to the village together – packed lunch in hand. After leaving school at the age of 14 Mary worked at home on the farm. She preferred farm work to domestic chores and milking the cows became her speciality. In those days it was a physically tough life on the farm, with little mechanisation.

After the war Mary was a keen member of Howden Young Farmers Club. On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1946 she won the “clean milking” competition and in 1949 she took second prize in the senior poultry trussing competition.

Early one Saturday morning in August 1967, Mary married Jack Bayston in Eastington church. Then began life at Tile Shed Farm, Escrick where Mary would live for the next 50 years.

Mary and Jack loved working together on the farm, particularly with the sheep and their sheep dogs. They also had a good social life. They remained actively involved with young farmers for many years as Jack was club leader at Escrick. They loved attending agricultural shows, The Great Yorkshire in particular, and sheep dog trials were a favourite day out.



Sadly, Jack passed away in 1987. Due to the generosity of the old-fashioned tenancy, Mary was able to remain in the home she cherished. Helped by her large network of family, friends, and neighbours she got on with life. As she would say in any difficult situation “it can’t be helped, we just have to make the best of it”. She has always been happy and proud to be part of the Bayston family.

Mary was a good listener, never judgemental. She welcomed all visitors and always made time to talk. It seemed that Mary knew everyone in Yorkshire and beyond! She made the effort to keep in touch and many reciprocated because it was such a joy to do so.

Her trusty pale blue AGA cooked many an apple pie, scone, and Victoria sponge for the delight of visitors. It also baked lovely celebration cakes that friends and family would request for their special occasions. She was a great cook and a generous host. Mary also loved her garden – flowers and vegetables alike. She was always good for a gardening tip or shared plant if you needed one.

Mary rarely left Yorkshire but there was a particular adventure that Mary recounted many times – her train journey to London to see Phantom of the Opera.

Mary delivered the Parish Magazine around the rural community and over the years she enjoyed many a fundraiser, WI, and Country Women's event. In the 1980's when the new local branch of Farm Women's Club needed somewhere to meet, Mary was the host. This group of ladies remained an absolute highlight for her up until a year ago when social gatherings ended abruptly. Mary was such a good companion and friend. Always good for a story but never a gossip.

Mary retained her driving licence well into old age – probably longer than she should have! Long into her 80's she would drive to Eastington to have Sunday dinner with Dolly. And Christmas dinner with Dolly was a long-standing tradition.

For the last three years Mary has been very well cared for in Somerset House, Wheldrake. A firm favourite with all the staff, she will be sadly missed. Mary was always highly complimentary about the care team and the food - chef certainly made a special effort to serve Mary's favourite meals.

She avidly read the Yorkshire Post every day – keeping up with the news and market reports. She loved having the telephone in her room so she could speak to her wide circle of friends and family on a regular basis. Blessed with sound mind, she remained an excellent conversationalist to the end – always interested in others and sharing stories old and new.

Just over a week ago she slipped away peacefully to join her beloved Jack. It is hard to do justice to 97 years in one short eulogy but hopefully we have provided a flavour of a very kind and generous lady. The Corona virus restricted number of you able to be present today will undoubtedly have many of your own special memories of Auntie Mary and there will be a multitude of absent friends smiling broadly as they remember her with much fondness.

March 2021

