

Eulogy – 19 July 2013 Evelyn Betty Crilly 7/4/1927 – 13/7/2013

Betty was born Evelyn Betty NEALE on 7 April 1927 in Kyabram to parents John Spencer Neale and Evelyn Mary Neale nee Moller. She was raised on her parent's dairy farm at Mason Road Girgarre and in 1930 when her parents sold the farm they temporarily moved to England. Mum's first sister Patricia (Pat) was born in England and in 1931 Betty and Pat together with their mother returned to her grandparent Moller's farm at McColl Road in Girgarre until their father Jack returned 18 months later. Another sister Rosemary and brother John were later additions to the family. Betty adored her father and grandparents. Betty was schooled in Girgarre, leaving at aged 14. Whilst at school morning chores were expected and between her and Pat, they milked 4 cows before and after school each day. If they dawdled home from school in the afternoon the cows would be waiting for them. According to Pat, Betty was never in trouble, she always did as she was expected and was always the good girl. When she left school, she was employed by Lorna and Jack Atkins near the Girgarre School, undertaking home duty responsibilities. She also did similar duties at Marj Clarks.

Betty would reminisce of her fond days at Girgarre. She had memorable recollections of riding by bicycle from her home in Girgarre to Stanhope, a distance of about 8kms to go to the pictures and attend dances returning home on moonlit evenings. Other entertainment meant meeting at the Girgarre store to catch the bus for dances at Kyabram when she was 16 - 17 years old. Betty was sent by her mother at the age of 17 in 1944 to work at St Luke's Babies Home in Bendigo. She wasn't happy about the decision but went along. Perhaps her mother knew that Betty would need good training for what was to come! After 2 years in Bendigo with the assistance of her Grandmother Annie Moller who was a Life Governor at the Mooroopna Hospital, Betty obtained employment at the hospital tending to the needs of the 3 resident doctors. She then relocated to the Kyabram Bush Nursing Hospital. Betty married Les Crilly from Carag Carag in the Church of England Kyabram on 23 October 1948. Their first son John born in August 1949 was followed with four more boys Colin in 1951, Neville 1952, Laurence 1957, and Noel 1959. That training at the babies' home was now a very handy skill! Whilst raising her 5 boys, Betty worked at the Kyabram cannery and later at the local primary school doing school cleaning for approximately 16 years. The saying "Life was not meant to be easy" certainly rang true for Betty but she found great joy in her children, later her grand children and of recent years the increasing number of great grand children. She raised five boys almost single handed without them getting into too much trouble, or that she knew of anyway!

Betty didn't involve herself in too many activities. Her family was what occupied her time. She did however later in life enjoy playing lawn bowls and indoor carpet bowls. When she had a fall her doctor said she was too old for a knee reconstruction. She didn't play much after this as her playing style was hampered. Betty was a wonderful cook serving up many a fine meal accompanied by wonderful baked desserts.

Over an estimated 35 years Betty had great joy in clocking up frequent flyer points travelling regularly to Western Australia catching up with sons Neville and Laurence and family, along with grandchildren and great grandchildren. Even in recent weeks and at 86 years of age she was still planning to fly over to the west. Betty thoroughly enjoyed the company of her sister in law Shirley, who was found regularly chauffeuring her around on shopping trips, appointments and friend or relation visits. They were pretty thick together and if you rang and asked, "Where were you today when I called earlier?" she would answer "Shirley and I had things to do". Her sister Pat and brother-in-law Doug Pettifer also provided Betty with great support throughout her life. Doug would get many a call requesting some help in some way. Legatees in Graham James and his wife Gwen were also great comfort to Betty and provided valued assistance. She was a regular to the Kyabram Club for a meal and chatter with the bowling ladies on Friday nights. Betty never wanted to be the centre of attention nor the life of the party, but she wanted to be there. She was happiest when surrounded by family and friends. Recent poor health was making life a little difficult for Betty but she was still cheerful in spirit and her health was not sufficiently bad to be affecting her cheerful disposition and her sudden passing was unexpected.

Betty had a great love of her father Jack Neale who passed away in 1962, and she is now buried next to her dearly loved dad in the Rushworth cemetery.

A light has gone out without so much as a flicker, and all we have left is the precious memory of how brightly it burned and the warmth it gave us.