

FUNERAL CEREMONY

Janet Ann Potter

Date of Death – 22nd June 2026

Date of Ceremony – 15th July 2026

Time of Ceremony – 12.

Venue – Park Crematorium

Entrance to chapel – Telegraph Road by Dire Straits start track at quite section midway.

Introduction

Good Afternoon. I would like to thank you for being here today for this ceremony, as we remember and also say our goodbyes to Jan.

My name is Jane Gant, I'm a funeral celebrant and it's my privilege to be helping you today. Not everybody is able to be here in person and those that can't are able to join via a webcast and we welcome them, it makes no difference to the strength of feeling whether you are in this room or joining from elsewhere.

This is my job and as such I conduct many, many funerals and I often find myself saying the same phrases over and over again but not this time. My thoughts really and truly go out to Jan's family; her husband Roland, her daughters Sheridan and Ashleigh and grandchildren India –Lily and Kai.

I spend lots of time talking to families about the ones they have lost and I've began to realise more each day that it's the small things in life that mean the most and that are remembered always.

I sat with Roland, outside in the garden of the house that has been their home for so long now, and we chatted about today. It gave me just a small insight into Jan's life but I have to say that the overwhelming feeling that I got from him was not just of sadness but rather the feeling of gratitude. Gratitude that you have shared your lives with someone so unique.

Jan and Roland had been able to have some conversations about today which shows Jan's strength of character.

She chose the music as you can see in your order of service with each piece having special meaning.

I'm sure you will all agree that the most important part of any funeral is hearing the story of someone's life but that story is not just mine to tell so we will have two, very personal, contributions today but let me talk a little about Jan's life first.

A Londoner by birth, Jan was born in Battersea, the youngest of four children. Sheila, Beryl and John her siblings have already passed away but Jan has a multitude of nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and even great greats as there was quite a difference in age between the eldest sibling and Jan. She lived with her parents, Elsie and Bill in house that was divided into 3 with one sister and her family living on the top floor and the other sister on the bottom so there were always lots of people around.

Born as she was in 1942 some of Jan's childhood memories recalled playing on the bomb sites of London. I'm sure there are plenty of other stories though and we will no doubt hear some of them soon from Ken

In her later years Jan loved to paint but her artistic side showed much earlier. Not many people choose their secondary school based on the architecture of the building after all but Jan did! Not that she spent a huge amount of time in school as Jan contracted TB and was tutored for a good part of her schooling but exams and certificates weren't really needed for her as it turned out.

Jan's captivating looks earned a modelling contract and she made a good living even appearing on TV ads for Babycham!

During this period of her life Jan met and married Michael and had her two daughters Sheridan and Ashleigh. The young family left London behind and moved to the Thames Valley and modelling tailed off but Jan has always worked and she made the switch to reception work.

After leaving London Jan lived in Woking in a place called Mead Court and here she made a set of friends who have stayed with her ever since. Mainly all at the same stage in their lives with young families so the Mead Court Gang had a lot in common.

Keeping friends is something Jan was very good at. Her very best friend, Andi has been in her life since the early years and was in a way instrumental in her meeting Roland. We'll get to that in a moment but first let's take a small step backwards and listen to some stories of the young Jan from Ken.

Ken

Good afternoon everybody on this glorious but very sad day. These are some memories of Janet from her sister's (Sheila Hicks) children,

Christine

My memories go right back to the 50's. One incident I will never forget is when we found an injured pigeon and Janet brought it home and put it in her bedroom. She then pushed me into the room with the flapping bird and shut the door! She was so caring 😊

Auntie Janet had so much time for us all. She was more like a big sister (bossy:)) no, we loved and adored her. She would take us out for the day to local parks, the zoo and also the seaside. We tried to tell her it wasn't necessary anymore as we were all over 30 by then 😊

Auntie Janet used to teach the 3 older girls, Linda me and Trish, a song and dance routine to perform for the adults on Christmas day.

She was beautiful and unique. I will cherish my time spent with her, fun and laughter all the way.

Today is very sad for all that knew and loved auntie Janet. I loved being with her and will miss her every day.

Tricia

It was always a joy to be in the company of my aunt Janet.

Earliest memories start with her taking us for days out when we were children. One particular incident involved a day out for us girls to Box Hill. Unfortunately, my main memory is of falling down the hill and being covered in cuts and bruises and Janet was definitely not impressed because she didn't want to explain my unhappy state to mum!

Later – always happy – memories, are of meeting up with Janet and Ro for group pub lunches and snacks, always accompanied by the 2nd love of their lives, their lovely dogs!

Cathy

Always so proud such a beautiful, funny and stylish lady was my Auntie Janet.

Janet was there when I was born (I think there were more people there than Bethlehem). Janet used to tell me how I got my name, proud to say my middle name is Janet. Janet always called me littlun, can't think why!

Gary

There's lots of lovely memories I have with Aunty Janet.

The one that sticks out the most is when I done some work for her and at lunchtime she would make me lovely crusty cheese rolls with cheese she had bought from a local cheese farm. And had memorable chats.

Love you, auntie Janet x

Mandy

Auntie Janet was truly one of a kind – unique in every way, effortlessly stylish, and beautiful both inside and out.

She had a presence that lit up every room and a spirit that left a lasting impression on everyone lucky enough to know her.

Her elegance, warmth and individuality will never be forgotten.

Though she is deeply missed, her love, grace, and beautiful memories will live on in our hearts forever.

Rest peacefully, aunty Janet.

Jane

Back to Roland. When he and Jan met, he was an eager young student and she was working at the University of Surrey on their reception desk, a job which came about when her friend, Andi began a degree there.

As Roland was involved with lots of societies he spent quite a bit of time at the reception desk organising things and they soon realised there was a spark between them which only grew and they have been together ever since and married for 41 years. Roland described their wedding day as utterly perfect even all this time later and it was quite different to their initial plans. A small wedding with no fanfare was their first idea but before they knew it a wedding committee had been formed from Mead Court and they arranged everything from a reception venue to catering. Jan cleverly repurposed a Victorian nightdress and with the flowers in her hair she looked beautiful.

Adelina was the name of their first home and it was not a house but instead a 72 ft houseboat moored in West Byfleet but thankfully connected to mains water and electricity!

Quite a different way of life and fun while it lasted but soon they moved to a little cottage in Farnham. Jan and Roland have only ever lived in old properties as she still loved places with real character. The cottage soon proved to be a little small what with Sheridan and Ashleigh and their respective boyfriends visiting as well as 4 cats and 2 dogs so they moved to Oakhanger and it's been home ever since. It's a home with Jan's style everywhere you turn from her collections of ceramics to some of her artwork on the wall. Jan loved painting with acrylics and pastels and was talented but she didn't give herself enough credit.

Jan soon found work at Farnham Hospital X ray department. This type of work suited Jan down to the ground. She never wanted to have a job with too much worry or responsibility although she was certainly academically capable and definitely didn't want to bring it home with her.

Home was for her and Roland. They never needed anyone else to make them happy. They were each other's person and spent as much time together as possible going for drives or walking the dogs. Dogs have been part of Jan and Roland's life ever since they first got together and they've always been rescues. Sir Hector Woodstock was their first who came from Battersea and a series of them ever since culminating in the current 3 residents; Theo, Phaedra and Mr Bojangles.

Jan did give up work for a while and stayed at home supporting Roland as a director of his company. Jan did the lions share of the cooking and was always there to offer a listening ear or just to make tea and ensure he took a lunch break.

Leaving the house actually became a bit of an issue for Jan as she developed agoraphobia and her Dr's advice was simply to get herself a new job.

Not as easy as it sounds but Jan steeled herself to walk to the local pub, The Red Lion, for an interview and before she made it home again the job was offered to her. For 9 years Jan could be found behind the bar and acting as manager when the landlord was away. Her first boss was Alan, a rather imposing figure of a man who could sometimes express himself rather robustly, but he was no match for Jan, and she could more than hold her own, something he respected her for immensely. Sadly, Alan is no longer with us but his wife, Angela is here today, Jan loved this role and soon got to know lots of locals adding them to her extensive list of friends.

She and Roland did very much enjoy spending time together but it wasn't always just the two of them. Close friends from the time of the houseboat Andy and Genevieve shared many holidays with them. Cornwall and Crete were their favourite destinations but they have also stayed with friends in Spain and been to America through Roland's work.

Wherever she was Jan always looked good. She absolutely loved clothes and shopped all over the place; from high street chains to charity shops and it's fair to say she definitely has a larger collection than Roland does.

This seems like the perfect time to pause for a while and listen to some music while you spend some time reflecting on Jan's contribution to your life.

Reflection Music – Where Do We Go From Here by Blackmore's Night 4.05

I've told bits of Jan's story today but really it's all of your story too as the threads that bind you together make the tapestry of Jan's life and they are threads that bind, threads I like to think of as love and compassion. There are many different kinds of love but the love that binds friends and family together through the ups and downs of life is one of the very strongest. Jan inspired this love in others and none more so than Roland and he would like to talk to you now about their lives together.

Roland

First encounters with my beautiful Jan were in 1981 at the student's union in Guildford where she worked as a receptionist, and it was pretty much love at first sight for me. I was often at her desk to make or take calls, but found myself making excuses to go there whenever I could.

People said I had no chance of getting together with Jan, and I tended to agree, but after a while I realised that she was struggling in her marriage, and she did seem to enjoy my company.

She had a lot of friends and had fun times like an impromptu trip to Paris with Andi, playing various sports and hosting and attending many parties. There were also family holidays to places like the Seychelles where she and Ashleigh witnessed a man cutting down a tree in his garden that went straight through his roof not to mention all the huge creepy-crawlies that were not Jan's favourite thing. Then a trip to Crete where she stayed on a roundabout for many circuits because it went round the wrong way and she was worried about coming off in the right lane. Despite all that she was often quite lonely and no longer had someone she thought of as her soul-mate, but now she had me ready and willing to fulfil that role.

Our first "dates" took place in the projection booth at the film society where I became a very distracted projectionist. If the film jammed, the audience noticed significant delays, because I had other things on my mind. It was a very cosy place to get to know each other well, with a free film into the bargain. I knew Jan was older than me but didn't realise by how much until later. She thought it would be too much of an age gap, but I couldn't keep away, and people could see that we were a perfect match for each other.

When I went back to Kent for the Christmas holidays, Jan drove through thick snow just to see me. I met her near a phone box as she had no idea exactly where I lived. We towed her car out of a snow drift, and that marked the start of our adventures together. I realised then that this was a lot more than a fling, and later Jan would spend evenings in my student accommodation teaching me to cook delicious meals and listening to music.

Jan moved out of her family home, and I met her on the road carrying everything she thought she needed in 2 carrier bags. Material things never impressed her, which was just as well starting up with a penniless student. We bought a clapped out Triumph Herald from a field and she drove up to her sister Beryl in Bedford, amusing a fellow motorist when the steering wheel came off while pulling away. Unphased, she just shoved it back in the right place and carried on.

By April the following year we had moved into our first home together, sharing a bungalow in Tongham, with another couple. We had Jan's dog Teco, but she was 16 and sadly wasn't with us for long. We soon adopted a kitten Tin Tin, then a puppy Woodstock from Battersea Dog's home and so started our new family, Jan, me, Woody and Tinny. Four in a bed soon became five when the other couple split, and we were left with Padding-ton the Old English sheepdog for a while. A camping trip to Studland Bay meant all 5 of us sleeping in a quiet spot in a VW beetle. A walk along the beach became a nightmare when the dogs wrecked a number of picnics while playing and stole children's ice creams. It was little disasters like this that had us dissolving with laughter for years to come. Laughter was one of the things that we shared along with our love of animals, the same music and our fundamental beliefs. One of the big things we had in common was being happy to rough it where necessary and make the best of what we had however little it was. Our idea of a meal out was a bag of chips, parked on Albert Bridge in London.

Jan's two girls stayed at the family home and would visit us, but soon moved out to places of their own. We went with them on holidays to Devon and Wales, and on various road trips. We also spent holidays with my Mum, and it was on one of those that we discovered our beloved Trevaunance Cove in Cornwall, where we have been going now for over 40 years.

We spent quite a lot of time in those days visiting Jan's old haunts in London, and often dropped in on her sister Sheila (or "biscuit barrel" as Woody called her), and met up with other members of the family there. They immediately made me feel part of their extensive family, which as an only child was a new and welcome experience for me.

As time went on, we both started to prefer being in the countryside around this area. When it was time to leave the rented room, we got a loan to buy a houseboat called Adelina. We had two and a half very happy years there, despite the boat being more holes than wood. It was another adventure. Once when Ashleigh came to visit, the gangplank slipped down the side of the boat with her on it. She scrambled into the boat, and we were marooned onboard until my friend Mark came to the rescue from Kent to help me lift the gangplank. One evening when I was away at my Mum's, Jan was watching a horror film and there was a sudden banging on the canal side of the boat. She was really spooked but steeled herself to look out the window only to see two ducks mating up against the boat. All things we laughed about a lot over the years, maybe not so much at the time though!

Before the boat decided to sink, we moved to an 18th century cottage in Farnham, with no bathroom and a WC in a shed. While I tackled wiring, plumbing and gas pipes, Jan started to get very good at painting and wallpapering, and arranged the small front garden so beautifully, it got compliments from passers-by. By this time, we had another dog and three more cats, so after a couple of years we needed somewhere with a bit more space, and found our final home in Oakhanger. Again, Jan took on all the wallpapering and painting, while working and still doing all the cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. Her energy was boundless it seemed and she made the new house into the home that we loved, and she still found time to plant out beds every Spring and fill the garden with colour.

As well as supporting me in my company, Jan volunteered at village events, often to be seen in the village hall kitchen. As so many people have said she always had a bright smile, and she could light up a room with her presence.

Over the years we visited Crete and other parts of Greece regularly with our friends Andy and Genevieve, and also Cornwall most years. For Jan's 50th birthday we went to Italy, to Venice, the Dolomites, Lake Garda and Verona. We went to California on an extended business trip and while cruising up and down Hollywood Boulevard we laughed because there was a definite shortage of "beautiful people". We were down the coast with the dogs nearly every weekend and were very content with just each other's company and always agreed that we had the best life together.

Jan was the light of my life, and she tried to stay in it as long as she could. She fought hard so that we were able to get back to Cornwall for our anniversary this May and we had a wonderful time as always. Jan always said if she went before me, she didn't want me to give up and be miserable, not least because the dogs and cat will still need me nearly as much as I need them. It was so typical of Jan to be more concerned about how I would cope than about her own death and she always loved the song "Don't Fear The Reaper". The other thing that keeps me going now is that we had such a great time in our 44 years together, and we always agreed that if we could we would do it all again.

Jane

When visiting Cornwall Roland and Jan always stayed in Little Orchard Village in St Agnes and this year was no exception. They spent their wedding anniversary there as they have so often before.

This visit was a little different though as Jan's COPD meant she now needed constant oxygen, and she couldn't manage the things she had so enjoyed in the past.

Not just COPD though as Jan was also diagnosed with breast cancer and had undergone surgery and subsequent radiotherapy but sadly the cancer had metastasised.

Roland cared for Jan with such devotion, truly honouring those vows of, "in sickness and in health" and he has done everything possible to make her life as good as it could be and when her life did come to its end on 22nd June he, Sheridan, Ashleigh and India-Lily were at her side.

Closure and Farewell

Thankyou for being here to share this goodbye. Life is finite and there is always an end but Jan has had a good life and after our ceremony concludes please go to Oakhanger Village Hall and share all your stories and memories together. There will be a video made up of a collection of photographs from Jan's life showing there as well and I hope they make you smile as you remember the good times you shared with Jan.

Think of her and all she has meant to you in a positive way. Remember her often, recall the things she used to do and say, the fun and laughter that enriched her life and yours. She will never be forgotten and will be much missed.

Rest In Peace Jan

You were and always will be so very loved.

DEPARTURE – voile curtains to be closed

Departing Music – Thankyou For The Days by Kirsty MacColl (listen to whole track) 3 mins
