

Anthea Naylor (28 March 1947 – 15 August 2017)

A tribute by Christine Stace

I first 'came across' Anthea when I visited an opticians in Oxted where she worked and I remember, whilst waiting to be seen, distinctly overhearing Anthea telling her work colleagues where she had been, where she was going, what she was doing, etc. and I thought "how interesting!". I think this was either 1996 or 1997, so we could say 20 years ago.

A few years later, on another visit to the opticians (by which time they had moved to better premises), Anthea now had her own desk at front of house as she was what I believe is called a Dispensing Optician or a Technical Practitioner, ie, she helped people choose their frames and later fitted them and checked that the patient's new glasses were all okay. It was on one of these visits, whilst she was checking my new glasses and we were busy chatting away, that Anthea said she was off to Dorset next month on a GA trip and I immediately said "so are we!". Unfortunately I cannot remember what year that was, although our President, Bob Chandler, has sent me a photo of a GA Dorset trip from 2003 with Anthea at the front of this group. (I am behind her at the back). So I can only think that this must have been the trip we were both referring to.

Anthea must have joined our Club after that. Unfortunately, we don't keep a note of when members join, so that will always be an unknown. Therefore when Anthea was around and from that time, she would come to our house in Crawley from her house in Horley and we would go from Crawley to Horsham. Anthea was also a member of the Mole Valley Geological Group and was most probably a member there for much longer than at Horsham.

As Gill [our Club Secretary] said to me, "Anthea lived life to the full; always taking as many holidays as she could and enjoying life". Apparently she had five holidays booked already post-op, and over her lifetime she had visited many, many places and countries; and as Bob said, "I will remember her in the rain at Horn Park and the muds of Folkestone – a great supporter of the Club's meetings and outings". Here is a flavour of her remarkable range of other interests:

- Not only was Anthea a Dispensing Optician, but she was also a Chiropodist and had also taken an OU course in Earth Sciences/Geology, so I think we could say that she liked to study hard, having taken courses in both the optical and podiatry fields for her career path and then the OU course for pleasure?
- She was a member of the Soroptimist Women's Organisation, which is an international volunteer organisation working to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities and throughout the world. I believe she was due to go to one of their international conferences in Europe later this year. In my ignorance, I had never previously heard of the Soroptimists and at first I thought Anthea was saying Chiropodist. One lives and learns – a case in point as far as Anthea was concerned.
- Anthea was also a member of a local bowls club and was often asked to play in their matches. These sometimes took place on a Wednesday, but Anthea she had said that she was going to say she was not available for bowls if it was the *second* Wednesday of a month, as she wanted to attend our monthly meetings more often. She was also away on holiday quite a lot too, which meant she missed quite a few of our meetings.
- She was a member of the Archway Theatre Company, a small amateur theatre group whose premises are situated under the railway arches in Horley; and she had fairly recently been on holiday with the Company to Austria. It was here, underneath the arches, that Anthea held her 60th birthday party to which John and I were invited.
- One of Anthea's other great passions was horses and horse racing. If she was not actually at the races, she loved nothing better, when the races were on, than to sit down in front of the telly, possibly with a glass of wine, having had a bet (she had her own on-line bookie's account) and hope that her horse would come home first. In fact, Anthea had her own pony as a child and then, later on, she had a share in a race horse. She was also very fond of fast cars and the Grand Prix.

I had actually been to visit Anthea on Monday [14 August 2017] when, although in Intensive Care, she had been transferred to ITU following another operation. Although tired, she looked well, so when I got a phone call late on Tuesday evening from her sister Claire, I was naturally shocked and very saddened to hear of her sudden passing, as Claire had told me on Monday that she looked much improved.

For me, I will finish by saying that Anthea came with John and me on our Club's trip in April this year to Dorset with Bob; so I suppose in a way, our friendship really started on our trip to Dorset in 2003 and was still going strong on our trip to Dorset in April 2017.

A friend who will be sadly missed, but not forgotten.

Christine Stace