

## **My friend Sheila Wesley-Smith**

My connection with the Wesley-Smith family goes way back before my birth, to the close friendship between Harry's parents John and Ada Wesley-Smith and my grandparents Enoch and Carrie Hall. There are various old photos of this connection. I just found one of my Mother Bertha aged 4 at the beach with Brian and Harry in 1919, and on the same occasion, E H Hall teaching Harry WS to swim!

Bertha and my father Don McDonald always maintained a strong family link with Brian, Harry and Sheila (Draper). As a child I referred to them all as Uncles and Aunties and thought of their children as cousins. Consequently my first memories of Harry's Sheila were as "Aunty Sheila." I remember as a young girl visiting Sheila, Harry and the boys at 21 William St, and watching everyone play tennis. I was probably too shy (and too outnumbered by boys) to have a go myself!

As a 17 year old, I met up again with Jerry at the Elder Conservatorium where we were in the same peer group of music students. He and I remained friends till his death- sort of "surrogate cousins".

In (?) 1962 Sheila did me the great honour of asking me to become her accompanist for Kindergarten of the Air, which I did for several wonderful years. We got on very well, and kept in touch as friends as the years went by.

In 1986 Sheila asked me to play the pipe organ at Harry's funeral, which I did with some trepidation, as there were several musicians present who would have realised that I was a real novice on the pipe organ! But I did it for my dear friend Sheila, and in honour of that long family connection.

In 2006 Sheila, Jerry, his cousins (my dear friends) Anne Sims and Margie White and I had a memorable lunch at the Star of Greece restaurant, not long before Jerry's death. The photos taken that day are treasured by all of us.

Following Jerry's death I spent more time with Sheila, regularly visiting her at Hawthorn and catching up with Rob when he visited. I became most concerned about Sheila living on her own with quite major health problems, and was relieved and glad for her when she eventually went to live at the Valley with Martin and Peter. Of course I miss her, but am happy that she is living out her "Indian Summer" in comfort and surrounded by those she loves.

Dear Sheila, you have always been a treasured person in my life. Thank you for your friendship. I love you dearly.

**Jean Kenny**