

Point of View

Our dear friend Mana Hazlet (nee Gemmill) died in February 2021 following a bad fall in October 2020.

This piece was provided as a contribution from John and Margaret Bonthron to her son David as he prepared for the funeral service.

Both girls were at Jordanhill College together. On their first day in the autumn of 1966, Margaret was waiting at a bus stop on Highburgh Road when Mana Gemmill, newly arrived in Glasgow from Oban, bounced up to her and asked:

"Hi, do you know which bus I should take to Jordanhill, please?"

The spark of friendship was ignited, a flame which burned brightly in the decades which followed.

In fact, when John first met Margaret in November 1969, Mana was responsible for the invite which saw both of them at a party in Cresswell Street, both newly graduated primary teachers.

At the Bonthrons' wedding reception in Partick Burgh Halls, Mana was on stage with her guitar, singing Mary Hopkins songs. Most definitely the star of the show!

When their sons Stuart and Craig came along, she was their Auntie Mana and later still, she became Grauntie Mana to their children.

During her spell at Bearsden Primary, she was Craig's P2 teacher.

I all these years of friendship, Mana never missed sending cards, wee letters or poems at Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries, often with a small, fun present.

Mana Hazlett was a kind, thoughtful and constant friend to many, many people all around the world. A shining beacon whose flame will never dim.

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Here is a particular story which illustrates another side of Mana Hazlett.

After she moved to Bearsden, Mana would regularly pop into the Bonthrons home at Kessington Drive to keep them abreast of her world, passing on news and views from her wide circle of friends.

Kessington Drive is on the flight path of kids from the local high school and, soon after they moved there, John became a self-appointed litter picker, scouring the streets on his early morning walks to get their daily newspaper.

One morning, while rooting out a half full cola can from a neighbour's hedge, he found a crumpled ball of coloured paper which turned out to be a £20 and a £10 note scrunched together.

A few days later, in the teeming rain in the car park outside Kessington Shops, he found a soggy wad of five £10 notes beside a discarded carton containing the remains of a Chinese meal.

The next day, his luck continued. Beside an overflowing litter bin, he found a further £20 note, bringing his litter-picker's 'wages' to £100.

Mana called at the Bonthrons' for lunch. When her news bulletin was over, John chortled his tale of serendipitous bonanza, emphasising how amazingly careless some people are with their cash, stressing that his lucky finds were, *technically*, 'litter'!

Mana fixed him with a disapproving stare, shook her head and pronounced judgement.

"No, John, *technically* you are a thief. You should have handed that money into the police station."

The circle was squared by John writing a cheque for £100 to *Christian Aid* which Mana received with an impish smile of satisfaction.

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"Yes, John, that is a very acceptable way for you to resolve **your** dilemma."

If you follow this link below or paste it into your browser you will access a story called "Glue Gen", a nearly true account of Mana and John Bee which offers a reminder of how she lived her life.

<https://www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk/updates/2015/03/glue-gen-1600-words8-mins/>

Here is another story called "Miriam's secret" which I think Mana would have liked.

<https://www.thebuzzinbee.co.uk/updates/2021/03/miriam-s-secret-1000-words-a-five-minute-read/>