

IN MEMORIAM - JAN FARROW

JAN FARROW 1943 - 2024

From Joanna Hewitt (Jan's cousin)

Jan was born at Walsall Manor Hospital in 1943.. She never knew her father; he was killed in Italy during the Second World War. Jan and her mother lived with her maternal grandparents in Sutton Road, Walsall until her mother died when Jan was eleven.

Despite losing both parents Jan could not have had a better upbringing, her grandparents being both kind and supportive and providing her with a loving home. They encouraged her to pursue further education and, after attending Mayfield School at Streetly, and the Joseph Leckie school, Jan went to Avery Hill College in London to train to be a teacher.

After completing her training Jan took up a post at Leighswood Junior School where she spent 35 happy years. After retiring, she worked as a supply teacher for a time and then ended her career at Saint Anne's School in Streetly; a lovely end to a happy career.

Jan had sight problems for much of her life and these became worse as she grew older. Despite these problems she persevered with her metalwork studies eventually becoming a proficient silversmith. In fact, she was interested in many forms of art and craft, including ceramics and enamelling. She studied pottery at Avery Hill and led the children at Leighswood to make a tile panel illustrating life in Aldridge that was displayed in the school foyer. Jan used her knowledge to commission enamel buttons featuring her favourite dogs, always a Jack Russell, the final four all being rescue dogs.

From Laura Ramsay (former editor of 'Button Lines')

I am sure members of BBS will be saddened to hear of the sudden death of Jan Farrow, a dedicated collector and ardent supporter of the society for many years. Jan had suffered ill health for a long time but coped with it cheerfully and positively over the years. In all the time I knew her, I never heard her complain once.

I first got to know Jan many years ago, when she and I found ourselves bidding for the same buttons at auctions. She contacted me directly and so started our long friendship.

We found we liked the same things and were both interested in the history of buttons, who wore them and when. Her knowledge of 18th-Century buttons (one of my favourite topics) as well as Livery and Hunt buttons was extensive and fascinating and over the years, I learned a lot from her.

She was an enthusiastic and competent silversmith and potter. I had taught art for 27 years, so we had a common interest there too. Both of us had been teachers, so we enjoyed swapping stories of our teaching days. She had so many hilarious tales to tell and still kept in touch with some of her pupils.

In her personal life, she could be feisty and challenging and didn't suffer fools gladly, but she was a warm, kind and generous friend too. Although she sent me birthday cards every year without fail, I could never winkle out of her when her birthday was! She was a very private person.

I was so grateful for her support during the three years I was editor and publisher of 'Button Lines'. She contributed articles and snippets of information cheerfully and regularly. So, I shall miss her greeting on the phone, "Hello Scotland" followed by a long, spirited conversation. The button world will be poorer without her.

From Sue Whitehouse (BBS and Birmingham Group member)

Sad news indeed! Goodness, I think Jan was at the first Birmingham meeting I came to, back in the 1980s. She was always so encouraging both to me and my then pre-teen daughters. A wonderful character. They broke the mould when they made Jan, as the saying goes. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.



Thanks to Joanna, Kathy at Walsall Retired Teachers Association, Laura and Sue for their help ed.