

Given Julie's disease I always knew I'd have to stand up and do this. I didn't expect it to be quite so soon, after she'd been responding so well to the chemo – although given our similar levels of fitness at times this year we did joke it could be a race to the end, and christened ourselves Thelma & Louise Mark 2 on a holiday in the spring last year.

It makes me laugh but it doesn't make today any easier.

Julie was born in Hampshire in 1965. The third child to Eve and Les, a girl following two sons, Michael and David. Julie attended the local school and Sunday school and eventually joined the brownies and guides. Growing up with brothers, and neighbours also with sons of a similar age, Julie told me she was quite a tomboy growing up, something which I have to admit, I found difficult to imagine. Her mum helped run the local cubs group and Julie told me that, like myself, she really wanted to join the cubs.

Dad was quite senior in the Navy in her early years and was away a lot, which inevitably meant that she forged a lifelong strong bond with her mum who, like many of that era, was a stay-at-home mum.

Seeing that Julie was a bright girl both mum and dad were keen for her to get the best education. She managed to get a place at St Annes Convent School in City Centre Southampton, which admitted a few scholarship non-Catholic girls each year. Julie loved St Annes, became house captain and, I think, head girl. She emerged with good A levels and gained several offers of University places, eventually electing to studying Maths and Management at Brunel, west London.

As a non-Catholic in a Catholic school Julie had the option of joining in various religious lessons, and I know she opted to join many. She

travelled to Lourdes with school, acting as a volunteer helping disabled children travel, which she really enjoyed. She also travelled a lot with her parents, with Rome being one of the destinations, again consistent with an early faith.

Julie's mum, whom many here have met, was a lively lady with a large social network and member of various local community groups over the years. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

I first met Julie in our first week at University when we were both 18, in 1983. It was the lady Di era and Julie was always smart in court shoes and wearing a string of pearls. I don't think those pearls came off during that first 6 months!

Our first conversation was in a supermarket about some cut price boil in the bag frozen fish (boil in the bag was the 1980s equivalent of a microwave meal for the younger ones here!). It was our first time budgeting for ourselves and we had both been brought up by parents from the wartime era, so were taught to be equally frugal. I had some in my basket, Julie (never shy) accosted me and asked what it was like. I had no idea but just said it was cheap. A lady then appeared and filled up her basket – so Julie then accosted her. The lady also said she had no idea....she bought it for her cats. We both burst into bemused laughter.

That first conversation really set the stage for the next 40 years.

Firstly, I learnt that Julie never had any inhibitions talking to anyone. She would chat to anyone, anywhere, often bombarding them with questions to find out all about them, always interested in everyone. It was a feature in that grew as her confidence grew with age. In the last

few years, often self isolating and then latterly fuelled by steroids and seeing fewer people, she could, as we say in Manchester, talk the hind leg off a rocking horse...after the steroids that could generally go on for me until 3am.

Secondly, we both liked a bargain. Julie's bargain hunting often focussed on clothes, shoes etc., especially if it was a charity shop. She always loved a charity shop – especially if in a 'better area' where the quality of the clothes was better.

My bargain hunting in those shops was generally focussed on travel books – and then travel itself.

Our love of bargains and travel coincided with the early days of EasyJet and Ryan Air, which air allowed us to travel all over Europe, often on £15 flights. We'd hire a cheap little car, Julie always drove, I navigated...and when we needed help/accommodation Julie would be accosting the locals, chatting them up to find out where to stay and what to see. I have very vivid memories of Julie stopping the car one day when we were in France, jumping over a low wall into a field and answering the call of nature....just as a campervan pulled up and a couple started to set up a picnic on the wall. I was both mortified and in hysterics at the same time. Julie didn't care, jumped back over the wall and started chatting to them as if the most natural thing in the world....which I guess it was.

On one famous travel occasion we were using the buses in Spain. Dressed in just beach wear we headed out for the day. At the end of the day we were due to head back, along with some carrier bags of picnic stuff for the next day, since it was a bank holiday. I was at the bus stop, Julie in the shops. A bus came and she was nowhere to be seen. After a rather frantic search she appeared and we both dashed

onto a bus. After a while things looked very unfamiliar. Eventually the bus stopped in a seaside village, the terminus. We realised we'd got the right number bus, but in the wrong direction. It then turned out the next bus back wasn't until the next day and by then it was quite dark. So, in swimming cossies and shorts, very little money and carrying beach mats and a bag of bread and cheese we walked towards the main street. We turned the corner to find some sort of fiesta going on – everyone was dressed to the nines, many in traditional costume...we were two sand covered, foreign, beach bums.

I would've probably shuffled off somewhere – not Julie. She immediately started talking to the locals to find out what was going on (well charades really, languages weren't Julies strong point) and we ended up being a novelty duo in the village that night, having a great evening.... but then staying at the cheapest and dodgiest hotel we had ever stayed in (less said the better)!

We had a similar experience when we arrived on a cruise ship... but our bags did not (cruise organised by Lynne, here today, with her staff discount...we were always ready for a bargain). Whilst everyone was dressing for dinner we just sat in the bar. By the end of the evening, fuelled by drinks from the bar, Julie knew half the ship. Over the next few days I was bemused as total strangers kept stopping me asking if my bags had arrived.

As our budgets increased and we started to travel more globally – South Africa, India, China, Japan – and she also started to travel more with work, to Indonesia etc., and to Australia with her mum. Wherever she went Julie still seemed to find lots of locals to chat to. It might be hoards of giggling Chinese ladies at the Forbidden City in Beijing or a parade of hormone fuelled teenage boys attracted to a novelty blonde in India.

Conversations anywhere would often revolve around the third theme of that student supermarket meeting.

Food.

Julie liked her food. In recent years she liked to cook and bake. She loved her cakes. She was always keen to try new foods wherever in the world, especially Japan which she loved. However, her favourite foods, whatever the restaurant, country or occasion were always the ones she didn't actually have on her own plate...basically she always wanted to try whatever was on someone else's plate. Am sure many people here have had food snaffled off their plate, because whatever you had she wanted to taste too...and suddenly you had half a portion!

Julie also liked to shop. Not just for fish in supermarkets. I've mentioned charity shops – but it was high end shops too. Generally clothes & shoes sometimes hats, scarves ... I have a friend here today that was scarred for life after being dragged around shoe shops in Edinburgh for a full day during a weekend break, whilst she sought out the perfect pair of brown shoes. When informed of her passing his first comment was that a Blue Plaque needs to be put outside Freeman Hardy & Willis...this is probably 25 yr after that weekend, the day was so memorable!

So we all know Julie wasn't shy and liked to talk. If talking gave her a bit of limelight, all the better. Julie was always happy to be the centre of attention. Sometimes this spilled over into her being quite bossy, although 9 times out of 10 it just made you smile and roll your eyes. I read recently that every little girl that's told she's bossy should instead

be told she has leadership skills, which I (and I'm sure Julie) thoroughly endorse.

Julie certainly knew her own mind and could make single minded, sometimes ruthless, decisions to reach her goal if she needed to. She knew she could be bossy, but this was tempered by her genuine interest in people, which allowed her to quickly ID any individuals strengths/weaknesses/likes and dislikes. I never worked with Julie – I always told her I'd love to her work for me, with her never ending positivity and enthusiasm, but I would hate to work for her!

On a holiday in China I was constantly being 'bossed' or instructed to video this and that, much to the amusement of the other travellers. One day, as the coach driver pointed out something interesting that we were passing, Julie was about to issue her instructions to me when the entire back of the coach turned around and shouted out the familiar phrase "Did you get that Cath?". Thankfully I now have all these adventures to watch again on those recordings, now she's gone.

However, I owe Julie my career. As a student I spent every night in the bar during my first year at University. I just passed the threshold passmark for the year. Julie was very much the diligent student that I was constantly trying to lead astray.

In our second year at University we ended up sharing a room in a shared house. It became very much a case of if you can't beat them join 'em. So I spent far more hours working, certainly spent a lot more time in the library and, since we did different subjects but studied together, we both had to learn to think through our assignments for ourselves. My marks rocketed that year.

Thanks to Julie I came out with a top class degree, as did she. We both have had very successful careers, but I told her several times that mine would have been v different if she hadn't held her ground as such a conscientious swat and kept me out of the bar! Maybe she was harking back to those days when, in her last couple of days and dosed up on drugs, she told me I had to drink less when she'd gone!

Julies career started in Milton Keynes at a company called Scicon, where she made lots of friends. I'm sure her re-location to Milton Keynes influenced my decision to carry on my education in nearby Cambridge, and so we continued to dip in and out of each others social lives each month. After Scicon she moved to Youde Andrews and then to BP, where she stayed for about 25 years and made more life long friends, many here today. Although never really understood what she did, apart from something to do with airline fuel invoicing! I learnt more in the journey down here with Maria than I did in all my 25yr questioning of Julie.

Anyway, to return to Julies interest in people, her ability to get to know people enabled her to learn what to delegate to who – who would enjoy or thrive with certain tasks and who wouldn't. She was a master of delegation. Even in her last days in hospital, when she started to struggle to talk and breath she wrote down that I had to learn to delegate better. I was instructed that delegation should be the flatter the better, and I had to stop linear delegation. The right task for each person. Apart from work, I'm sure the WI here have experienced Julies delegation skills.

When I learnt Julie was in the WI, book club, gin church, bowls club and had tried no end of other activities I laughed because Julie has always

been one to join things, always throwing herself at something new with great enthusiasm. Some things would stick, some would fade away. A lot of her previous 'joining' has revolved around dancing lessons – from Ballroom to Belly Dancing, or Salsa to Scottish Dancing. All with the required outfits, of course. Fancy dress was another familiar theme.

She loved the WI here, since it really played to a lot of her interests and general personality traits. Indeed, she loved living in Broadwindsor. This was where she said she belonged. I have never seen her so content. She really loved this village. As a city girl I teased her that she lived in a constant episode of Miss Marple. A whole microcosm of society in a village.

It also suited her perfectly especially in recent times when she needed so much help and support. She had a wonderful group of friends and frequently told me how lucky she was to live here, in such a beautiful place with a great group of people. One day last summer she was throwing a ball in the garden for Tom when I called her. It was a sunny day and the garden was looking lovely thanks to Flo. She'd had some rough chemo but was feeling better and was in a very happy frame of mind. I'll never forget the phrase she used "Oh Cath, isn't life lovely". It stuck with me then and still cuts me up now.

Throughout her career, this disease, and a some tough recent times, the most consistent comment that people have mentioned after Julies death was how positive she was, how bubbly and full of enthusiasm for life she was.

For me, I always remember my gran – now gone around 25 years – who used to look forward to Julie coming to Manchester because "she is always full of bounce".

I think all our lives are a little less bouncy today.

I'd like to finish with a short poem that sums up the last month.

Come With Me

By Rhonda Braswell

God saw you getting tired and a cure was not to be
So he put his arms around you and whispered 'Come with Me'.
With tearful eyes we watched you suffer and saw you fade away,
Although we loved you dearly we could not make you stay.

A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands at rest,
God broke our hearts to prove, he only takes the best.
It's lonely here without you, we miss you more each day,
Life doesn't seem the same, since you have gone away.

When days are sad and lonely and everything goes wrong,
We seem to hear you whisper 'cheer up and carry on'.
Each time we see your picture, you seem to smile and say
'Don't cry, I'm in Gods keeping, we'll meet again someday'.

You never said 'I'm leaving', you were gone before we knew it,
And only God knows why.

A million times we needed you, a million times we've cried,
If love alone could have saved you, you never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still,
In our hearts you hold a place that no one could ever fill.
It broke our hearts to lose you, but you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you, the day God took you home.