

Nurse Catherine Goldstone (Goldie) & Nurse Kathleen Toms (Tommy)

In terms of Madron's more recent history it is only fitting that we mention two of its sadly departed residents who contributed so much to the parish. The following represents a summary of the wealth of information about the two nurses kindly provided by Mr. S. Myers, who know these incredible ladies as friends.

Goldie's parents were Salvation Army officers and although she was born in Camborne part of her early life was spent in South Africa on the mission field. On the family's return to UK they settled once more in Camborne and Goldie attended the Camborne Girls Grammar School. Goldie chose nursing as her career and spent some time in London as a midwife. From there she transferred to Bristol nursing college as a tutor for student midwives. It was here that she met Tommy as one of the students. After the training and six months experience in the work for Tommy the two had become friends. A vacancy for two midwives occurred at Camborne. Goldie applied and invited Tommy to also do so. They were successful and worked there for two and a half years followed by a health visitor course at Battersea Polytechnic and a move to East Cornwall.

Kathleen Toms was born at Portslade near Brighton in 1912, the only girl with an older and a younger brother. Her father was an instrument maker and worked for some time at the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough, then as a salesman and later worked for a company producing concrete products. The family eventually settled near Yateley in Surrey.

At fourteen years Tommy left school, to enter service for a local Colonel's family. She then went to work at Marks & Spencer's store at Aldershot but her career there was cut short by being one of the first women called up, in 1939, to work at the Radway munitions factory in Cheshire. The work was very noisy. During this time her father had died and she supported her mother at home in Hampshire until she died in 1950. At the munitions unit she was housed with 1000 girls and women. Kathleen and her group received considerable support from a Methodist sister who worked in the factory sick bay and led bible study and other group activities.

One day during 1942, in the little Chapel at the factory, Tommy felt a definite call to nursing and was encouraged to apply to Bristol Royal Infirmary to train to be a State Registered Nurse (SRN). There she could be close to her elder brother and his family. Once qualified she followed that with part 1 midwifery training at Plymouth and then worked at Bridgewater with her friend from Bristol training, Esme Nares, to complete part 2 midwifery and gain her State certificate of Midwifery (SCM). It was while on this course that she came into contact with Nurse Catherine Goldstone (Goldie) who was one of the training midwives. They only met for training, clinics and of course deliveries!

After six months training and experience vacancies occurred for two midwives at Camborne, Goldie's home town. Goldie invited Tommy to apply along with her and they were successful. They arrived in October and stayed for two and a half years before moving to Battersea polytechnic for Health Visitor training. Following that course the two returned to Cornwall and took up post at Millbrook, Kingsand, & Cawsand to fulfil their contract with the county.

In 1955 Goldie and Tommy travelled by sea, £200 return 1st class, to Tasmania to visit Goldie's brother George, who had emigrated. There being no home birth deliveries allowed in Tasmania at the time they went to a local maternity hospital to train upcoming midwives for nearly two years. During that time, they delivered the first home birth in Tasmania to an English wife who was determined to have her child at home. This made news in the daily papers and was somehow picked up by Miss Ann White, County Nursing Officer (Cornwall).

At her request they came home in 1957 and took up post at Madron, one serving the east of the parish and the other the west. Their work covered birth to death and 'nit' nursing to over 700 pupils in local schools. Here they remained until their retirement in 1977. They lived in Memorial House near to the School, which had been financed by Madron and Morvah parishes and Col Edward Bolitho in 1952. It has a most beautiful view which they both enjoyed for 54 years. Goldie enjoyed the house and cooking while Tommy was the gardener. The pair decided to attend the Methodist Church in the village and became fully involved in local activities.

The following are just some of the activities they were involved in:-

Chapel Youth club – started by Tommy in 1960s

Activities included demonstrations of gift wrapping, marquetry, cake icing, playing table tennis, darts etc. Each weekly meeting closed with an epilogue by Tommy.

Sunday School was transformed by Tommy (teaching teenagers) and Goldie (superintendent) using Scripture Press material for younger children

MAYC (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) events – Tommy encouraged young people to join in Cornwall Methodist District events as well as local Circuit activities.

VBS (Vacation Bible School) – These took place every summer in Madron Chapel from 1965 for several years. They were organised by Tommy, Goldie, Mrs Goldstone (Goldie's mother) and Ann (Tommy's niece?). Every morning for a week each summer school aged children from the village attended for Storytelling, crafts and singing. About sixty attended daily.

Carol singing on Christmas Eve. Tommy and Goldie took junior choir members by car to some of their patients in their homes – often in remote outlying farms.

Tommy enjoyed driving and in turn the cars she had were: an Austin 7, a Mini, Morris 1000, and finally Ford Fiesta.

Tommy was also very keen Photographer – recording many events in the village and chapel. Goldie's parents had retired to the village and between them the three ladies were instrumental in setting up the Young Wives Club at the Chapel which evolved over fifty years into the Women's Fellowship, open to all ladies of any or no Christian denomination, as it is to this day.

After they retired and the deaths of Goldie's parents the two nurses enjoyed several extended visits to George in Tasmania. On return in 1977 Tommy was asked to teach knitting at the village school. She thoroughly enjoyed this.

Tommy drove for the Stroke Club and helped at Bellair Slimming Club. The pair volunteered for the Breakfast Project when that was started in 2000 but Tommy was never asked to cook.

Memorial House was always full of visitors. In her sixties Tommy was the taxi service for five a side football, table tennis appointments and many other activities.

Goldie was taken seriously ill in 2007 but miraculously recovered. Life began to change for Tommy as she became Goldie's carer. In March 2012 the pair moved into Menwinnion Country House Care Home, where Goldie died in January 2013. By this time Tommy was also a bit frail and decided to remain at the home where they had both been so well cared for. She was active in encouraging the setup of a Christian Fellowship group at the home at that time which still continues. November 2017 saw her celebrate her 100th birthday with friends and some family at the home where a good party was enjoyed and she was proud to display her card from the Queen. With her work for her Lord, finally done, she was taken from us 8th August 2021.