

## Open Door – 20 September - Janette Clutterbuck

Spanning through almost nine decades, Janette (Jan) Clutterbuck gave an account of her life filled with courage and humour.

During the 2nd World War, she enlisted with the Red Cross and was posted to Europe. She took a brave journey on ship with 400 soldiers and only fourteen other Red Cross girls across the Atlantic and landed in Glasgow in January 1944. Their job was to be the 'girl back home', working with the club mobile serving the American troops with coffee and doughnuts. She was posted to many places in the UK and eventually to France, Belgium and Germany. Jan witnessed the surrender of the German army in May 1945 which she described to be one of the best moments in her life.

During the war, she met her future husband, Jeremy Clutterbuck. He was their driver, the most handsome Englishman she had ever seen, sitting in the driver's seat reading poetry - she had never met anyone like him in New York. Jeremy invited her to Micklefield where he lived with his mother Blanche Clutterbuck and two brothers. After the war Jan returned to America and kept in touch with Jeremy and one fine day he arrived in New York, took her to dinner and proposed. Jan accepted the proposal, although all her friends had advised her to never marry an Englishman as the weather in England was so awful! Jan and Jeremy were married in November 1952 at Holy Cross Church in Sarratt.



After having her two children Benjamin and Camilla, Jan found she needed to do something and initially took a teaching job in Denham at an American children's school. She also started painting, holding many exhibitions, and was accepted into the Royal Academy for two summers. She also became the Chairman of the Women's International Club which promoted women artists'. Painting became her life, she attended Harrow School to learn more painting techniques and in 1970 started art classes and has been teaching ever since.

In 1982 they moved to Sarratt from White House. Sadly Jeremy died in 1992. In her humorous fashion, she ended the speech with the following statement: 'As I have grown older I have now reached the age of 87, I think back on my past, I try to be content with the favourable aspects of ageing. My real joy is my electric scooter so I can get out of the house and take my Pekinese Emma in the basket with me. I still teach painting twice a week so I am not lonely. My two lovely children make me thankful, I love England, that is in spite of the weather'.

Verna-May Zaranyika