

A TRIBUTE TO SUE



A very special person



Sue began her career at the Cordwainers in 2009 having worked with John Miller at the Law Society. He was delighted when she moved to work in the Cordwainer office.

'Sue put her heart and soul into the Cordwainers and we all loved her for it. Kind, courteous, punctilious, with a fantastic eye for detail and a prodigious memory, she looked after all of us with a twinkle in her eye.'

**Judith Millidge
Senior Warden**



'I first appointed Sue in the Law Society 25 years ago. She was always such a solid and reliable person, and a brilliant organiser that I welcomed her with open arms to the Cordwainers in 2009, where she proved to be such a fantastic support to the Company. For Sue, the Cordwainers meant everything. For the Cordwainers, she has been a treasure.'

John Miller
Clerk 2007–2018



Sue and Marilyn Redgrave had also worked together at the Law Society for many years and Sue cherished her great friendship with Marilyn.



Life in the City meant wonderful dinners and no one was more clear sighted than Sue when it came to organising them.

She forged lasting relationships with all the people who work

so hard to make livery dinners a success. Thanks to Sue, members of the Company also came to know our 'regular' toastmasters well, as they returned again and again to supervise our events.



With Marilyn and John, and toastmasters Ian Lowe and Ken Tappenden.

'Sue was a fantastic colleague – kind and welcoming, passionate about her job, and generous with her time and with her epic knowledge of all things Cordwainer – but, as part of such a close-knit team, she was also a very dear friend. With her beautiful smile and infectious giggle, Sue was great fun to work with. From singing along to show tunes in the office, to joking about the incredible number of handbags she had stored under her desk, we will always remember what a warm, big-hearted, wonderful person she was, and how lucky we were to have known her.'

**Nancy Treves
Charity Manager**





*"I am very saddened by the sorrowful news of Sue's passing. I had the pleasure of dealing with her in the past and she was an angel in making sure I was well looked after. She was a wonderful person and very committed to her duties.
Sue will be greatly missed by all."*

Honorary Liveryman Professor Jimmy Choo OBE



*'To say I am sad would just not be a big enough word to describe the feeling.
I am heartbroken to hear this tragic news and my heart goes out to all of
you at Cordwainers and Sue's family.*

How silently brave and stoic she has been.

*I will be forever in her debt for her friendship and support on my own Cordwainers
journey, and also for the support and encouragement she heaped on our college and
students alike to be the best. She was wickedly funny and I always felt
so happy to be in her company.'*

**Liveryman Sarah Day, Course Leader at Cordwainers College,
London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London**



Talking student designs with the course leaders from the University of Northampton and the London College of Fashion.



In 2014 the Cordwainers launched their footwear awards, a competition to encourage design excellence among footwear students.

Sue built relationships with the judges, the students and the sponsors, and the awards have grown to become an established part of the footwear calendar, thanks in large part to her organisational skills, her tenacity and above all her hard work.



Sue touched the lives of every Cordwainer; welcoming new members and answering all their questions, and gently keeping older members in line. She made sure that everyone knew what they were supposed to be doing at events, from photocopying meeting papers, to

endlessly re-jigging seating plans as last-minute changes altered the numbers. She had a phenomenal memory and knew how those of us from Cordwainer families are related, and, more importantly, which of us were speaking to our third cousins and which of us were not.





'She was incredible at putting people around her at ease and made going to Cordwainers events even more of a joy than they already are.'

**Liveryman
Ana Williams**



'A very dear friend and a guiding light. I will miss Sue dearly and I am so honoured to have known her and to have called her a friend.'

**Liveryman Ian Goff,
Cordwainers College,
London College of
Fashion, University of
the Arts, London**



In 2019 Sue won a pair of personalised Dr Marten's boots and enjoyed a day out at the factory in Northampton when she went to collect them.

How did she personalise them? She chose blue leather with yellow stitching and 'Bungle' stamped on the tongues.



Turning the Cordwainers' Twelfth Night Dinner into a lively evening complete with fancy dress owed a great deal to Sue. No one enjoyed dressing up more than Sue, who encouraged us all to embrace everything from flappers to flower power and, in 2022, medieval mayhem.

'That is exactly how I will remember Sue – game for anything (except lifts!), and always focussing on making occasions perfect, whether it be inventing a special cocktail, finding appropriate decorations or dressing up!'

Penny Graham, Clerk



The celebrations for the Cordwainers' 750th anniversary had been years in the planning. Sue drove it forward and we were especially pleased that she was back in the job in time to join in the party at the Guildhall.

Right: meeting the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Vincent Keaveny.



A tribute on behalf of the Company, read at Sue's' funeral on 23 November 2022

To say that all of us in the Cordwainers' Company will miss Sue is an understatement.

Her death is not only a tragedy for the Company, but a source of immense sadness to all our members. Quite simply, she knew us all and looked after everyone with warmth, great kindness, charm and seemingly unending patience and good humour. She was the Company's greatest supporter, and we owe so much of our success to her hard work.

The office has been inundated with messages of condolence from so many people that Sue dealt with over the years, ranging from Jimmy Choo to the account manager of the catering company and everyone in between. All of them mention her kindness, her quiet (and often wicked) sense of humour and her innate decency.

Sue was drawn into the Cordwainer family in 2009 by John Miller, then our Company clerk, having worked with him for several years at the Law Society.

She quickly became irreplaceable. Her job initially involved organising events and liaising with the 250 or so individuals that form the Company membership. In 2014 we launched our student footwear awards and Sue took on the colossal administration of what has become an established part of the year for

footwear design students and the industry. Sue worked her socks off to engage with the students, the judges, the events team, and the guests and, as John has said, she took the awards from strength to strength.

Organising the awards was an intense annual experience of demands, deadlines, and, occasionally, divas, but Sue's organisational skills and quiet powers of persuasion ensured that the event ran smoothly. She made many friends and earned huge respect and admiration from Cordwainers everywhere, especially from those in the worlds of footwear education and the industry.

Sue welcomed new members to the Company and made sure that they were comfortable with the traditions of the Cordwainers. She kept more established members in order, making sure that we were all in the right place at the right time with the right papers and the right clothes (especially our shoes). Her thoughtfulness extended to marking birthdays and anniversaries, when they coincided with Company events, and at dinners, placing items of Company silver next to the families from which they'd originally emanated (often to the surprise and always to the delight of the current generation).

The Cordwainers pride themselves on being

a family company, with many families having been members for generations. Sue not only remembered how people were related, but also knew which of us was not speaking to our second or third cousins and seated us accordingly at events.

Sue loved history and quickly soaked up the customs and formalities of the Cordwainers, becoming a stickler for tradition. Thankfully for me, this extended to the written word and any errors that may have cropped up in the Cordwainer Magazine under my editorship always occurred if a proof went off to the designer without Sue seeing it first. Her eye for detail was exceptional and she knew absolutely everything about the Company so was never wrong. When Sue celebrated a decade with the Cordwainers in 2019, we joked that while the rest of the world asked Alexa, the Cordwainers always asked Sue.

In 2012, along with her dear friend Marilyn Redgrave (Mabel) Sue was sponsored for the freedom of the City by my late father Richard Stillwell and Christopher King, both of whom were incredibly fond of Sue. In 2019 Sue was

made a Freeman of the Company and she was as proud to receive the Freedom as the Cordwainers were to formally include her in the ranks of members.

She really enjoyed the social side of livery life and so many of us were proud to count her as a friend. At our livery dinner last week, Sue's colleagues in the Cordwainer office and the team at Clothworkers' Hall did a superb job, but we were all aware that one person was missing.

We are so lucky to have known Sue, to have benefited from her guidance and to have called her our friend. She had a great sense of fun and I shall especially miss those daft conversations with Bungle about everything from 1970s TV shows to, more seriously, how to drum up support for the footwear awards.

I know how much Sue loved being part of the Cordwainers and I hope she knew how very much we loved and respected her too. She has left a gaping hole at the heart of the Company and we will miss her more than I can say.

Judith Millidge



Sue Cummings
Freeman and Assistant Clerk
of the
Worshipful Company of
Cordwainers
2009-2022