

# Phyllis Yallop (nee Rowe)



Phyllis, or Phyll as she preferred to be called, was born in Devizes in Wiltshire in 1918, the daughter of Jim and Amy Rowe. Jim was a services man in Wiltshire and that is where he met and married Amy, bringing his family back to Bulmer on his 'demob'.

Phyll went to Bulmer School and then to Sudbury High School for Girls. On leaving school she became a governess to the daughters of a touring theatrical company who lived in the village.

Phyll met and married Derrick Yallop and they moved in with Phyll's family at Tin Tops in Bulmer Street. Phyll took an interest in the local youth club and was a member of the ARP. It was around 1941 that she started to work for a butcher in Sudbury to help with his books, but was soon encouraged to drive his van on meat deliveries. *"His two employees had just been called up when I went to work for him. Learning to drive was the last thing I wanted to do but I thoroughly enjoyed it," she recalls. "I did about 80 stops and starts on that first round and soon got the hang of it."* This started her lifelong ambition in driving – deliveries, then some private hire chauffeuring.

On moving to Sudbury in 1949, she worked for a garage in the office but soon was collecting new Humber and Hillman cars from the factory in Coventry. Having won the local police driving competition, she was asked to teach the chemist's wife to drive, and this started her career in driving instruction. *"It could be quite hairy because we didn't have dual controls in those days and the handbrake was on the driver's side, so all I could do was shout if I wanted a pupil to stop sharpish. One time we ended up in a ditch and had to be pulled out by a tractor."*

On passing her police exam and the Ministry of Transport exams she became one of the first 'lady' driving instructors – her career spanned several decades and she became widely acclaimed and appeared on TV and in the national press. Finally she was known to be the 'oldest driving instructor' in the country. One of her proudest moments was when her grandson Timothy passed his driving test on his seventeenth birthday.

After the death of Derrick, although she was still driving and slowing down on the instruction, she was diagnosed with dementia and died following a fall and breaking her hip. It seems only right for her ashes to be buried in the village that she had grown up in and loved.