



Younger days: Rene Bell, third from left in back row, with sporty friends.

Rene Bell, July 1913 to May 2017

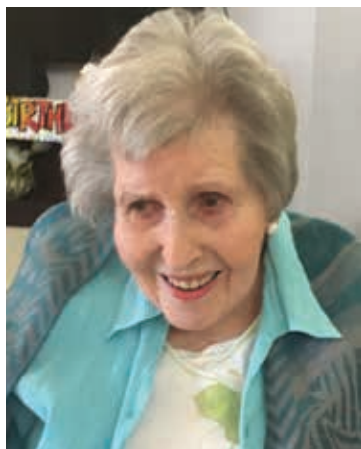
By Neil McNaughton

Many residents of East Finchley and Muswell Hill will be saddened to learn of the death of Irene (better known as Rene) Bell at the Meadow Nursing Home in Muswell Hill. She died just two months short of her 104th birthday.

Rene attended Holy Trinity School in East End Road, and then Finchley Catholic School, which she left in 1929. After that her life was woven into the fabric of the East Finchley community. She was a keen Guide as a girl and later became Tawny Owl for the Oak Lodge Brownie pack.

But it was at East Finchley Methodist Church that she became best known and loved. She was a church steward there and a member of the choir. Rene had a disabled daughter herself and so was particularly interested in the welfare of disabled and disadvantaged children.

Rene worked in the West End after leaving school where she was employed by Bell's music publisher. She later returned to East Finchley to work for a diamond tool manufacturer near East Finchley station. In 1939 she married Daniel Bell, living with him originally in Sherwood Hall



Much loved: Rene Bell

in East End Road and later in Twyford Avenue.

A member of the Health and Beauty Group which met at the Methodist Church for many years, she was also a keen sports-woman, playing both badminton and tennis. She remained fit and sharp until well past her 100th birthday. Indeed, she loved nothing more than reading *The Archer* newspaper to keep up with local news and gossip.

Those who knew her will remember the stories she used to tell of life in East Finchley in times gone by. She remembered visiting injured servicemen who were convalescing in Fortis House, then in Fortis Green, during the First World War. She also recalled playing in the fields where Abbots Gardens now stand, sheep being kept in a pound in Market Place, the building of the railway bridge and funeral processions led by horses passing up the High Road to St Pancras cemetery.

A service to celebrate her life was held at East Finchley Methodist Church on 14 June. She left a son and daughter, two grandsons and three great grandchildren.

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Positive thinking powers friends in new business

By John Lawrence

Two friends are getting a business off the ground that aims to prove the power of positive thinking for children and young people.

Somayah Caesar and Krystle Markham have set up I'More Kids in their words to "build confidence in children and break the cycle of negative thinking".

They've created a colourful collection of ethically-made T-shirts emblazoned with affirmative slogans like 'I'm all kinds of awesome!' along with lapel pins, wall prints, stickers and journals proclaiming 'What I have to offer the world matters'.

Somayah and Krystle, both mothers to young children, have been friends since primary schools but believe the pressures on young people today have changed out of all recognition.

Somayah, who lives in East Finchley and works at Martin Primary School as a play leader and netball coach, says children's confidence can easily be knocked by society and social

media where the pressure to compare yourself with others can create low self-esteem.

"We believe positive words and affirmations can uplift and encourage. I've seen it happen with my own daughter," says Somayah. "On a daily basis over six months, we've made a point of reinforcing her confidence and her attitude has gradually changed from 'I can't do this' to 'I'm going to try to do it'."

"Krystle and I wanted to take this outside our own families because we believe the way we speak to our children becomes their inner voice. We hope our products will help in some small way to empower them."

I'More Kids clothes are currently being stocked at Ryker Kids in the High Road, N2. Find out more at www.imorekids.bigcartel.com.



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