

Mabel Purefoy Fitzgerald: Memories of Geoffrey Purefoy

On the morning of her 100th birthday, Mabel took one look at “The Telegram” and said “My name’s spelt wrongly – The Queen knows how to spell my name – send it back and have it done properly”.

Subsequently, I went over to our church to check names on the memorials – some two words – some one word – some with a hyphen and some all in lower case – so there was a choice. The Queen got it right the second time!

Aunt Mabel was cared for by an army of home helps – now carers. One of them had a near relation who worked in a bakery and wondered if Miss Fitzgerald would let him make her a birthday cake – which she accepted.

On the great day, Aunt Mabel’s contemporary friends arrived for tea. There weren’t very many but one totted up their combined ages and it was over 1200!

The cake arrived – beautifully made and iced with sugar roses on top, like he had learned to make in college. On the top was the inscription “Congratulations – Mable Purefoy FitzGerald – 100th Birthday” – Mable as in Table! Two spelling mistakes on the same day might have been fatal!

Aunt Mabel used a very low wheelchair, built like a sports car, where your bottom is near to the ground. We put the cake on a table raised by a couple of books and, at the right moment, I said “It’s time to cut your cake Aunt Mabel – here’s the knife – I’ll guide you”... the knife went straight through Mable!

