

My Personal Tribute to Mrs Eileen King My Friend



I met Eileen in August 1969. I had left a Girls' Comprehensive school and had applied to BICC as an Office Junior.

I was interviewed by Eileen and a rather intimidating man by the name of Mr Jim Condon. Eileen showed me where I would be working and explained the function of the typing pool. I would be working with five other women, and would be expected to touch type and send Telex messages to other branches of BICC.

My first thoughts of Eileen were how beautiful she was and how much she looked like Princess Margaret. She was smartly dressed and at the time seemed a bit Posh! However, she was kind and encouraging and I started at BICC the following week.

I would have described myself as a rather naïve sixteen year old who knew very little about the big wide world let alone the world of BICC and Men!! As with all of "Eileen's girls" she took me under her wing; she was maternal, patient and supportive. When I made a Hash of something (which was often) she would be encouraging. Gradually I got to know the other women, I sat between Shirley and Viv with Eileen at the helm.

Our day started at 9.00a.m. and Eileen would have cycled in from Ealing or arrived with her beloved Bob. Coffee break would be between 10-10.30 a.m. enough time to make rolls and coffee, or wash your hair, hem an outfit Eileen was making for one of us, have a discussion about all manner of things, including sex, who was the man of the moment or who fancied who! Working in a predominately male organisation, men generally figured in the conversations in the typing pool.

To each of us Eileen was much more than a Supervisor. She was a mother figure, a confidant, she was firm when she needed to be but always fair. Eileen had many skills. she could Knit, Crochet, Sew, Paint and was happy to share those skills with “her girls”, plus making outfits for all of us, sometimes having two or three things on the go at the same time. Eileen was generous with her time but more importantly she had a generosity of spirit.



I left BICC in 1976. Our special relationship lasted until her death in August 2016. She is entwined in my history and my life today and that of my family. Eileen was and has always been someone constant and special in our lives. She has been there during the hard times as well as enjoying with us the good times. I miss her greatly.

At times I chuckle to myself; I do not know another place where you could wash your hair in your coffee break, while the Supervisor sits crocheting. Happy Days made happier by Eileen.

Pauline Kelly (née Earles)