

Rene Bassi (nee Hogg) An Obituary by Kent County Squad Players from the 1950's

We were shocked to hear of the death of 77 year old Kent Life Member, Rene who died of a brain haemorrhage on the 20th February. Rene had lived in Switzerland since her marriage to Sergio, on the 23rd August 1962. Each Christmas a number of County colleagues, some of whom have contributed to this article, would receive one of her long, informative letters which updated us with what was going on in her life and helped us to keep in touch with one another.

She was educated at Mitcham County Grammar where she was Head Girl and trained at Brighton Training College as a teacher of English and P.E. With an enthusiasm which was typical of her, she undertook sports courses at Loughborough in her school holidays. At one time in the late 1940's Rene regularly made the long journey from Mitcham to Kent for practices and matches. Later she taught at Rainham in Kent and lived in lodgings there.

She was a stalwart Kent Captain, possibly the longest playing member of the 1st Team of her era. Short of stature, she could never hope to replace England's 6 foot plus Surrey shooter, Annette Cairncross, but she did go to South Africa in 1956 with an England Touring team at a time when players had to pay their own expenses, unlike today's professional sportspersons!

As a player, she was quick, neat and had tremendous enthusiasm for the game. Under her leadership and encouragement Kent rapidly improved and regularly challenged Surrey, the dominant English county. Although Surrey seemed to have the edge, games were always close and played in good spirit as one would expect from them and a team captained by Rene.

Her colleagues remember her as a player and at Committee level for her organising skill, kindness and sincere friendship. Any newcomer was always warmly welcomed to the Squad. She was a good captain on and off court, loyal to her players and taking her duties seriously, but not without a sense of humour. One newcomer to the 1st team recalled her advice on how to deal with a tall defence – 'duck quickly through her legs!' (Subsequently this player decided it was easier to adapt to centre court play than attempt to achieve the impossible!)

Sadly her 93 year old husband, Sergio, died a fortnight after Rene. We extend our sincere sympathies to her family, who were the centre of life, particularly to her brother, Brian and his wife, Heather. She will be greatly missed by her old friends from Kent Netball.

