

Last weekend was Silver Sunday, an opportunity to celebrate our older members of society but also to remember there are those who may find themselves alone in the frantic world we live in. I recognise and respect that we have many days, weeks and even months of awareness events but this one is particularly special to me personally.

I miss my maternal grandmother enormously. It is not just on birthdays or anniversaries but at times when I am high or low. The latter especially so. In a way wise old women do, she would exclaim "lambie" (her pet name for me...she was "mutton", naturally) and then come out with some words that felt appropriately wise at the time. As we so often do I took her for granted. I forgot to call and never stayed as long as I should. She has been a star in the sky for 7 years now but I still think of her.

Like my mother, she worked for social services but in adult community care. She was passionate about the elderly and their right to be treated with respect and love. She hated the thought of people being lonely and living in isolation. Today too many do. The number of people over the age of 65 (not that I think that elderly before people email me) who claim to be lonely is shocking. It is heart wrenching to read of those who claim the TV is their only company.

I wonder if my nan was lonely. I hope not. But when I see my older neighbours I always try and stop to say hello, mindful that I might be the only person they speak to that day. We need to do more to combat loneliness and I would urge everyone to look at the Campaign to End Loneliness on the Internet and see what you can do to help. My nan left me many a legacy, my interest in politics, classical music and penguin biscuits, but most of all the desire to help our older generation live a fulfilled and happy third phase of life.