

Bridget Dixon 1942 - 2017

Many of us in the South Yorkshire, North Derbyshire and Nottingham area and further afield knew Bridget as an enthusiastic musician – a viola player, and a ‘proper’ one, not one of those violinists who didn’t make the grade and converted! She played in several local orchestras, but like many of us enjoyed most of all playing chamber music. Her activities were wide ranging: string quartets, quintets, sextets and so on upwards, and baroque music and viola ensembles all featured. She also enthusiastically and regularly attended the Lionel Tertis International Viola Festival at the Erin Arts Centre, Isle of Man.

She was a regular at the termly viola workshops with Robin Ireland, which have run successfully in South Yorkshire for many years, and attract not just local players but others from further afield including conservatoire students. She was one of a group of four of Robin’s pupils who initially set these up.

She was also involved for many years in the 4strings88keys charity which organised chamber music weekends and particularly aimed at drawing in younger players. She took on the role of organising people into groups, and threw herself into this so heartily that she sometimes missed out on playing herself! She later became treasurer, and when the charity closed down, there was a healthy balance to pass on to another worthy musical cause.

Bridget was game for anything really and over the years played sometimes in public for weddings or charity concerts, but mainly at home, for fun, and always stopping for cake if not a meal. Friends confirm her good appetite on such occasions. Perhaps even more important than the food was the laughter. Her ‘great laugh’ was so infectious. We laughed at her as well as with her, and she would just join in. We all laughed when she got lost and applied her standard policy for such situations: choose a bar later on and play it until it fits. It’s a good policy, but doesn’t work so well for the Pachelbel canon. This piece is a popular choice for weddings where fortunately nobody is ever listening so they don’t notice if you don’t quite end together!

The best story was the orchestral concert where Bridget left her black trousers behind. With perfect composure, she wrapped her black jacket around her legs and sat still for the whole evening in this rather unusual outfit. Certain younger members of the orchestra couldn’t stop giggling over this and had to try to look in the other direction and concentrate on their parts.

Tributes to Bridget from fellow musicians poured in after her death and were very consistent. The term ‘a lovely lady’ appeared several times, as did mentions of her enthusiasm, her commitment, her support for her various organisations, and her determination to keep going. She was still playing at the end of July. In fact we’ll probably still be expecting her to turn up – as in later years the diary became a challenge and we never knew whether she was going to arrive early, late, or not at all!

We are sad to lose her and she will be much missed.

Joy Paul