

# SHEILA CORBETT

It is with great sadness that I write this memory of Sheila, all the more so as, because of my own health problems, I wasn't able to see her as often as I would have liked at the end, and it was a great grief to me that I could not attend her funeral.

I know she would have understood, as many of her visitors in her last days told me that she always wanted to know how I was and was very concerned for me. Typical Sheila. She never complained and always, even if she had to force herself, looked on the bright side. Our many outings together caused us much amusement over the way people perceived her as a wheelchair user; either ignoring her completely or being over effusive, though most people couldn't have been nicer or more helpful.

Sheila was born in Kidderminster, the youngest of a family of four children – Roger, Mick, Margery and Sheila herself.

When she was born with Spina bifida, her parents were told that she would never walk, but, with typical Sheila determination, she did and she remembered her mother crying with joy when she rode on her first bicycle.

My first memory of her was when I went to Kidderminster High School, where she was two forms above me. She stood out from the crowd because she walked awkwardly, but we got to know each other well as she was my 'sixer' in our school Girl Guide pack. She went away for a year, when she was fourteen, to Woodlands Hospital in Birmingham for exploratory treatment, though nothing was eventually done. She could remember her mother and Aunt Tet coming up by train and bus once a week to see her and bringing her fresh eggs to have for her breakfast, as it was during the war.

Her father worked for Bradley & Turton, an engineering firm almost next-door to where Sheila lived and he arranged for her to have a job in the offices there when she had completed her School Certificate. She stayed there for many years being pushed up in her wheelchair each day and taken home again by a member of the workforce until the firm closed, when she was successful in obtaining a post with a private Stourport firm until she retired.

I met her again when she came over to visit Margery, who had married Bill Austin. They eventually kept the Post Office and shop, and Bill had a newspaper round. Sheila came to live at the Post Office together with her aunt when her mother died.

She was always ready to keep abreast of modern trends; her little disabled vehicle was soon changed for a converted saloon car, and she embraced the new IT world with enthusiasm, using it to good effect in publishing the Parish Magazine. She played an important part in village life, being secretary to the Vernon/Bourne Charity for many years, and writing the much-loved Village Pantomimes, at which her young band of handbell ringers entertained the audience. She was also a familiar sight at Shrawley Fete, taking the money in the tea tent.

She was kept busy doing the weekly Post Office accounts until Margery retired and it was a great shock when Margery died; but the last phase of her life was a happy one. She had her own home for the first time and loved nothing more than entertaining her friends there. Sadly, it didn't last long, but she accepted her lot in life philosophically up to the end.

*Editor's note: I am so sorry but I don't have the name of the person who wrote this. Any info, please contact me on [web@khsoldgirls.org.uk](mailto:web@khsoldgirls.org.uk)*