

The Bridget Robinson Studentship in Mathematics or Music



Bridget in the garden of her great-uncle in Belgium

The studentship is intended to benefit a student specialising in one of the subjects that interested and inspired Bridget throughout her life.

Bridget was born in Guildford, the second daughter of George Robinson and Wilhelmina Roothaan. She grew up with her elder sister in Surrey and was part of an extended European family. Holidays were often spent with her maternal grandmother and cousins in Nijmegen and her paternal grandparents and cousins in Bruges. She was particularly fond of her deaf and speech-impaired great-uncle, a stained-glass artist who expressed himself powerfully in his work by drawing inspiration from his garden, always ablaze with colour. A talented musician and singer, Bridget played the flute and the piano and loved to sing in the church choir. Music was important to her, possibly for its transcendental qualities but also no doubt for its harmony, symmetry and order. This was reflected in another interest of hers: mathematics.



Bridget (right) with her elder sister



Bridget (right) with her younger sister

After gaining a Certificate in Education at Homerton in 1972, her first post was at Glendower School where she held responsibility for the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. In 1981 she enrolled as a mature student at Bedford College. Dr Hamish Rae (retired) remembers her as having a passion for mathematics, aware that it was a subject where hard work and determination were among the requisites for success. She was a determined, resolute student and duly graduated with a BSc in Mathematics in 1985, going on to teach at two other schools.

Bridget had high ideals and formed strong and long-lasting friendships. She was painstaking in everything she did and her gentle approach to life was unhurried. From her beautifully formed and neat handwriting to her dressmaking, needlework and stained glass, she strived for perfection. Some of the inspiration for her creativity came from her visits to the Greek Islands, her favourites being Crete and Symi, born of a strong interest in ancient Greece.

Bridget's life changed irrevocably in 2014 when she suffered a profound brain injury. Her family were advised to expect that she would not be able to walk again and that she was unlikely to make any significant progress. After spending nearly five months in different hospitals, she was transferred to the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in Putney where she benefited from three months of rehabilitation. From there she went to live with her younger sister.



Bridget, March 2017

Her care was arranged at home and she was very much loved by all who met and got to know her. Gradually, she was able to find joy and contentment in her life once again despite its many limitations. Listening to classical music and Choral Evensong were regular pastimes and therapies. With daily encouragement and routine but more importantly, as a result of her own determination and tenacity, she *did* learn again to some extent to eat and drink, to speak, to read, to write, to play a scale on her lap-harp, to stand, to sit and even, to walk with the aid of a frame. Sadly, her remarkable progress was cut short by a terminal illness in 2017.

Family and friends remember Bridget's unassuming, gentle personality, her lovely smile and the precision in everything that she did. It would have pleased her to know that a student of one of the subjects that she pursued, and possibly the one that she taught, could benefit from this studentship.