

## **Stella Tidmarsh 1942 – 2025**

Shrivenham lost a great treasure when Stella died at the age of 82 this year. Cheerful and outward going with a warm personality and a wide range of interests Stella was well-known in Shrivenham. An often-heard comment was: “talking to Stella is like talking to your best friend, she always greets you with a lovely smile”. Fundamentally she was an active Methodist and attended the Methodist Church in Shrivenham when she and her two young children moved here in the 1970s soon after she was widowed. Trained as a teacher she happily helped with Sunday School, Bible classes and playing the organ for services. Music played an important part in her life. The first time she visited Salzburg she had been absolutely captivated by Mozart’s music and this added considerably to her repertoire. Stella also created ECHOS (Ecumenical Choir of Shrivenham) which was a choir for the community formed with members of Shrivenham Methodist & St Andrews Church. She regularly gave music lessons in Longcot school. Her knowledge of and caring for the visits to Oberammergau, organised by the Methodist Church was much appreciated.

Graham Tidmarsh, the Shrivenham Methodist Minister, had also suffered bereavement and it was not long before they met up with their shared interests amongst which was the Swindon Amateur Light Operatic Society. (SALOS). Graham and Stella decided to get married and their home became the venue for Bible Studies. If there were any children accompanying their parents to these meetings Stella always made sure there were some games for them and of course a drink of juice and some cake. She loved to cook and bake whether it was for Summer “Tea in the Garden” at which her famous Lemon Drizzle Cake appeared. Not only did it benefit those who went along to enjoy the social aspect but at the end of each Sunday afternoon, a bowl was made available for donations and the money would go to a chosen Charity, perhaps the African Charity, Phakakisma, or Riding for the Disabled.

In addition to volunteering at RDA, helping disabled children to feel calm when riding a horse, Stella was a Guide for the National Trust at Ashdown House. She was also on the Committee for the Local Branch of the National Trust and took responsibility for daytrips for a coachload of members. Before advertising the outing she would

always visit the places selected to ensure accessibility and safety. Many of us in Shrivenham and District have delightful memories of places we would not otherwise have seen. Always there was fun and laughter. Amazingly, considering all her other commitments, she initiated the popular Sunday Lunch Club for people living on their own and who would like to go out for a monthly meal at a nearby hostelry. Again, she always visited the chosen venue before booking it.

Stella's love of dogs introduced her to many other people as she regularly walked over the fields and round the village. A friend to so many and although sadly missed, we have such wonderful memories of Stella, so kind, so caring and so practical.

Michele Holloway and Vivien Moss