



# A TRIBUTE TO **BRENDA BAKER**

1925-2020

**Brenda Baker** (nee Sherratt) sadly died on 2nd July 2020, aged 94.



## A Sedgley life

Brenda Sherratt was born at Number 6, Vicar Street, which is the detached house on the **far right** of this photo. It lies between the former Inspector's house (which is connected to Sedgley Police Station) and All Saints' Church.



## Early life

This photo, taken in around 1926, shows Brenda as a baby in the back garden of 6 Vicar Street, which overlooks the entrance to All Saints' Church.



## A lifelong association with All Saints' Church.

Brenda attended All Saints' Church in Sedgley her whole life.

As a girl she was a frequent visitor to the old vicarage (which was rebuilt in around 1969) and in later years was able to recollect the elegant interior in great detail.

In this charming photo (please excuse the unfortunate blemish) she can be seen working in the vegetable garden of the vicarage.



## Wartime – and working for the Police

This photo shows a sandbagged entrance to Sedgley police station during the war.

Brenda's family would shelter in the basement of the police station which was next door to their home.

Indeed she began working for the police as a 17-year-old in 1943 in a secretarial role –first at Coseley Police station for a couple of years, before she moved to Sedgley Police Station.

She eventually became secretary to the Inspector at Sedgley.

She also worked for the magistrate's court, recording proceedings, when it was located in the Vicar Street buildings.



## The Police Ball

Brenda was part of the social side at Sedgley Police Station; PC Willetts is on the left; Brenda is in the middle and PC Pearce is next to her in this photo of a Police Ball in around 1960-62.



## Her marriage to Geoff Baker at All Saints'

Brenda married Geoff  
Baker at All Saints' in 1962.

The vicar was Revd  
Stanley Lloyd.



## Another Police Ball!

This photo shows another Sedgley Police Ball, this time from around 1962-3.

Brenda and her husband Geoff are on the left.



## Playing the piano

In this photo, Brenda can be seen with a Sedgley dance class, presumably on the occasion of one of their performances.

She provided the piano accompaniment at classes.

Brenda can be seen top left, June Baker is beside her; and the lady on the back row, far right, was Floss Alden who also used to play the piano sometimes for the classes.



## Musical events at Dormston House

The event in the previous photo is likely to have been staged at Dormston House in Dudley Street.

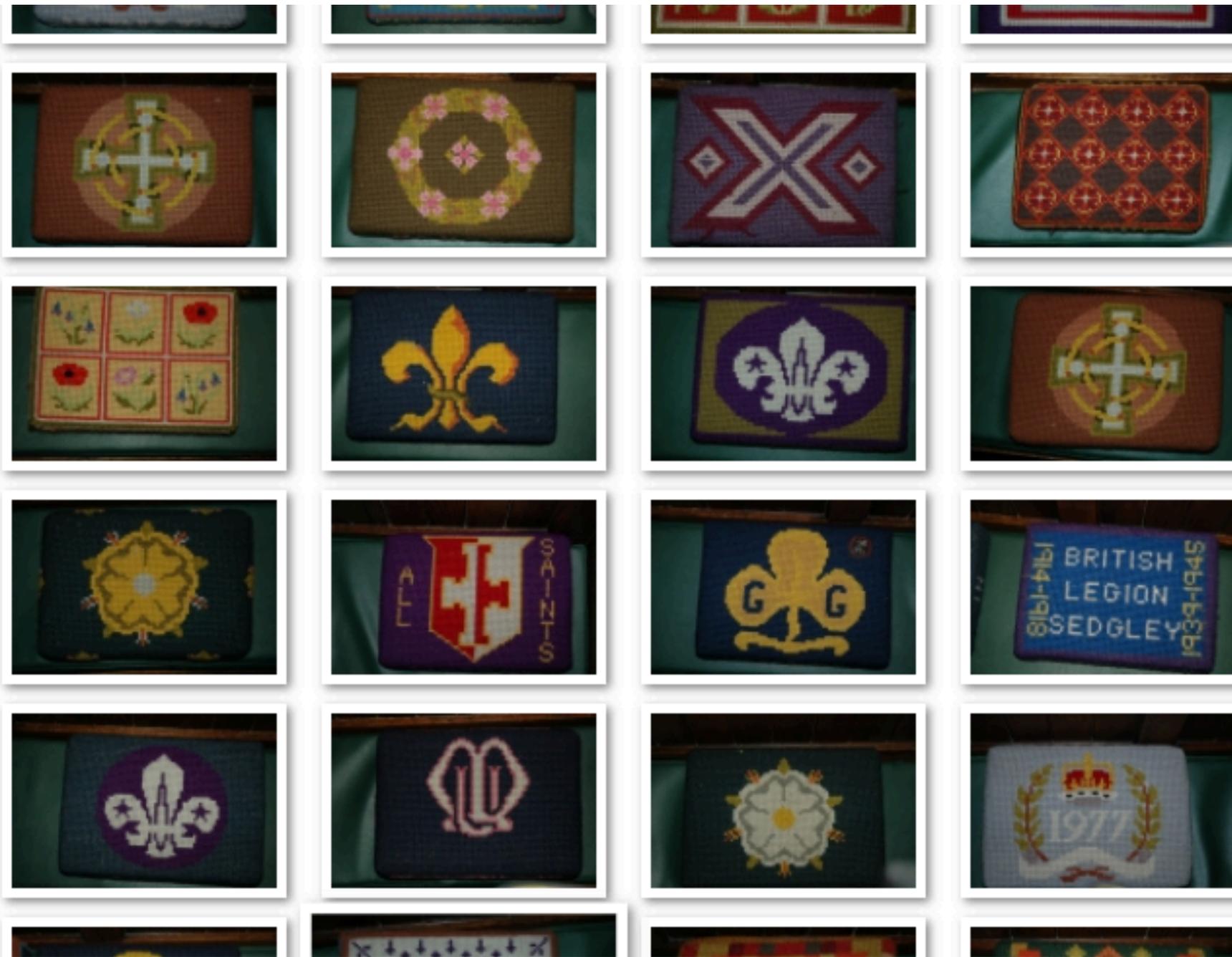
From the late 1940s onwards, the owner Councillor Hickling used to host musical and cultural soirees, and Brenda would almost certainly have performed at some of these.



## School Secretary in the 1980s

Brenda was the School Secretary at Queen Victoria Primary School, Sedgley in the 1980s.

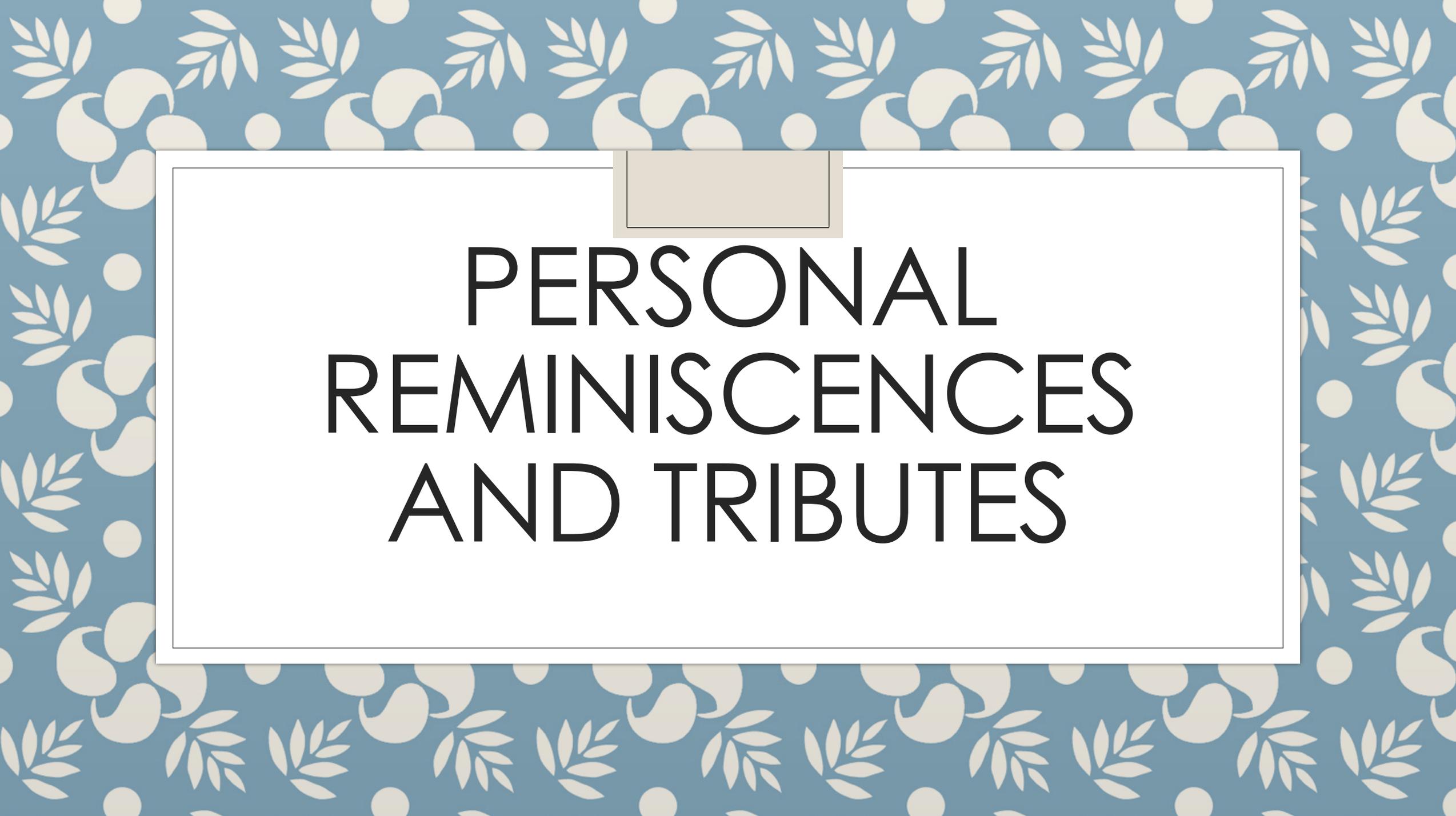
She can be seen in the front row, second from the right.



# All Saints' Church Mothers' Union

Brenda led a very active church life – one of her roles was leader of the Mothers' Union at All Saints' in the 70s/80s.

She was very much involved in organising and co-ordinating the craft project that created over 200 hassocks (embroidered kneelers) for the church in the late 1970s and 1980s.



# PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND TRIBUTES

**Helen Dye:**

"The church kneeler project was started in the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The rubber kneeling pads in church needed replacing, so my mother, Brenda Baker, who was running the Mother's Union at the time, suggested to Revd Linford that they replaced the worn-out pads with embroidered kneelers. She made a couple of kneelers to show him what they would be like including a Silver Jubilee design. My mother, along with Mrs Morgan, then organised the purchase of kneeler kits and persuaded people to purchase them. I designed a number of special kneelers for people. These included ones for schools (Queen Victoria School and Alder Coppice) and a RAF design for Mrs Hackett in memory of her husband who was killed in the Second World War. These were all embroidered by my mother and we, as a family, embroidered a vast number. Also, I designed, and my mother worked and donated, the "Bride" and "Groom" kneelers for my Wedding on 8 July 1995, 25 years ago, and they are still used for weddings today."

Brenda's  
daughter  
Helen  
remembers  
the Church  
Kneeler  
Project

**Jane Sherratt, Brenda Baker's niece:**

“Brenda was my much-loved aunt, and I spent many happy hours at her house. She was a fabulous cook, particularly excelling at baking, and she was an excellent craftswoman. Well-known in the community, it used to take me and cousin Helen hours to deliver Christmas cards to everyone she knew in Sedgley. Many of my memories of Brenda are associated around the church. Stitching kneelers. Singing in the choir. She loved music, and I was often around when she was giving piano lessons. I will always remember her with lots of love and affection. A lovely, kind, gentle, talented lady.”

From her  
niece Jane  
Sherratt

**Anne Wakefield:**

“Brenda was a friend and neighbour of the Wakefield family for almost 60 years. We shared many tears, joys and sorrows in our lovely gardens and shared our produce.

Brenda made such divine shortbread (always given some at Christmas). Scones and home-made jam were often provided. I think we had a shared ‘jam kettle’ - for Brenda frequently borrowed mine, her own apparently not large enough for the quantity she needed to make. Her marmalade was delicious too!

We sat together in Church for many years and were among the first ladies to sing with the gentlemen and boys in the augmented Choir implemented by the late Organist and Choir Master, Bill Timmins. We sang on special occasions.

In latter years, when her health and mobility began to fail, Brenda needed support, for which she was most grateful, although, at times it was difficult because there was only one way of doing things, her way! I once had a lesson in washing up spoons. I held my breath but now I smile!

An interesting lady who loved company and conversation. You shall be missed!  
Rest in peace Brenda.”

From her  
friend and  
neighbour  
Anne  
Wakefield

**Barbara Bolt:**

“A beautiful lady.  
Remember her from my childhood.  
I attended dance classes with June Baker & she always played  
the piano for us.  
Such happy memories.  
Rest in peace dear Brenda.”

from a  
dance class  
pupil

### Judy Cowburn

“I remember Brenda from Queen Victoria School. I taught there from 1987. She was a wonderful lady with a ready smile for everyone. I especially remember that she was so kind and caring. When my sons were little she would invite us round for a cup of tea and cake. They loved her because she spoilt them rotten. A lovely person through and through.”

### Sandra Beardsmore

“I remember her fondly as my school secretary when I taught at Queen Victoria School from 1985...she was always helpful, quiet and so hard working.”

### Magdalene Davies

“Sad news to hear of the death of Brenda, I also was a school secretary and knew her - she was a lovely lady, polite and very well-spoken.”

From  
colleagues at  
Queen  
Victoria  
School

### Ruth Drake

My siblings and I (nee Chesworth) all had piano lessons with her over the years, on her baby grand piano in her front room. She was very patient, and chose lovely music – Haydn, Mozart Beethoven or Star Wars as appropriate! She would suck in a sharp breath at a wrong note rather than stop you or criticise. Thoughts with Helen and her family.

### Liz Beeston

Mrs Baker was my first piano teacher, giving up her lunchtimes to teach me, free of charge, when she was school secretary at Queen Vic. Later, I attended lessons at her house, she was incredibly welcoming and kind. She remained supportive of my career as a musician, seeing my mum (Ridgeway Practice Nurse) regularly and always asking after me and my family. Happy and fond memories.

From her  
piano pupils

**Gemma Louise Curtis**

I used to be Brenda's carer... as you come away from care work you tend to not see your old clients as much, and life takes over - sending my thoughts to her family.

**Emma Louise Whitehouse**

She was such a lovely lady!

**Denise Insley**

I helped Mrs Baker for a few years before my grandson arrived 3 years ago. Sorry to hear sad news.

Messages  
from  
Brenda's  
carers



**Goodbye Brenda – with much love from all  
who knew you.**