



Remembering Sheila

She is home!

Writing on behalf of SIL, I am expected to share facts and details about Sheila's ministry here in Brazil, but try as I might, I cannot seem to remove myself from the equation. So with an aching joyful heart I will share what Sheila has meant to me personally and I believe that each one of our Brazil SIL members will resonate with my thoughts.

My husband and I arrived in Brazil very wet behind the ears and moved right into a tribal program that had its share of challenges. With a twinkle in her eye and words of wisdom on her lips, Sheila gently encouraged, advised, and even scolded us on occasion. She is the one who instilled in me a love for swimming and Sudoku. I learned from Sheila's example how to give of myself, my time, and my resources and leave the results to God. She also taught me the very important art of taking the pot to the kettle, not the kettle to the pot when making a perfect cup of tea.

If I had to describe Sheila in three words, they would be undaunted, faithful, and loving. Though Sheila's ministry among the Rikbaktsa was difficult in many aspects, she never seemed to despair. Not only did she fearlessly and lovingly persevere, she encouraged me and all her SIL family to follow her lead. She never lost hope in me or in any of the people God placed in her path. On many occasions, when we would gather for prayer, our list of prayer requests would get long and our hearts heavy. Sheila, undaunted, would lead us in a festal shout of "Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord" and somehow our burdened hearts would once again gain perspective and rest in God's sovereignty.

Today my heart is heavy, but in keeping with dear Sheila's example I choose to shout in celebration, "She is Home! She is Home! She is Home! I am sad, but honoured, to be here today to say my final farewell to such a great person.

Tammy Harrison

My husband Bob and I only served in Brazil for two years way back in 1990. We met Sheila at Branch Conference in Brasilia. We were so impressed with her ability to work in a language group where she was not welcome in the villages. We bought a whole Rikbaktsa outfit and used it extensively in our speaking engagements throughout the years and hung some of the artifacts up on our office wall. Each time we looked at them it reminded us to pray for Sheila and her very difficult assignment. It is great to know that Sheila is most welcome in heaven where her Lord is pleased with all her efforts to win this people group for his kingdom. Well done, Sheila!

Bob and Lois Schoonveld

We are still adjusting to the reality that Sheila, our faithful earthly warrior for the Lord and the Rikbaktsa went before us to our Saviour and Lord! We knew Sheila so well. Fritz has flown so many times with her to the Rikbaktsa. She gave her life in many areas.

Living on with saddened hearts but still rejoicing in His care

Fritz and Anneke Lauffenburger

I first met Sheila in 1972 when I had a rare opportunity to visit her in the tribal village where she was then working. The plane was taking the long journey there so the pilot's wife, another colleague and I said we would pay for a seat each, so helping to reduce the cost for Sheila. Little did I dream then that years later I would be invited to join Sheila in at least 5 courses when we were able to give some wonderful Rikbaktsa men training to be teachers of their own people and help them produce culturally relevant reading materials. These trips involved a 3 and a half hour flight and then a boat ride to get to a village. I especially remember 1995, 1997 and then again my 5th trip in 2000 and have copies of some of the books we helped them to produce at that time plus photos to bring back the memories!

I probably would not have chosen Sheila as a special friend and I'm sure she wouldn't have chosen me, but on reflection I am sure that we miss out on some wonderful people in our pathway because maybe we judge them or their outward appearance or whatever, before accepting them for who they really are. Ours is the loss when we do that!

Our shared interest in the Rikbaktsa's need for more help with bilingual teaching led us on to realise that we also shared a love of surfing, so since I retired to the UK in 2004 we enjoyed short surfing experiences first staying in Norman & Pat's caravan and later in Polzeath in a B&B and then during the day sharing with Jan Pearkes and her family who camp there each year over the May bank holiday weekend. In May I had a feeling that it might just be our last time as Sheila had recently discovered that she had macular degeneration so couldn't continue driving.

I stayed with Sheila each year so got to know many of her friends and her oldest sister, Mary. I saw and felt first-hand just how much Sheila cared for and thought about Mary's every need. I was, and am, full of admiration of Sheila and all the extraordinary things that she accomplished in her life and the many people, young and old, that she has helped over the years.

I received an email from an ex-Cuiaba colleague who said he told his son and daughter about Sheila's stroke because she was a very special "Aunt" to them while growing up there many years ago. Here I quote "Yesterday Brad sent me the following: "Appreciate that. She was one of the few adults at the center that treated us kids like people with mind and opinions of our own." She was also especially aware of folk who didn't have a car and would help them as well as take them on lovely outings.

May Sheila be an example for all of us in the time we have left to share and care for others. "Only one life, twill soon be past, Only what's done for God will last."

Farewell, dear colleague and friend. Who will enjoy surfing with me now?!

Margaret

We also are sad, but can imagine Sheila rejoicing in creative & extraordinary ways that she enters Heaven.

Steve Sheldon

One of my (Cynthia) first memories of Sheila is at her Valedictory service in the late 50s in the Bridewell Hall. She was wearing a coat with a large fur collar and no hat! The then Wycliffe general secretary's wife commented she 'Not quite the Miss Tremaine we know' On the Cuiaba Centre in Brazil she was a very favourite aunt of our four children, always interested in what they were doing and they had great confidence in her. She understood when they were having difficulties when we had to leave them on the centre in the Children's Home when we went into the tribe. She would have them up to her house, play games with them and feed them ice cream. One son remembers an outing when she took him to climb San Antonio, a small mountain. It was very hot and at the top she became so dehydrated that he had to go back down and bring back up some water.

She was so hospitable, shared her home with Indians, Brasilians and missionaries alike. Who can forget her fish suppers?

She was with us when our three year son died and organised his simple burial. She was more than a good friend she was family.

Glyn had helpful linguistic discussions with her and attended the same workshops. She was never afraid to speak her mind and would often remind the group to stop and pray. Her dedication to the Rikbaktsa was without equal and she stuck to a very very difficult tribal location for longer than anyone else we know. She never gave up believing that God would reign in Rikbaktsa land. That faith has been abundantly honoured and there are those rejoicing with her in heaven today as well as others mourning her passing on earth. I believe that the one thing that Sheila would ask of us is that we continue to pray for her beloved Indians.'

Sheila always in our hearts

Glyn and Cynthia Griffiths, Ruth, Andrew and Simon.

We are away at the moment (in Sydney for a month) and regret that we won't be able to come to the thanksgiving service.

May I share one small story, that I suspect Sheila didn't know anything about? On one occasion many years ago when Sheila came to speak at St James, my youth group were given a three-line-whip to attend the service. Knowing that Sheila didn't always express things as concisely as possible, I feared for what the half-dozen teenagers who turned up would do – as did those sitting close to them. So I asked them to count every time Sheila said "Rikbaktsa" ... they paid attention throughout and had the adults puzzling over their enthusiasm (and muted cheer) every time she mentioned her Brazilian friends! And they still talk about it to this day!

Blessings

Martin Wakefield

Heaven is celebrating! We wrestle with the feelings of emptiness—a friend with whom we can no longer relate and the knowledge of the joy she is experiencing in her Heavenly abode. We also take the pause to reflect on our own humanity, knowing that one day there will be those writing memories of us! May they be half as pleasant to write as these are for me to write for my good sister Sheila.

We met Sheila when we were assigned to Brazil to work with the education of missionary kids. Our friendship became fast and deep. She was a woman of serious thought and sincere fun. Though we were there for only two and a half years, our friendship continued. We visited her in England a number of times. I remember one drive through a very narrow road, overhung with beautiful trees. Better still are the memories of being bundled up against the winds off the sea, eating fish-n-chips and discussing...something! Just being with her was pleasant. But she couldn't understand why we (the USA) could not have waited a few more years. She was sure that tax issue with the king could have been worked out! ;-)

Our good times together continued as she came to visit us in San Diego on a number of occasions. One time we were at the ocean watching the sea lions beach and play. We gave her a "taste" of the "other" ocean, the Beautiful Blue Pacific! But the "time of our lives" was one time cleaning out our swimming pool! It had been neglected over the winter. Leaves and pine needles (and much other debris) had found their way to the bottom. While my wife, Yvonne, swept it over to our side, Sheila and I were scooping it out into the trash can! Sheila had to get in her 80 lengths (1500 meters) every day! Oh, how she loved to swim. I would be struggling to swim nine lengths and float one while she just kept going!

A particularly special time for me (Yvonne) was when she finished the Rikbaktsa New Testament. In Brazil, I had helped type different portions, but now it was finished. We celebrated by driving together from Washington up onto the Glacier Highway in Canada. Her enthusiasm for a job well done filled the hours along with the beauty of nature. It was a most memorable time.

We love you, Sheila. We will miss your visits.

Neal & Yvonne Pirolo

When Bob and I moved from Brasília to Cuiabá we got to know Sheila. I'm the one who passes on letters from both the English speakers and the Portuguese speakers from our sister mission ALEM to about a hundred people around the world who have served in Brazil at some time, either for a short period or as a full-time ministry. And these are people who pray. We live in Arizona so it will not be possible to be there for the thanksgiving service on the 18th.

Dottie Wright

A great life completed this side of Heaven and now a wonderful awakening.

Gill Reitsma

Thank you for sending this. I too am shocked, but I am sure that Sheila is rejoicing to be with Him. Sheila's thanksgiving service will be on my 80th birthday. I work with WBT in Papua New Guinea, and my co-worker Pat Brien and I met Sheila when we all did a course together in Israel back in 1997. Since then I have developed MD, the wet kind which is treatable. Both Pat and I for medical reasons are living in our homelands, because I need to have regular eye injections I am not able to return to PNG. But when I enlarge the computer fonts I am still able to see well enough to continue the Narak language dictionary editing which we are both doing from our homelands, expecting to finish it next year. I am in Australia, and Pat in USA. I have forwarded your message on to Pat, and she responded with the comment "I am sorry to hear this. She had a life well lived".

I don't think the ARMD would result in Sheila's sudden death, so something else must have carried her off to a joyous reunion with her maker.

You, and the rest of the family and friends of Sheila will be in my thoughts on the 18th. May God bless you,

In His Wonderful Name,

Joan Hainsworth

Years ago Sheila and I did a skit at Branch conference...she was the mother superior and I was the nun. We both worked in tribes where the Catholics had been for years. We also had a great time together in New York City helping at Wycliffe's exhibit at the world's Fair.

I remember Sheila with great joy. I'll meet her in glory.

Marge Crofts

We are shocked and saddened! Thank you for letting us know that Sheila is now with her Lord. This is one lady that we can say with confidence – well done! She has been a friend since 1979 when I, Barbara, was in Brazil. We loved Sheila and were blessed by her life.

Love from us both

Barbara Currin Gardner

Alas we will not be able to be present on 18 November to join in thanks to God for His grace revealed to and through Sheila. We first met her when she taught us on the Wycliffe course at Mertsham in 1965.

David and Yvonne

Thank you so much for keeping us up to date with the news about Sheila, whom we first met over 50 years ago in Brazil. We knew her well; for many years, while living in her house on the Cuiaba Centre, we were her nearest neighbours. Of course, she was often not there, as was the case with us also, being away in the tribal village locations.

Like you, we were shocked at the suddenness of her death -- I (Shirley) had just been chatting with her on the phone a few days beforehand, trying to arrange a time when we could get together again.

(Peter now writing) What can be said about Sheila? She was a one-off, truly unique in her character.

She had a will of iron and when she set herself to a task, never gave up. Examples would include her dedication to fitness, particularly through swimming; and her remarkable, almost life-long commitment to the Arikpaktsa people, as they were known, in spite of difficulties in access, language and travel and transport that would have daunted most other people. And, in addition, the problem of the initial opposition of the local priest, who saw her as the Enemy himself!

We well remember her hilarious tales of how in the early days of her work in the village, it would normally take at least 3 days to get to there, first by hitching a lift on top of a loaded lorry, perhaps with eager rubber tappers -- usually drunk -- travelling as she did, making advances as she was hanging on for dear life, with brush and jungle foliage a constant threat to her security! Then waiting around -- sometimes for days -- for another hitched ride up the Arinos river, this time in a boat: a single woman with her partner Valerie Mitchell, surrounded by more rubber tappers. Or the time when tappers on the lorry started shooting at each other and she lay there, bullets whistling past her ear as the lorry lurched on!

But her iron will was not a dominating, controlling one; it was for her own life, not imposed on others. To others, she exhibited gracious and often mildly amused tolerance of their views, habits and foibles; often when she disagreed with something, she would be non-confrontational, offering an alternative that might begin, "Don't you think that perhaps..." followed by a gentle, good-natured exposition of her view.

She was broad minded in her strong Christian beliefs, exhibiting an unusual level of openness to Christians of different views that was sometimes not reciprocated, as her own views were sometimes (rightly or wrongly) seen to be towards the edge of "acceptable Evangelical belief" at any given time. For example, she found that she could worship her Lord attending Roman Catholic services including the Mass, and would remark with that quizzical amused smile of hers, that one doesn't have to believe everything they said! This openness helped her build bridges towards those who opposed her.

But Sheila was wise in her broad-mindedness. For example, she loved a drink of wine from time to time, but the Evangelical community of Brazil generally advocated tee-totalism, so Sheila never vaunted her personal freedom.

I rarely, if ever, recollect Sheila indicating she felt lonely; perhaps because of our gender difference; but more likely because she had her own inner resource pack, filling her life with extrovertive activity and giving out in her relationships with others.

What a remarkable woman! The Wycliffe community, in both Britain and Brazil, will never be quite the same without her.

Shirley and Peter Kingston

Unfortunately I can't travel this month. I will celebrate here in Brazil with a special mass.

I live in Brazil and have been a friend of Sheila since I was young (now I am 56 years old). Last night I received the notice that Sheila is in a hospital with a serious decease. As she can not read messages I would like to have news about her.

If it is possible say her we are praying for her health and soul. We (my wife and kids love her also) hope Jesus can take care of her.

She is very important to us. A lot of times she was with us: marriage, kids burthdays ...

Wilson Conciani

Good Morning My name is *Professor Ivo da Silva*, I live in Cuiaba, Brazil. My family is a close friend of Mrs. Sheila. Estamos all praying for her. We would like to know how it is? prof. Ivo

Thank you for your attention and give us news of our friend Sheila. I'm very grateful to her. I am currently a teacher in a federal university, master and got a job thanks to my studies. I have gratitude to Sheila because it is a mission of very human heart. And she paid all my books when I studied in high school. Thank you so much again.

On receiving the news that Sheila had passed away.....Obrigado pela atenção Jan. Estou muito triste.

I have such good memories of Sheila's kindness and friendship, we will miss her very much. What a joy it will be when we again meet up in the presence of The Lord.

With every good wish,

David Hortop

We were truly shocked to learn from you of the death of Sheila - with her regular swimming and walking she normally seemed so fit, although the last time we saw her earlier in the year we noticed that she didn't seem as well as normal. She was a truly wonderful person and so many will feel deep sadness at her passing, especially amongst the Rikbaktsa people amongst whom she had done such amazing work throughout her life, even after "retirement". Not many people of her age, late in life, would have been returning to make some of those journeys into the jungle.

We deeply valued the links we had with her as one of our link mission partners when we were at St James, and even after my retirement 11 years ago it was so good to remain in touch with her, normally seeing her once or twice a year either in Sidmouth or here in Taunton. As well as catching up with her news, she was always interested to hear about our own family. We are only sad that we are unable make the funeral.

Although sad to hear the news, we know that for Sheila there will be the glory of meeting with her Lord and Saviour - no doubt with many of the Riks who will also be there as a result of her faithful work over the years - it does say in Revelation that there will be people of every tribe and tongue!

Peter and Glenda Bannister

Sheila was like an additional grandmother to us. She was fun to visit, amazing to listen to when talking about her life's work and amazing as a child to picture her life abroad. Her returns from the Rikbaktsa tribe adorned my parents' walls and often evoked conversation.

Fond memories include chilling in the garden of her amazing house in Sidmouth, relaxing in hammocks and drinking lemonade. Long walks along Sidmouth sea front, swimming in the sea and being amazed at her ability and confidence to swim out to the buoys.

More recent years involved the annual meet at Polzeath with Isca fellowship and Sheila alongside her friend Margaret without fail donning their wetsuits and grabbing bodyboards for a not-so-short session in the waves. She certainly showed us how it was done.

She was and is an inspiration, a dedicated being, an example to all of how to live your life to the full and ensure all opportunities are taken whilst being as selfless as humans can become.

I and we will miss her, the saving graces are that she passed quickly from ability to frailty to death and now is sitting with the Lord.

xx Tim Pearkes

Sheila was indeed a giant of the faith and a superb model for us all.
Blessings,

Mary Daniel, USA

We receive the sad news about our dear sister Sheila Tremaine. I told pastor Marcos in Juina who is also very sad. Sheila helped me a lot when she was living with SIL in Cuiaba, my siblings and I worked for many years with/for her, for more than 30 years... a dear person and a real missionary. The last visit she made to Cuiaba she stayed with us and I helped her with transport. I did this with pleasure and always told Sheila that every time she comes to Cuiaba my family and I want to help you in any way we can.... she was most grateful. I personally felt so good that I could help Dona (term of respect) Sheila who helped us for many years when we were children... You know all of us in Cuiaba are very sad at the loss of Sheila.
Thank you for everything.

Pastor Josué from Cuiaba (Translated)

May the grace of God be with you and all those you know. It has been good to receive the information from you about our dear sister Sheila. During our ministry God has placed in our live special people and one of them was, is, and ever will be Sheila. It is exactly 21 years since we met her for the first time in Cuiaba. My family (Elani, Melissa who was 2 years old and Raquel who was only 5 months old) and Sheila looked after us as if we were her own children and we detected in her eyes the joy that the work amongst the Rikbaktsa would not stop. And this is exactly what happened and our responsibility with the Rikbaktsa grows. Our nostalgia (saudade a great Portuguese word so hard to translate) will be eternal never ending for our dear sister who is now at the side of our Heavenly Father. We will be telling the people about Sheila's passing. (I know without a doubt that there will be heavy crying and a ceremony or ceremonies all along the river to mark her passing).
In Christ

Marcos & family (Translated)

I hope there'll be an Olympic size swimming pool up in heaven for her!

Peter Kingston

How kind of you to let us know how one of our heroes of the faith has gone home to be with JESUS!

Sheila was a tremendous woman who has left a legacy that is rich and deep, and she will be sadly missed in ISCA and in the Amazon. I always looked up to her as a Woman of God who paid a huge price and reaped an even greater reward.
ISCA is poorer but Heaven is richer for her passing.

Dave Richards

Wes and I could never out-give Sheila. Whenever Wes fixed her car, she invited us over for dinner. After several meals at our house, she'd say, "the balance is getting heavier on your side; I need to take you out". We shared many times together—trips to the Pantanal to spend the night and see the thousands of birds before dawn, to crater lake to swim with the fish and the anaconda I didn't know was there, even to the hospital to stay with her while she had her femur put back into its rightful socket after her nightmarish canoe trip and flight back to the city.

Wes's and my favorite times were Monday night tea time with Sheila. After Lord Nibs, our son Matt, and Sarah were tucked into bed for the night, Sheila, with her tea towel to wipe away perspiration, arrived for tea--three cups of Yorkshire tea with cream and no sugar. Sometimes Sheila walked in and sat down at the piano and played a jolly tune before joining us at the table. On some occasions she might quote a childhood poem from memory for our children. Our daughter remembers the time Sheila taught her to play the "Chopsticks" and the time when we allowed her to sip tea with the three of us for half an hour without her younger brother in attendance! After we had solved the problems of the world, Sheila went off to the city to visit Brazilian friends to leave us to turn into pumpkins at 10 pm.

About a month ago when Sheila and I talked on the phone, we prayed for each other because both of us needed encouragement. Now she's in heaven enjoying her Saviour and singing, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"... or is she leading in giving Festal shouts!

How much we'll miss her!

Jean and Wes Bell

It's over forty years since Sheila and I were working together in the Rikbaktsa tribe, but of course we have met over these years and she has tried to keep me up-to-date with news of all the changes. When finally the New Testament was completed, she sent me a copy. I showed it to my son who was about twenty at the time, and was thrilled by his reaction. "Wow, what an achievement! If you had something like this to show at the end of a life's work, you'd know you had done something real for God." Sheila has done something real with her life, and the fact that we shall meet Rikbaktsa people in heaven one day is the demonstration of that. She has worked with determination and real commitment.

Her natural qualities of guts and adventure have stood her in good stead. I remember one afternoon when we were resting in our hammocks in the heat of the afternoon. Suddenly we saw a snake slithering its way through the thatch of our palm-frond roof. I was new to jungle life and not great at killing things so was very thankful that Sheila grabbed a machete and proceeded to do the necessary. The snake saw her coming and went through the roof to the outside so we ran round the outside of the house, saw it again and Sheila struck it successfully. But we ended up laughing, because, as the dead snake fell to the ground, its mouth opened and out hopped a live frog that it must just have found and swallowed whole on the roof! She was made for that type of lifestyle!

Joan Kearney

Many thanks for letting us know about Sheila, or Auntie Sheila as she was to me. I have known her since I was a baby as she kept reminding me that I threw my food off the high chair in Honiton. My mother was Myrtle Kittow whom she may have spoken of. We are so thankful that we have seen her twice in the last three months or so.

Kathryn Kittow

We, my husband and I, served in Cuiaba, MT Brazil with Sheila from mid-1988 – mid 1995. She was a dear friend, a sounding board, and insightful in what was going on.

Working with Sheila Tremaine in Brazil as fellow Wycliffe Members has been special and given us courage on many occasions.

We generally met for a time of prayer in the morning before we started our work. It was often during these times that Sheila would expound on a Scripture that meant much to her or that she was either studying or working with in translation. I so well remember when she had been having challenging times getting into the village and contact with the Rikbaksta when she used Isaiah 40:31 “But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” (NLT Translation) She lived this out in her everyday life. What an encouragement for all of us, regardless of what was being required of us. To sum it up, we will remember Sheila as one who soared, she was not earth bound by difficulties; regardless of the hurdles she faced in her mission work, in her personal life, as in every facet of her work.

She will be missed greatly by the Rikbaksta. Let us pray that they, too, remember who Sheila represented, her living out who Jesus is. May it cause them to seek to do the same.

John & Ann Hostetler

Like yourself, I have been out there with her, and there are so many good memories - but a small incident sticks in my mind, underlining the love and esteem the Indians had for her. We (Rog, Steve & I) accompanied Sheila down the river in order to visit one of the chief men in a particular village. When we arrived he was not around, but Sheila said she really wanted to see him so would wait for his return. She suggested that we walked down a path she pointed out, which would take us to another village. We did this, and when we emerged from the jungle into the village there was a slightly awkward moment when the leader saw us with a quizzical look as if to say 'Who are you?' Of course we had no common language, but we pointed back down the path and just said the word 'Sheila'. It was the magic word!! His face broke into a wide smile, and beckoned us in, and showed us around the village. Clearly any friend of Sheila was a friend of his. When we got back to the original village there was Sheila sat with the man she had come to see, poring over the Scriptures.

Wonderful moment, wonderful woman!

Norman Alford

Most people have heroes, some many. Often they are from films, music or sports. Popular and famous, they quite often fail. My hero was Sheila. She never failed.

I remember being around her house, sitting and sleeping in Brazilian hammocks, eating Sidmouth lardy cake, going for walks along the paths to the beach, swimming out as far as I could with my brothers and then seeing Sheila swim on for another 300m to a buoy before turning around.

Apparently when I was born, Sheila wanted my parents to name me Montmorency / Montmorencia. In some ways I am glad she didn't have her way.

As young kids, we would hear her stories of working in the middle of the Brazilian jungle, translating the Bible, teaching language skills and generally being amazing. My brothers and I grew up learning about a tribe we would probably never meet but knowing their names and families. We played with Amazonian warrior headdresses and dangerous spears and learnt about a culture way beyond our normal experiences.

When I was 15 my mum went out to visit and it was always something I wanted to do. Sheila was fearless, straight to the point and a mighty speaker. Sheila honoured Maria and me by coming all the way out to Estonia for our wedding and was an important part of our life. In recent years we went swimming and bodyboarding together at Polzeath and generally had a lot of banter.

My hero has passed away but I know she is in a better place being told by her father that she has done a good job.

Ben Pearkes

Sheila and I first met 58 years ago at the Wycliffe Language Course, Chigwell, Essex (an old army camp). Knowing that we were both going to Brazil, we soon discovered that we had a lot in common, which proved to be more than true over the years. She took my whole family into her heart, and often into her home on the Cuiaba Centre (Brazil).

So much so that at the end of one of our furloughs, she offered to take our children to the seaside for a week, while John and I got on with the packing unhindered. Not many "honorary aunts" are so generous and my children have never forgotten it!

Since John died, Sheila and I have often kept each other company on trips to and from Brazil. Her dedication to the Ribaktsa people where she worked for so many years, giving them the Scriptures, was another example of her love for others and for her Lord, which brought glory to God and much joy to many, many people.

I thank God for her faithful love and friendship, and know that she will be sorely missed. Thank you, Lord, for Sheila and all she meant to all of us. "

Audrey Taylor

I first met Sheila Tremaine when I was ten years old. She came to Upcott and spoke about her work translating the Bible for a small group of Indians in the remote recesses of the Amazon rain forest. I remember it well. She passed Rikbatsa artefacts around the room and we all had to guess what they were used for. That was typical of Upcott, by the way: a place where it was normal to meet extraordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Sheila's talk that day meant that when I was drawn to the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators as a young adult, it wasn't entirely new to me. When my aunt, Jeannie, heard that I wanted to join, she invited me down the road to Sidmouth to meet Sheila. The house wasn't quite what I was expecting of a missionary: large, detached, with a wrap-around garden and an upstairs view overlooking the red Devon cliffs and the sea. We spent an unforgettable summer afternoon in the garden listening to Sheila's extraordinary story. I quizzed her mercilessly about every aspect of her life in Brazil. At the end of the afternoon she gave me a coffee-table book about Wycliffe's worldwide work which I kept for many years.

After that, any time we were both in England, we would cross paths and catch up over one of her trademark avocado and lemon smoothies. Over the years, I grew to realise just how unique she was. Rarely to be seen at the Wycliffe-UK headquarters, she tended to keep a low profile in England, as she was busy caring for her sister in Devon. She was a chameleon, slipping back and forth between English and Rikbatsa culture with ease.

On one occasion I asked her why someone with her vast experience had never become a translation consultant, helping to train and mentor teams working on other languages. She replied "If I had, who would have gone to the Rikbatsa"?

When I became a Catholic in 2010, Sheila was supportive and understanding. It wasn't a surprise to her because, for many years, she had had enjoyed fellowship with a community of Catholic sisters in Brazil.

I will never forget the moment when she took a small insignificant looking book off her shelf and handed it to me. The published Rikbatsa New Testament: the fruit of forty years tenacity.

The last time I saw Sheila was in 2014. A group of us were doing a sponsored walk of the south Devon coast path to raise money for Bible translation. She and Ange Scoble offered to do some car ferrying for us and generously took us out to a pub in Bridport in the evening. I treasure the memory of that last meeting now.

It's a cliché, I know, but they simply don't make them like that anymore. A truly inspiring life, and a significant influence on my own.

As the Kabiye would say, Ɖɔ-kɔɔ Sheila tɪ ɪɖɔŋ. Ɖa-tɪŋa ɖɪkay wobu. Our older sister Sheila has gone on ahead in the meantime. We all will follow.

Dave Roberts

A life without fear, full of love
Without complaint, full of compassion.
She made the best of times.
Time to break and share, to watch the ocean retreat and flare.
The greatest host, always delivered Lardy cake, berry pie and coke floats on cue.
Garnished with the words 'how are you?'

A draw to adventure overseas, every year she journeyed to her other family whom she loved just as dear, sharing everything she had and returning with stories that would destroy any eight year old's imagination. But to discover it was real when Mum returned, with headdress, nose feathers and a soon to be developed camera bursting with fujifilm.

Sheila had a passion for giving others the words that set her free, the life she lived was a testimony to the peace she had inside. I'm so grateful I could share as many times with her as I did. She taught me how to stick at it and what it looked like to give everything in the name of love, I will always remember what it felt like to have her attention. I'll miss you dearly Sheila.

Robin Pearkes

Sheila came regularly to Emmanuel Baptist Church to give updates about her work in Brazil and was loved and supported by folk over the years. Although her visits decreased more recently.

I was very grateful for the loving ministry of visitation, she gave to my mother (Wendy Thomson) who lived up the road and latterly with us. In 2010 when the snow "lay round about" she walked up the hill with a plated Christmas dinner wearing a Santa hat, as Mummy couldn't get down to be with her and Mary on Christmas day.

Andy recalls her asking him if she would like to go swimming with him, when he asked where, she said 8.00 am on the sea front to swim in the sea!! He politely declined!

It was a privilege to have known a lady of great godliness, perseverance and selflessness in her work with the Rikbaktsa tribe and to see how she completed the translation work and other tasks the Lord gave her before calling her home.

Andy and Cathy Michell

Reply from Brad when his Dad passed on this sad news to him:
Appreciate that. She was one of the few adults at the center [Cuiaba] that treated us kids like people with mind and opinions of our own.

Sheila is definitely among my list of heroines. She phoned me in Montana when we were in the US recently. We definitely will pray ... and so look forward to seeing her in our city whose maker and foundation is God.

With love in Christ, Wes & Trudy Seng

Please pray for Marcos and Elani who are still working with the Rikbaktsa people

