

The Revd Dr Brenda Gibson

We announce with sadness the death of the Revd Dr Brenda Gibson (63) following a lengthy illness from cancer.



Brenda, born in Northumberland, initially trained as a scientist spending six years at Durham University where she took her first degree, then carried out research work from 1977 to 1980, receiving her doctorate under the title, 'Some kinetic, equilibrium and structural studies of the reactions of aromatic nitro-compounds with nucleophiles'. A further year at Cambridge University gained her teaching qualification. She moved to Wimborne in 1981 for her first post at Queen Elizabeth's School. Her scientist and school teacher qualities showed throughout her life.

Former Rector Barney Hopkinson "In the early 80's the life of the Minster was much enriched by several enthusiastic newcomers. Amongst them was a slightly gauche young chemistry teacher from QE School with a wicked sense of humour. (When the Rector was installed as a Canon in Salisbury, she not only described it as 'canonisation', but presented him with a glitzy, but substantial, halo in the middle of the Cathedral). She very soon began to join in many of our weekday activities, and it became clear that church rather than school would eventually be at the centre of her life."

Brenda joined the team of Minster Altar Servers and for a while was treasurer of the Minster Fair.

The next Rector Revd Canon David Price writes, "that in my time Brenda first trained as a Lay Reader and then at Salisbury for the Ordained Non-Stipendiary Ministry. Brenda was a gentle and reflective person whose great skill was as a tutor and many will be grateful for her guidance as they developed their vocations be it to lay or ordained ministry". She studied at The Southern Theological College, Salisbury (STETS) and was ordained in 2004 (Brenda went on to be a Tutor at STETS). "She exercised a valued ministry in the Minster".

Leaving Queen Elizabeth's School in 1999 she efficiently ran the busy Diocese of Salisbury's Area Office, looking after the Bishop of Sherborne and two Archdeacons. She always called them 'Her Boys'.

Former Bishop of Sherborne the Right Revd Tim Thornton wrote, "I am so very sorry. Brenda was a lovely, careful, Christian woman who had a heart of gold and was always willing to do something for others. I really enjoyed working with her and it was a joy to see her ministering in the Minster which she so dearly loved. She taught me a lot about patience and noticing the small and what might seem unimportant and the need to spend time in God's presence and the priority of listening to others. May she rest in peace and my prayers for Peter, her brother, and all of you at the Minister, as you come to terms with the loss of a friend and fellow pilgrim and disciple."

Retiring from the Area Office, allowed space for further study. Brenda was studying up to her recent illness for an MA in Christian Liturgy with her dissertation being on "Liturgical Changes at the Minster between 1870 and the present." During her spare time she enjoyed reading, music and walking.

Brenda was an Associate Priest in the Wimborne Minster and Northern Villages Benefice and served as PA to Rector Revd Canon Vanessa Herrick. She writes, "Brenda was a committed and loyal colleague. Never one to put herself forward, she was nonetheless always 'one step ahead' with the planning of services, with an acute eye for detail and a profoundly well-developed sense of liturgical space – a 'Canon Precentor' in all but name. I deeply valued her pastoral wisdom and awareness of the Minster's 'story' in years both recent and long-past. It was a delight to see her begin to emerge a little from her natural shyness during my time – in her fine conducting of funerals, her imaginative narrative preaching and even in an unforgettable performance of Rossini's 'Cat Duet' at a Minster concert. May she rest in peace and rise in glory."

Current Rector, The Revd Andrew Rowland writes, "We are sad at the loss of beloved Brenda but sure in our hope in the promises of God in Christ our Lord – a faith in which Brenda was secure. As a priest in the Church she was both a faithful servant follower and a leader in the Way of Jesus. Rev'd Dr Brenda had that delightful quality of being both humble and yet forthright. We loved her dearly. She is a considerable loss to us all at Wimborne Minster and in the Villages".

Brenda leaves a Mother still living in Northumberland and her brother Peter with whom she shared a flat in Wimborne for very many years.

Brenda's funeral which will take place in Wimborne Minster will be held on Friday 22nd February at 12 noon.