

Lottie Lillian Sharrad

Lottie Sharrad (26th July 1902 – 19th December 2001) was actually not related to the Davies/Leppinus family – but could not have been closer to us if she had been. She was much loved by us all, and by our friends. We all knew her as ‘**Doway**’. The name was introduced by Richard Davies as a toddler (*ca* 1947). He somehow mangled ‘Lottie’ into ‘Doway’, and it stuck.

Lottie was born and brought up in Stirling, in the Adelaide Hills. She was a pupil at the local primary school until the end of year 6, but missed many weeks due to illness. She managed to get her QC (Qualifying Certificate; intended to indicate basic competency in reading, writing and maths), of which she was very proud. She talked of having a special teacher, who believed in her and helped her. Lottie was one of five children – two boys and three girls. She and her sisters did a lot of jobs for their mother – collecting and delivering washing and ironing and etc. In her young days, all the money she earned was handed over to ‘Ma’. She said her ‘Fa’ was a ‘good worker, but he would not look for it’. Fa was the son of a Norwegian ship’s captain. ‘Ma’ kept the family together by doing laundry work. Many of the Sharrads are buried in companion plots in the Stirling Cemetery.

Having left school, Lottie did washing and ironing work, and had positions as a nurse-maid. One of these was looking after Stuart Cockburn (later a prominent journalist) as a small boy. She adored him, and many children were compared unfavourably with him. She obtained her job with the Leppinuses through an agency.

Lottie joined the Leppinus family at ‘Valdarno’ in Unley Park in 1933. She was originally employed as a housekeeper/companion for 3 weeks. Some months later she returned to ‘Valdarno’, and stayed for *ca* 30 years. When he was very ill (1939), Louis Leppinus asked her to promise that she would ‘look after Mother’, which she did, and stayed to care for his wife Edith until she died. She also cared for Edith’s sister Clare for some time, and for her husband Arthur Pellew.

Lottie was blunt in what she said. She adored roses and gardening, and was very independent and hard-working.

After Edith Leppinus died, Lottie went to live in the cottage left to her by her godmother. This was on Cross Road, next door to what was Claridge’s. As result of measles

as a child, she was deaf in one ear, but always slept on her good ear and was not disturbed by traffic noise. The house on Cross Road had a superb garden, lovingly tended by Lottie.

After the death of Mrs Leppinus, Lottie took on cleaning jobs for elderly people who had been friends of Edith's. This work kept her in pocket money, and would have paid for the extras for her beloved garden. As these people aged, Lottie would say of them 'poor old things'; quite forgetting she was older than them.

My late husband Richard Davies, and later his brother John, spent many many weekends with Grandma Leppinus and Lottie as a small boy and primary school lad. Our sons Andrew and Stuart also spent many weekends with her at Cross Road, and she once told one of our friends that 'Richard and Kerrie may think the boys are theirs, but I just lend them to them'.

Lottie was kindness itself. When my family came to see me from NSW etc., woe betide us if a visit to her was not arranged, as she was easily offended by what she saw as 'slights'. There would be a formal invitation to afternoon tea, and Lottie would be busy for a couple of days beforehand, cooking cakes and biscuits and polishing silver and furniture. The best china came out, and the very best linen. By her standards, there had to be at least two sorts of cake, two sorts of biscuits and either fresh sandwiches or hot scones – and one had to try them all to avoid offence. On these occasions, one had a very light lunch beforehand.

Before Lottie died, she told me that she wanted her ashes scattered in a rose garden. I asked if the gardens in the South Parklands would be suitable, and she replied 'Oh No! too many feet'! She had often visited the rose gardens at the Waite with me, and when I suggested them she said that would be perfect. When the time came, I sought, and got, permission to fulfill her wish. We organised a family picnic for her 100th birthday as the most appropriate day for this to happen. Her birthday was in late July, but amazingly it was a calm, warm day. We could see a change moving in from the south-west, and just after we had sung 'Happy Birthday' to her, and cut her cake, it arrived. It was hard not to feel that she had orchestrated this.

The armillary sphere, situated just outside the Waite rose garden, was organised by the families and gifted to the University in Lottie's memory. It was made by Sundials Australia. Physicist Margaret Folkard, one of the proprietors of Sundials Australia, is a close

friend of the Davies, and knew and loved Lottie. Thus, we felt that the sphere was the perfect way to honor her.



Lottie Sharrad at Cross Road, *ca* 92 y.o. Photographs taken by K. Davies.

Lottie Sharrad was a remarkable woman. It could be said that hers was a ‘small domestic life’, but her kindness and thoughtfulness and love influenced four generations of our family, and of hers. There are few who could claim as much.

Armillary sphere

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