

It was October 1968. Men had hair as long as Moliere's wigs. Girl wore skirts as short as clergymen's collars. Music was loud: behaviour was bad. I settled in to my new room and my new life as a research student. And sometime during those first few days, I met the girl next door.

The first impression I remember so vividly was Liliane's smile. Brown eyes sparkling with friendliness – eyes which, I soon learned, could modulate into eloquent sympathy if one had some kind of heartache to share with her.

Liliane has always had great beauty of mind and body. But it's not an intimidating beauty. It's tender and humane. In those days of mad fashion and foolish extravagance, Liliane was chic in a classic, contained way – effortlessly elegant, always, and somehow beguilingly domestic.

We shared cups of tea and I marvelled at her effortless command of English – it was never necessary to compromise or make allowances. Liliane loved entertaining, and the one linguistic slip I remember was simply a matter of pronunciation: I think she had prepared a soup or a pudding for some guests and discovered she needed some extra dishes, so she knocked on my door and asked, 'Please, Sue, is it possible for me to borrow your bowels?'

Others have spoken of her great intellectual gifts and her brilliant career – what I cherish is being able to share (not nearly often enough) her joy and delight in life – and I'm smiling now, thinking of her, as I sit in an English twilight, with the rain falling outside. My life has been immeasurably blessed by knowing her.

**Sue Limb**