

## **Sian's Story – Live Life and Then Give Life**



When Sian was 11 years old she was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis and her parents given the shocking news that she may not make it out her teens. But despite having to live with this debilitating illness, Sian was an active, happy child who excelled at gymnastics and swimming.

She grew into a typical teenager who loved socialising with her friends and getting into all types of music from grunge to dance. She was also a bit of a tom-boy, who enjoyed computer games, horror movies and action films. As a teenager her favourite film was Predator starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, rather than anything more typically 'girly'. And like her Dad she was a big Liverpool fan. Sian was also a fan of horror authors like Stephen King and

Christopher Pike – and began writing her own stories in this style. Some of these stories have now been collected in a book called 'Fatal Fortune' to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

She went to Telford New College after finishing school, and then spent time at Leicester and Wrexham universities studying media. She then took a job at DVLA in Shrewsbury, where she met her future husband, Nick.

In 2004 Sian decided she would put her name on the transplant waiting list, as doctors had told her that her lungs had deteriorated to an extent that she may have only around 18 months to live.

Sian moved in with Nick in August 2004, but unfortunately Sian's health was about to take a turn for the worse. Sian had kept active – continuing to work full-time, socialise and live a full a life as she could – for as long as possible. But as CF began to take its toll, she became housebound and dependent on oxygen. For several months she had to 'hang in there' and literally fight for her life as CF took its toll on her health. A machine called a NIPPY forced oxygen into Sian's lungs to keep her alive.

After a few 'false alarms' when she was called in for a transplant only to be told the organs were not suitable, Sian finally received the call that would transform her life in June 2005. Eleven months after going on the transplant waiting list, Sian received the precious gift of life due to the humanity of a donor and her family and the expertise of Papworth Hospital.

Sian's rapid recovery following transplant amazed all her family and friends. She was discharged from hospital after only a few weeks, and began making up for lost time immediately. She didn't hang around waiting for things to happen for her, she went out and found them for herself, trying everything from jewellery making and Tai-chi to rock climbing and Kung-Fu!

Amazingly, given her history, and fear of getting out of breath, Sian also completed three Great North Runs and the Manchester 10K – raising money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. And after Nick converted her to being a bit of a Shrewsbury fan, she began working on the turnstiles at Shrewsbury Town FC.



Sian also enjoyed indulging her 'girly' side - endlessly changing her hair and collecting umpteen pairs of shoes - mainly with very high heels. She also began exploring the world, taking holidays everywhere from the Lake District to Prague (where Nick proposed to her).



Sian adored children and loved spending time with her seven nieces and nephews, to whom she was a much loved auntie. Sian also loved animals and, after she and Nick bought their first house, she adopted the dog she had longed for – Jock, a Patterdale terrier. Jock had to share his new home with Sian’s adopted felines, Tom, Belle and Ginger – not to mention two fish!

Sian and Nick married in July 2009 and took a dream honeymoon in Italy, taking in Lido de Jesolo, Venice and Verona. When Sian found a new job in Manchester, she and Nick re-located to Stockport and began a new chapter in their lives. Sian loved being near a big city, where she could go to gigs, theatres and restaurants, but also close to the beautiful Peak District when she wanted to get away from it all.

For the first few months Sian was enjoying life in the north-west to the full. Then, worryingly, she developed a wheeze and her lung function began to drop. At first Sian was diagnosed with an infection and a cocktail of antibiotics and steroids seemed to have her on the mend. Sadly, Sian then began to deteriorate further, spending time in Wythenshawe Hospital, and then Papworth Hospital, where she had received her new lungs seven years ago.

Sian battled to stay active and get her lungs working again, but despite her bravery, determination and endurance, her condition continued to deteriorate. In February 2013, Sian was given the devastating news that she was suffering chronic rejection and the only remedy would be a second transplant. Tragically, Sian did not have time to wait for another pair of lungs to transform her life again, and passed away on 27 March 2013.

Sian was always incredibly grateful for the gift of life she received from her donor and made it clear to her loved ones that she wanted to donate her organs should she pass away. Her family honoured her wishes and her kidneys were donated to two patients in grave need of a transplant. The fact that Sian was able to save the lives of two other people through her bravery and compassion has been a source of some comfort and consolation to her family, who will always miss her dearly. Her family were immensely proud to receive the St John’s Ambulance award for organ donation on her behalf.

Without doubt, Sian is an outstanding example of the motto ‘live life and then give life’. We hope her story will inspire many, many other people to do the same, and sign the organ donor register.