

The IFOPA proudly presents to you a Legacy Member . . .
Sarah Cameron – Founding Legacy Member
by Victoria Mandracken



Sarah at her cottage home

Sarah Cameron was born July 25th, 1947 in England and passed away on Christmas Day, 1997. As I researched the life of this IFOPA founding member by reading her letter in our scrapbook, interviewing Jeannie Peeper and asking questions of Dr. Kaplan, I discovered a fun, active lady whose actions continue to help FOP research today.

Both her parents had passed away by 1984 and she had no siblings. Sarah's warm smile is easily seen in our photo albums and her fun personality is clearly evident as I read her very neatly handwritten letter to Jeannie. Sarah's letter tells Jeannie what it is like to live alone in a 300 year old cottage with her "fat orange cat called Edna who I love dearly." Sarah's list of hobbies makes me chuckle as I read, "Playing guitar – very boldly in private!!" Sarah had a good sense of humor. Sarah was an accomplished typist and wrote 120 words per minute in shorthand. She was a secretary to the manager of the nearby Management Training Center and she drove her automatic Ford Escort to work.



Sarah with a new hair style

Our president and founder, Jeannie Peeper said, "I gave our non-profit the name 'International Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva Association' after Sarah wrote back to me from the United Kingdom and included the name of her FOP friend Valda Pinder who lived in Australia." Fondly known as "Val", this amazing lady who taught French became Jeannie's friend, and joined the IFOPA, cementing our association's name and premise to bring our global community together.

Jeannie enjoyed being pen-pals with both Sarah and Val for many years and Jeannie had the joy of meeting them at the Second International FOP Symposium in October, 1995. During this Symposium Sarah was greatly inspired by the valuable gift Harry Eastlack gave to the Mutter Museum – his complete FOP skeleton. During this event, Sarah told Dr. Kaplan she wanted to donate her body to medical research when she passed away to increase awareness of the disabling effects of FOP to clinical professionals and laymen

alike. Upon her return to the UK Sarah discussed at length the possibilities with Professor James Triffitt and activated the practical and legal necessities required for such a donation. Sarah wrote Dr. Kaplan, Jeannie and Val letters until she passed away. At that time, Professor Triffitt, from The University of Oxford and a long time friend of Sarah's, orchestrated a valiant effort to assure that Sarah's last wishes were fulfilled.

In 2002, a small portion of Sarah Cameron's skeleton was exhibited during a commemorative event and international FOP medical and scientific conference organized by Professor James Triffitt of The University of Oxford at the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in the United Kingdom. Dr. Kaplan attended the presentation

of Sarah's final gift which continues to help FOP researches today. "The Sarah Cameron Fund" also continues to monetarily support the FOP research work being done at the University of Pennsylvania and at The University of Oxford.

Although both of Jeannie's first two international friends, Sarah and Val are now FOP angels, their lives continue to inspire us. Thank you for reading this small summary of our founding member Sarah Cameron's life.

Acknowledgement: Images of Sarah Cameron's skeleton demonstrating fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva
©Museums at the Royal College of Surgeons.



Back of Sarah Cameron's Skeleton -
detail of skull, torso and hip



Back of Sarah Cameron's Skeleton -
detail of skull and torso