

When I started thinking about this tribute I wanted to try and capture the essence of Abbie in a single word.

There were, inevitably, many to choose from.

Beautiful – well it goes without saying

Fun – she had a wonderful sense of fun

Centre of attention – she loved being this

A star

Boisterous – as a parent and knowing her medical situation it was scary watching her get stuck into rough and tumble with her friends at parties. But she never held back.

Intelligent – her thirst for knowledge was immense. She could read and write from very early ages and got so upset if Jamie had homework and she didn't that we often had to invent some for her.....although if you tried to correct her occasional mistakes she would never accept that she was wrong. And she adored her school, Glenesk.

Determined

Strong willed

Ironic & witty– as we were driving to a frame shop in Cobham and I almost overshot the turning, I hit the brakes, turned sharp left, swerved into the space, came to a halt and switched off the engine. Out of the silence from the back came a little Abbie voice – “that went well!”

In charge – at that same frame shop as she sat in the car waiting for Liz she got hold of the keys, locked the doors and sat with a big beam on her face as she made Liz negotiate her way back in.

Courageous

Dignified

An amazing negotiator – she could stand her ground longer than anyone and would never give up fighting for what she wanted.

Feisty – always with that twinkle in her eye

Special – there was definitely something special about Abbie

Patient – when she was colouring or doing the art and craft she so enjoyed she would be thoroughly absorbed and focussed for hours.

Loving – and loveable – to us all, but especially Jamie

A tonic – she could bring a smile to peoples faces without even trying

Funny

A performer – she loved being centre stage, and put on frequent shows with Jamie where she sang and danced. And she made sure her final exit would be remembered by making it on 9/11

Motivated

Competitive – she had to be part of the team and she was out to do her best. Her hide & seek abilities were amazing from a very early age. Over this summer she mastered Cluedo, always wanting to be Miss Scarlet, (because she goes first) and with an amazing ability to solve the crime.

Strong – physically, emotionally & mentally

Spirited

Talented – music, art, sport, school – whatever she turned her hand to, she was a fantastic all rounder.

Unique – without a shadow of a doubt she was one of a kind.

Cunning – she could work her magic on anyone and had people eating out of the palm of her hand...and she knew it

Pink – Princess Abbie loved the colour

Dogs – she adored them too

Pesky Varmit – summed her up well and that's what we called her

Involved – she always wanted to be a part of what was going on. Abbie had been suffering with problems with her ankle last half term and Mr Bishop, her sports teacher at Glenesk wrote this in her end of term report – “Although Abbie has been unable to join in all lessons she still attends them with great enthusiasm and at times has ordered me to do her activities for her”.

Happy – Abbie was rarely down and even looked forward to her visits to the Marsden. “We're going for a sleepover at the Marsden”, we'd tell her. “Yeeaah!”, she'd shout in delight!

But it was the memory of her at her friend Sam's party just 5 1/2 weeks ago that finally helped me find the word I was looking for.

Abbie had not been her best for the few days beforehand but she had started another cycle of treatment and she obviously decided that she was feeling better and was ready for some fun again.

Off she went in the sunshine playing games with all the other children and running around – not easy with her distorted ankle but she never let that get in her way. She was a star in the egg and spoon race and, as usual, was out to win.

The children then started a game where they were throwing bean bags at a stack of tin cans, seeing who could knock off the most. Abbie lined up and took her go, desperate to knock as many off as possible. But after her go, and instead of sitting down and watching with the others, she went to help Paul who was running the game and spent the rest of the time running to pick up the bean bags, the knocked over tins, helping stack them up again and handing out the winners sweets.

And that little example sums up a lot of what Abbie was about – she never just did the basics – she was always looking to squeeze whatever she could out of every opportunity. She operated at 200%. And this wonderful quality to make the most of everything was seen by others, who in turn, would then inevitably feel inspired to reflect back that enthusiasm in their relationship with Abbie. She had created a superb positive feedback mechanism which worked to everyone's benefit and made everyone feel good. And there it is - the word I was looking for – **inspiration**.

Let us be inspired by the way she squeezed the most and the best out of everything and use what she has taught us every day as we go forward.

Her inspiration is the gift she has given us and now she has left, her job well done.

Abbie – we are honoured to be your Daddy & Mummy.