

= Bridget Parker =

Bridget Louise " Didge " Parker is a fictional character from the Australian soap opera Neighbours , played by Eloise Mignon . In 2007 the show was revamped to boost falling ratings in Australia . As part of this , the show 's focus returned to family dynamics and the character of Bridget and her family were created and introduced . Bridget made her first on @-@ screen appearance on 23 July 2007 . She arrived in Erinsborough from Sydney with her father and mother , Steve and Miranda . During her time in Neighbours , Bridget 's storylines included being run over by Susan Kennedy , falling in love with Declan Napier , finding her birth mother and falling pregnant at seventeen . In March 2009 , the decision was taken to write the Parker family out of the show after both Mignon and Steve Bastoni quit . Mignon wanted to return to her studies and she had had enough of Neighbours . Bridget died on @-@ screen on 21 July 2009 after suffering internal injuries , which she sustained in a car crash . The character was popular with viewers and her pregnancy storyline was voted the best of 2008 during a poll on the official website .

= = Character creation and casting = =

In 2007 , Neighbours suffered one of its worst decline in viewers and several key changes took place to boost the ratings . Network Ten drama executive , Dan Bennett revealed that the show would return to its focus on relationships and family dynamics . Writers created and introduced a new family , the Parkers , who already had a link to Ramsay Street in the form of Ned Parker (Daniel O 'Connor) . The family made their first on @-@ screen appearance in July 2007 , marking the start of the show 's renovation .

Former Silversun actress Eloise Mignon was cast in the role of school girl Bridget Parker , despite being five years older than the character she would portray . Steve Bastoni and Nikki Coghill were cast as Bridget 's adoptive parents Steve and Miranda Parker respectively and Sweeney Young was cast as Bridget 's biological brother Riley .

= = Character development = =

= = = Characterisation = = =

Bridget has been portrayed out of conjunction with the stereotypical ' girly image ' , she is sporty and athletic . Mignon has described her as open , honest , outdoor kind of girl . Stating that like herself Bridget had grown up with keen interests for climbing trees , cycling and swimming in rivers , non typical female interests . She also branded Bridget as a ' sporty tomboy ' . During an interview , Mignon said that Bridget 's relationship with Declan changes her and she feels more independent from her family . She also becomes more determined as a person .

= = = Disability = = =

One of Bridget 's first high @-@ profile storylines was coping with a disability , after Susan Kennedy (Jackie Woodburne) hit Bridget with her car . She had been paralysed on one side of her body , the storyline saw her trying to regain the complete use of her body . Mignon explained during an interview with media reporting website Last Broadcast , the research that had been carried out and the effects on the character stating : " Bridget suffers extreme physical difficulties as a result , because she 's such a sporty tomboy , to be incapacitated suddenly poses emotional problems for her . To make sure that I could understand better what Bridget 's going through , I studied medical notes on paralysis and disability on the internet . " The storyline also explored self @-@ image issues that come with disabilities , in one episode Bridget was doing physiotherapy exercises and became in danger of drowning until Declan Napier (James Sorensen) saved her . He tried to kiss her but she fended off his advances , of this Mignon said : " Bridget pushes him off , she fears he 'll

see her differently due to her disability . "

== Teen pregnancy ==

One of the most important storylines for the character of Bridget was when she discovered that she was pregnant with Declan 's child . As the storyline progressed , Bridget was seen considering abortion or adoption , before ultimately deciding to have the child with Declan 's support . This caused controversy among conservative family groups in Australia who accused the Neighbours of using their characters to normalise teenage pregnancy . Pro @-@ Family Perspectives director Angela Conway said : " [Teenage pregnancy] is not something that should be considered the norm , programmes like Neighbours can make the behaviours that lead to teenage pregnancy seem normal and acceptable . A lot of kids just aren 't ready to get their head around details of explicit sexuality . " Neighbours executive producer Susan Bower defended her character 's storyline stating : " I am quite sure a lot of people are not happy with this storyline . We decided we would show the ramifications on the teenagers ' lives . " Mignon said that the storyline between Declan and Bridget was not shallow , trite or vulgar , further adding she would not have liked to film the storyline if it was and branded it as showing emotional spectrum of pregnancy justice . Critics also slammed the show , noting that Neighbours has a G @-@ rating and the storyline could lead to more promiscuity and teenage pregnancies among young viewers . The storyline continued despite the controversy it caused and Declan and Bridget became parents to a daughter , India .

== Departure ==

In March 2009 , it was announced that the Parker family were to be written out of the show after Mignon and Bastoni decided to leave to concentrate on other commitments . Mignon , Bastoni and Coghill filmed their final scenes in April 2009 . Mignon announced that her reason for leaving the show was so that she could return to studying an Arts degree at Melbourne university . Mignon said " I didn 't want to defer uni forever and , to be honest , I 'd had enough of the Neighbours experience " . The Neighbours writers took the decision to kill the character off . Viewers saw Bridget being injured in a car accident while travelling to Oakey . Bridget underwent surgery and she then had a premonition of her death . Her vision comes true and she dies from internal injuries . The Metro newspaper called the scenes " tear @-@ jerking " .

When Mignon heard how Bridget was going to leave the show , she said " I was quite honoured . I feel I 've been given good scope in terms of drama ? Bridget had a baby , got married and died . I got the soap opera trifecta ! " On Bridget and the Parker 's exit , Bower said " It 's the story that keeps on giving for another three or four weeks . It 's very well storylined , beautifully acted and shot . It 's a tremendous amount of work for which we 're all very proud " .

== Storylines ==

== Backstory ==

Steve and Miranda Parker adopted Bridget when she was 6 years old , along with her older brother Riley . Being adopted never worried Bridget and it was irrelevant to her day @-@ to @-@ day life as Steve and Miranda were the only parents she had ever known .

== 2007 ? 09 ==

Upon her arrival to Ramsay Street , Bridget makes friends with Zeke Kinski (Matthew Werkmeister) and she joins his football team , despite opposition from bully Justin Hunter (Chris Toohey) . Bridget joins Declan Napier when he begins joyriding . During a race with Justin , they are pursued by the police . They return home thinking they escaped , only to find the police waiting for them .

Bridget is banned from seeing Declan , but she sneaks out to meet him at the park , where they argue . On her way home , Bridget trips and falls into the road in front of a car being driven by Susan Kennedy . Susan blacks out , a result of suffering from multiple sclerosis , and hits Bridget . She drives off , unaware of what she has done . Bridget is found and rushed to the hospital , where she undergoes emergency surgery for a bleed on her brain . She remains unconscious , until Rachel Kinski (Caitlin Stasey) visits and pleads with her to wake up . Bridget 's hand moves and she awakes the next day . However , she cannot feel anything down the left side of her body and she is told that she could be permanently disabled . Susan realises that she caused the accident and comes forward . She is arrested and put on trial . Bridget remembers that she fell into the road and that the accident was not Susan 's fault , and she tells the court . During a rehabilitation class at the swimming pool , Bridget meets Josh Taylor (Liam Hemsworth) . Following a disastrous date with Declan , where Bridget is given the impression that Declan cannot handle her disability , Bridget begins dating Josh . Following a roof collapse at an illegal dance party , Bridget and Josh are both trapped in rubble . Declan carries Josh out before coming back for Bridget . Another collapse traps Declan and Bridget together and Declan tells her that he does not have a problem with her disability . Shortly after , Bridget begins to walk without her walking aid and her mobility returns .

Bridget bonds with Chris Knight (Luke Mitchell) and she asks him to the school formal . She joins him in a hotel room , where Chris tries to pressure her into having sex with him . He turns aggressive and Bridget pushes him away and flees the hotel , not knowing that Chris hit his head . Chris later dies in hospital and Bridget 's father confesses to the police that he attacked Chris to protect Bridget . Steve is charged with murder , but Bridget goes to his trial and tells the court that she pushed Chris in self @-@ defense . Throughout the ordeal , Declan is a big support to Bridget and they begin a relationship .

Bridget tells Declan that she wants to have a physical relationship with him . Not long after , Bridget discovers that she is pregnant . Declan runs away scared of becoming a father and Bridget plans to have an abortion . Declan returns and commits himself to Bridget and the baby . Declan proposes to Bridget and though she is hesitant , they get engaged . Bridget decides to look for her birth mother and Joanna Hale (Laura Lattuada) turns up in Erinsborough . After meeting Joanna , Bridget decides to give up her own baby against Declan 's wishes . However , when Libby Kennedy (Kym Valentine) miscarries her own baby , Bridget realises that she wants hers . Declan and Bridget marry in a church in the country witnessed by their friends . Bridget gives birth to a daughter at a music festival and the couple name her India . Bridget and Declan struggle to cope with their new lifestyle . On a road trip to Oakey to visit relatives , Steve crashes the car . Bridget rescues India and they are found by a search team and are taken to the hospital . Bridget suffers a premonition that she is going to die and makes Declan promise that he will look after India . Shortly after , Bridget dies from a blood clot . Bridget 's death leaves Steve and Miranda devastated and they move away from Ramsay Street not long after her funeral . Declan is left to raise India by himself .

= = Reception = =

The Parker family 's entrance to the show was watched by an average 1 @. @ 05 million viewers in Australia . Following their arrival , Network Ten 's head of drama Dan Bennett praised the new cast members saying " It 's probably the strongest cast we 've ever had " .

The character received negative criticism from Ruth Deller of television website Lowculture . Shortly after her arrival , Deller said " ' Didge ' either needs to get over herself , fast , or die in a freak accident " . Deller later called her " a whiny , self @-@ absorbed pain in the arse " . However , following Bridget 's death in 2009 , Deller wrote that she had grown fond of Bridget and Declan as a couple .

Bridget 's pregnancy was nominated for " Best Storyline " at the 2009 Inside Soap Awards and fans of the show also voted the storyline the most popular of 2008 in a poll conducted by the official Neighbours website . The website announced that they had received over 5 @, @ 500 votes and they added " We all love a bit of drama , and who would argue that Bridget falling pregnant at the age of 16 and Declan 's rebellion against the constraints of fatherhood wasn 't the juiciest story of

2008 ! " Sarah Megginson of website SheKnows included Bridget 's death in her " 8 Most Memorable Neighbours Moments " feature in October 2009 . She said " When our beloved teen mum Bridget ' Didge ' Napier died in a car crash ? just weeks after giving birth to her baby girl ! ? we couldn 't help but shed a tear or twelve for new dad Declan and baby India . "

Susan Bower revealed in a 2010 interview that she thought the storyline between Bridget and Chris Knight was " brilliant " . She also added that the storyline featuring Bridget 's pregnancy and her relationship with Declan was " extraordinary ? something we were terribly proud of . "