

## **Julia Lallie Ionides (1942-2015)**

**These texts by Julia's daughter Caroline Morris and her husband Peter G Howell were first presented at Julia's Memorial Service on 30th January 2016 at St Laurence's Parish Church, Ludlow.**



**Caroline Morris:** Where do I start? At the beginning I suppose. Julia Lallie Hankinson was born on the 7th April, 1942, at Hemel Hempstead.

Mum went to Tolmers Park Girls' School, where she made many lifelong friends, some of whom I am still lucky enough to be in contact with.

The Webber Douglas School of Dramatic Art was the next step for an aspiring actress and stage manager. Mum even won Actress of the Year - a success at everything from the outset. Encounters at Webber D included John Noakes, Joan Knight and many others who again remained lifelong friends of mum's. Amongst other roles, mum worked in theatre for a time, before going on holiday to Cyprus and coming back engaged to an RAF Officer. Most people bring back Ouzo or olives, but not mum. Cyprus became her home for some years, and my first memories are of being in the sea in Cyprus - floating around in a car tyre which had been attached to a rope!

Abingdon then followed as home before a move to Blairgowrie in Scotland. Mum had completed a Cordon Bleu cookery course in London so this was put to good use running a very successful hotel.

Some years later there was a decamp to Shropshire. Thankfully our wonderful grandmother, Lallie, had also made the move from London to Scotland, then from Scotland to Clun in Shropshire, continuing her close links with us.

The final move was to the lovely Ludlow. Mum loved Ludlow, as do I. Mum discovered there was so much to learn about and to do - and learning was something Mum excelled at. For example, she completed an MA in the History of Art, was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and wrote several books, including Memories, by Luke Ionides. Mum was Luke's great, great niece. Luke was a member of the Anglo-Greek Ionides family, who were renowned art patrons in the second half of the 19th century. Luke's brother Constantin left his fine collection of works of art to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, where they remain. Luke's father and then his brother, Alecco, owned 1 Holland Park - that 'epoch-making house' - which contained work by many of the leading artists and designers of the day - William Morris, James Whistler, Walter Crane, William de Morgan and Philip Webb. In Memories, Luke wrote about these friends.

I make mention of this because Mum was researching her next book in Istanbul when she had the fatal fall. I do believe I am also tasked with taking up this research; but what a hard act to follow. I will try my best, Mum.

Mum's interests were wide and varied. For example we both loved our involvement with the Ludlow Food Festival. Mum also travelled extensively, researching and exploring. Mum was very involved in a range of projects, including the Georgian Group and the Dog Rose Trust. But more of those later, from others. Ok - multi-tasking. We all think we can multi-task well, women in particular, sorry gents!, but mum excelled at it. That, coupled with making introductions between people whom she knew would interest one another, and feeding friends and family with a vast array of especially and carefully prepared meals were some of Mum's special skills.

I think one of the key themes running through this is the ability to make and keep friends. Mum has friends of all ages, from all walks of life, and from all round the world, some of whom are here today. Contact has always been maintained, of course made easier by the introduction of e-mail, Skype and the internet. Indeed Mum and I used and abused the free facility Skype afforded us to the nth degree; we spoke nearly every day, at length.

Mum is survived by her three children, dad - David, her first husband, and Peter, her present husband and eight, yes eight, grandchildren.

Mum was the best. She nurtured us, she empowered us, gave us opportunities, chastised us - me rarely of course!, but above all loved us with all her heart. As we do her.

I am so proud of all her graces, her intellect, her heritage, her achievements, but above all, I am so, so proud she was my mother. Mum you always have been my inspiration, and always will be.

“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others” - Pericles.

**Peter G Howell:** Julia's life over the last twenty odd years, when we consider it, was extensive and complicated and 'full on' most of the time. However, it was a rich and, I hope, a happy life. This life was not only about architectural history and the arts but also in the main aim of the charity, the Dog Rose Trust which was to help particularly those who are visually impaired. I must therefore outline this work was actually one job, and that was people. It grew out of our passion for old buildings and concerns for our fellows, particularly those with perceptual problems. Thus architectural history was one strand and the other was communication, but it was all about people. Julia was good with and believed in people!

It was not a question of activities being divided into work and pleasure but all the activities being of equal value and all about people and their environment. We had little money but Julia managed to start and finish a gruelling university course on Art History with an MA. And also work part time as an administrator in an Architect's office. At this point I was busy fighting to the last to keep the Ludford Early Music Festival afloat.

It is difficult to separate Julia's life from mine and the jobs we were doing together so I am afraid that you will hear my story interwoven with Julia's. We worked together, lived together and, importantly, ate together. Julia was a very good cook and I was her enthusiastic follower. She had travelled a lot and collected recipes as she went.

Towards the end of her university course Julia wrote her thesis on an 18th C architect called Thomas Farnolls Pritchard who has particular importance in Shropshire. This has become an important book.

At the beginning of our being together we were sound recording mostly local amateur groups such as male voice and church choirs, which was important but not with much financial support. This is something that should be done but in the present context needs some financial support. It is something the local BBC stations should pick up. We did push BBC local radio but it was too early. Julia did try her charm!

Through the recording network and early music fora we travelled a lot in Estonia and Russia. We recorded in a town near Tallinn several baroque concertos. We recorded a church choir in Pskov and the Rossica choir in what is now St Petersburg. Here the thermometer was at minus 18C on the day of the recording and so the batteries that we were using for recording were slightly dodgy. The choir had sung Russian Orthodox liturgical music in York Minster for us, which was issued as a CD. We recorded the whole of the Orthodox Easter Services in Pskov which were published by the church. Julia's skill with diplomacy saved the day on several occasions, especially when the authorities challenged our visas. We also recorded some fascinating ritual music in the north of South Africa when visiting the family.

We were also driving around mostly Shropshire looking at churches and other historic buildings wondering why we were the only people doing so. It seemed so obvious, one winter afternoon we sat in Julia's old car looking through the windscreen discussing the tower of a beautiful little village church. We then realised that it was snowing and the windscreen wipers were working and the car was very cold. We looked at each other and laughed! We knew that the masons who originally built the church would have understood us!

At this point in our progress Professor John Hull of the University of Birmingham put up a project entitled 'Cathedrals through Touch and Hearing'. Clearly since he was himself blind it was to provide a way for blind people to move around and understand cathedrals. The proposal to work on cathedrals was significant because the cathedrals presented the most complex challenge.

As two 'churchaholics' and as an architectural historian and an architect, this concept was very exciting. We presented our proposal and it was accepted. It was to research and script for suitable audio guides for blind visitors together with tactile models. This had to contain guidance for those using a long cane and those with guide dogs. We proposed the revolutionary recording of the audio guide in each place using hi tech binaural recording so that the place could be recognised by its 'acoustic fingerprint'. We made guides for all nine cathedrals on the list. To our joy the BBC radio programme *The Archers*, Julia's favourite programme, offered us readers. We recorded at night in each individual place which we had identified and Julia had scripted to present the story and their acoustic fingerprints. Because the sound was critical, this was recorded at night when the cathedrals, which are normally like Victoria Station, are almost quiet. Subsequently we prepared guide tapes and a large tactile model for the Houses of Parliament. We also worked on museum design; one such project was the Greek Room at the British Museum.

The University of Birmingham after several years ran out of funds and their Trust shut down so we formed our own charitable trust to continue the work for which Julia was the administrator and indeed I was the consultant, and we worked most weekends when we were not being Georgians. As Georgians it is worthwhile noting that we have records of over 160 visits by the group plus each year a four day stay away. This was a considerable administrative task for Julia.

Our view of the general situation for disabled and blind people was not good, and is even worse now. It is important to say at this stage that the legislation to help disabled people was a complete failure, and in spite of hard work on RNIB committees, the situation simply got worse. Julia and I were deeply depressed by this.

We wrote in our book: "This book is a personal journey, a journey which has enriched our lives. The book is based on our experience gained from working independently for about twenty years on ways to help those with sensory impairment."

This was our first book, although in fact I had registered a publishing company in 1985. After publishing this book we published Julia's book and several others. The books were edited by Julia and designed by me. Julia was very good at this, as she had been in scripting audio guides.

Although we got on very well, it seemed right to get married as we always intended, but this took time. In the end, we came to it. The details had been fixed in a conversation between us: I was in my editing room in Ludlow, and Julia was in a telephone box, which I knew, situated at the bottom of a hill in San Francisco. Anyway all was sorted out. We were, as usual, pushed for time. We therefore got married first thing in the morning, and had a real wedding breakfast given by two lovely friends. We then drove off to Winchester and recorded in the cathedral through the night. Ted Kelsey, still in the *Archers*, who was our reader for that job, fortunately, had a strong constitution to read all night in a cold cathedral.

We worked with the University of York on sound. We measured or reconstructed the architectural environment, the ruined cathedral at Coventry in the form of drawings of that which no longer existed and put the drawings into the computer and produced the sound of a service as it would have originally been heard in the now vanished building. This has tremendous potential in the field of sound design in buildings and environments. We did some clarification of this for the National Sound Archives, but it is not exactly their field.

In 1985 I registered a publishing company. I had not used the company, but it was to become important to us. The most important book for today is the book that Julia wrote based on her research entitled Thomas Farnolls Pritchard of Shrewsbury, 'Architect and inventor of Cast Iron Bridges'. This became unofficially number six architectural book published in 1999.

Out of the courses we ran for providing sound for blind people came indirectly after some 20 years the publication of 'Another Eyesight' in 2005. This was produced under great pressure - we worked all night on many occasions. Julia took this in her stride - gentle she was, but as tough as they come. We did finish it in time, and the cost was covered by government funding. Subsequently we published several books mostly ably edited by Julia and designed by me.

We took part in a major EU research project in France, Italy and the UK. It was badly managed and could have been so useful. Again Julia got us through some nasty moments.

On the basis of our work we were concerned with the theory of 'Universal Design' and attended conferences mostly in the States. This was important, but was changed in the States into a money making formula. This is very sad, since it is fundamental to all people. Due to Julia's friendly manner, we still have many friends all round the world.

We gave papers and demonstrations on our work in the States, Hungary, Italy and France on a general theory of communicating with people with visual impairment. Back home there was the beginning of groups of friends with common interests - what is now called the Dog Rose Georgians. These were important to us and still are. The following outlines the areas this covered, and has developed over twenty one years into an 'extended family'.

We started and it was with Local Architects organising conservation meetings which were very ably administered by Julia. In parallel she organised visits for a group of fellow architectural historians who would travel and who have broad interests. This developed into local visits up say 60 miles, plus an away week in the summer. This enables visiting subjects further away. In addition the idea of Study Days developed on various subjects and with an increasing breadth! Julia's instinct proved to be correct.

You may see over all this country tactile models which we have designed or have been connected with. The first major bronze cast model is outside York Minster and the concept is now repeated elsewhere. See the fine model in Leominster. We also developed tactile raised diagrams. See and touch one in Ludlow situated by the bus shelter in Mill Street, next to what was the museum.

You can see from the story I have told you that Julia was a hard working partner in some worthwhile projects. She had such charm and helpful drive that she had many friends who together might be seen as her extended family. We hope that this family, many of whom are here this afternoon, will stay together.