

A TRIBUTE TO JULIA BASTIAN

Julia Bastian's life was truly a "long life well lived".

Early in her life she led an active role with the Women's Royal Naval Service, *the Wrens* – and it was during the war that her beloved brother Peter was killed, when a navigator for the Royal Air Force Bomber Command. After her service, Julia embarked on a career in journalism and publishing, and it was to be a long and distinguished one. She worked for *The Times* and was, we believe, the first editor of a dedicated women's page on a major national newspaper.

Outside of work Julia had many interests, some surprisingly water related. She helped establish the Pirate Castle charity in Camden on the Regent's Park canal, still going strong 40 years on and helping generations of young people.

She joined a pioneering new group, set up by government - *The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council*, fondly known to all as IWAAC. From their modest offices in Fitzrovia's Cleveland Street, Julia and the small IWAAC team had a profound and lasting impact, they helped shape government policy on all aspects of inland waterways for over a decade – and Julia became a passionate advocate for canals and barges and our water based environment.

A lifelong passion of Julia's was what we now call social justice, but Julia would have simply called fairness. Julia believed strongly in fair play. Specifically, Julia embraced and supported the work of the Henry George Foundation, named after the 19th century economist who has helped shape and continues to shape much of the world's economic thinking. Julia was a tireless promoter of the foundation's aims and believed strongly that our taxation systems and distortions in land ownership, drive inequality and unfairness and are unsustainable in the modern age.

She had an amazing artistic ability. Julia loved painting and drawing and was a member of the Marylebone Art Club. Among her many commissions was a portrait of a Lord Mayor of London.

Visiting galleries with Julia was a joyous experience as she savoured every detail of an artist's work. This love of art extended to the Arts and Julia found magic in them all; whether a shocking new Howard Brenton play at *The National*, an experimental piece at her local *The Cockpit Theatre*, or modern dance at *The English National Opera*, Julia had a deep love of nature and enjoyed travel – whether painting holidays in Greece or trips in the United Kingdom and further afield across Europe to visit friends. Julia had a capacity for making friends wherever she went.

Julia always saw the best in people. On one occasion we were crossing a park in London and came across a drunk staggering toward us and waving his bottle. Julia greeted him warmly, took the bottle from him, emptied it on the path and passed it back to him with a few friendly words. As we walked on the poor man was speechless. I truly believe she thought she was helping him.

For almost the past 10 years I think it is, Julia has been in the care of Morden College. She had nothing but praise for the team at Cullum Welch Court who surrounded her with kindness and laughter and made her life so comfortable.

As well as attending annual conferences of the *International Union* and the Henry George Foundation, she wrote over 40 articles for *Land&Liberty* from 1963 to 2000.

In 2003 she invited me to join a group which produced topic papers for *Land&Liberty*. After a while this developed into a website which we called *LandIsFree*, and we posted the topic papers there. When that was done, we added signed articles, and now there are over 100 available to read. While she was at Morden College we had monthly meetings with her, Roy Douglas, Merle Edwards and me, to approve the next few articles. She never failed to encourage and prompt us.

We will miss her encouragement and care, and her lovely companionship. Kind, loving, fun, thoughtful, warm and generous Julia. 🇬🇧



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