



A celebration of the life of

# Freda Ann Sack

23<sup>rd</sup> September 1951 – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019

St Richard's Chapel, Surrey and Sussex Crematorium

Balcombe Rd, Crawley RH10 3NQ

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 12.45 pm**

*Celebrant: Felicity Harvest, accredited by*



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## The Tribute

Freda loved to tell people that she was born in a remand home, which she was – her father, Bernard, had taken a break from being a police officer to work at the home in Middlesex, where her mother Betty also worked. He later returned to the police as the village bobby in Sandhurst in Kent, where Linda was born. It was an idyllic Kent childhood, with memories of long summers, and hop picking, though the family moved around Kent as Bernard got promoted, to Canterbury, then Strood, and then to Kennington, near Ashford. This meant that Freda changed school often, and had to be prepared to go into new situations, and make new friends – a skill she retained all her life, despite the fact that she appeared quite shy.

When she left school, she went to Maidstone College of Art to study Typographic Design. It was during this time that she met John. They were introduced by her cousin Geoff, at a college dance in Ashford. They immediately clicked, and in 1972, when Freda was just 21, they got married at St Peter's Church in Broadstairs, where her father was then working. Their shared interests sustained and invigorated them through their 47 years of marriage, and they had a knack of filling the other with enthusiasm for their own interests and hobbies.

Freda was the first of them to take up yoga, studying to become a teacher, for which she wrote long essays in her surprisingly dreadful longhand. When John questioned why she was doing it, she would say "One day you'll understand". And eventually he did. When he was particularly stressed in one of his engineering jobs, she persuaded him to give yoga a try, and eventually he also trained as a teacher, and became very active in the world of yoga.

In recognition of Freda's yoga teaching, Paul Harvey will now speak to us.

### *Paul Harvey's contribution*

Just as Freda had excited John about yoga, it was John who (eventually) got Freda excited about diving.

When Freda was working at home, she could sometimes disappear into her work. On one occasion, she took on a project of which she said to John "You're not going to see me for three days, but when I've done

this, I'll end up with a big wad of money". She disappeared, emerged, and got well paid. A few days later, she was walking past a travel agent and saw an advert for a holiday on a tropical island (I assume the typeface must have been attractive, as well as the image of palm trees and sun kissed beaches.) She walked in, and booked a holiday for two. When she got home, she told John what she had done – and they had to get an atlas out to find the location of the place they were going – the Maldives.

When they got there, John was keen to try scuba diving. After their first lesson, Freda was horrified – she HATED it and was never going to do it again. But the theory part of the course was taught in the bar at 6pm, and she found herself joining John for these sessions, and doing the exam at the end. And once she'd done that ... well yes, she agreed to try in the water again, and they both passed their initial diving test.

And of course, this then became another regular shared passion for them, going back again and again to the Maldives, improving their technique with the help of Swedish Navy divers, and falling in love with the under-water world they discovered. They became particularly passionate about manta rays, becoming sufficiently confident for the mantas to approach and even touch them.

And they both fell in love with Australia, drawn there at first by the fact that Freda's uncle Lionel had settled there, with his wife Pat, who regarded Freda as an extra daughter and welcomed John warmly into the family.

I am grateful to Mike Daines for his tribute to Freda on the ISTD website, from which I have taken just the bare bones of Freda's career which follow.

Her first job was at Letraset International in 1972, where Mike remembers interviewing a shy 21 year old. She started as a photographic retoucher, then transferred to the type studio where she began what she later described as a "five-year apprenticeship" in type design and typographic artwork. After three years she designed the Paddington and Victorian typefaces, which were published in the Letraset typeface range.

In 1978 Freda became senior type designer to Hardy Williams Design in London. By 1980 she was being interviewed by Mike Daines again, this time for the role of type designer at Typographic Systems International, a new division of Letraset. Alongside digitizing types, Freda continued to design, hand draw and hand cut artwork for Letraset typefaces, most notably the Proteus family. Her deep understanding of typeface construction and spacing made her the ideal candidate to educate the digitizing staff at URW Hamburg on behalf of TSI.

In 1983 Freda became a freelance type and lettering designer. She shared a studio in Archer Street, London, with lettering designer David Quay. It was a stylish type design partnership. Freda's studied calm complementing David's flamboyance. Their type marketing venture, The Foundry, was set up in 1990.

Freda and David were founder members of the Letter Exchange, and fulfilled various roles at the ISTD. Alongside her work at Foundry Types there were many ISTD events and occasions to manage, from Freda's office and her apartment just off Charlotte Street. Her tenacity ensured the flourishing of the ISTD's student assessment schemes, and ensured that the ISTD always had a programme of events.

Freda lectured at the Glasgow School of Art, Cumbria College of Art and Design, Nottingham Trent University and Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design.

She was passionate about typography, working tirelessly for the ISTD, supporting her students, and travelling constantly to carry out student assessments, sometimes in trying circumstances – in Karachi she had to be accompanied everywhere by two bodyguards with machine guns.

She was awarded an Honorary Degree by the University of the Creative Arts, and became a governor – while this was another way to support students, she could sometimes find the minutiae of being on a governing body quite trying! And last August, when she was already ill, she finally became an Honorary Fellow of the ISTD, an honour she had long deserved. She received the award in August in a ceremony at the De La Warr Pavilion. By that time she was already very ill, though very of her colleagues and peers knew this, and her ability to write an off-the-cuff acceptance speech on her napkin, despite her heavy medication, was astonishing.

As well as re-writing the rules of typography, Freda never stopped exploring other forms of creativity, and in later years became inspired by Dian's love of mosaics. This had started when they were both in Athens, Freda for work and Dian visiting a friend, and they had the joy of sharing a Greek Easter with the family. Dian fell in love with mosaics on that trip, and later Freda joined her for a course in Barcelona, and became fascinated with them too. They did a course together each year for seven years, and Freda produced several mosaics, inspired by her various holidays.

Dian was of course Freda's closest friend, since they started to work together in 1990, and if there were things she wanted to do for which John was not available, or as occasionally happened, was not interested, she and Dian would do it together. When people asked whether Freda and John had children, her response would be "No, but we share Dian's"

Dian will now speak to us:

*Just over ten years ago, Freda's passion for language and her love of poetry came together in a very serendipitous way. The poet Roger McGough was invited to the International Society of Typographic Designers student awards ceremony. He was to present successful graphic design students with their certificates (Many of you will know of Freda's total commitment to the society and everything it stands for).*

*Roger's wit and warmth made him a great success and the ISTD awarded him with an honorary fellowship.*

*Freda loved his poetry.*

*This poem shows his more serious side, it's called Sad Music and I'm reading it on behalf of John.*



*Sad Music by Roger McGough*

*We fall to the earth like leaves  
Lives as brief as footprints in snow  
No words express the grief we feel  
I feel I cannot let her go.*

*For she is everywhere.  
Walking on the windswept beach  
Talking in the sunlit square.  
Next to me in the car  
I see her sitting there.*

*At night she dreams me  
and in the morning the sun does not rise.  
My life is as thin as the wind  
And I am done with counting the stars.*

*She is gone she is gone  
I am her sad music , and I play on,  
and on, and on.*

Thank you, Dian.

It was as Freda and John were preparing for a dive in their beloved Maldives last year that Freda first became ill – an illness which speedily developed, and took on a much more serious form than they first realized. John was caring for her at home, when he in his turn became ill. They had a huge amount of help from their friends, family and carers, but eventually Freda just could not stay at home and they found Cranmer Court, not far away, which proved to be the ideal place to support her as her needs grew.

We often think of death as a cruel enemy, taking away those we love, but for those who are suffering or who have reached the end of their endurance, it can come as a quiet friend, closing the curtains, blowing out the light, and settling us into a last sleep, free from pain and weariness.

I hope it was so for Freda.

