

A Celebration of Life

Prudence 'Pru' Mary Stephanie Winder



28 November 1943 – 27 December 2020

3.30 pm, Friday 15 January 2021
Rose Hill Crematorium, Doncaster

a personal goodbye

Humanist
Ceremonies

Pru, grew up with her brother Mick and sisters Sue and Hilary in Cud'orth near Barnsley or rather CudWorth as their mother, a teacher, encouraged the correct pronunciation. Their dad like his father before him worked for the coal board. Grandfather Jones came from Wales and named the house the family lived in 'Fron Deg', but friends often had fun with the house name, and they received letters addressed to 'frog's den' or 'fried egg'! The family were quite well off compared to some, their mother's dad had been the local GP and one of the first in the area to get a car. They enjoyed a happy childhood, with memories of family pic-nics, walks, down to Low Cud'orth and holidays at the Yorkshire coast.

Their mother was staunch catholic and so Pru went the local convent school and then to Notre Dame Catholic girl's grammar school in Leeds and then art school and like her mother Pru went on to university and became a dedicated teacher.

As a teenager Pru decorated her bedroom walls with pages from fashion magazines. She always took care in her appearance and was proud of looking attractive. Sue remembers watching her big sister' put on her "sticky out" net petticoats and make up ready to go out dancing with her boyfriend Mick who was a Teddy Boy. They went to the Saturday night dance at Upton and on the train to Sheffield City Hall to see live Jazz Bands. In her Beatnik era Pru dressed all in black.

She always found great pleasure in sharing her enthusiasm for live music; going to gigs at The Shed, with friends and Hilary and Sue would meet her at live venues for a dance together. She enjoyed a diverse selection of artists and music but one of her favourites was Leonard Cohen.

It was in art school where Pru and Alan met, they married whilst at University and lived at Marydale, a lovely cottage in the beautiful village of Naburn where Hilary and Sue enjoyed visiting for holidays. After university, Pru and Alan went to live in Greece. They moved back to England when Pru was expecting Selina and lived in Pontefract when Selina and Georgina were little.

Alan and Pru had their difficulties and separated for a time before coming back together. But soon after, whilst the girls were away at school, tragedy struck the family when Alan took his own life.

Wherever she went Pru made friends for life, friends who helped her through difficult times and in turn she supported them. They shared a wealth of good times too.

Her good friend, **Jill Fairley**, wrote a lovely tribute to Pru recently, these are some of her words:

I met Pru at York University in 1964, only one year after it was founded amidst much 1960s idealism. Her subjects were English Literature and Education and she thrived in the passionate, ground breaking atmosphere of both departments and of the university itself. Over the years that followed, she often spoke to me about the academic staff who had been so inspiring and the courses which had fired her imagination. That inspiration and commitment stayed with her all her life.

After graduating, she went to work in Greece, and mastered the art of teaching English as a Foreign Language. This was a time when artists and writers were attracted to Greece but still it was a country living under a military dictatorship. It must have been an adventurous but risky experience.

After that she lived and worked in different parts of Yorkshire and I did too. We were both preoccupied with work and family, and rarely met but did stay in touch. Pru made a career in Further Education and always found work at the local college as her family moved around. She was infinitely adaptable and devised vocational and academic courses for students of every age and ability.

When her children had grown up Pru returned to Greece to teach English and initially had a happy time. Unfortunately, she was in a traffic accident which resulted in lengthy treatment in hospital both in Greece and the UK and left her with a permanent limp.

As with other misfortunes in her life, Pru got things back together and resumed her career in Further Education. From this time onwards we were more frequently in touch with each other and would get together for visits to the theatre, art galleries and literary events. We especially liked the northern emphasis in Shakespeare productions by Northern Broadsides and art exhibitions by David Hockney, as well as plays by Alan Bennett and the poetry of Simon Armitage.

One day in 1994, she came with her mother to a celebration of the foundation of Notre Dame high school in Leeds, which she and her mother had both attended, and where I happened to be working in its new incarnation as a sixth form college. Mrs Jones told me how the nuns had encouraged her to go to university in the 1930s, at that time fairly unusual for women. This made me realise that, unlike most of my friends, Pru was not the first person in her family to go to university, and that her diffident manner was a bit misleading. I saw that she had had a very solid academic education, but not perhaps one to boost confidence and ambition. The daily journey from Barnsley to Leeds must have been a challenge in itself.

Besides her deep and enduring interest in literature and education, Pru had a passion for art. She never let me see any of her work, and it was not displayed in her house, but I loved going to art galleries with her because she was so knowledgeable and full of insights. I think we have been to all the galleries in Yorkshire as well as some in London and elsewhere, and I know that she did the same with other friends and family. In retirement she attended several art groups and classes, some of them for many years, and I hope you can get some input from these friends, as I suspect that Pru had a well-hidden talent. Certainly her artistic flair was evident in her elegant use of colour in the way she dressed and how she decorated her houses.

Pru had a strong commitment to those who needed extra help in life. Her career took her from Further Education in local colleges to working in prison education, and she found it rewarding to encourage and develop people who had previously been written off. Once, she made me laugh when I asked her if it was frightening to work with violent offenders, and she replied, "Oh, you know how it is, Jill, once you start teaching you stop thinking!" Obviously, she meant that you stop worrying, as teaching is so all-absorbing. (I wonder how many teachers are able to think that now, amidst all the bureaucracy?) Even in retirement she enjoyed giving one to one support to those who needed it. Recently she was thrilled that a young dyslexic friend whom she had helped, succeeded in graduating with a first class degree in primary education.

Alongside her endless hard work, Pru loved holidays. She always liked the Yorkshire coast, and I had one or two enjoyable trips to Filey with her. She loved the landscape, the atmosphere, and the traditional feel of the Yorkshire seaside. She regularly booked a holiday flat overlooking the sea and invited the family to visit. In recent years she took Georgina on regular short breaks, sometimes to Devon and sometimes to France and Italy. She booked and planned all these herself and took care of all the details. She told me that Georgina was always on the lookout for their next destination, so plainly these trips were successful. I last saw her at the end of July, when we sat in her lovely garden and watched the butterflies. That is how I will remember her.

Whilst working at the prison, Pru made friends amongst the staff and was well thought of. Paula who was a young teacher in her twenties at that time, said that Pru was a very positive influence, who inspired her and helped her with teaching.

Here are a few words from another good friend, Judith:

Our friendship was based initially around our children & eventually our grandchildren (Pru was very proud of them all & was tireless in her fight for Georgina), and also our shared love of art, crafts, galleries & museums, books & poetry.

We sat in cafes over pots of tea & toast, putting the world to rights - we could never understand why politicians & policymakers didn't contact us for advice!
We laughed at absurdities, shared a sense of humour, loved a bargain & shopping in Wilco.

We had fun together on various courses - making notebooks at Cusworth Hall (we both loved paper, cards, notebooks, stationery of all kinds), lino prints at Doncaster Art Gallery, rag rugs, & for Pru, painting. We were never short of things to talk about. Pru was a very good friend; thoughtful, supportive, interesting, & fun to be with.

In retirement Pru attended several art groups and classes, some of them for many years. She was also an active campaigner in her local community. When the council threatened to close the library, she wrote countless letters of objection; she rallied her neighbours to fight the council decision to stop the only bus that came near their estate. She was thinking of how to object to a new planning application to build on a nearby flood plain when cancer took its hold. She was incredibly upset at the mess and injustice made of the children's exams during Covid in 2020.

Pru devoted a significant amount of time over many years, striving to obtain the deserved level of support for Georgina, to help her deal with the disadvantages she was born with. Pru often had to fight against the apathy she encountered in dealing with the NHS. She was also successful in gaining the proper level of financial support from the DWP for Georgina, after spending many hours cross referencing her medical and social needs in order to present a very strong case.

The Yorkshire coast was a special place for Pru since childhood, particularly Filey, where she visited regularly and invited family and friends to join her. In recent years she and Georgina enjoyed short breaks together, mainly organised by Georgina, to Devon, France and Italy.

Pru loved her family, though she hasn't always seen eye to eye with everyone and has fallen out with most of them at some point. She adored her grandchildren, who she was very proud of. Mark and Juliet have fond memories of special times with their granny, going to Edinburgh and visiting art galleries and for afternoon tea at Cusworth Hall. Juliet has happy memories of a day out with her to the Yorkshire Mining Museum.

Mick is glad that he and Pru reconnected last year. They enjoyed regular chats, reminiscing and laughing together about childhood, remembering the happy family days out for picnics in the sunshine. With that in mind, here's one of Pru's favourite poems, **Eden Rock by Charles Causley**.

They are waiting for me somewhere beyond Eden Rock:

**My father, twenty-five, in the same suit
Of Genuine Irish Tweed, his terrier Jack
Still two years old and trembling at his feet.
My mother, twenty-three, in a sprigged dress
Drawn at the waist, ribbon in her straw hat,
Has spread the stiff white cloth over the grass.
Her hair, the colour of wheat, takes on the light.
She pours tea from a Thermos, the milk straight
From an old H.P. Sauce bottle, a screw
Of paper for a cork; slowly sets out
The same three plates, the tin cups painted blue.
The sky whitens as if lit by three suns.
My mother shades her eyes and looks my way
Over the drifted stream. My father spins
A stone along the water. Leisurely,
They beckon to me from the other bank.
I hear them call, 'See where the stream-path is!
Crossing is not as hard as you might think.'
I had not thought that it would be like this.**