



In Memorium: Sally Willington

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Born: Sonia Gwendoline St. Leger on 25th May 1931

Married: David Willington a land surveyor

Children: Clare Willington, Paul Willington

Grandchildren: Tobhi Feller, Hailey Willington

We all knew of Sally's heart problems but it came as a shock to hear that she had died at her home in Gunnislake, Cornwall, of a heart attack on the 6th September.

Sally was born in Middlesex and attended the North London Collegiate School for Girls and Willesden College of Art. She was a skilled potter and her work was exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum when she was young. She studied under Bernard Leach and during the 1950s she made medieval-style goblets and platters for a hotel in Kensington that laid on Elizabethan banquets.

In the 1980s she rented a shop and flat in Battersea Park Rd which she later bought from the council. The shop came with a kiln that enabled her to fire stoneware.

Sally was a tenacious campaigner, activist, pacifist, and a member of CND and Voice of Women. She stood as a Green Party Candidate in Cornwall in the 1970s and in London in the 1980s and founded TOES UK (the Other Economic Summit - later the NEF - New Economic Foundation).

Sally founded AIMS in 1960 after spending ten weeks in St Albans Hospital, bleeding whilst pregnant. She wrote to the Observer about her experiences and eventually the letter was published. The Guardian also published a similar letter on 1st April 1960, and many people considered it an April Fool's joke. It was not called AIMS at that time but the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Pregnant Women.

After the Observer article Sally was deluged with letters and someone sent £50 cash in a brown envelope with no covering note. It was a huge sum at that time so she set up a regional network in UK, with some connections abroad.

During the 80's. she would close her shop early and rush through the traffic to attend committee meetings. Her unobtrusive presence and helpful comments always gave the committee a wider perspective. She knew that, despite cosmetic improvements in maternity services, there was still a long way to go. Her call for grandparents' involvement is as relevant now as 30 years ago.

In 1984 she divorced her husband and in 1990 moved to Nowra in Australia to be near her daughter. Her house in Nowra was in the midst of immaculate lawns and well tended gardens, Sally's house was easily

recognised, the front garden was rampant with foliage, a back garden had been created in the form of a map of Australia with Ayers Rock in the middle and more tangled foliage. Sally travelled around Nowra on her bicycle wearing one of her large collection of unique, and beautiful, hand made sun hats - the image of an English Lady in a foreign land. While she was there she did not miss the opportunity of founding an AIMS group in an attempt to improve their over-medicalised care.

Sally returned to England in 2004 and bought her house in Cornwall. As President of AIMS Sally kept in touch with our activities but attending meetings was increasingly difficult. It was only last year that she wrote an article for the journal about the changes that have happened over the last 50 years. It is a tragedy that she will not be with us to celebrate our 50th Anniversary in 2010 but AIMS still carries on its essential work in her spirit.

This is the full version of the abridge piece that appeared in the Journal