

Ian Blair's Eulogy

I first met Gill in the summer of 1974 on an archaeological excavation in Lewes in Sussex and we instantly became friends. Looking back I think I initially saw her as a slightly exotic creature: whereas we were camping out in a field she and a group of undergraduates at University College London and the Institute of Archaeology were renting a house in Brighton, travelling to and from site each day in a jam-packed Mini Cooper.

Our paths continued to cross on archaeological sites across Sussex over the next three years: the last being a post-medieval pottery kiln in Hartfield in 1977 where three of us shared a caravan. Later I commuted from Kent to London to help processing the pottery from the site in the basement of the Institute of Archaeology.

At a loose end as to what I could do to advance my fledgling but stalled career, Gill and David Freke (the site director) suggested I visit a large archaeological excavation near St Pauls Cathedral in the City which was being undertaken by the Museum of London's Department of Urban Archaeology. This advice changed my entire life and shaped my forty-two year archaeological career: I never did leave London..

Two years later having heard the sound of Bow Bells beckoning Gill also joined the DUA working in the Finds Department. We both worked together on the important Billingsgate Market excavation in 1982 with Gill and her finds colleagues having the misfortune to be based in the very smelly crab-boiling room of the former fish market.

Whereas I remained glued limpet-like to the archaeology of London Gill moved on to pastures new and fresh challenges further north in: Stoke-on-Trent, York, and Carlisle.

Gill and I remained close friends and in contact for fifty-two years.

RIP