

Susan Jellicoe

30.06.1907 - 1.08.1986

Writer and editor, photographer and plantswoman.

1985 University of Sheffield DLitt,

Daughter of Sir Bernard Pares (1867-1949 professor of Russian at University of London 1919-36, previously at Liverpool University 1908-17).

After school, she attended the Sorbonne in Paris, studying languages. During the Second World War she served in the Ministry of Information Department, countering enemy propaganda.

She joined Geoffrey Jellicoe's office Jellicoe, Page and Wilson as a secretary in the early 1930s, and married Geoffrey Jellicoe in 1936; throughout the rest of her life she collaborated closely with Jellicoe in every aspect of his life - his design work, his writings and with the Institute of Landscape Architects (ILA) and International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) - he was founder member of both of these organisations.

At the first meeting of IFLA in Cambridge, Susan Jellicoe acted as an interpreter, and played a vital role advancing international friendship and understanding, especially important in the post war era.

In 1958 Geoffrey Jellicoe decided to write a history of man made landscapes, and from then on at every opportunity they travelled together and she photographed many historic landscapes throughout the world. Her photographic library 'compiled by one who combined insight with technical skill forms a priceless contribution to landscape archives and libraries' (Dame Sylvia Crowe PPILA) tribute to Susan in 1986. Jellicoe found that she could reveal the essence or idea of a landscape, he never told her what angle to take, and she preferred to be alone when photographing. Jellicoe found that generally she took photos to which she had an emotional response.

It was not her wish that the collection should be passed to the Landscape Institute (LI) and so 'preserve for posterity many views of landscape which we saw together, which might soon cease to exist' but after her death Jellicoe gave over 6000 of her photos to the LI library. These are very good quality black and white images, organised in loose leaf albums, labelled and numbered with negatives. Many of her photographs have been used in the Landscape Journal, books and the archive calendar. They comprise a very significant part of the Landscape Institute archive.

Susan Jellicoe was chair of the journal committee for Landscape Design (ILA journal) 1960s-80s, and editor, although she never referred to herself as this or put her name in the journal, for many years she wrote and edited most of it. She also edited the Observer newspaper gardening panel, 1961-65.

She was co-author with Margery Allen (Lady Allen of Hurtwood) and Geoffrey Jellicoe on a series of important books on garden and landscape design:

The things we see: gardens 1953

The new small garden with Lady Allen of Hurtwood 1956

Modern private gardens with Geoffrey Jellicoe, 1968

Water: the use of water in landscape architecture, with Geoffrey Jellicoe 1971
The landscape of man, with Geoffrey Jellicoe 1975
Town gardens to live in with Lady Allen of Hurtwood 1977

The gardens of Mughul India 1972, by Sylvia Crowe, Susan Jellicoe contributed many photographs.

Although she had no formal training in landscape design she became a most accomplished plantswoman, claiming that Brenda Colvin (PPILA) 'taught her all she knew', and she prepared planting designs for a number of Jellicoe's schemes, most notably Sutton Place, their own garden at Grove Terrace, Harvey's roof garden, in Guildford, and the Water Garden at Hemel Hempstead.

She had a warm personality, was a very good cook, and frequently assisted young landscape architects helping them find opportunities. She and Geoffrey had no children.

While Geoffrey Jellicoe received international recognition for his work and his contribution to landscape architecture, Susan Jellicoe's contribution however has long been overshadowed by people other than him.

For more references and links go to the main library catalogue:
www.landscapeinstitute.org/library_and_information_services/catalogue