

OBITUARY: JOAN KATHLYN FELICE CREIGHTON, ("EVE")

On the evening of April 18th, 1997 "EVE" departed from our world. The remains of her physical frame -what Gurdjieff called the "planetary body" -BUT NOT SHE HERSELF -lie buried on a beautiful sunlit slope, surrounded by trees, among the rolling hills of south-west Hertfordshire, and less than half a mile from the remote farmhouse where I myself was born.

When I first met "Eve", in January 1947, she was already with the British Foreign Office and was serving on the staff of H.M.'s Consulate-General at Antwerp. She already knew that she was going to be the secretary of a man who was due to arrive shortly "from New Orleans", and, when she first heard my name mentioned, in December 1946, the "**inner voice**" which she had been hearing all her life, said "You're going to **marry** that man!"

In July 1947 we were indeed married, in the beautiful red sandstone church high up on Kinver Edge in Staffordshire. (In July of this year we would have completed fifty years of perfect married bliss. We could truly say that there had never been a harsh word or quarrel between us. No man could have ever had a more loving and perfect mate -and a widely talented one too. I have no doubt that we had already been together before, as we shall be again.)

During WWII "Eve" had worked with a Belgian firm in the Midlands, perfecting her French, and she had also taken the very unusual step of teaching herself to be highly proficient at **French Shorthand!** And so it came about that, for our first year, in Belgium, I was able to dictate my correspondence, and we got a great deal done!

In a hasty dash to see Paris -so recently liberated -early in 1946, she had been strolling down the Champs Elysées when she spotted the British Embassy and walked straight in and enquired whether they could give her a job. Shortly afterwards she had been called to the Foreign Office and interviewed and tested -and offered a choice of "either Antwerpen or Baghdad!" Fortunately for me, Antwerp won.

A gifted artist herself, Eve had two university degrees in the History of Art, and later, after our return to England from Brazil, she lectured on Art for years at a college here, and also taught English to foreign students. She was a gifted writer too, and produced many humorous pieces for *Punch*. (Indeed, they accepted the very first article that she sent them, and in following years they took many more.) For years

I had delightful vacations with her, visiting museums and art galleries and other monuments in Europe and in the Middle Eastern lands.

On the domestic side she was a wonderful mother, a splendid diplomatic hostess, and a first-rate cook. And when, in the 1980s, the small personal computer came along, a big article in our local newspaper "plugged" her -already a grandmother -as "the first local woman to own and use one". (It was Clive Sinclair's ZX81, from which she progressed to the BBC computer, and later the present PC.) She taught herself to write programs, and for years used computers to assist in her Art lectures. Later, when she had retired from teaching, she threw all this computer competency into working for FSR. By learning the desktop publishing skills needed to produce the magazine herself she was able to drastically reduce the printing costs. And so, for several years, we were able to produce the magazine together as a husband-and-wife team. Later, even with her health seriously declining, she still persisted and brought out the magazine through all her vicissitudes.

Owing to a grave bout of illness when she was a grammar school girl in her early teens (pneumonia, peritonitis, and abscess on a lung) Eve was never able to engage in strenuous sport or exercise, and this was what crippled her for the last six or seven years of her life, most of which time was spent **fully on oxygen**, which meant that she was largely a prisoner in the home, but ever cheerful and tenacious. During her last four years she was back in intensive care in hospital for long periods each winter, and would have died three or four times were it not for the marvellous work of the doctors and nurses -and her own will to fight her illness. One hospital consultant told me: "**Mr Creighton -she is the bravest woman I have ever seen!**"

Her final illness started early in April of this year, when she had already prepared almost the whole of FSR volume 42/1 and put it on disc for the printers.

By April 16 she was unconscious, but not suffering actual physical pain, nor indeed did she ever do so. However, by about 5 o'clock in the evening she suddenly rallied wonderfully, and called for our son, Philip, to go home and get the FSR manuscript. Then, with her oxygen full on, she sat up in the hospital bed until 8 pm and revised and corrected the entire text as far as page 23. So great was her sudden

improvement that I began to feel that she would, after all, be coming home once more. **But she had done her bit for me and FSR and her mind was at rest.** By next morning she was unconscious again, rallying only one last time in the evening, when she spoke in a breathless whisper and Philip, putting his ear to her mouth, heard her last words, which were:

"IT IS AMAZING...IT IS AMAZING...THAT I AM SO HAPPY!"

She did not rally again, and her brave spirit finally left us on the evening of April 18.

She died as she had lived, a staunch follower of the Christian faith. At the memorial service for her in St. Mary's Parish Church, Rickmansworth, I held in my mind the wonderful words from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, "And all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side".

She too had been a pilgrim and a battler, so my special request in the service was that we should sing Bunyan's hymn "*Who Would True Valour See, Let Him Come Hither!*", together with Blake's *Jerusalem*.

The officiating priest made a special point of mentioning Eve's wonderful last words which, without any shred of doubt, can only have indicated that she was seeing and beholding something or someone very important as she passed over into the **Light**.

Much of my own long life has been spent in the study of Comparative Religion and in dipping into the texts of most of the world's great faiths, always in the hope of seeing "as wide a Truth as possible", and this too Eve shared with me, fully convinced of the common ground of all mankind's spiritual search.

And in our Christian service for Eve that day, in a church of the old Anglican faith, I was happy to note that we also had there, among our many dear and good friends, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and a Hindu.

FSR directors and their wives were there, dear friends all, to lend their staunch support, but few of Eve's main friends live locally, and there had been little chance to notify many of them.

(Mindful as I am of the shabby treatment that FSR and I have both received from the media over these past forty years and more, I confess that I had not even taken the trouble to inform any newspaper that our Joan had gone ahead.)

My son Philip and daughter Rosamund (twins born in Brazil) and their children, Nicholas, Alan and Chloe, join with me in thanking all of you who have shown us so much support.

But our mood is not of sadness. It is a mood of intense hope and joy because we all know that Joan is now liberated and freed from all that terrible

frustration of her last few years. For such an active, creative soul, to be always shackled at the end of an oxygen tube was a torment, physically painless though it may have been. G.C. ■

MAILBAG.

29/4/97

On behalf of the Board of FSR and of its readership, I would like to express our condolences to Gordon Creighton and his family for the loss of his wife, Joan.

Her interest in our subject was as burning as Gordon's, and her knowledge immense. Her indefatigable efforts over the years have ensured that FSR was well laid out and on time with the printers. She has made an invaluable contribution to the magazine, and her cheerfulness and humanity will be greatly missed.

As ever, the burden of producing a magazine such as ours falls heavily and unevenly on a few. She bore the very large part of it, and her resolve to get the magazine out stayed with her to the end. We are all in her debt.

Yours faithfully,
Jonathan Caplan.

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U.K. £12; Europe £15; rest of world £18

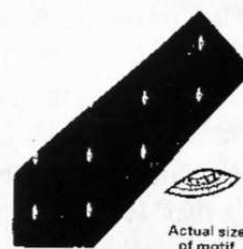
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MIR SPACE STATION CORRECTION.

On page 25 of FSR volume 41/4 (UFOs Escorting Russian Space Station?) we published a report from the German UFO Research journal DEGUFORUM (No. 11/September 1996). In their following issue (No. 13/March 1997) they now warn, however, that the story is dubious. As we are busy going to press I have not had time to do more than give it a brief glance, but it seems clear that the "UFO hypothesis" is definitely to be ruled out. I am not yet clear as to whether or not the Germans have found any other explanation for the phenomenon originally described as a "string of UFOs". G.C.■