

Marion will live on through her work

Michael Jordan pays tribute to Marion Frank.

Born 11 December 1920 – Died 15 September 2011



had escaped with the family, joined the British Army and was killed in Normandy in 1944 fighting, under an assumed name, for the country which had saved him.

But her life here was a happy one and indeed she would often say "I am a lucky girl". She was blessed with a close family, albeit one which extended throughout the world.

She was a citizen of the world, rather than of one country. If you happened to be going to some remote place, it would not matter where, Marion would have a relative or friend (and it was often difficult to distinguish between the two) who would, and invariably did, offer the greatest hospitality. There was always a quid pro quo, however, and you would be expected to take something on her behalf to the relative or friend. You could sometimes feel you were a courier.

After she and her sister arrived in this country, they trained as radiographers in Glasgow. Her twin sister did not make the career in radiography that Marion did and this is perhaps fortunate for us all – could we have coped with two Marion Franks? Her sister, however, was totally different from Marion in appearance and manner, being somewhat more reserved and quieter than Marion.

When Marion had qualified as a radiographer, she worked in various hospitals, notably the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary where she struck up a friendship with the Campbell-Tainsh family

which lasted throughout their lives and she took a close and, if not maternal, certainly a maternal, interest in their son. That, of course, was the essential Marion – once you became her friend, you were her friend for life, with all the commitment that this implied.

This is not an exposition of Marion's professional life; that is well documented and recorded in other places. But some of her attainments must be mentioned: President of The Society of Radiographers and examiner for the Society; and her OBE of which she was inordinately proud – she would say "The Queen loves me" because somewhere in the citation to her OBE there was a phrase "... my beloved subject" or something similar.

And there was her role as superintendent and teacher at the Middlesex Hospital School of Radiography. It is not overstating the case to say that under her headship the Middlesex School became the most prestigious in the land and its influence spread everywhere. Indeed, one senior superintendent radiographer once said to her: "Marion, the Middlesex School is all very well, but it does metastasise so." It was common knowledge that in order to get a place in the Middlesex School you had to demonstrate that you could provide a lunch for 20 people at 24 hours notice at a cost of three shillings and sixpence per head.

However, Marion will be best remembered

professionally for her work with the International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technicians. It would be fair to state that she was devoted to its ideals and aspirations for bringing radiographers throughout the world. She worked ceaselessly and tirelessly to promote and foster the ISRRT and, in particular, those countries and people who were, are, in most need.

How many of us have been phoned at some time of the day or night, picked up the phone and heard her voice at the other end: "Right, chums, there are three things we have to do." No preamble, no waste of unnecessary words – just straight to the point. Time was too precious and phone time far too expensive to waste on fripperies.

This is not to give the faintest impression that Marion was overcareful with money. In fact, she was tremendously generous with her money, her time and her efforts on behalf of international radiography and radiographers. But hers was not a blind generosity. She adopted the 'tough love' approach. You had to earn her support and be worthy of it, but if you were prepared to work and show your mettle, Marion would back you 110%.

Her flat in Lancaster Gate was a testimony to her generosity. It was open to anyone who wanted an overnight stay. One year she decided to keep a record of the people who stayed in her flat and in the first nine months of that year she had well over 200

It is not given to many people to pack – cram would be a better word – as much into their lives as Marion Frank did in hers. If you say she was a remarkable woman then you do not do her justice. We are all mixtures of different persons within the shell of one person. There is the person we would like to be, we want to be, we aspire to be. Then there is the person we actually are.

Unfortunately, for most of us, these two do not coincide, the spirit may be willing but the flesh is all too weak and our actuality does not meet our aspirations.

As we get older there is a third person, the person we wished we had been,

acknowledging, perhaps, our own weaknesses or failures. And lastly, after we have died, there is the person we are reported as having been, the person remembered as having been.

Marion was notable for being probably the closest of us all in combining these four different persons into one.

Not many of us know a great deal about her early years in pre-war Germany, but we do know that her family were fortunate enough to escape the terrors then existing in that country and obtain refuge in this country. She was eternally grateful for this refuge and never forgot what she owed. It is a tragic irony that her brother, who



From left: Kathleen Clark, Ernest Ray 'Hutch' Hutchinson and Marion Frank. Photo courtesy of Adrian Thomas

bed occupancies. Any hotel would have been delighted at the bed occupancy rate that Marion had. And it was free. There was never the remotest question of levying a charge. When anyone stayed at her flat Marion made only two stipulations: you must look after yourself and you must lock the door when you went out. This latter rule was most important because breaking and entering can be a problem in this part of London. She was renowned for having the most burglar-proof door imaginable with bolts going up and down and laterally from side to side.

On one occasion, when there had been a break-in and all the flats rifled, the police were intrigued as to how and why Marion's flat had escaped. One of the policemen went into her flat, looked round, and

said: "But madam, there's nothing worth taking."

When Marion told this story she would laugh and this showed another side to her character. She was completely unmaterial. She had no interest in personal possessions for their intrinsic value. Money was only of interest insofar as it could achieve an end. If you were travelling with her to some foreign parts you had to be prepared for pretty basic accommodation. She couldn't bear to waste money.

On one occasion, at an ISRR conference in Jamaica, she had us all lined up outside her room in the morning to receive a slice of bread with butter poured on it (there was no fridge) and a banana. This was breakfast because the

hotel breakfasts were, in her opinion, far too expensive.

Each and every one of us will have our own memories of Marion and our favourite stories about her. She had an unnerving ability to drop off to sleep with mayhem going on around her. Of course, like all of us, she had certain weaknesses and perhaps one of the most surprising was her gambling streak. If she was on a ship with a casino on board you would find her at the tables. But it was a minor weakness and it never governed her life. In fact, in some ways it made her more endearing.

Marion has been, and will continue to be, honoured, loved and even revered by all who knew her for her humanity and her wish to try, in some small way, to help those less fortunate



Marion with Sir Godfrey Hounsfield FRS. Photo courtesy of Adrian Thomas

than herself. It seems strange and sad that no longer will we receive that telephone call at any time of the day or night and hear that inimical voice from the other end of the line.

And so we have reached the end of the life of one of the most remarkable persons anyone of us has had the honour and pleasure of knowing. It is a cliché

to say that our lives are richer for having known her but it is nonetheless true and has to be said. Indeed for many people their lives are richer for her presence even though they never knew her. Her influence was that great.

The journey of her life may have come to its close but the legend – the immortality – of Marion's work will endure.

NHS Pensions – To infinity and beyond

SCoR Industrial Relations Director Warren Town tackles the arguments surrounding the coalition's pensions reforms.

When you read this, at least one of the political parties will be at their conference with the party faithful, sipping wine, sampling finger food and patting each other on the back.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the economy is in stasis, employers are sending people home, the NHS is in turmoil and the European Union is running a bring-and-buy sale to pay off Member debts.

The truth of the matter is, yep, we are still in a recession and the

Government has a cunning plan that is not as effective as it expected. But, of course, we are still on track – whatever that means – says that nice Mr Cameron.

The ever so nice Mr Miliband has told the TUC that striking is not the answer and that the pension reforms are necessary and that nice Mr Clegg (the other half of the current leadership) is not sure what to say but I am sure that the Conservatives will give him a prompt some time soon.

Whatever the political arguments about the

economy – and am I the only one who has heard enough of 'we inherited this mess'? – the fact remains that the coalition wants to limit the costs of pension provision for public servants and, if truth be told, had Labour remained in power they would not have been far behind.

This is not about fairness, it is about raiding your entitlement to balance the books. You will pay for the recession by not having a pay rise for two years; by increasing energy costs and, if the coalition gets its way, through slashing your pension.

But what is that cry from the populace? Why should public servants have it so good and don't they have gold plated pensions? The fact is that, yes, it is true that public servants will have a

guaranteed pension, even if the reforms go through, but that does not mean that just because greedy internationals, out to save a few bucks or balance the books, can or should be allowed to raid an employee's pension pot.

Public servants are not saying we are all right, so help us keep our pension – we are saying that all workers should enjoy a good standard of living and the race to the bottom will only deepen the recession.

As for the 'gold plated' pension – a myth which was dispelled by the Hutton review – the only group who still professes this to be true is the politicians. And who has one of the best pension plans? Yes – it is your elected Member of Parliament.

In the coming months,

the SoR and other unions will ballot for strike action against the coalition pension reforms that will affect all public service workers.

If you want to be part of this and be counted, you need to make sure that you are on our database and that our details are correct.

Members of the SoR have already expressed support for this action and many have said enough is enough.

Whilst the bankers bathe in their bonuses; the politicians bathe in the adulation from the faithful and the coalition lives in 'never-never land', you – public servants – will still have to pick up the pieces and provide help and assistance to those who need it most. A good pension is a small price to pay for this commitment.