

## Helen Jones

1936 - 2017

Helen died on 17th November 2017. She had been acutely ill since March of that year, when she was told that she only had weeks to live. It was typical of Helen, that she refused to conform to someone else's timetable, and lived for another six months. In those six months she gave a master class in how to live a life in anticipation. Having very reluctantly accepted that she could no longer manage to live on her own, she lived her last six months in a care home, in which she developed a very active network, both outside and inside the care home. When I told her in late October that I intended to come to visit her, she replied that she was already occupied on my suggested date... and I had to book a date in two weeks time!

After a career as a language teacher, Helen trained as a counsellor in the late 1970's. In this training she came across PCP and contacted Fay Fransella. Fay invited her to meet with her... and so began her career within PCP. For nearly 40 years she was a quiet but determined advocate of PCP in academic, therapeutic and organisational contexts.

I first met Helen at the PCP Centre in the early 1980's, at which time she was Director of Training and Development. She was the emotional centre of the training programme, who made PCP both accessible and engaging; she became my training supervisor and in a typically quiet but forceful way she ensured that I was not allowed to get away with anything but a proper Kellyan provision of therapy.

In 1987 she moved to Yorkshire and spent over 20 years working within management development, both in the NHS and at the University of York. In an interview with Mary Frances in 2012 she said, "We also ran a Master's programme in Leading Innovation and Change in partnership with what was then the College of Ripon and York St. John, now St John's University, York. Working on this programme was a joy for many years and perhaps what I am most proud of in my organisational career."

As well as her organisational work she always had a small practice working therapeutically with individuals and couples, and providing supervision. Her last publication (which we wrote together) in *Personal Construct Theory and Practice* was on working with couples, using a PCP perspective. She continued her interest in training by being one of the two supervisors on an internet diploma course offered by the Personal Construct Association.



For anyone who had not met Helen, it is difficult to describe her in two dimensions. She impressed you immediately with her quiet presence, you knew immediately that she was special. She had a very distinct sense of style, both in her dress sense and in her insistence on quality, no matter what the context. She influenced a wide variety of people, particularly through the 'York Group' which met throughout her time in York, for nearly 30 years. As one of the participants in this group said to me at her funeral, "the group often seemed to meander quite a while... then you realised that it had found its focus for the meeting, purely because of the way in which Helen had shaped it". I think that this brilliantly

sums Helen up; she facilitated others, took pride in their development, and effaced herself as much as possible.

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## **REFERENCE**

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