

Tribute – our friend Mary Jackson.

We had bad news today, that our friend Mary Jackson, who wrote here regularly until a few years ago, has died.

Mary and I met round 2005 on the Jihadwatch website where she posted under the name 'Interested'. We had a similar attitude to life and an English sense of humour which drew us. There we got to know Rebecca and Hugh Fitzgerald and Rebecca invited us to blog at the new web magazine, *New English Review*.

We took up the opportunity with gusto.

Mary was born in Bolton in the North West of England. Her accent and humour shared roots with the late English comedian Victoria Wood, from Bury, also in the historic county of Lancashire, although they looked nothing alike. It must have been something in the water.

The humour was genuine but behind it was a formidable intellect and wide knowledge. Mary studied modern European languages at Cambridge and later lived and worked in London. Language, words and wordplay was a great interest of hers and featured in many of her articles. She travelled widely and to some very unusual places.

This is her in 2006 on the subject of [Esperanto](#) (as spoken in Ruritania) and later that year on the lesser known language of [Volapuk](#).

She loved theatre and would occasionally [contribute a review](#), or her [thoughts on a play](#).

She also enjoyed food and wine. I remember when she took a course on wine appreciation. She had homework. Sample a wine from (I don't remember, a region of Italy was it? It was an

Italian restaurant) and assess its qualities. And of course, a good friend helps with difficult homework... Two mouths are better than one...

Other times it was the pub, the Citte of Yorke in Holborn was a favourite, as were steak and kidney pudding or scampi and chips.

We did go on serious expeditions. The open day of an important mosque, both assessing the quality of the taqiyya, or a talk by somebody interesting, like Anne Marie Waters (and then down the pub).



And we travelled to Nashville for the NER symposium of 2010 where we, with John Joyce comprised the British Division, which was enormous fun. Rebecca took us to the park in Nashville and we sat on a bench, enjoyed the view (left) and met chipmunks.

The finest thing she wrote, in my opinion, was her piece on the Handmaidens of Allah; Dozy Bints which was for Pajamas

Media as it was then known. It is no longer extant in that particular form but it was a theme she developed over several years [here](#). And [here](#).

Mary hadn't written here for a couple of years; family life and work had to be given precedence but she was still active behind the scenes, and with other issues, particularly Brexit. I recommend her archive of monthly [articles here](#), none of which have really dated.

She was kind, supportive and encouraging. When I got in a pickle she would calm me down. When I had doubts she lifted me up.

She was a good friend and I will miss her.