

# The ART of love

Two romances spanning more than a century have helped form a successful Lancastrian artist



**Above:** Julia with Synchronicity

**I**t was a love story from the early 1900s and it brought a young woman half way around the world from Australia to Lancashire. A century later her great-granddaughter travelled in the opposite direction looking for adventure and she also found romance.

As a girl growing up in the Lancashire town of Darwen, Julia Carter often heard tales about her great-grandmother's early years in New South Wales. Florence Taylor was an accomplished pianist at the turn of the 20th century and, when she was 19, the young woman won a scholarship to study in Vienna with the great Ignacy Paderewski.

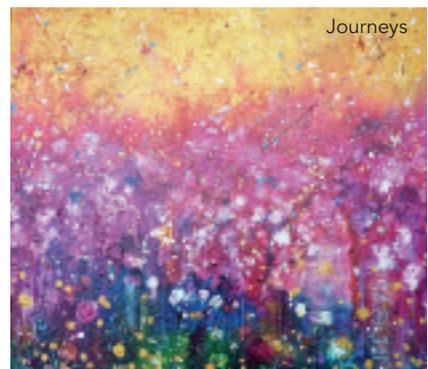
Love intervened. While in Austria she fell for a young surgeon called Walter Biggs from Lancashire and they married in 1908. He was a surgeon for over 50 years at the Royal Blackburn Infirmary, where a ward was named in his honour and, during a distinguished career, he made a number of trips up the Amazon as a ship's doctor.

But it was romantic tales of her great

grandmother that also captured Julia's imagination and in the mid 1980s she completed her studies in sculpture and literature and decide to spend time travelling in Australia. It was there she met and settled down with the man she describes as her 'Crocodile Dundee' and they had a family.

She also made a name for herself as a dramatic painter and she is on the first leg of a trip to Europe to take part in several exhibitions.

'I have very fond memories of my childhood in Lancashire, growing up



“I still miss fish and chips, snow, and the overwhelming friendliness of the people”



**Above:** Julia at Noosa  
**Left:** Forever  
**Below:** Essence



with great friends on the street,’ says Julia.

‘We had the Darwen moors all around us, and we’d love to build dens and pick blackberries. I catch up with the same friends when I’m back home and we have the biggest laugh about the adventures we shared. I remember Sundays when there were family walks in Sunnyhurst and Tockholes Woods and up to Darwen Tower.’

Julia was born in Fairfield General Hospital in Bury and her parents, Harvey and Ruth Carter, lived at Holcombe Brook before the family set up home in Darwen. She attended St Barnabas Primary School and St Wilfrid’s High in Blackburn and her parents owned Darwen Hi Fi and Music Centre, which often featured in Lancashire Life.

It’s a far cry from her new home at Noosa Heads on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast, which Julia describes as ‘an idyllic tropical cosmopolitan paradise with magical turquoise ocean with white sandy beaches.’

But her art is crossing international



boundaries. It has just been displayed in a top gallery in London’s Pall Mall and sold out before the doors opened. This month other works go on show in the Italian city of Bologna and later in the year there will be a show in Paris.

Julia says her aim is to make her work ‘vibrant, uplifting, energetic, colourful, motivational, inspirational, evocative and highly emotional.’ A tall order but critics have spoken highly of her style.

She concentrates on large canvases building up layers of texture with symbols and patterns and collage materials and then uses washes of fluid acrylic for a flowing, intertwining effect.

Heavy bodied acrylics are then applied with knives, fingers, brushes and sometimes direct from the tube.

Although her current environment inspires her, she says Lancashire also influences her work. ‘Often, subconsciously, I paint the rolling moors, the winding paths through the enchanted Tockholes Woods, and carpets of wildflowers found in the nearby Lake District. They are embedded in my soul.’

Lancashire is much more than a distant echo for Julia. ‘I still miss fish and chips, snow, and the overwhelming friendliness of the people, and of course family and friends - and the accent!’ she says. 🍷

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