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# Magazine

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**Paul Hogan**  
Up from  
down under

**The Bishop  
of Reading:**  
Exorcist  
for the 21st  
century

**Remember  
Mee?**

**Julie**  
**CHRISTIE**

**Reclusive and elusive... but back in focus**

# Still Far From **THE MADDING CROWD**

**Anthony Hayward** focuses on actress Julie Christie, the Sixties icon whose private life is... just that

**H**ollywood and love go hand in hand for Julie Christie. Thirty years ago, she and Warren Beatty were Tinseltown's No 1 couple and their attempts to keep their life together under wraps did little to keep media interest at bay.

Today, the 61-year-old star who became an icon of the Swinging Sixties through her appearances in films such as *Darling*, *Doctor Zhivago* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* is back on America's West Coast enjoying love and films once again after more than 20 years of rural isolation in Wales.

Her long-time journalist partner, Duncan Campbell, moved there from London as a correspondent for *The Guardian* newspaper in early 1999 and she followed in September of that year. Just as they did in Britain, in California the couple have their own homes – his a flat in Venice, hers a house near the Pacific coast, 75 miles from Los Angeles.

Remarkably, they are never seen with each other publicly, spending most of their time together at weekends in the exclusive Rincon area where Julie lives, away from Hollywood hysteria. For her, this has become the equivalent of the smallholding near Montgomery in mid-Wales that she previously used as a retreat from the film world. Outside Rincon, no-one would know that Julie Christie and Duncan Campbell are associated.

Los Angeles-based British journalist John Hiscock says, "As far as I know, she has never shown up at any party or reception that he has attended, including BAFTA's pre-Oscar party this year. In fact, I can't recall her at any public party here apart from the Santa Barbara Film Festival, where she was a judge. She has stayed very much away from Hollywood generally."

Christopher Reed, the British correspondent for *The Guardian* whom Duncan replaced, says the Scot "is very mild and self-effacing, gentle and quiet... I had a few conversations with him at the time he moved here and was surprised to find that he is incredibly secretive about Julie. He can't be under the illusion that nobody knows about her but he acts as if you ▶



◀ don't – he only refers to his 'friend'."

Julie's own career has now entered its fifth decade and, notorious for taking long breaks from the business, she is now making another comeback – as she did five years ago.

After failing to appear in any feature films during the first half of the 1990s, she then acted in three. After the fantasy adventure *Dragonheart* and Kenneth Branagh's mammoth, four-hour screen version of *Hamlet* – playing the king's mother in both and showing that she gracefully accepted she was no longer automatically the female lead or love interest – Julie won her third Oscar nomination for her part in the American film *Afterglow*, made in 1996.

When it became known that she had undergone a minor facelift, with a modification to her jawline, she said, "It's very hard going to America, where people who are older than you appear to be younger. That is really, really undermining. You know they're older than you, and you look like their mother."

But expectations that Julie would follow up her new enthusiasm for making films were dashed until last year. Ironically, only one of the four pictures she has signed up for since moving to California is a Hollywood production – the *Beauty and the Beast*-style fantasy *No Such Thing*. She appears in the French production *Belphegor – Phantom of the Louvre*, stars with Burt Reynolds in the forthcoming Dutch-British film *The Hermit of Amsterdam* and has just made *I'm with Lucy*, shot on America's East Coast by the French studio Gaumont.

But her "starring role" off screen, with Duncan Campbell, is remarkably low-key. It is what Julie would have wished for during her years with American actor Warren Beatty, who was riding high as the star and producer of the acclaimed *Bonnie and Clyde* during the early days of their relationship. They had much in common, shunning publicity and sharing a determination not to conform to Hollywood conventions, but that did not stop endless speculation about whether they would marry.

The romance could not fail to send the media into overdrive. Although they lived privately in a ninth-floor penthouse suite at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, in Beverly Hills, and one friend from those years spoke of Julie's "secretive" lifestyle and the time she spent there making glass ornaments and figurines, she and Warren followed one another to filming locations in Europe and acted together in director Robert Altman's classic anti-Western *McCabe & Mrs Miller*.

She also joined him on the Democratic Party's campaign trail during the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections, and this introduction to politics triggered her participation in demonstrations against America's involvement in the Vietnam War, including that outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London, in November 1969.

However, Warren's notoriously insatiable appetite for women had not abated and, while she was finishing work on *The Go-Between* in Norfolk in 1970, he had a two-month affair with Britt Ekland, who described him as "the most divine lover of all". After five years and one film together, Julie – who had enjoyed a romance with British star Terence Stamp before real fame came her way – left Warren in late 1972, when she started work in Europe on the eerie supernatural thriller *Don't Look Now*, which is still remembered for an intensely erotic love scene with Donald Sutherland.

Although she returned to Hollywood and even made two more films with Warren – *Shampoo* and *Heaven Can Wait* – the flames were never rekindled and he dated other women, including Carrie Fisher, and found a new partner in Michelle Phillips, a former member of the American pop group The



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'I went where my heart was and my work. There was a lot of heart business...'

Mamas and The Papas, before marrying actress Annette Bening. He later hinted that Julie had ditched him.

She did have other lovers during those final years in America and admitted: "I simply went where my heart was and my work. There was quite a lot of heart business in America besides Warren." It was after one such relationship broke up that she left Hollywood and, from 1978, her Welsh cottage became her base.

In Britain, she stepped back from mainstream cinema to concentrate on films featuring issues with which she devoted more time to social and political causes, such as the anti-nuclear movement, animal rights and feminism. She credited Beatty with opening her eyes to politics but supported pressure groups devoted to specific causes rather than political parties. An even greater discernment in her choice of films also meant that most of those she made dur-

ing the 1980s were low-budget and usually too esoteric to appeal to wide audiences. One notable exception was *Heat and Dust*, considered an "arthouse" film that opened the doors for the producer-director partnership of Ismail Merchant and James Ivory to make more widely screened pictures.

Julie returned to the land of her birth for this mesmerising story of a woman travelling to India to research the scandal of her great-aunt becoming pregnant by a local during the days of the Raj, having an abortion and living the rest of her life in exile. When filming finished in 1982, she set out on a voyage of rediscovery with Campbell through the Himalayas to Assam, where her father, Frank, had managed tea plantations. She had spent the first seven years of her life there, before being educated in England, but recalled little of it except being looked after by an Indian nanny.

Although born of a colonial family, Julie was by the 1980s condemning imperialism and likening it to the way in which humans treated animals. Her mother, Rosemary, came from a family of tea planters in India. Julie's paternal grandfather, George Christie, had enjoyed a distinguished career as a civil servant in the colonial administrations of India and Burma.

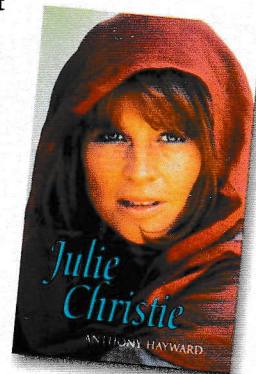
Julie's travels have now led her within a stone's throw of Hollywood again and, as determined as ever to keep out of the limelight, with Campbell she can rely on her privacy. It is reported that, on his being confirmed as new Los Angeles correspondent for *The Guardian*, someone on the paper broached the idea that Hollywood gossip and inside stories would be forthcoming in future, but an awkward silence followed when Duncan replied: "Not at all. I can't do that. It would be extremely unethical."

After 23 years with such a soul mate, Julie Christie appears to have found the personal happiness that allows her to choose when to leave the peace of her home and give the public a reminder of that magical quality that can shimmer across the silver screen.

For those who remember the beauty whose spellbinding presence and vitality made her a true spirit of the Sixties, it is some consolation that she has not become another Greta Garbo and forsaken Hollywood for good. ■

● Anthony Hayward's biography, *Julie Christie*, is published in paperback £9.99, by Robert Hale on September 28.

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