

## Joyce Arram

Joyce was born in the maternity wing of the Whittington Hospital on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1935. She claimed that she was a real cockney on the basis that Dick Whittington heard the bells of Bow Bell on Highgate Hill just outside of what is now the hospital. Joyce said that this is confirmed by the statue of Dick's cat just outside the hospital.

Aged six, during the war, Joyce was evacuated to wales and lived in the village of Argoed just outside Blackwood. She was taken in by Olwen Harler, deputy headmistress of the local junior school, and her mother. Joyce's evacuation tag is currently on display at the Museum of London.



*Image from © Museum of London*

After the war, Joyce continued to visit Wales and her family had a strong relationship with Miss Harler, for example they would exchange food coupons for non-kosher food with Miss Harler.

During retirement, Miss Harler moved to Hermon, a hamlet, just outside Cynwyl Elfed, where Joyce continued to visit her. Joyce would always immerse herself into the community such as taking part in the country shows and joining the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society. Miss Harler was the treasurer of the Society for many years. Joyce was part of the society for many years, she always wanted to come to the Day School but it always clashed with her liberal democrat conferences.

When Miss Harler passed away, Joyce inherited her cottage and continued to enter country shows. She often won the fruit and vegetable competitions, using the produce grown in the allotment next to the cottage.

Eddy Arram, Joyce's brother, said Miss Harler was a mentor to Joyce and was an influence on Joyce's political views such as Women's equality. This can be seen when Joyce took part in the 1976 protest to allow women to join the National Liberal Club. They were eventually successful, allowing women to be admitted as full members. Joyce made sure to fully enjoy her right on many occasions and even celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at the club.

Eddy also recalled that Joyce loved to travel. For example, in the sixties, she joined the liberal delicate when they travelled to the Caribbean to help in the local elections. After the results, she tasted the local liquid hospitality and ended up spending a few hours in the local judiciary 'hotels' for being drunk and disorderly, luckily no charges were made. She also worked in a law firm in Miami for a year.

Joyce originally started her work in the legal profession as a Managing Clerk. She saw the role was undervalued and was a leading voice in ILEX which transformed legally trained support staff into a professional vocation. She was also a driving force in obtaining a Royal Charter for ILEX.

In 1978, Wendy Mathys met Joyce when she joined a small firm called Dresdens, in Covent Garden. She recalls Joyce as being a very hard working individual, often working late in the evenings for her clients. Joyce once took a former colleague, Stephen Williams, out for lunch where he was introduced to Lord Denning, which Stephen considered a great privilege.

Joyce was a very community minded person. In Summerlee Gardens, she would often arrange street parties and visits to the panto for the children. In 1993, Joyce was highly active during the North London Boroughs Order. She organised petitions to transfer her road from Haringey to Barnet. The order was eventually passed on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1994.

Joyce was elected by the RSA council as a fellow in 1990. She was always highly active within the RSA for example in 1991, she took part in a discussion on 'Citizen Who, Citizen How?' about the relationship between young people and the police. In 1992, she took part in a discussion about 'Education for European Britain' and in 1993, she took part in a discussion in 'Quality, Equality and Europe and House: Living with the Policy Failures of the 1980s'. Joyce eventually became legal executor and governor of London for the RSA in 1992. In 2012, Joyce was listed in the London Region for the RSA and in 2013 and 2024 Joyce was the chair of the London Region.

Due to Joyce's remarkable achievements, she was elected as a Woman of the Year at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Women of the Year Lunch in 2014.

In 2015, Joyce co-authored an article in the Journal of Liberal History which was an assessment of the former Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe. The article was published following the death of Jeremy Thorpe in December 2014. Joyce first met Thorpe when he had recently been elected as MP for North Devon at the 1959 General Election. Thorpe called Joyce 'the Arum lily'. In 2017, Joyce was a TV consultant and was an advisor to the BBC production about Jeremy Thorpe called 'A Very English Scandal'. Joyce was delighted when she got to meet Hugh Grant and even went out to dinner with him one evening. She was very amused to recount that after dinner they were spotted crossing the road by a group of young girls who she overheard saying 'who's that old lady going out with Hugh Grant'.

In 2018, Joyce stood as the Liberal Democrat candidate for East Finchley for local elections.