

In memory of Joyce Arram
speech by Graham Colley-Lloyd George Society lecture
25 November 2019

Welcome to this lecture in the honour of Joyce Arram, "the Arum Lily" , beloved by us all.

I am Graham Colley and am the president of Liberal Democrat lawyers (Rights-Liberties-Justice). Joyce was my deputy president . I had known Joyce since I joined the Liberal Lawyers Committee in 1981, as the membership secretary. Joyce was already an active and respected member of the Committee. She encouraged and helped me as a new committee member. I left the committee in 1985 to become an active PPC and subsequently a Kent county councillor. I continue to see Joyce at conferences and other party gatherings.

In 2009 I rejoined the LibDem Lawyers committee and Joyce was still there. She had been secretary for many years and had subsequently become the Deputy President. When I became the Chair in 2011, Joyce was again always there to support me. And at every annual dinner she used to remind me that it was her role to propose the loyal toast.

Joyce was born at the Whittington Hospital on 24 March 1935. She always claimed that this allowed her to claim that she was a Cockney and said that the statue of Dick Whittington's cat, outside the hospital, justified this. It was in the Whittington Hospital that she passed away on 11 November 2018

At the age of six, Joyce was evacuated to Argoed. Her evacuation tag is on display in the Museum of London. Joyce was taken in by the local deputy headmistress Olwen Harler.

After the war Joyce maintained links with Ms Harler and on Miss Harler's retirement, Joyce used to visit her in Hermon, a hamlet, just outside the village of Cynwyl Elfed and immersed herself in the local community. She engaged in the country shows and the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society of which Ms Harler was the treasurer. When Ms Harler passed away, she left the cottage to Joyce and Joyce continued to enjoy and play an active part of that local community, including entering local country show competitions with vegetables from her allotment next door to the cottage. It was because of her involvement in Wales and her home in Cynwyl Elfed that Joyce became involved in the Lloyd George Society, which had once been the Welsh Liberal Summer School and which met every year in Llandrindod Wells.

Joyce was a regular attender at the annual Lloyd George conference and persuaded to me to attend some eight years ago. And ever since, I have been a regular attender at the weekend, which is an interesting mixture of historical and legal discussion

The third link to this evening and Joyce is where we are now, the National Liberal Club. I have been coming to the Club since the 1970s when the Europe House Club in the offices of the European Movement were on the ground floor. But even before that, Joyce had been coming as an Associate Member of the Club. But Joyce was only an associate member. In those days, only men could be Full Members of the Club. In 1976. Joyce, together with six other notable female liberal candidates (Christina Baron, Sarah Curtis, Penny Jessel, Margaret Snow, Delia Venables and Nesta Wyn Ellis) protested outside the Club that they were not being admitted, following the passing of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. They were known as the "magnificent seven" Joyce was successful, of course, and women have been equal members ever since. Indeed, many will remember Joyce's 80th birthday party in the adjoining room.

So there are three direct links between Joyce and this evening

But Joyce was a member of many other organisations, both within the Liberal Party. (Now the Liberal Democrats) and in other areas.

Joyce was a member of the liberal candidates Association and was first a candidate for the party in the 1966 general election, where she stood In South-East Essex. She stood on many other occasions, both as a parliamentary candidate and for her London Borough. She used to attend the candidate's associations, weekend schools, normally held in Oxford. She was active in her local party in Finchley and Barnet. She was an active member of the Women's Liberal Federation and very importantly to Joyce, the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel.

Joyce lived in Summerlee Gardens in Finchley, and just as she had been active in her community in Wales, She was an active local community member in Summerlee Gardens. Indeed, in 1993 she petitioned in the North London Boroughs Order for her road to be transferred from Haringey to Barnet. Joyce was successful.

Joyce was elected to the Council of the Royal Society of Arts in 1990 and was always very active in the RSA, taking part in an many discussions. She became a governor of the RSA in 1992

and was listed as its London regional chairman in 2013 and 2014 .

Joyce started her working career in the legal profession as what was then known as a "managing clerk". She saw that the role was undervalued and became a leading voice in the Institute of Legal Executives which that transformed legally trained support staff into a professional vocation. Joyce was a driving force in obtaining a Royal Charter for iLEX, which became silex and she was a council member.

Joyce worked in many areas of the law ranging from criminal work to conveyancing. However, she did not confine her role to private practice but worked in the PSU (The Personal Support Unit), which provides support in the High Court to unrepresented litigants.

Perhaps one of Joyce's better-known clients was Jeremy Thorpe, for whom she was executor. Joyce co-authored an article in the Journal of Liberal History in 2015, which was an assessment of his life. Joyce had met him shortly after he had been elected as the MP for North Devon in 1959. Jeremy Thorpe called Joyce "the Arum Lily", which is the title I gave her at the start. Joyce became an adviser to the BBC production about Jeremy Thorpe called "a very English scandal". She was

delighted when she got to meet Hugh Grant and was invited out for dinner with him one evening. Her account of the dinner was that she and Hugh Grant were spotted crossing the road by a group of young girls who she overheard saying, "who is that old lady going out with Hugh Grant".

Joyce never pushed herself forward, but was always a dedicated member of the Liberals and every organisation that she was part of. Whilst there are overlaps between those organisations, no one knew all of her activities. I asked a student Florence Lee to help me over the summer to draw some of these together. I would like to thank her and all those that gave the contributions. There is, however, still much more to discover.

Whilst Joyce will be remembered for all of her activities, she will be treasured for the love she gave to her family, her brother Eddy Arum and her nephew Richard Arum. And all of us who knew her will remember her for the care she gave to others, her ability to listen and for her kindness. Joyce Arram - a remarkable person and who, in this lecture, we remember.