

# Joyce Littaur 1925-2018



Joyce was the youngest of three sisters. She was born in 1925 in Aberdare Gardens, West Hampstead and her parents were Cecil Fox, well-known locally as a successful property developer, and his wife Evie. The family moved to 31 Bracknell Gardens a few years later and they became good friends with people called Littaur, who lived a few houses away at No 21.

Joyce and David, from the age of about 10, used to meet each other when accompanying their respective mothers on local shopping expeditions. They liked one another and David was drawn by Joyce's big smile. But that was as far as it went in those early days and it would be an exaggeration to say it was "love at first sight".

At that time, Joyce was attending South Hampstead High School. When WW2 started, in 1939, the school was evacuated to Berkhamstead, but Joyce's parents decided to stay in London and sent her to The Henrietta Barnett School in the Suburb. Little did she know then that Hampstead Garden Suburb would become her home in the final 20 years of her life.

David became a boarder in the preparatory school of Clifton College, Bristol. In the holidays, he would occasionally be invited over to see Joyce and these invitations were reciprocated.

In September 1939, his family went on holiday to Buenos Aires in the Argentine. Their ship left from Southampton, not far from Bournemouth, where the Fox family happened to be staying. David and Joyce have a photo of Joyce and her parents, standing on the dockside, looking up to the ship and waving goodbye to the Littaur.

The War started a few days afterwards and they were stranded in the Argentine until November 1942, the year the Littaur's returned to Britain. Of course, there was a reunion between Joyce and David.

By now, Joyce had volunteered for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and became a radio operator, mainly on RAF stations in the West Country. David became a trainee navigator in the RAF and in 1945 did a course of training in Canada. At the end of the war, both of them were obliged to await the turn of their respective demobilisation numbers and they went back to civilian life in 1947.

They became increasingly close to one another, announced their engagement in 1947 and were married in 1948. They lived in Stormont Road, Highgate, where they raised a family of two children and this was their home for 50 years until 1998. Joyce and David's daughter,

Glen, was born in 1949 and Gavin, their son arrived in 1950.

For some years, Joyce involved herself in the orchestra David conducted, Philomusica of London, in a managerial capacity. She helped to plan concerts as well as booking venues and artists. This work continued until 1998, when David retired and the couple downsized to their home in Wildwood Road on the Suburb. At this stage, Joyce began to play an important part in hosting meetings for the Events Committee of the Residents Association, which her husband chaired, and providing them with refreshments. Unlike David, she did not enjoy serving on committees – "I am not a committee person" – and much preferred the social and catering elements. Joyce played a similar role in Proms at St Jude's, Abbeyfield, at the Fellowship Club and, on occasions, at Alyth Gardens.

Joyce and David enjoyed travelling together. Their travels included ski holidays in Switzerland, tours to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Hungary, as well as visits to David's parents in South Africa and her sister in Los Angeles. She especially enjoyed seeing her much-loved granddaughter and her husband, Rachel and Petter, and her great-grandchildren and step-grandchildren in Norway. Joyce and David went there many times.

Joyce loved people, and she enjoyed visiting the elderly and chatting to them about their lives. During the week, she would pay regular visits to lonely people,

needing companionship and an opportunity to confide in an open listening ear. Her visits continued until her nineties, when several of her 'protégés' were far younger than herself.

Another activity, meaningful to Joyce, was her involvement in volunteer reading help in schools. She assisted pupils in Wessex Gardens School for many years; it was only her deteriorating eyesight that caused her to step down. She was much admired and appreciated by everyone she assisted.

She made many friends from these activities and was much loved by all who knew her, especially members of the Suburb community. They will miss her terribly. Joyce's voluntary work at the North London Hospice for many years provides yet another example of her charitable activities.

Like most people's lives, there have been some painful passages. In 2015, her dear daughter Glen was seriously injured in a traffic accident. Joyce was overjoyed when she began, slowly, to make a recovery and she would have been so proud and grateful to her for taking the long journey from her home in Sussex to say goodbye to her at her funeral.

There have been a large number of recent tributes to Joyce received by David, her adoring and grieving husband. They share a common theme: repeated references to her kindness, gentleness, sweet nature, service to others and, above all, her lovely smile.

*The above is taken from the eulogy given at Joyce's funeral.*

### David shared the following memory from his great-nephew Jonathan with Suburb News

My great aunt Joyce, my Grandma's sister, was a smart, selfless and incredibly wonderful human being; Joyce could talk to anyone and was kind to everyone. She and her husband David recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Together, they always loved to travel, and to meet new people wherever they went.

When I visited them in London, Joyce would wake me up – usually around 6am – to have tea, and then we would take long walks together. Every place we went to, somebody who knew her would come over to say hello.

There is one wonderful memory I want to share, especially timely with the royal wedding: one time my great uncle David was telling me the story of how as a child he

actually went to the same French tutor as the young princesses, Elizabeth and Margaret (this must have been back in the 1930s or early 1940s). One day, the tutor had the princesses over and they were all playing hide and seek when he knocked one of them over (*David adds: Princess Margaret was very reticent on my visit and hardly spoke. Princess Elizabeth, our present Queen, spoke a great deal and we had been instructed to do so in French! Then we played hide-and-seek or some such game and it was she whom I knocked over by accident.*) I said to David that if he had played his cards right at that moment, he could have married a princess. David put his arms around Joyce and, with a big smile, said, "But I did marry a princess!"

# David Cohen 1939-2018

David was born in Gresham Gardens, Golders Green on the 27 February 1939, the youngest of three children. He went to Golders Hill School and then to Beaconsfield Prep School from the ages of 7 to 11. David then attended the City of London School until he joined his father in the family retail shoe business in 1956.

David married Judith in 1962 and moved to Hampstead Garden Suburb, where they have lived for 56 years, starting in Hill Rise, before moving to Northway and then to Sheridan Walk. Their two boys, Richard and Peter, had a wonderful childhood in the Suburb and made many lifelong friends.

David always took a very active role in local community events including Neighbourhood Watch, annual cricket matches on the Heath with the residents of Northway – the Odds v. the Evens – battling it out, classes at the Institute and the Proms, to name just a few.

After spending 26 years in the family business, David and Judith formed David Cohen Fine Art in 1984. They spent 32 years dealing in First World War art supplying major museums and clients around the world.

David joined the Rotary Club of Paddington in November 1963 and became President in 1980. When his business in Bayswater ceased trading, David became a member of the Rotary Club of Golders Green where he made many lasting friendships. He served as both President and Secretary of the Club and was very proud to have done so.

Since 2009 David led the annual November Ceremony of Remembrance at the Clock Tower at Golders Green. This was an event started by the



Rotary Club of Golders Green, which has grown from year to year and is now usually attended by around 100 people with the police stopping the traffic around the Clock Tower for the Two Minute Silence.

Sport always played a large part in David's life – an Arsenal Season ticket holder, a Saracens supporter, as well as playing rugby, cricket and hockey in his early years. David coached rugby and cricket for seven years at St. Anthony's Prep School in Hampstead where Judith worked for 30 years. He also gave a yearly talk to the Year 8 boys on Remembrance and the First World War.

David ended his days in the North London Hospice – a haven of peace and tranquility – and the family will always be grateful for the love and care that David received there.

The many cards, letters and e-mails that Judith has received all talk of David being a very special man. He had a way of making people feel comfortable whenever he met them and there were many references to his warmth, his smile, his laughter and his generosity. David was a real character and a true gentleman.

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