

A Commemoration

Rosemary Lois Harris

*Born on 28th February 1930, died on 31th March 2015,
at 85 years of age.*



Corinth 2011

Obituary

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Rosemary Harris will be greatly missed by anyone who knew her and by the many who knew her work. Since her death last March, several tributes have emphasized her intellectual brilliance and her personal qualities, remembering her as a wonderful, dedicated teacher and supervisor and as a very kind person.

Rosemary was a gentle, unassuming and generous woman, who devoted countless hours to her students and younger colleagues, supporting them and stimulating their intellectual growth. Tributes to Rosemary have emphasized the important contribution she gave to widening the scope of social anthropology, both through her own research and through the encouragement she gave her students in the pursuit of innovative ideas. I would like to note, however, that paradoxically — or probably because of the pioneering nature and very high calibre of her work — such a significant contribution did not always receive the recognition that it deserved and that would have been reasonably expected. As unfortunately it often happens in these cases, Rosemary's great scholarship encountered unwarranted opposition from mediocre minds. In remembering Rosemary, I feel that more should be said about her scholarly achievements.

Rosemary was one of the first British anthropologists to do research in a modern North-European nation-state. Stimulated by the work of the ethnologist Estyn Evans (who later became professor of geography at Queen's University, Belfast), and initially encouraged by Daryll Forde at University College London, Rosemary undertook her first anthropological fieldwork in Northern Ireland with the aim to study the nature of prejudice in relation to religious divide. Her book, titled *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A Study of Neighbours*

and “*Strangers*” in a Border Community, was based on 10-month continuous fieldwork carried out in Ballybeg in 1952-53 and subsequent periodic visits until 1965, which she made during her lectureship at the Queen’s University, Belfast. As Rosemary explains in the Introduction, the name of the village, Ballybeg, is a pseudonym used to disguise the real identity of the place and the people mentioned in the study. The ethnography analysed in the book brings out a common culture shared by Catholics and Protestants who ‘paradoxically’, Rosemary writes, ‘are seen to have close and friendly contact as neighbours’, despite the official cleavage between the religious groups. Anthony Buckley praised Rosemary’s study of the Northern Irish situation as the first modern anthropological work that provided an in-depth, subtle and intelligent analysis of the sectarian divide; an analysis that transformed scholarship on the topic. In a review-article that addressed the ‘Ethnology of Northern Ireland’, Buckley emphasized how Rosemary’s work represented a ‘paradigm change’ on the study of sectarian divide, masterfully showing the complexity of the relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and, by relating sectarian divisions to social geography, bringing out how such divisions and the attendant prejudices coexisted with a sense of shared community. Buckley concludes that, unsurprisingly, the publication of her book in 1972 immediately stimulated similar works in anthropology and outside it. Note that Rosemary’s monograph was published only in 1972, twenty years after the initial fieldwork!, and that this happened following Max Gluckman’s steady insistence that she should publish an account of Ballybeg. Official explanations for such delayed publication would point to the fact that in the 1950s — at the time, that is, of Rosemary’s original fieldwork — research carried out in northern Europe would not be considered appropriate for a PhD in social anthropology. While similar rural-based research was carried out elsewhere in Europe (especially in the Mediterranean region), northern Europe was perhaps considered too familiar or, in line with the dominant disciplinary divisions of the time, as being an appropriate subject for Sociologists or Folklorists, not for Social Anthropologists. Anthropology ‘at home’ had still a long way to go before being accepted in mainstream British anthropology. It is, therefore, not surprising that previously Rosemary had published her essays on her Irish ethnography in sociological journals, like the article she published in 1961 in the *Sociological Review*.

Thus, for her doctoral dissertation Rosemary had to do what was considered at the time ‘proper’ anthropological research. Being a strong and determined person, Rosemary was certainly not discouraged and, as a young British lady in her mid-twenties, travelled to West Africa on an Emslie Horniman Anthropological Scholarship to undertake a new field research among the Membe of Nigeria. She conducted this long-term fieldwork in 1956-57 and subsequent updating field-trips in 1958 and 1959 focusing on the variations of a particular form of chieftancy among the Mmembe tribes of the Middle Cross River area. Her revised doctoral thesis was published in 1965 by Her Majesty’s Stationary Office under the title *The Political Organization of the Mbembe, Nigeria*, for which she was awarded the prestigious Percy Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology. Hers was indeed a remarkable study of an African political system carried out in the classical anthropological tradition but which departed in significant ways from the still dominant functionalist approach to the study of

tribal societies. Rosemary provided a comparative historical analysis of the differences among three Mbembe tribes (the Adun, the Osopong and the Okum), which had involved linking their political organisation to their kinship system of double unilineal descent, to their belief system (in which spiritual leaders and witchcraft played a central role) and to their different economies and forms of warfare. In reviewing the book for the journal *Africa*, G. I. Jones wrote, ‘The result is an admirable and authoritative study of Mbembe chieftancy ... this is a very valuable contribution to the social anthropology and ethnology of this part of Nigeria and one that will remain the last word on Mbembe ethnography for some time to come’.

These two ethnographically and theoretically different researches clearly show what a talented and committed scholar Rosemary was. She was a gifted and innovative fieldworker and a highly sophisticated ethnographic writer. Her publications were written in a jargon-free style, linear, simple and elegant.

Rosemary commanded a solid anthropological knowledge and was blessed with an inquisitive mind. It is precisely her scientific curiosity and imagination that led her not only to undertake innovative research, but also to promote new teaching programmes. After her teaching appointment at the Queen’s University, Belfast, Rosemary took up a lectureship at the University of Sussex before moving to the Department of Anthropology at University College London, where she retained the position of Emerita Reader after her retirement. It is at UCL that, in the 1970s, she initiated a course on the Anthropology of Complex Societies (as they were defined at the time) and later — in the wake of yet another innovative research, this time in industry — a new teaching programme on Western Industrial Societies. Both courses included anthropological literature and readings from cognate disciplines. The aim was to stimulate serious debate on the potential advantages and the possible alleged ‘dangers’ of an interdisciplinary approach. Through both courses Rosemary sought to show that if, on the one hand, anthropologists who studied western society could not ignore the contribution of cognate disciplines; on the other hand, it was precisely anthropology’s methodological paradigm and the commitment to proper in-depth ethnographic fieldwork that constituted the basis of authoritative analysis and theoretical development. Her lecturing style was as clear and incisive as her writing. And she caught her audience’s attention throughout; her lectures and seminars were interspersed with anecdotes that brought to life the anthropological works under consideration, thus actively engaging the students and awakening their desire for further knowledge. It is during her postgraduate seminars on kinship that I finally began to master the complexity of this anthropological field and not only fully understand the technical terminology, but more importantly grasp the economic, social and political relevance of different kinship systems and their significance as systems of exchange.

Rosemary was a masterful supervisor, stimulating self-reflection rather than imposing her views. She would ask apparently simple questions, starting from ethnographic details and from there leading her interlocutor to reflect on key analytical aspects and bring out the theoretical relevance of their analysis. I felt privileged to be one of her doctoral students. She had encouraged and supported my proposed research on Italian politics, despite arguments that a young woman could not possibly do research in a male-dominated institutional environment. Well, those who appreciate Rosemary’s strong personality and intellectual

acumen would not be surprised by the support she gave me and many other students. She was one of the very few senior anthropologists who understood the broader relevance that the kind of locally-based political formations I wanted to study had on Italian politics and how they might be harbingers of more fundamental changes to come. I completed successfully my research and my doctorate and, as later political events showed, we were both right.

In 1986, Rosemary published what turned out to be her last book. This monograph, too, is based on new, ground-breaking anthropological research and has theoretical significance well beyond anthropology. Titled *Power and Powerlessness in Industry. An analysis of the Social relations of production*, it was based on her ethnographic research in two ammonia plants within ChemCo. Rosemary undertook a comparative study of the two plants, which were treated ethnographically ‘as fields of social relationships’, with the aim of showing how ‘reflections on the nature of the differences between the two plants are very pertinent to the major theoretical debate about the relative significance of technology and culture for workplace behaviour’ (p. 23). This work is a great demonstration of the danger of superimposing theory to reality. As Rosemary notes in her Introduction, aptly titled ‘The Innocent Eye’, her work began primarily through ‘attentive observation rather than theoretical reflection’. Significantly, such attentive observation produced a well-informed and astute analysis of major sociological theories, focusing especially on key sociological debates about the nature of industrial relations. It was precisely the ‘ethnographer’s eye’ that made it possible to develop such a convincing empirically-grounded rebuttal of abstract Marxist-oriented grand theories. However convincing might these grand theories appear at first sight, Rosemary’s ethnography masterfully shows that a ‘particular structural Marxist view of industrial relations is too simple, and is forced to be very selective of the data considered if it is to be crammed into what is something of a theoretical strait-jacket.’ (218).

Rosemary’s concern with contemporary western societies led to further initiatives and academic endeavours, such as: the collaborative work with Gary Armstrong on football hooliganism — another pioneering work; the constant encouragement and support given to her students to pursue anthropological research in European cities, which went beyond the duties and responsibilities of a supervisor.

Over the years Rosemary strongly supported the work of the IUAES Commission on Urban Anthropology (CUA) and encouraged the establishment of this Journal, on whose Board she served and to which she contributed several articles. In recognition of her substantial contribution to the development of the Commission, in 2011 she was unanimously elected to the Commission’s Advisory Committee. It was Rosemary who introduced me to the CUA in 1996, on the occasion of a conference she had agreed to host at UCL. Rosemary involved three of her former students in that conference, Italo Pardo, Gary Armstrong and myself. Later, she encouraged me to engage in the activities of the CUA and, following my appointment as its co-chair, she gave unfailingly her invaluable and constant behind-the-scenes counsel. Never confrontational, never belittling her opponents, Rosemary gave subtle, most effective diplomatic advice. Throughout my professional life she has been a leading example of intellectual engagement, and of wisdom, skill and integrity.

More recently, she reminded me of a conversation we had when she was trying to soften my frustration and anger at not having yet been able to finding a publisher for my doctoral work. Although all the publishers that I had approached unanimously praised the great ethnographic and theoretical contribution of my work to anthropology and other social sciences, it seemed that either it did not fit in their publishing policies or it was believed not to be likely to produce sufficient commercial returns. Rosemary sympathised with my frustration and disappointment, both pointing out that academic politics can be far more vicious than real politics and suggesting that there I should apply the skills that I used in my analysis of Brindisi politics. A few months ago, while discussing some new fuss in academic circles she and I concluded that all too often mediocrity and pettiness find a way to matter at the expense of intellectual fortitude and integrity.

Rosemary's conducted her last major research before her official retirement in 1991-1995 in Somers Town, a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in central London's South Camden area — this is the area around Euston station, spreading towards St Pancras and Kings Cross. She carried out this research on ethnic conflict, including teenage inter-ethnic violence, in the context of the transformation of the area from a traditional working class neighbourhood to a cosmopolitan inner-city district hosting at its periphery various transient ethnic groups, the most numerous of which were Bangladeshi. With her usual acumen, Rosemary went on to analyse ethnic conflict beyond fashionable discourses on 'race'; she suggested that the term 'ethnic' would be more appropriate to describe a conflictual situation that did not arise 'simply out of perceived visual differences' for those differences were 'broadly cultural'. The research resulted in academic publications in 1996 and 1999 — respectively in the *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights* and in an edited volume on *Ethnicities in Conflict* (edited by T. Allen and J. Eade) — comments in *Urbanities* and a public intervention titled 'A Death in the Ghetto', which was published in the magazine *Prospect* in 1997. In this field research, Rosemary focused on groups of teenage boys from different ethnic backgrounds to investigate the alliances and antagonisms which these boys believed to be linked to ethnic difference. She investigated instances of violence often involving Bangladeshi boys in various institutional contexts such as the school, youth club and the street. She found out that youth violence was less important than drug abuse and the long-term effects of unemployment and that major problems concerning inter-ethnic violence appeared to be the stereotypical reactions by both local people and outsiders, especially the media.

It will never be said enough that Rosemary was a true pioneer in anthropology. She has promoted and encouraged new fields of study, either through her own research or by supporting her students in pursuing innovative anthropological research. Over her long career, she helped many 'stranded' doctoral students to bring to completion their dissertation.

Many will remember Rosemary's enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity and energy. To the end of her life, she remained lively in conversation and incisive in her comments. During her last academic engagement, as a key-note speaker at the CUA conference of 2011, Rosemary found herself respected not only by senior colleagues but, to her amazement, by a new generation of younger scholars who were completely taken by her intellectual brilliance

and greatly appreciated her encouragement and social interaction as well as her wit and humour. Posterity should certainly grant due credit to her contribution to anthropology and social theory more broadly, remembering her as an innovative scholar and a great mind.

Personally, I have lost a precious colleague and a dear friend.

Tributes

by Gary Armstrong, John Gledhill, Italo Pardo,
Manos Spyridakis and Pier Paolo Viazzo

* * *

by Gary Armstrong

Rosemary Harris' reputation preceded my meeting her. In 1981, as a first year undergraduate in the Department of Anthropology at University College London I eavesdropped on a conversation in the student common room among a group of third-year students; one of them was so behind in his studies that he had been summoned to meet with Rosemary in her capacity of departmental Senior Tutor. Seeking solace from his colleagues, the miscreant wondered how the imminent meeting might be best turned to his advantage. The group decided that the best tactic was to admit that his disregard of his studies was indeed his own fault and, then, somehow get onto the topic of ponies and dogs. That way, they surmised, she would look favourably upon him and give him all the time and understanding he sought even if he did not deserve it. From my later knowledge of Rosemary, I trust that she would have seen through the ruse, possibly admired his elementary attempt at research and, having tolerated the feigned interest in her passions, gently read him the riot act. The student would have left the meeting both happy and apologetic. Rosemary had that effect on people.

In a department that in the early 1980s combined extremely capable and gently humorous British-born scholars with equally scholarly hip dudes from the U.S., Rosemary was something different. Thoughtful, poised and not fond of the sound of her own voice, she had immense time for students and was ever-present in the Departmental Seminars; she was a backbone of the department where she was to serve for some 35 years. A problem-solver and ever a voice of reason, she had no enemies and did not pursue the small wars that so define academic life. Getting on with things and getting along with colleagues, and never swerving from what needed doing, Rosemary had a strong sense of duty and believed in doing what was right. A utilitarian in the home of that philosophy, Rosemary saw the many sides to any issue and knew that a successful settlement was one where no loser was apparent and no grievance was left to smoulder. She had no time for the cult of personality and never sought disciples in her students. She would have made a marvellous diplomat.

Her life as an Anthropologist saw her begin in the position then familiar to anthropologists, amidst a tribe near the equator. That fieldwork resulted in a book titled *The Political Organisation of the Mbembe, Nigeria*, published in 1965. Her next book was very different and represented a sea change in the discipline. A year after British Army troops were deployed to patrol the street of a British city, Belfast, Rosemary was updating her field research in Northern Ireland to address what the title of her book would suggest — *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster* published in 1972. A decade later, she was on the shop floor of a chemical factory looking at industrial relations and power in both its formal and informal manifestations. Her monograph, *Power and Powerlessness in Industry*, published in 1986, is a classic. However, this book attracted the opprobrium of some Marxist scholars specializing on work and industry. Never one deliberately to antagonize people, Rosemary had, however, little time for those whose thinking was reducible to formulaic rhetoric. If she had a doctrine that informed her work it was the incongruity offered by the debates over Agency and Structure. Her fascination lay in how people overcame and enabled structures to work to their advantage. Put simply, the distinction between what was said and what was done fascinated her. The truth was out there, but only ethnographic inquiry could tell it. She loved Anthropology.

When not doing research, Rosemary supervised PhDs. The topics were extraordinarily diverse. In the late 1980s, the department had a reputation for non-completion of dissertations. However, all who started with Rosemary finished; more of her students went on to become professional anthropologists than any of her colleagues — not that she was counting. She was the consummate academic; studious, generous with her wisdom and kind to colleagues. She could have harboured resentment around her academic status for despite her three monographs, she was never given the status of Professor. Why remains a mystery whose solution may lie in the academic process and, in part, in her character; whilst collegiate, Rosemary belonged to no lobby, and she was too kind to have or use sharp elbows. Perhaps people feared her intellect, which was fierce. Allowing herself to close her eyes in long-winded departmental presentations, she was often the member of the audience whose gentle question could be the one that flawed the speaker. Not that she was showing-off; she just saw things that others did not. Academics who were rude or whose *chutzpah* was second only to their self-promotion would occasionally attract the understated aside, *'I could easily fall out with that one'*. Yet, few people fell out with her. Never shying from stating her case, Rosemary wanted things done correctly and could be gently scathing of poor scholarship. And she was usually right.

I was to meet Rosemary in person in mid-1982, when final year dissertation topics were matched to supervisor. Teaching a course titled *Complex Societies*, Rosemary was considered the ideal person to watch over my efforts to explain the phenomenon of football hooliganism. Working on the dissertation engendered a collaboration that lasted nine years. Through my doctoral work, my sloth benefitted infinitely from Rosemary's patience. Because she sensed that there was a story lurking somewhere, she met with me weekly for years to tease out the narrative. The end product was a book which sold thousands and won an award. I went on to further studies and have enjoyed paid employment in academe for some 30 years. I owe

everything to Rosemary. She was a mentor and dear friend, whose opinion I sought over very many issues. Her job references were works of art; she covered all bases. Many people owe their living to her. She not only inspired; she left a legacy in all those whom she supervised. Having as supervisor someone so generous with her time inevitably rubbed off on those of her students who followed her in academic life. A major lesson that we, her students, learned was to be wary of appearances and careful not to make hasty decisions about people's character. Rosemary was very perceptive and, one senses, she recognized perception in her students.

Thankfully Rosemary was more than an academic. She was a public Intellectual in the truest sense. Not for her the breakfast TV sofa or the 15 second sound-bite. She realized that, when combined with time and wisdom, talents such as organisational skills could be put to the benefit of many, both human and animal. Thanks to Rosemary, small ponies were saved from extinction and rescued from cruelty. If there is an after-life, I for one would consider returning as one of Rosemary's beloved King Charles spaniels; no beast on this earth had a more comfortable life. Patron of a charity dedicated to assisting children in distress, Rosemary was also active on the local school Board of Governors and was a corner stone of the Parish Council. Rosemary's devout Christianity was in part a reflection of her fascination with Theology. She was particularly interested in the notion of Forgiveness. Anthropology will not see her like again. The academic world is a lesser place for her passing.

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by John Gledhill

Like many others, I owe Rosemary a considerable personal debt. I knew her as a colleague rather than a student, but when our relationship began in 1976 after I secured my first appointment as a lecturer at University College London, I was very green and often younger than even the undergraduate students that I was teaching. In those early days I tended to express my views on just about everything, from politics to the future of direction of anthropology, rather stridently if not downright dogmatically. Although Rosemary must have been appalled by some of the things that I blurted out in lectures and staff meetings, she refused to let that deflect her from a spontaneously assumed mission of informal mentoring that certainly made me a better person in ways that went beyond becoming a more professionally competent anthropologist. As I got to know her better and read her work, I developed a very great respect for Rosemary in intellectual as well as personal terms. There were some matters on which we continued to agree to differ, but, begging forgiveness for a lapse into audit-speak, as the quality of the final 'output' demonstrates, we proved a very successful supervisory team on Andrew Finlay's PhD project on trade unionism and sectarianism in the Derry shirt industry. The study of Northern Ireland's divisions and conflicts was one of the areas in which Rosemary made a truly pioneering contribution from social anthropology. *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster* may well be her most cited work today, although her Africanist contributions also continued to command respect after she

turned to other issues, and there was much more innovation to come. She never ceased to promote anthropological research on new and highly relevant contemporary social issues throughout her career. Anthropological research on industrial relations was one of these, and others, such as research on football hooligans, reflect the quite extraordinary levels of support and encouragement that she always gave to her students as well as her profound commitment to ethnographic methods as a foundation for grounded anthropological knowledge. This act of commemoration will certainly contain many direct personal testimonies to her support from former students themselves, so I will not labour the point beyond adding, on the basis of the inside knowledge acquired as a result of performing various administrative roles in the UCL department, that even the students who benefited from Rosemary's care and inspiration may not fully appreciate just how much behind the scenes administrative work this cost her, the extent of her dogged determination when colleagues and administrators placed obstacles in the path, and her extraordinary capacity to kick such obstacles out of the way.

Rosemary was trained as a social anthropologist in the heyday of what Adam Kuper dubbed 'The Modern British School' and made important academic contributions within its dominant paradigm. But what cannot be said too frequently is that through her personal research and writing, and by promoting the work of talented and forward-looking students, she made a truly important contribution to expanding the horizons of British social anthropology and developing new research agendas in the crucial period when that paradigm had entered its phase of collapse and professional horizons changed both geographically and thematically. Her anthropology was not just about doing anthropology at home (or in Europe) in ways that would provide a substitute for past anthropological research on small-scale societies in colonial settings. It was about applying anthropological thinking to new kinds of problems that mattered to the new kinds of places and people being studied. Her example should continue to inspire us today.

Personal tributes should have some anecdotal element and let me choose a story that is unlikely to be repeated by anyone else. For a while I organized a national study group that held its periodic meetings on Saturday mornings in the old premises of the UCL anthropology department, located on the street opposite the university bookshop and outside the back gate of the institution. Arriving for one of these meetings I discovered that newly delivered computers had been stolen from the department overnight. I reported this to security, to be told not to contact the police. Concerned by the absence of signs of forced entry and puzzled by this instruction, I telephoned Rosemary at home, since she was acting head of department at that time. She did not hesitate to disobey orders and make a call direct to Tottenham Court Road police station, thereby ensuring that what predictably turned out to be an inside job was properly investigated. Behind a diplomatic and often conservative seeming outward persona lay a strong woman with high moral values and an acute understanding of how the world really works.

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by Italo Pardo

Integrity, kindness, compassion and intellectual acumen defined the Rosemary Harris I knew. Death hath deprived me of my dear friend and invaluable colleague, to whom I owe an incalculable debt of gratitude.

I met Rosemary in 1981, when she taught me Social Anthropology as a master's student at University College London. Then, she advised me throughout my doctoral work, which I started in 1984, completed in 1987 and successfully defended in 1988, and she was one of my mentors throughout my postdoctoral years. She was an experienced and pragmatic council on just about any issue regarding anthropology and academic politics, who saw me through more than one crisis. Over time, she became a personal friend, on whose wit and wisdom and feedback and counsel I found I could count. And what a precious find that was!

Daring to go where others would or could not, throughout her career Rosemary broke many barriers and opened new fronts, ethnographically, methodologically and theoretically. As her ground-breaking production discussed by others in this Section amply attests, she was a brilliant producer of new knowledge. And as a highly motivating teacher and senior colleague she staunchly encouraged the breaking of new ground and the production of new knowledge, to which I bear direct testimony. As a young postgraduate, I wanted to do my doctoral research among what were thought to be the Neapolitan poor. The existing literature on these people was rife with derogatory stereotypes and I felt that classic anthropological research could contribute to offer a better view. However, I had to deal with my end of the view powerfully held in mainstream British Anthropology that fieldwork in the classic anthropological fashion could not be done in Western industrial urban settings; that that would not be anthropology. Rosemary rescued me before I could despair, offering much needed encouragement, support and advice: my doctoral project went officially ahead. Both she and I had little time for specious arguments and ideologues. Led in the belief that narrow empiricism is as misleading as unjustified abstraction, that Naples ethnography collected in classic anthropological fashion directly undermined arguments against ethnographic fieldwork made then in support of some ethnography by proxy or of armchair-bound abstract 'anthropology', damagingly reiterated later through post-modernist waffle and robustly disposed of in *Power and Powerlessness in Industry* (1986), where Rosemary lucidly spelt out the many weaknesses of this kind of argument.

Throughout the time it took me to complete my work, Rosemary applied what she appropriately called her Socratic advisory method: as I know she did with others, she listened, sat back and asked stimulating, constructively provocative questions, very rarely voicing and never attempting to impose her view. In her gentle, understated, intellectually demanding style, she offered incredibly valuable theoretical and methodological guidance. Perhaps equally important, over those years, and later, she both drew on her immense experience to ward me off the edge of naivety, over-enthusiasm over my own ideas or intellectual confusion, where all too often I happened to dwell, and reined in my eagerness to matter, while steadily encouraging me to dare and never refrain from being controversial — a word she loved. Patiently, very patiently, she taught me the importance of writing clearly and

simply; I am not quite sure how much of her teaching did actually get through to me but in later years she did not seem too disappointed with the results.

Even after she officially retired, Rosemary continued to lend her invaluable experience to those she encountered bringing her audience to their limits and beyond; the younger generations in particular admiring her style and benefiting from her time. I unashamedly dared ask her to participate to several seminars and conferences trusting that, despite her advancing years, her passion about and commitment to anthropology and her intellectual curiosity would make her ignore my gall and say yes. She impressed her international audiences presenting refreshingly provocative papers and, as an astute and sophisticated discussant, pointing to ethnographic or theoretical weaknesses, spotting common points among diverging views, bringing contradictions out in the open and encouraging boldness where it was due. This, Rosemary did almost to her end. To give the reader a small measure of her passion and commitment, a little less than three years ago she had cataract operations that could not be postponed and had to miss a conference in Naples which she was strongly committed to attend. She, however, authorized me to say that she would have flown there anyway, had she not been forbidden to do so on medical grounds. I did as she asked, later to learn that she had followed the proceedings as they were broadcast live streaming online (!).

As personal friends, Rosemary and I shared many non-academic interests over which we mused and exchanged views during our walks in the Kent countryside or through her Surrey garden. We also shared a love for Italian food, which sometimes I cooked for her and which sometimes she entertained me to in the Italian restaurant she knew in Virginia Water. Not many among her academic colleagues perhaps knew what a convivial, vastly cultured conversationalist this quintessential English lady could be.

As others in this Section report in detail, for many years Rosemary was active in her Surrey community, among other things contributing substantially to local education. And she was a devout Christian, who described herself as an ‘Anglican Catholic’. Even the most hardened atheist would have been moved by her Funeral Service and impressed by the tributes that were paid to her from so many walks of life.

I learned much of what I know from Rosemary. And she was a key figure in my personal development.

Many colleagues who survive this great classic anthropologist will miss her scholarship. Those who had the privilege to know her will also miss her friendship. Her immense legacy lives on. Rosemary’s presence and absence will be felt for years to come.

In sorrow,

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by Manos Spyridakis

I met Rosemary Harris in 2011 in Greece, when she participated in the Annual Conference of the CUA, which we organized in Corinth on ‘Market versus Society’. Of course, I knew her

work; especially her excellent book, *Power and Powerlessness in Industry*, which has strongly affected my own work.

One thing that surprised me was this 81-years-old lady's determination to visit important archaeological sites in the Corinth area and, later, the Acropolis in Athens, when she insisted on taking a walk in the city despite it being animated with demonstrations protesting E.U. economic policy. Her humor was never far away; I remember Rosemary expressing her very politely put criticism that people in Athens are 'so nice, so friendly but they don't wear helmets when they drive their motorbikes' (!)

Throughout that three-day conference, Rosemary ensured her constant presence and participation, asking helpful questions and offering topical comments. She delivered an extremely interesting key-note address on 'Power and Powerlessness in Industry: Are the 1980s Relevant in 2010?'. She based her talk on the fieldwork that had informed her book on industrial relations. That was an amazing moment in the conference. Rosemary captivated her audience for almost two hours. Having delivered an elegant 45-minute address, she answered all questions and responded to comments, never showing impatience or tiredness. We were mesmerized, as she very carefully answered the questions in a pedagogic and anthropologically deeply informed manner. This was a masterful performance. No one left the room! Most importantly, that performance generated great interest also among the large number of scholars who were not anthropologists: geographers, historians, sociologists and political scientists were absolutely taken with what this classic anthropologist had to say. Above all, however, she fascinated and was very much liked by the many postgraduate students, who enormously appreciated both the opportunity to hear such an experienced anthropologist develop her topic in an original and down to earth way and the privilege to talk with her afterwards. Many of us took a really good anthropological lesson that day.

Above all, Rosemary was a very warm and clever person, who had the original talent to attract your interest in a unique way. Politeness, the ability to deliver unfailingly well-aimed comments, a highly developed sense of humor and a strong self-dependence made her a lovable and admirable personality. This feeling persisted long after that conference, often renewed through our correspondence. I met Rosemary in person only for too short a while but I feel so very lucky that I did have the chance to realize what difference some people can make in your life. Rosemary was one of them. She will certainly be missed in our lives. Most certainly, she will remain in our memories.

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by Pier Paolo Viazzo

In the autumn of 1977, as a postgraduate student in the Department of Anthropology at University College London, I had just started the second year of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Anthropology and was looking for an area and a topic for a Doctoral project. A challenging encounter with ecological anthropology during the first year had instigated the

idea of doing fieldwork in a mountain community. It was, however, Rosemary's course, 'Social Anthropology of Complex Societies' that Michaelmas term that proved decisive in driving me towards the Alps. What I did not imagine then was how even more decisive that course would prove in the long run, orienting my whole career.

While retaining a keen interest in West African ethnography, for a long time Rosemary had shown an interest in the 'anthropology of complex societies' (a relatively new label in those days). During her appointment at the Queen's University, Belfast, she had updated her field research on the relations between Protestants and Catholics in an Ulster border community, which she published in 1972 under the title *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster*. In the course of her apprenticeship to become a full-fledged expert on Irish matters, Rosemary had been fascinated by one of the central themes of Arensberg and Kimball's pioneering study of County Clare, namely the structural mechanics of the stem family and the ideology underpinning this stern system which imposed that only one son could inherit a farm and get married, whereas his brothers were condemned either to celibacy and lifelong social immaturity or to migration. The reading list that she proposed to her students that autumn of 1977 included Arensberg and Kimball's classic *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940) and the work of critics, like Brody and Gibbon, who argued that their influential account had been marred by historic myopia; Rosemary was indeed especially fond of Hugh Brody's impressionistic but heartrending *Insihkillane*. The Irish stem family continued to be one of her major theoretical concerns for many years to come. Our reading list also included studies of stem family systems in Central Europe, notably John Cole and Eric Wolf's *The Hidden Frontier. Ecology and Ethnicity in an Alpine Valley* (1974), a study of two neighbouring villages in the Italian Eastern Alps, and the American historian Lutz Berkner's path-breaking article in the *American Historical Review* (1972) on the stem family and the developmental cycle of the peasant household in eighteenth-century Lower Austria. Thanks to the stimuli from this part of the course I settled on the Alps and directed my fieldwork to the study of inheritance practices and family structures in a historical perspective, with Rosemary as my supervisor. No less important for me, through Berkner's article I learned about the existence of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure and the controversial theses on the history of the family put forward by Peter Laslett, one of the Group's founders, who was engaged in a furious debate with Berkner over the historical significance of the stem family in Europe. This was the beginning of a personal trajectory which eventually led me to join the Cambridge Group and to develop a long-term research at the frontier between social anthropology, historical demography and family history.

However, Rosemary's course was far from being focused only on the rural side of 'complex societies'. It also contained a robust urban component, spiced by an intriguing choice of titles which reflected her growing interest in a budding and still largely unacknowledged branch of the discipline, the anthropology of industry, which some ten years later resulted in her *Power and Powerlessness in Industry*, an empirically-based study of the technology and the social relations of production in two ammonia plants in Great Britain. We were thus encouraged to read such anthropological works as *Coal is our Life* (1956), the well-crafted portrait of a Yorkshire mining community by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter and

Tom Lupton's *On the Shop Floor* (1963), but also the work of sociologists like Alan Fox and Anthony Giddens. It is remarkable, in retrospect, that she felt free to look to sociologists for inspiration and theoretical help. She was probably less insecure than some of her colleagues about the unique strengths of anthropology and was in no doubt that the tools of ethnographic enquiry as practiced by anthropologists (participant observation, extended periods of time spent in the plants meeting the crews and learning the production process and personal interviews) were essential to reach a proper understanding of social relations in a factory. She was certainly not obsessed with patrolling the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology and instilled this attitude in her students. I remember her as a supervisor who was not only careful and supportive, but extremely open-minded: she had no objection when she saw that I was increasingly drawing upon the sources and methods of social and demographic history, and she always spurred me to enter untrodden paths, if they looked promising.

A seemingly quiet scholar, aloof from fashionable theoretical discussions, Rosemary was in fact an enterprising researcher, unafraid of venturing into uncharted territories. In many respects she was ahead of the anthropology of her time. Her book on Ireland was a recognized forerunner of border studies and her volume on power relations in industry, besides being one of the first studies in urban anthropology not to focus on ethnic minorities, was the harbinger of an anthropological interest in industrial relations which came to the fore only in the 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

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EULOGY

by James E Fraser and Paul Monaghan¹

With Rosemary's passing we have lost a dear friend.

Dr Rosemary Lois Harris, Emeritus Reader in Social Anthropology at University College London, was born in 1930 in Eltham near Bromley. She was the youngest of the four surviving children of Albert and Gertrude Harris, and some years younger than her sisters Muriel and Betty, and brother David. Albert was an engineer and businessman of some repute, a member of the Worshipful Company of Founders and a Freeman of the City of

¹ The authors are jointly Trustees and Executors of the Estate of the late Dr Rosemary L. Harris.

The content of this tribute is drawn from material gathered by her Executors from Rosemary's own papers and the many written tributes received after her death, for the Eulogy delivered at her funeral in the parish church of St Mary, Thorpe on 29th April 2015. Unattributed quotes have been included where it has not been possible to confirm with the originator that they should be named in this article.

London. Gertie was bright enough to pass the Civil Service examination in an era when that was not an easy thing for a woman to do.

Rosemary rose to become one of the pioneering anthropologists of her generation, developing a sharp and incisive mind for observing and analysing human behaviours, and an engaging ability to put her thoughts into writing.

These professional skills she also put at the service of her local community and wider charitable interests – most notably with her sister Muriel in the breeding of Caspian horses. Those of us who were regular recipients of her emails and Minutes of meetings will recognise the clarity and wit of her written style, even if perhaps the layout and presentation often betrayed her greater familiarity with the mechanical typewriter than with the formatting features of *Microsoft Word*. But Rosemary was no Luddite: she was quick to embrace the advantages of modern technology, using email and Skype to their full advantage in pursuing her interests and responsibilities.

Rosemary's academic career began with a first degree in geography, followed by a PhD in social anthropology at University College London. Her doctoral research focused on the Mbembe of south-eastern Nigeria, which was later published in 1965 by Her Majesty's Stationery Office as *The Political Organization of the Mbembe, Nigeria*.

Rosemary went to Nigeria in 1956-1957 and again in the summer vacations of 1958 and 1959, still only in her twenties and travelling alone. She and her eldest sister Muriel had made a trip to the United States together in 1955, aboard the original Queen Mary. They landed at New York and travelled to the Niagara Falls and Chicago — quite an adventure in those days. Rosemary's pocket-book from that trip resembles remarkably the original research notes from her later anthropological studies, so perhaps she was using it as a trial run — closely observing the American people in their native environment.

In the Preface to *The Political Organization of the Mbembe*, she writes, 'Above all my thanks are due to the Mbembe people who made my work not only possible but enjoyable ... The Mbembe are a modest people believing others to be wiser and more clever than they are. I hope they will see from this book that their fathers ... displayed a degree of political acumen and inventiveness remarkable in a people so few in numbers'.

A major part of that study was the place of witchcraft in Mbembe culture; and having developed such an expertise in 'real' witches, Rosemary was a robust defender against any who made false claims on that territory. In the 1960s, she wrote a Letter to the Editor of the Daily Telegraph (undated):

Sir — Since the article in WEEKEND TELEGRAPH appears to suggest that anthropologists believe that current "witches' covens" are true revivals of ancient practice, a comment from an anthropologist may be desirable.

First, the kindest thing which can be said about the two anthropological authorities quoted is that their opinions on witchcraft are not taken very seriously by their colleagues, and that the covens as described probably have as much authenticity as Tennyson's poems on King Arthur have as pictures of dark-age Britain.

Second, witchcraft beliefs, which seem almost universal, are related to the fact that all peoples seek explanations for human misfortunes such as sickness and crop failure; not surprisingly, one factor blamed in greater or less degree is human

maliciousness. Where this type of explanation is used beliefs about witches are elaborated and a few deluded souls try to put the beliefs into practice.

The modern witches' coven is an interesting sociological phenomenon, but its roots lie primarily in the present, not the past.

Yours faithfully,

Rosemary Harris

The Queen's University, Belfast.

Rosemary's first teaching post was at the Queen's University, Belfast from where she moved to Lectureships at the University of Sussex and, then, at UCL. Described by her colleagues as 'an innovative fieldworker', Rosemary was among the first in British Social Anthropology to carry out research in the British Isles. Her 1972 book *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A Study of Neighbours and Strangers in a Border Community* was widely cited for its well-grounded analysis of religious pluralism in Northern Ireland. The 1986 reprint includes reviews of the original work on the jacket, which capture Rosemary's style perfectly: 'Dr Harris writes with an eye to detail and without jargon. Her book is a model of its kind ...' (*The Economist*); '... fascinating in its detail, amusing in its anecdotes, clear and incisive in its descriptions' (*Economic and Social Review*); 'Here is scholarship which is humane, compassionate, yet detached and tough-minded ... The poise and integrity of this book command respect both for its author and its conclusions' (*Irish Historical Studies*). In the Foreword to that book, Rosemary writes, 'These people, as I saw, prefer peaceful conditions and want above all to live at peace with all their neighbours. This is why, although I go on to show the sources of conflict, I begin by showing [this] as a community in which there was a vast amount of tolerance and good will. Perhaps, at this time this is the best way I can repay its people for all their kindness and hospitality to me'.

Rosemary's last major fieldwork, which again broke new ground, was undertaken on the factory floor of two chemical plants near Bristol. It was published in 1986 by Routledge under the title *Power and Powerlessness in Industry: an Analysis of the Social Relations of Production*. Her academic interests also took her to study in depth the origins of racial violence in inner London schools, and the 1980s phenomenon of football hooliganism, including the events surrounding the Hillsborough Stadium tragedy in 1989 which has been back in the news again recently.

Over her long career at UCL, Rosemary was particularly noted for her supervision of numerous PhD students and for her lengthy tenure as a very supportive and sympathetic Departmental Tutor. Since retiring, she retained an appointment there as Emeritus Reader in Social Anthropology.

In formal retirement, Rosemary became a key figure in the development and international success of the IUAES *Commission on Urban Anthropology* (CUA). She was unanimously elected to the CUA Advisory Committee in 2011 and enjoyed her last major international expedition, to their conference in Corinth, that year. Rosemary helped to establish this Journal, to which she contributed with her comments, advice and articles.

Rosemary's work for the CUA was mainly with Giuliana B. Prato and Italo Pardo. They have written, of course, of Rosemary's academic gifts but 'above all', they have said, 'Rosemary was a dear friend with whom we shared many pleasant moments'. On hearing of

her death, Professor John Gledhill of the University of Manchester wrote, ‘Rosemary made very important contributions to widening the scope of what British anthropologists studied at a time when this was really important for us’.

It seems, however, that Rosemary’s academic career was not always a foregone conclusion. One of her old School Reports from December 1946 was kept among her papers; she was at Blackheath High School for Girls, in the 6th Form. Rosemary was only 16 years and 9 months old, among a class with an average age of 18. Her classes were English, French, Latin, History, Geography, Scripture, Civics and Drill. The Headmistress, Mrs Mcauley, who taught Scripture, comments, ‘Good. Rosemary makes interesting comments’.

There will be many priests and more senior clerics in the Church of England who will attest that this continued throughout her life. On Geography — which became her first degree, and the foundation for her anthropology — we read, ‘She has real ability, but she seldom does herself justice in her written work’. And on English itself, ‘Rosemary plans her essays well. She works thoughtfully and exercises her own powers of judgement. Her written work shows intelligent and logical thought, but she is still irritatingly careless in style and spelling – at this stage a serious defect’.

Well, she clearly took the criticism to heart, and worked on that defect, as she was admitted to UCL as an undergraduate less than two years later. Her determination and independence, however, had shown itself some years earlier, when she was evacuated to Abertillery in South Wales at the start of the Second World War. She was only 10 when her parents sent her away to escape the bombing in London. No sooner had she arrived than she was plotting her escape: she found that the family she was billeted with were so pessimistic about being bombed themselves, she decided to draw down the emergency funds her father had left her with, and take herself home by train – in the guard’s van, after spinning him some yarn. She got home to Eltham with half a crown to spare, before anyone in Wales noticed she was gone. She was transferred to another school in Greenwich and later evacuated to Tunbridge Wells, where the family eventually settled.

Her desire to be back with her father — even in wartime — was perhaps because she so valued his commitment to her education. He was so shocked, at the age of 10, that she did not know the speed of sound that he decided to teach her about it by timing the sound of the Doodlebugs falling on Lewisham as they sighted them from an upstairs window. In *Power and Powerlessness in Industry* Rosemary says this of him, ‘I dedicate this book to the memory of my father because my interest in industry dates back to the time when, at the age of seven or eight, I asked casually, “Daddy, what does ‘Ltd’ mean?”, and had the advantages and disadvantages of limited liability carefully explained! I had made the delightful discovery that I only had to ask questions on industry to be treated seriously as an intelligent adult, and it made the subject fascinating’.

Of the four siblings, neither Muriel nor Rosemary married, and in the times Rosemary was not travelling or working away from London, they shared various houses together, eventually finding their way to Virginia Water. To the first house they owned they gave the name ‘Rathlin’ — an island off the north coast of Ulster on which Rosemary had conducted an in-depth anthropological study in the preceding years.

It was in 1974 that they moved to a larger property, with a garden big enough to establish the Runnymede Stud. They named this house after Eglantyne Jebb, the British social reformer of Edwardian era, who founded *Save the Children* and drafted the original *Declaration on the Rights of the Child*.

The Caspian Horse became Muriel and Rosemary's preoccupation. Virtually unknown as a breed until rediscovered in Iran in 1965, it was Prince Philip who encouraged Louise Firouz to expand the breeding population outside that country. In March 1974, a small shipment of Caspians was exported to the UK. In *The Caspian Horse*, her 1999 book on the breed, Brenda Dalton picks up the story, 'Muriel purchased the stallion Karoun ... and subsequently Hopstone Banafsheh, a striking dark bay, thoroughbred in appearance ... extremely important to the breed, being the only representative of the grey foundation stallion, Felfel, to survive the [Iranian] revolution. After three months in quarantine, Karoun was moved to the Harris' home in Virginia Water ... Muriel's sister Rosemary also became intrigued by the breed, adding her own expertise and preferences. Muriel and Rosemary Harris have done a great deal to promote the part-bred Caspian in the UK, using Welsh mares with top bloodlines. By crossing and re-crossing the offspring with pure-bred Caspians [they] produced stock which reached the standard required for Grading-up status ... Runnymede Karamat, a chestnut stallion typically bred by Rosemary Harris, was amongst the first flights to the USA in 1994'.

Dalton has also recalled how Rosemary worked continuously with what is now the Caspian Horse Society from its beginning, mainly as Secretary, where she will be greatly missed for her knowledge and expertise: she became 'an indispensable vertebra in the spine of the first UK Caspian society'. She acted as liaison between the Society and other pony groups, giving up her valuable time and resources.

Rosemary also saw the world of Caspian horses go through one of those periods of conflict and division which had featured so significantly in much of her professional work. Perhaps it was the application of this experience and expertise which allowed Rosemary to come out of that with the respect of both sides. A leader of the Caspian Breed Society recalls, 'I appreciate we have had our differences between the Societies but our aims are basically the same: the promotion and preservation of the breed; and I know that Rosemary was particularly keen on this aspect. Her expertise will be greatly missed'.

Liz Webster, the earliest of the UK breeders and former Chairman of both the Caspian Horse Society and International Caspian Society, writes, 'The Harris sisters spent a good part of their later lives working for the Caspian. Muriel was one of the first owners who became a founder member of the Society and she and Rosemary worked to promote the breed through their imported stallion, Karoun. The Runnymede prefix is much respected in Caspian circles and the fact that it was started and mostly maintained in their back garden only adds to its interest. Another of the "old stagers" gone. I will miss her, like all those who have become her friends through her Caspians'.

Some believe that it was her sister's interest which led Rosemary to horse breeding — but horses had clearly been a favourite of Rosemary's since childhood. In 1943, in a school exercise book, she wrote 11 poems, the first of which is published for the first time here —

the editor's hand correcting only the one or two lapses in spelling which her English teachers later criticised:

Shem (a pony)

*See that pony being led home,
Lathered in sweat and flecked with foam,
She won the first race in the point-to-point
By stretching and straining muscle and joint,
Lying back fourth to the last half mile
Then forging on in splendid style
Past the chestnut and past the bay
On to the favourite 'Springtime May';
neck and neck they leapt the water,
neck and neck and not a falter,
Galloping round the quarter bend,
straight and hard they fought to the end.
Then, with gallant response from all that was in her
To one touch of the whip she flashed the winner.*

Rosemary brought the same energy and commitment that she gave to the world of Caspian horses to the parish Church in Thorpe. She served both as PCC Secretary, and as a school governor for over 20 years, in both roles seeing through periods of major physical and institutional change. As PCC Secretary she carried the burden of all the dealings with the Diocese of Guildford for faculties, first over major restoration works in 1990-94 which substantially gave the mediaeval church the character it has today; and then in all subsequent repairs and renovation work. This brought her into contact with Bishops, Archdeacons and Diocesan Authorities on a regular basis. The Rev'd Canon Dr Michael Hereward-Rothwell, who was Vicar throughout that time, recalls, 'To those who fell short of what was expected a Rosemary letter would follow which gave the lie to a belief that here was an elderly lady who was bound to be a "push over". The power of the pen became a mighty weapon when employed by one who was formidably articulate and of daunting intellect ... Like many I have lost a very dear friend'.

Likewise at Thorpe Church of England School, Rosemary served with dedication and commitment as a governor — and for most of her time as Vice-Chairman. She saw the school through periods of upheaval, of renewal, and of change. The current Chairman of Governors recalls, 'The value of education and the impact it can have on the lives of both children and adults was very much at the centre of Rosemary's life. This was shown in the numerous ways she supported the school, was always available to the school and shared her experience in a self-effacing manner'.

So many times in the different aspects of her life and career, Rosemary both studied and found herself in worlds, societies and organisations which were undergoing some sort of struggle or conflict. While she was by no means always a neutral observer or impartial participant, she approached these situations always with an eye to identifying and facilitating the end of conflict, siding with the victims rather than the oppressors, and the peace-makers rather than the protagonists.

To her family, Rosemary was a ‘great aunt’ in both senses of the word. In their memories they recall how a conversation with her was a delight, not just because she could talk of so many things, but because she was a marvellous listener, pausing before giving a considered reply — a skill she had obviously honed during her working life. She used this at every level, with adults or youngsters: listening, then gently offering another point of view, invariably — or even grudgingly — accepted as the best or most sensible one.

With her much missed sister Muriel, and her more recent companion cousin Audrey, Rosemary always took a keen interest in her larger family, wanting to know how children were growing and their progress both in early years and as their education and careers developed. She was tremendously kind and generous towards her great nieces and nephews, helping and encouraging however she could, particularly when they were in poor health or need of financial help. She was very proud to be a godmother to more than one godchild, maintaining an active interest in them — as she did with all her posts and positions, taking this responsibility very seriously.

Another aspect of Rosemary’s character was her stoicism: many a younger person would have shied away from the treatment and pain she endured whilst recovering from problems with her legs, the loss of the proper use of which infuriated her.

The Scripture teacher who wrote in 1946 that ‘Rosemary makes interesting comments’ had the first insight into what was to become a lifelong Christian faith, and an interest in seeking the signs of God and the story of his people, as revealed in the Scriptures and in the lives of those she studied, worked with and lived among. Over the years, Rosemary contributed thoughtfully to articles in Thorpe parish magazines, bringing together the insights the different parts of her life. Among those was an exposition in 1998 *On confidence in life after death* (Parish Magazine, Archives of St Mary Thorpe). In discussing the beliefs of the Mbembe people on this matter, she observes, ‘The Mbembe were absolutely sure about the nature of life after death. They had a pretty rounded picture of what life for the Dead was like and about how, in due course they, as individuals, would fit into it. Without wishing to be culturally arrogant I have to say, in all honesty, that I think this conviction had, in detail, little relation to any likely actuality — the life of the world to come does not, I devoutly hope and believe, centre round yam farming’.

With Rosemary’s passing, those who knew her from conversation or correspondence, or only through her published work, will miss her wit, her wisdom, her incisiveness and clarity of thought and word, and her faithfulness as family, friend and colleague. We have all lost a very dear friend.