

OBITUARY

JOKE SEBUS (1929–2023)

Last February my mother Johanna (or 'Joke' for short) Sebus died at the age of 93. She was the last one of the MLS members I called 'the Big Five' in the obituary for Annet Duller (*TML* 34). They were the passionate Dutch and Belgian lanternists who joined the MLS in the 1980s. In 1988 she organised the MLS meeting in The Hague with the four others, and she attended many meetings and Conventions when an MLS member.

I called Joke also the oldest female lanternist in the world. She started giving magic lantern shows in the early 1960s using one of our family lanterns and slides. She was very good at giving lantern shows for young children because she was such a good storyteller in a special way. The stories were always exciting but never too cruel. However, her heart was really in lantern shows for and about women, specially the suffragette movement. Clearing her house, sorting through her slides and reading the notes she made, I realised how much the participation of women in politics kept her busy. As a teenager during WWII, she spent three years in a Japanese concentration camp for women and children on the island of Sumatra in the Dutch Indies. That awful period of her life gave her a good insight into how women worked (or did not work) together in difficult circumstances.

As a good feminist, she was for many years a city councillor in her home town. She was also an active member of the Dutch and international societies for the emancipation of women all over the world. Until her late eighties she travelled to conventions in China, Australia, Africa and Europe. When in New York for a convention she also demonstrated against the war in Iraq in front of the United Nations building. At the same time I was safely at a MLS meeting in Birmingham! I was very relieved when I learned that she was not apprehended by the American police.

In recent years, her magic lantern activities diminished. When 91 she was planning to do her very last show for her neighbours, but the pandemic made it impossible. Last, but not least, she was a good teacher for me to prepare and give shows, and to create or improve the stories. She broke her leg at the age of 92, and died a year later due to complications from surgery, but still in great spirits and interested in the world till the end. Michael and I – as well as our children – will deeply miss her.

Gwen Sebus

