

JOHN COLEMAN (1962–2006)



John Coleman, who died tragically in a car crash, was born in The Paddocks in 1962, the sixth of the 11 children Michael and Doris Coleman would eventually have. He attended Deddington Primary School and the Warriner. He worked in a variety of labouring jobs and in due course became a window cleaner; his fitness – he lifted weights and was a fine footballer and tennis player – was demonstrated in his walking as far as Duns Tew carrying his ladders.

He always preferred walking or cycling to travelling by car and particularly enjoyed rambling round the Deddington fields with his beloved dog, Spades.

John eventually became Village Steward, appropriate employment for one who loved Deddington as he did. John was a fine steward, not just because he liked the business of keeping the village kept tidy, but because he was so good with people. He seemed to know everyone in the village; he could connect with people of all kinds and all ages and had a cheery welcome for anyone he met. He was generous in offering help where it was needed. But just the sight of John going through the village with Spades was encouraging and reassuring, for John was an emblem of rootedness and true neighbourliness, an embodiment of the good things a community like ours should offer and of values by which we should aspire to live.

Hugh White