

Joy Drake 1943–2019

Joy was kind, loving, empathetic and had a great sense of humour; she was also courageous and feisty with a passion for justice, never letting something wrong stand unchallenged

Joy was born in Bombay, her father being director of Boots, the chemist, in the Far East. Holidays were spent in England so Joy and her sister travelled on long-haul flights as if it were the most natural thing. When Joy was nine, she moved to England to attend Clare Park School for young ladies where her love of drama, directing and writing plays was encouraged by the Scutt sisters who ran the school and treated Joy and her sister like daughters. She regarded these six years of school as some of the most exciting of her life and made lifelong friends there.



Following her GCEs, she returned to her parents in Singapore where, in 1960, she met Norman doing his National Service in the Army Education Corps. Shortly thereafter Norman whisked her off to Tonypany in South Wales to get married and be welcomed into Norman's family. Helen and Ashley soon arrived. For the next three years they lived in Great Haywood, Staffordshire, where Ruth and Joanna were born, before moving to Oxfordshire, where they spent three happy years in Banbury and then in 1972 moved to Deddington.

Joy threw herself into village life, helping with the Guides, the school PTA and the playgroup. She loved reading with the children in Deddington School, involved herself in the Windmill project and worked tirelessly for the Deddington Festival in the early '80s. In the late 70s she and Maggie Rampley helped start the Christmas Eve carol singing tradition, having cajoled Percy Walker to conduct, standing on a beer crate under the Town Hall. She still made time to pursue her hobbies: she was a skilled dressmaker and knitter, made jewellery and was an excellent cook.

In 1980 she and Norman opened the Market House Tearooms where her shortbread, chocolate fudge cakes and flapjacks became legendary. The Tearooms got into the Egon Ronay *Just a Bite* Guide for three years running. They also started the very popular Pudding and Pie evenings on Fridays and Saturdays. Joy continued working, firstly as a secretary for Mr Marshall, based near the old Russell Hotel, and then for Philip Allan. In 1988 with Norman front-of-house and Joy driving the back office they ran their own publishing business for several years until they retired.

Joy's charity work typified the caring person she was. She never shouted from the rooftops about what she did. She knitted balaclavas for the troops in Syria and Afghanistan, helped fill containers with school desks, chairs and computers to take to Africa, knitted teddy bears for Katharine House and blankets for the orphans in Romania. She took time to visit elderly people in the village, sat with them, read to them and gave them the time they so wanted.

Joy said that her greatest achievement was her children, followed by her grandchildren, who will remember, as will all her friends, a wonderful person who touched many people's lives with her love, her loyalty and generosity of spirit.

Jenny Soddy on behalf of Norman and the Drake Family

