**Tributes to Joan April-June 2021**

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| She was a fantastic, loveable lady; she spent many hours here with us, having a good yarn and the odd glass of white |
| *We have sat and smiled and often roared with laughter many times as she entertained us with her stories of her very colourful life. In many ways she was the epitome of the strong English woman… a sort of Dinder version of Margaret Rutherford! The colour that she brought to all our lives will sadly be missed…a lot. We loved her positivity and humour and without doubt her generosity. She lived life to the fullest she could and you should be very proud of her* |
| Our memories of Joan are full of joy and happiness for a life so well lived…  Joan’s tenure as Bookings Secretary for the Village Hall was nothing short of epic, and it is in no small part due to her charm and patience on the phone that we have so many loyal friends of the Hall |
| *Joan was an amazing woman & had the air of a person who enjoyed every moment of her long life. We have so many fantastic memories of her and feel very lucky to have known her for as long as we did. Whilst there is deep sadness for you all at this time, there is also joy for a life that was truly well lived*  *We feel very lucky to have known such a truly wonderful person. Joan is one in a million!* |
| I can still hear her voice and laugh in my head. She was a lovely, lovely lady  You will have many happy memories to look back on in the bleak days when you will feel sad. Just try to remember her smile |
| *The memories of Joan's remarkable life will stay with all of us, though she is gone. She had strength, integrity, generosity and verve-- that's a lot to be thankful for* |
| I think I’ve known Joan (and your Dad) ever since they moved to Dinder and they were both great characters, so friendly and welcoming to everyone. The amount they did for the village was phenomenal, your Mum will be sorely missed by us all |
| *Joan was a great example to us and the last survivor of a remarkable family. Here is a little prayer I sometimes use on these occasions:*  *Rest in the eternal grant unto her O Lord and may light perpetual shine upon her and may she find in Thy continuing service the perfect consummation of happiness and peace. Amen*  *I know you will have the strength and support to see you through and will have many fond memories of a remarkable Lady*  *She has certainly chosen the right person to accompany her to Heaven (Prince Philip)!* |
| I will always remember stopping by to collect the summary of village hall bookings - which were always done with great care - the sunlight pouring in through the kitchen window, the cats being fed, and having a nice chat over a cup of tea. Her unfailing kindness and good humour made these some of the fondest memories I have of Dinder. I'll always be very grateful to her |
| *…Always the welcoming face at the table by the entrance to any village gathering, ready to sell you a ticket and exchange a bit of village news. I regret to say that most of our conversations were about booking the village hall for a meeting about some (perceived) threat to the village or matter of interest to villagers. She was always so enthusiastic about my dotty campaigns as well as having constructive and helpful ideas. She was quietly very efficient and I valued her opinion*  *Mostly we chatted about ‘the small change of life’ but occasionally a window would open on her past which made me realise what a broad experience she had of the most important bit of life, working for others*  *She had that talent of always making you feel better for having seen her that day. Positivity and the gift of enjoyment are such valuable attributes and she had both in abundance, indeed she seemed to positively enjoy most things!*  *She was a lynchpin for Dinder, and the whole village, not to mention her close and wider family, will miss her greatly* |
| Joan was a remarkable person in many ways. To me, she was always full of life and that is how I shall remember her |
| *I am so sorry to hear the very sad news of your mother, but delighted that she had such a wonderfully long and full life until the end! … a tour de force, the likes of which, sadly, are a dying generation, where decent values, kindness and openness to help whoever they could, was paramount. I am sure she will leave a gaping hole in all your lives, but forever be a part thereof in all sorts of unforeseen ways* |
| Your letter, which arrived this morning, was a very fitting tribute to someone who did so much both for the local community and who made an impact much further abroad |
| *I have fond memories of her and in particular back in the days of the Church holiday weekends at Sheldon. We all used to join in the jobs there and I remember her always being so happy, friendly and cheery* |
| She was the last of the Thornhill cousins. A generation has passed. The Thornhill family is a remarkable one with some pretty strong genes! It is sad to think that Joan has left us but what a remarkable life! |
| *Gardening memories of Joan*  *As you will know, I had the pleasure and privilege of caring for Joan’s garden over twenty years. Joan loved plants and was a very able gardener in the early days. In between my visits she would wander round the borders, weeding where necessary and upon my return she would let me know where all the piles of weeds lay.*  *One summer Joan noticed a new plant growing. It was a tall, robust brute with the most beautiful palmate, ferny leaves. Strangely it had no flowers. ‘What on earth is it?’ Joan mused, ‘I don’t remember planting it!’*  *I knew what it was. Joan had accidentally grown a prize specimen of cannabis. It probably came courtesy of a packet of Trill bird seed and combined with Joan’s green fingers, well…*  *Now Joan, being a fine, upstanding citizen just roared with laughter. Anyway, what to do with this magnificent beast? Well, not wanting to get our good friend into trouble with the local constabulary the plant was consigned to the compost heap where, no doubt, it eventually provided nourishment for the rest of the garden!* |
| Joan was a wonderful lady who enveloped us in her welcoming spirit. I learned a deep respect for her as a fellow Cathedral Guide and she gave me generous support when I served on their committee. She was always incredibly warm and kind. … grateful to have been part of her life of love and friendship |
| *Joan was a tower of strength to the village…a great supporter of the local community. …in August 1997, Graham was one of the first to knock on the door to welcome us to the village* |
| The family gatherings we had in the village hall were the very best of times. One of the regular highlights was to negotiate with Joan. My most loved family members were chosen by me to collect and return the key, knowing they would also appreciate her amenable, loving, gracious, enthusiastic participation in our joy. …Joan was always interested in my work with young people and families. She will leave a massive hole in Dinder |
| *She was obviously a wonderful woman who was a very popular member of the village and did so much for so many. We will remember her being incredibly welcoming when we first moved to Dinder* |
| What a wonderful woman dear Joan was. Always so interested in other people: “How are you? And what’s going on in your life?” was how she always greeted me. Her enduring friendship with my mother sustained mum in her own widowhood. Two women of a definite “type”! It was a sad day when the green car no longer drew up outside the Old Rectory side door on a Sunday morning for a very lengthy coffee and biscuit session |
| *We so much enjoyed our “chatty” Christmas cards from your dear mother. I admired her so much* |
| We have many happy memories of singing at Dinder with her playing the organ. … remember your father playing as well! |
| *Her mission in life is accomplished, her legacy is profound. I always got sound advice and love… We will both miss her tremendously – treasured memories of a quick cigarette in the kitchen, with the window open – “Don’t tell anyone!”* |
| Joan was a larger than life character who always seemed to look on the bright side of life and make any meeting so enjoyable. Joan will be greatly missed. Village life will not be the same |
| *She was such a loving and caring friend, most especially to our daughter – and her son - who she took on as godmother after Graham’s death* |
| You have lost a star but now she is shining in Heaven |
| *Joan was a marvellous woman. She never dithered!* |
| Joan was a very special lady who had lived a very full and happy life. She had a wonderful sense of humour and of mischief. She will be greatly missed |
| *We feel pleased and honoured to have known Joan over our short time in Dinder and now Dulcote. She showed a love of life and let it reach out to us all, for which we say thank you to Joan and our Father in Heaven* |
| “The end of an era indeed”. Joan was such a big character and presence in Dinder over so many years. I am sure we will miss her greatly |
| *Our Save the Children coffee mornings at Sharcombe Farm were legendary!! We always looked forward to them and enjoyed every minute with Joan at the helm, seated in pride of place, greeting everyone who came. Her unfailing interest in everyone, whether young or old, endeared her to so many. I particularly will remember her wit – we always laughed especially over our glass of sherry!* |
| Sad to hear of Joan’s Passing. I hold fond memories as I am sure you do as well, she will be in our hearts forever |
| *She was such a help to the choir for so long by playing the organ. She was always a delight to deal with and returned her music on time! A force for good, she will be missed* |
| I did not know Joan for very long but will have enduring memories of our chats at the coffee morning and at other times in the kitchen! So sad, an end to an era |
| *I am finding it hard to find the words to express my sorrow, but also my admiration since she was such a remarkable lady. That she allowed us to invade her lovely home, for so many years, to raise money at her coffee mornings is testament to what a kind and generous person she was and a great supporter of Save the Children. I enjoyed immensely our little chats … she was always so interested and interesting. The whole village will miss her terribly as she was very much at the heart of it, always keen to do her bit and really happy to be able to bring people together – she, in fact, did much more than her bit* |
| I met Joan professionally when she worked with the Rowntree Trust and I was a Health Visitor in Wells. She was a wonderful woman who always got things done! We were so blessed with her wonderful support for the Save the Children Fund |
| *Joan was such a generous and loyal supporter of our branch and her annual Coffee Mornings legendary! She was able to involve and include so many others and it was an occasion not to be missed – especially as there was always sherry to follow! I remember her as such a welcoming person and enjoyed her forthright manner, which was never harsh. … such a lovely lady who touched us all. … there is a huge gap when there have been so many shared years* |
| What a wonderful life your dear mother had – she gave so much to her family, her church, to Dinder and to her honorary goddaughter! To lose such a special person leaves a great gap in all our lives |
| *What a wonderful person she was – such a strong and inspiring person with a real zest for life* |
| Joan was always so active and involved in village life, she will be much missed by all |
| *Joan and Graham made us so welcome when we first moved to Dinder, showing us the ropes at the fete and introducing me into the “Dinder village fete tea”. She was always kind and enthusiastic and full of life. We shall always have fond memories of Joan. The village won’t be the same without Joan and it was a privilege to have met her* |
| We all have such happy memories of her. When Mum and my brother were so homesick on moving here, Joan’s welcoming friendship meant so much. She was witty, clever, wise and compassionate; her stories will live long in our memories and provide comfort when we think of her  Dinder without Joan just won’t be the same – she was a constant in all our lives and loved by so many….Knowing there will be a new member of the family must have shone a light in the last few weeks |
| *She was an absolute legend and will be missed* |
| When I moved to Dinder from London 30 years ago, it was Joan and Graham who made me feel so welcomed. Joan’s upbeat, positive, caring, enthusiastic nature will be missed around the village and will leave a hole in the community. She always had a smile on her face, whether it was playing the organ in church, taking money at the village fete, booking the hall or serving tea in the hall – her positive energy never wavered |
| *So pleased to have had the chance to be her neighbour and get to know her a little over the past 6 years. She was a formidable lady who will be hugely missed* |
| Both Joan and Graham were great friends to my parents – indeed Graham was the very first to welcome them to Dinder on their first day in the village. Joan became my mother’s regular companion to many local and village events … the mainstay of the “Gossip Shop” on Friday mornings – a gathering which was the mainstay of the village in many ways. I particularly enjoyed her kindness and sense of humour. I well remember her coming for a sherry (or two) at our home one summer evening and a challenge to see which one of us could out-talk the other – great fun!  On another more recent occasion I was asked to tea by Joan, but on arrival she proudly announced that she’d bought a special bottle of beer in my honour! With great relish she produced from her little cupboard a bottle of “Black Sheep”! |
| *She was such a good and dear friend, and from Dinder’s standpoint she was truly a pillar of village life and one of its wonderful keystones. She and Graham gave a huge amount to the community they loved and that loved them equally – proper old school stalwarts with heart and soul*  *It’s impossible to picture Joan without smiling! I can see her big widening grin, and a G & T not far away – maybe the ghost of a sly fag somewhere? – always delighting in herself, her stories and her whole-hearted enjoyment of life and people. Always interested in everyone else’s doings, progress and welfare. An absolute radiator of warmth, a rare gift and quality that Joan embodied*  *We’ll miss her hugely, her music and intelligence and appetite for life with a capital L!*  *Please be sure that we, and all her friends and community here in Dinder, are sending up grateful prayers for her life and witness* |
| Your Mum was such an inspiration to us all, an amazing woman who did so much for our community and others in her life. She will be truly missed and treasured for years to come  I will miss her sense of humour, courage, determination and all the joy she gave |
| *The village has lost the centre around which so much that was good revolved. When we first came to Dinder about 16 years ago we were so warmly welcomed by Joan and the two of us found much pleasure – and laughter! – in our contacts with her. She will stay in our memories for a long time and continue to brighten our days though no longer with us* |
| You have lost a truly remarkable person … she was always so interesting and interested in everything |
| *Many, many memories of Joan since she first so warmly welcomed the three of us to Dinder 23 years ago: hearing stories of her rich and varied life (we never minded the “repeats”!); her involvement in all aspects of village life including her wonderful organ-playing which did so much to enhance the worship in Dinder church; the annual Save the Children sale at her house (which we didn’t dare miss!); the list goes on and on. If there was something happening in the village, you could bet that Joan would be in the thick of it*  *And she was so hospitable – the door was always open (literally) and she was always happy to stop and have a chat. As we came into her little sitting room, she would often hastily put out a fag and wave the smoke away (“don’t tell the family!”) – it always made us laugh.*  *She was so kind in allowing any number of grandsons to kip down in the annexe…games of football on the paddock … the annual Easter Egg hunt in Joan’s garden*  *The 1920s produced some wonderful people – my late husband, Prince Philip and Joan amongst them. Those three shared many qualities: a sense of fun, a keen interest in people and ideas, a positive, forward-looking attitude, and a firm sense of duty and loyalty. What a generation! I really can’t imagine what heaven is like, but with those three there it promises to be a lively place with plenty of laughter (and drinks!)*  *…you were blessed with a wonderful mother who was so proud of you and your children. I have lost a very dear friend and neighbour. We won’t see her like again and she will be much missed* |
| We have been blessed with Joan’s friendship ever since we first arrived in Dinder. Like so many in the village we have hugely admired the way she has lived her life, especially during a long widowhood. She has been such a stalwart member of the village community, which is greatly indebted to her for her huge and enjoyable success in running the Village Hall bookings. A very warm, remarkable woman  I expect you know the piece below which I only came across recently.  The Best - Anon  God saw you were getting tired,  And a cure was not to be,  So He put His arms around you  And whispered, “Come to Me”.  With tearful eyes we watched you,  And saw you pass away.  Although we loved you dearly,  We could not make you stay.  A Golden Heart stopped beating,  Hard working hands to rest,  God broke our hearts to prove to us,  He only takes the best |
| I will remember with love and gratitude the influence Graham and Joan had on introducing us both to the value of church music. My husband was choir master at St Mary’s for 40 years |
| She always so enjoyed the family and she loved seeing and hearing about everything all the generations were doing. Mastering a computer was a great way of keeping in touch. Joan was so supportive to all of us when we came to live in Dinder. We have so many happy memories with her in particular round at the village hall functions, the bar and popping between our two houses! She was a wonderful pillar of the community at Wells Cathedral, playing the organ and the hall diary of events. You must have so many tributes of a long and varied life |
| *Joan was always interested to hear our news and we remember fondly the occasion when she guided us and four of our friends around Wells Cathedral with the inimitable jokiness of her pet stories!* |
| Joan was a great lady, always wise and warm and very kind to me when I was the secretary of the Dinder Village Hall. She is certainly a lovely role model for us all and the village will miss her |
| *Your wonderful mother Joan will be hugely missed – she was the heart and soul of the village and we all loved her. By the way, the first time I met your mum in the village hall bar after church, she told me that she had once been “a page 3 girl” - or more accurately her picture appeared in page 3 of the local newspaper! She was such amazing company! And I really enjoyed that and every other conversation I had with her* |
| I was very fond of Joan and Graham. We met in Singapore … I had some wonderful weekends with Joan and Graham in both their Dinder homes. They spoilt me with concerts and countryside visits. They were enormously supportive when I was first alone |
| *Joan was so kind to me, especially around the time of my mum’s death* |
| I remember with much gratitude how kind and considerate she was to my mother when she became frail, and I am aware she was equally practical and thoughtful to others as well. We remember Joan as a wise, kindly and capable friend |
| *She was one of the kindest most thoughtful people I have ever known. I can understand how important she was to the village – almost irreplaceable. My memories of her go back to Farnham and St George’s days. Chatting to her as we waited for our sons, with our daughters in pushchairs, was always a joy. She was always interesting to talk to and made one feel you were important to her* |
| What a woman! I have so many warm and sunny Dinder memories with your parents, Judith and Monca. Endless lunches and games on the lawn |
| *Joan was such a joy and encouragement. Her delight in her wonderful family and church family was so evident* |
| Joan was a wonderful force of nature, a fabulous character who was also kind and funny – what a great combination. It does feel like the end of an era with Joan and Prince Philip leaving us so close together |
| *Your mother was such an outstandingly nice person, never without a smile or a laugh on her face, with a warm and friendly manner*  *Dear smiling Joan, Dinder will not be the same without her* |
| A very intelligent woman with a refined sense of humour. Good that she was still taking bookings for the village hall until lockdown - that is a nice image |
| *Your mum was always absolutely lovely to me whenever we made our frequent visits over to Dinder. If you will allow me to say my condolences Jewish style: May Joan’s memory always be for a blessing*  *What an interesting, interested and lovely lady she was* |
| I’ve been in post at the Cathedral since 2010 so I remember Joan with fondness, always cheery and very enthusiastic about her guiding role. She was very sad about giving up |
| *I am very sorry about hearing about your mother passing away, but extremely impressed that she had kept so very active even into her nineties, and had been surrounded by friends and family. She clearly led a very fulfilling life and made a huge contribution to others’ lives too* |
| Your mum was a very impressive person and I have affectionate memory of her, including her (quite rightly) rocking me off , and putting me straight about helping with the washing up. I must have been in early teens, staying at your house and being an ungracious, boorish guest! Anyway she was direct and firm in correcting my portfolio attitude. The funny thing is these vignettes of life can stay with one forever and I periodically remember the incident (rather hoping that I have been a better house guest since then). The gist of it is that I think of both your parents with warmth, right from those early days in Malaysia |
| *I know Joan had good innings, but so very sad when the life of a lovely person ends. It was such a shame distance prevented a get-together from time-to-time for a quick coffee or lunch or gossip. I think we would have enjoyed that. I will always miss Joan’s Christmas cards. Always so full of news* |
| I will always have fond memories of Joan – from her presence at our shared Village Hall meetings, to gatherings of the Lent courses where she always had interesting observations to make; her warm and cosy PCC meetings in her sitting room, and all the other happy gatherings in the village. For me her wonderful organ playing with such vigour and joy will be one of my happiest recollections. She brought the Church alive! Joan was such an important and constant presence in the village and Dinder will be the poorer for her loss |
| *She was such a lovely person and I enjoyed her company so much, particularly when we worked together at the local hospital. I was new to Social Work in those days, but always felt I could go to Joan for advice when I was unsure about any situation and the best way to proceed. A long and worthwhile life … always remember the loving and happy times you enjoyed with her* |
| We were so sorry to receive the news of your mother's death. She was such a wonderful person and I was deeply saddened to hear from you on this. Your mother always welcomed me into your home in our 6th form days and was like a "second mother " to me. Joan was such a lovely person |
| *It is difficult think of Dinder without her – she was a central figure in all our lives and was much loved. She was a great friend, too, to my mother and brother at their time of need. Her sensitivity and care were so much appreciated. We especially loved her sense of humour and will fondly remember her wit and wisdom* |
| It was so good to be able see you, albeit briefly, the other day and a privilege to see Joan. Her indomitable spirit was still very much there! |
| *Your wonderful mother was a force of nature. We feel so lucky to have had her and Moni in our lives!* |
| My memories of sunny days at Dinder with your parents, Monca and Judith are still so strong for me. Always a good supply of squash, cake and crazy games and sports on the lawn. Whenever I feel indecisive, I shall channel Joan and Monca! |
| *I was very sorry to hear about your mother passing away, but extremely impressed that she had kept so active even into her nineties, and had been surrounded by friends and family. She clearly had a very fulfilling life and made a huge contribution to others’ lives too* |
| We still have a vivid remembrance of her, how she liked to share the contact and to talk with friends |
| *I stood on a pair of steps at the altar window arranging my flowers. I looked over. I could see my Mum doing her flower display in her window and Joan sat at the organ about to practice for the next day’s service. She turned around and said, “Sorry for all the noise I am about to put you through” – and a broad smile on her face. She would laugh in that very distinct gruff voice of hers… I was so pleased to see Joan being laid to rest alongside Mum and Dad, just beyond another late friend. Perhaps they could hold hands together and reunite in peace, instead of the three dinner ladies, perhaps they could be the three DINDER LADIES…We were both very lucky and had wonderful parents* |
| A full and generous life |
| *We will always remember your Mum with much love and joy. A truly Christian lady. It was a privilege to know her and be blessed by her love* |
| All the tributes and stories of Joan’s amazingly full and interesting life made us wish we could have known her for much longer! |
| *She was such an empathetic and special person. I first met her in Germany. I heard that she was English and we started talking. It was always interesting to be together with her, and I enjoyed it. We exchanged Christmas and other cards from there on. I was so impressed to learn that she still worked for Wells Cathedral as a guide and also played the organ at her local church at that high age. I should like to express my deep sympathy for the sad loss of your beloved Joan. I will remember her as a kind and loving person* |
| Joan was a fascinating person and she was always so enthusiastic about life. One of my fondest memories was her taking me to Wells Cathedral, where she was doing a tour. She was so full of knowledge and her love for the Cathedral showed. She was always so interested in what I was doing |