

Joyce Aldous

Born Joyce Finch on 24 March 1924, at Handsworth, Birmingham. Daughter of George Finch who ran a butchers shop and was by all accounts a very well-read man. In later life Joyce spoke very little about her childhood, but it seems to have been happy until her mother became ill and had to go into a sanatorium. Joyce was kept pretty busy as a child – if her father saw someone doing nothing he would find them some job that needed doing! It was a way of life Joyce retained almost all her life, she was always industrious and helpful to others, never idle. Joyce was also a very clever child with one of the best academic records of any pupil at the high school she attended in Sutton Coldfield. More than 20 years after leaving school Joyce could still remember enough Latin and French to help her older son Robert through the 'O' level course.

Joyce's mother died when Joyce was only 16, and, as an only child, Joyce had to take on the responsibility of running her father's home while still studying in the sixth form.

Joyce left school during World War II, and shortly afterwards joined the Women's Royal Naval Service. Although her natural interests were in the humanities rather than technology, Joyce followed the radio mechanics training very successfully, first at Battersea and then at various naval shore establishments. After her training Joyce repaired the radar sets used on aircraft in the Fleet Air Arm. She served at 5 different naval establishments and was promoted to Petty Officer. At one of these establishments she met her future husband, Ken. They got to know each other when trying to retrieve their bicycles – both of which had gone missing from the same train. They were married at Ken's home in Maisemore on 4 June 1945 – and were devoted to each other for the 63 years which they then spent together until Ken's death in July 2008. Their honeymoon was a few days in Marlborough – the destination of the next bus that turned up at Gloucester bus station! Joyce was demobbed in June 1946. The remarks on her service record are: *Reliable and conscientious. Always ready to do her best in whatever job is given her to do. A quiet and pleasant personality.* It is a description that anyone who knew Joyce will recognise.

After the war, Ken studied agriculture and dairy technology in Scotland, and Joyce took whatever jobs she could get – including ladies companion cum maid - to keep them both solvent and to have a roof over their heads. Joyce frequently had to work long hours in cold houses.

After Ken graduated, Joyce and Ken moved to Norwich where their older son, Robert, was born. Shortly afterward that, Joyce spotted an advertisement in the Daily Telegraph for a dairy manger in Exeter and encouraged Ken to apply. He got the job and they moved to Exeter in 1950 where they lived for the next 21 years. Their younger son, David, was born in 1952. Joyce was a devoted mother. By the mid-sixties Joyce was somehow finding time to have an active social life in between cooking 3 hot meals a day for her family, washing, cleaning, gardening, helping with homework, and organising caravan holidays in France. Joyce was an excellent cook and pretty unflappable – which was just as well as Ken was in the habit of phoning home half an hour before lunch to say he was bringing a business colleague home for lunch! Joyce also found time to read widely, she especially liked history and biographies.

In 1971 Ken was very ill and lost his job following the takeover of the company that he was a director of. Fortunately Ken recovered, and Joyce and Ken moved to Cornwall where they bought a retail

dairy business in Truro. Joyce did whatever she could to help the business run smoothly, especially the secretarial work and packing the clotted cream for delivery by post just before Christmas.

When Ken required kidney dialysis at home, Joyce ensured that all the necessary supplies were available, that the dialysis machine was properly cleaned, and generally that everything ran smoothly. This wasn't so easy with the early dialysis machines.

Joyce joined the local branch of the Women's Institute and later became its treasurer. She built up a circle of friends, did a fair amount of entertaining –and somehow found time to tend all the flowers and shrubs in their large garden at Feock (near Truro). In the winters she would knit sweaters for family members.

Joyce was a keen member of the National Trust and also had a passion for industrial archaeology.

When her grandchildren arrived in the late 1980's and early 1990's, Joyce sprang into action knitting tiny sweaters and making much-loved cuddly toys.

In 1999 the large garden at Feock became too much for Joyce and Ken to manage, and they moved to Colwall, partly to be closer to family. Joyce joined the Colwall W.I. and once again started to build up a new circle of local friends. Again Joyce became W.I. treasurer.

Ken and Joyce celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in June 2005.

Joyce remained very active until early 2008, when it became clear she had started to suffer from dementia. By the time of Ken's death in July 2008 Joyce was rapidly losing her short term memory and her comprehension of what was going on around her. Nevertheless Joyce struggled on with help from carers and family.

In September 2010 Joyce could no longer cope on her own, and moved into a care home at Eastnor where she lived until her death on 24 January 2011.

Joyce will be remembered for her kindness to friends and her unstinting devotion to family, for her intellect, her wise and tactful counsel, for her energy and efficiency combined with a dignified and quiet, almost self-effacing, manner.