

There are so many loving tributes I could make to my mother, Joan and much of this eulogy has been written by my father, Jeff. [It has turned out to be a bit long but you can't cover 94 years in a few words.](#)

Joan Goddard was born at Crich in Derbyshire to Annie and Joe, a younger sibling to Aubrey, Mary and Kathleen. When she was three years old, her grandmother died, [and her body was brought to the house as was customary.](#) Joan's parents told her the angels would be coming to take her grandmother to heaven. She stayed awake that night gazing from her window but if the angels came, she did not see them and was deeply disappointed.

After High School, she took a job caring for children in an orphanage, but then decided to train as a nurse, perhaps influenced by the example of Florence Nightingale an earlier and famous Derbyshire citizen, the lady with the lamp, sometimes the angel with the lamp.

On completion of her nursing and midwife training and the coming of the war, she volunteered for Army service with the QAs. Indeed she was with the first British Hospital to arrive on the invasion beaches of Normandy. There was a photograph in a newspaper of a nursing unit arriving headlined as Angels in Battledress. Certainly many of the soldiers she cared for regarded the nurses as angels.

The love story between Joan and Jeff begins after the end of the Second World War. Jeff was then with Transport Command R.A.F. engaged in bringing home soldiers from the Far East, including those damaged as prisoners in Changi Jail or slaves on that infamous railway. The first stop after leaving Singapore was in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) where amongst a small group to join the flight, was a nurse in Q A uniform.

Joan was returning to U K on compassionate leave because her mother was ill and had sent for her. Like dutiful daughters everywhere, and I could name one, she had responded at once. The pilot and the nurse got to know each other on the way with stops in Baghdad and Malta. Three days later she was delivered safely at Lyneham in Wiltshire.

About a week later the pilot followed her to her parent's home town of Worksop. Joan often recalled waiting at the railway station, anxious about this strange Scotsman from the back of Bennachie that she was meeting. Would she recognise him? She spotted him looking from a carriage window and knew at once that it was all right.

[Joan and Jeff married in 1948\(?\) and enjoyed 66 years of marriage. I think that two of the attendees at the wedding are here today. \(Isabella sister and Christine niece\).](#) Jeff and Joan have been together ever since, as much as airline schedules would allow, until this final parting.

During their marriage they were blessed with 3 children [and 7 grand children..](#)

Bringing up three young children with a husband regularly away was not easy but Joan managed it in style. Household repairs, a common occurrence were generally accomplished with sticky tape and string.

Grand children, were a joy to Joan and she was highly involved with them all including the distant ones in New Zealand.

Family was always very important to Joan and she would tell stories of her childhood with her brother and sisters. Our annual family get together was a high point of her year and she was proud to be matriarch of such a loving and wonderful family.

Joan spent many years as a marriage guidance counsellor, which later became Relate, after which she joined with a neighbour delivering meals on wheels in Slough and district. When that wound up the local newspaper headlined the event as Angels on Wheels, so once again the Angel theme followed her.

Joan and Jeff moved to Bahrain for a 2 year contract but, it proved so successful that they stayed for 6 years. In her memoir of Bahrain, Joan reveals the secrets of her success. Armed with only a smattering of the language and her ready smile and love of her fellow men and women she charmed all who met her.

Looking through some more of Joan's papers, we have found a poem written by her when she was 12 years old, the end of which reads:

*And then I saw the angel's face  
Who'd taken me there to such a fine place  
And then she lifted me up on high  
To dwell with Jesus in the sky.*

Joan's poetry doesn't match that of Shakespeare and she'd be happy to hear the mis quote from Hamlet:

*Dear Joan may Flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest*

If the bard of Stratford upon Avon isn't to your taste, perhaps you'd prefer the Scottish bard. During the last few days of her life in palliative care Jeff would touch her forehead and quote from Robbie Burns:

*Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;  
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!  
Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
never met - or never parted,  
we had ne'er been broken hearted.*