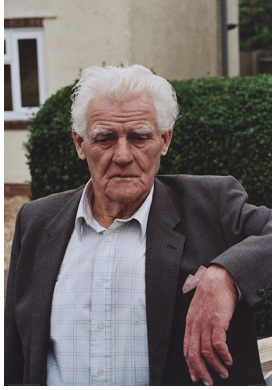# MICHAEL COLEMAN (d. 2014)

Michael was the first of eight children born to Elizabeth and John Coleman. He grew up on a farm in Ireland with his five brothers and two sisters, for whom he was an ideal eldest brother, gentle and kind. When he was 17 he came to England, first working with his uncle in Manchester and then serving in the Military Police. Posted to Barford St John airbase, he met Doris at a dance in Bloxham.

After their marriage they lived first with Doris's mother in Hempton and, in due course, having started their own family, moved to 21 The Paddocks, Deddington, which became a stable and happy home for what were to be 11 children.

Michael had a successful business as a building contractor. He worked hard, leaving the house before the children were up and usually not getting back home until after their bedtime. He also – he liked to work – kept a large vegetable garden and calves which, drawing on his early dealings with livestock on the farm in Ireland, he reared for market. His fuller presence in the family at weekends was greatly enjoyed by Doris and the children, and his family meant everything to him. He had to suffer the hard blows of losing Doris early and then the deaths of his children Micky and John. Strong in spirit as well as body, he bore what came with fortitude.

Michael continued to lead an active life into his early eighties, still chopping wood and doing the garden, loving the outdoors and being out and about, usually in a pub meeting old friends and making new ones. He was from first to last a people person. He had a way about him that made him easy to be around.

Michael was his own man with his own integrity and his own particular goodness. Despite the downs, he was very conscious of the ups in his life. During his later years he often said that he'd had a great life, a great family, great friends – and he didn't owe anyone a penny. His was a life well lived, a life enjoyed to the full, a life which enhanced the lives of others and contributed much to the community of which he was part.

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