

BARBARA BUDD 1939–2026



Barbara was born in Dewsbury, Yorkshire, a war baby. Her father died when she was three. She was brought up by her Grandma and Auntie May while her Mum went to work, initially in the Co-op and then running her own hairdressing business. In Barbara's words, this was fun.

At kindergarten, she met some of her lifelong friends on day one. She went to the grammar school and was known as a good all-rounder who excelled at passing exams and active in the school's tennis and hockey teams.

She started Medical School in Birmingham in 1957 and loved the studying, the ambience and the social life. She met David at Birmingham, also a medical student, during the interval of a play. He was in a competition to see who could drink a pint fastest. Barbara graduated in 1962 and married David. Between 1962 and 1971 various anaesthesia jobs followed in hospitals in Wolverhampton, Luton and Dunstable, Edgware Road, London, and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Oxford. James, Bill and I were all born at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford.

The family moved to Warmington where Mum continued to work while being a wife and mum. Family life was busy and filled with warmth and it's fair to say we were lucky to have her as our mother.

Whilst proud of her Yorkshire roots, she harboured inspiration from kindergarten radio programmes about faraway places and followed with glossy brochures. Barbara embarked on a long-time dream of travelling. In the early '80s she started in Kashmir. Subsequently, she explored endless countries, covering south and central Asia, south and Central America and Africa and, of course, her many golf trips to Spain.

Even at her last visit to A&E in January and unable to speak clearly, we understood the word Ethiopia. She said this to the paramedic who was telling us about his year off to travel. Mum loved her month in Ethiopia, living simply, while volunteering at the New Day Children's Centre, Bahir Dahr. She only regretted not staying longer.

She moved to Deddington in 1994 where she 'lived happily ever after, tending her garden and going to the pub', but also playing golf at Tadmarton Heath and with the DOGS, continuing her travel adventures, trips and days out with Banbury Fine Arts Society and Bicester Theatre Club, enjoying the Harvard Krokodiloes, with visits to the Royal Opera House, the book club and bridge. She said her life in Deddington was the happiest of her life and that the sun had not stopped shining since she moved in. Thank you, Deddington.

It was during her time here that she became Grandma to Sam, Harry and Josie. They brought energy and life on their visits She loved every minute of it but was glad when peace returned.

Memories were made on school pick-ups and annual outings to Giffords Circus and the panto at Chipping Norton, as well as many other local places of interest. For Mum it was important to have grandchildren in her world.

She was a loyal friend: in addition to the Deddington community who welcomed her with open arms, the friendship with the little girl she met on the way to kindergarten on her first day became the three musketeers and has endured for more than 80 years. Her loyal travelling companion was a fellow medical school student. The strong bonds with her Warmington girlfriends have continued, despite time and distance.

Mum was fun-loving. She loved dancing, and hosting and attending parties. As children, we had a three-tier cake tin that was always full of sweet treats for after school. We had faultless Sunday lunches and big family Christmases, and she could always rustle up a tasty meal with all the random stuff Dad brought back from his own adventures.

She would tell me about street parties and celebrations in Deddington. She was an enthusiastic and glamorous attendee in one of her many scarves and outfits, or fancy dress if required. More recently, parties would be only for people with the surname Budd. Often a supper in the kitchen was labelled a party.

Barbara had an independent spirit; she was curious and courageous. Her career in anaesthesia was curtailed by changing regulations but she retrained in genito-urinary medicine and family planning, extending her career for 18 more years, retiring at the age of 66.

Her collection of travel itineraries and documents are testament to her passion for exploring. Her destination choices were not always easy, requiring problem-solving, resilience and energy ... and maybe a hidden miniature whisky. She was determined and tenacious.

Anyone who helped in her garden will know, she would closely supervise your work. When her cellar flooded, she did not give up. I pity Thames Water on the end of the phone. Although we will never know, her last few days of life were probably on her terms. She didn't really want to leave her lovely house. And she didn't.

Most of all, she was our Mum, the head teacher at our school for life. We really didn't want for anything and there would always be an ear if needed.

Helen Budd