

ELISABETH HEYWOOD (BUFFY) 1930–2025



Elisabeth, known as Buffy to her friends, was born in Maidenhead on Christmas Day 1930, a very special Christmas present for her parents that year. Her brother, John, arrived a couple years later and together they grew up having an idyllic childhood around Maidenhead. Once she left school, she trained as a secretary and worked for a surveyor's firm in London.

In the winter of 1956–57, she met Denys Heywood on a skiing holiday in Zermatt. They married in October 1957, fairly soon after they met, due to Denys's RAF postings. She then settled into service life as a housewife and was soon to become a mother.

After various homes all over the UK, including Norfolk, Rothbury, Scampton and Basingstoke, the family started their foreign adventures. Denys had a posting to America in 1966 and, by now, there were four children, Robin, Annabel, Carol and Simon. They lived in America for four years and spent many holidays travelling around the country in a caravan.

After America the family returned to the UK for nine months for Denys to retrain on various aircraft for his next posting to Cyprus. Buffy revelled in her time in Cyprus with lots of service parties and beach barbecues. This was an idyllic time for her as all four of her children were there with her. After a couple of years, they returned to the UK for a short posting to Bawtry, near Doncaster, which became Denys's last posting as he retired from the RAF and, in 1977, they all moved to Deddington. Here, Buffy really came into her own as she loved the idea of never having to move again. A lot of friends moved into the village around the same time, which soon developed into a lovely community with endless parties and tennis matches.

There were many family get togethers as well as excellent Christmas parties which included getting all her children and grandchildren together which she loved. Buffy always loved preparing the annual Christmas meal when the dining table was extended to its maximum and other tables were added so that the whole family could sit together and enjoy the wonderful Christmas lunch, not forgetting to wish her a happy birthday as well.

Buffy developed an enormous interest in the history of Deddington Manor and its 18th-century owner, the Rev Cotton Risley. She loved doing the researching his well-known diaries in the Bodleian Library and placing an excerpt under the title of '150 Years Ago' in the Deddington News every month. She was a very active member of the Deddington & District History Society, for which she researched and published two authoritative articles about the 'Poor of Deddington' and 'Deddington Schools'.

Buffy and Denys enjoyed playing tennis so much they had a tennis court built at the Manor. Along with a group of friends, she was involved with raising funds and setting up Deddington Tennis Club which opened in April 1983 where she played for the club teams. She was also involved in setting up the Deddington Map Group for the Millennium Project. As a committee member, she organised the research for naming all the local fields, as well as hosting regular meetings around her dining-room table.

She was the chairman, then treasurer, of a local branch of the charity Imperial Cancer Research which raised over £25,000.

Buffy loved her garden with all its beautiful flower beds and huge kitchen garden which produced a mass of fruit and veg, quite often given to friends in Deddington. But her greatest passion was her roses and, right up to the time she moved, she would be found on her knees pruning and tending the 12 rose beds.

After she left Deddington, she moved to Twyford with Rob and Sheila. Here she enjoyed sitting in the garden on her swing seat enjoying the sunshine, but as her health deteriorated she moved into Seccombe Court just across the road to be looked after by all the amazing staff there.

Buffy is missed greatly by all her friends and family.

Rob and Sheila Heywood