

Cliff Smith (1937–2023)

Cliff was born on 22 October 1937, the youngest and only son of four children. The family lived in a small terraced cottage in Hockley Heath, Birmingham, later moving to nearby Lapworth, Warwickshire.



Cliff passed the 11+ and got a scholarship to Leamington College for Boys. He left school early, aged 15, after the death of his father, becoming the man of the house, supporting his Mum by doing gardening jobs in the village. Later he started work at Warwickshire County Council in the Clerk's Department, during which time he did his National Service. He met Christine and they married in 1964. For three years he worked for the road construction unit at Leamington Spa, being involved with the planning process for Spaghetti Junction. The family lived in Warwick where they had two sons, Matthew and Gareth. Cliff got a job with Oxfordshire County Council and the family moved to Deddington in 1972. In 1993 Cliff took early retirement but kept busy working as a voluntary ambulance driver for many years.

Cliff loved sport. He was an Aston Villa supporter, played cricket and football for Warwickshire County Council and, on moving to Deddington, opened the batting for North Aston, enjoyed Aunt Sally, and played football for Deddington Town Football Club. He was club secretary for over 20 years and regularly helped out with home matches, running the line, making teas for the players and cleaning the changing rooms after games. He also represented the football club on the Windmill Committee in the early stages of forming a community centre.

The family enjoyed many happy walking holidays in the Lakes and Yorkshire but fell in love with Pembrokeshire and more especially Newport, nestling below Carningli or the Mountain of the Angels. In 2017 the family spent a week in Newport to celebrate Cliff's 80th birthday and, together with 5 year old Poppy, reached the top of the Mountain, with the help of flapjacks. The family plans to return to Newport to scatter Cliff's ashes on Carningli.

In 2018 Cliff was diagnosed with vascular dementia and in March 2019 he suffered a severe stroke, leaving him paralysed down the right side and non-verbal. After three months in hospital and rehab, Cliff came home and slowly came to terms with his disability, having to receive help from carers and Christine. He always enjoyed jazz, visiting clubs in Digbeth and Ronnie Scott's, an 80th birthday present from his sons, and would listen to many of his jazz CDs at home. He always had a smile for everyone who visited him: friends, carers, nurses. He went from two carers four times a day until April 2020 when he had one carer, Donna, who came in every day to shower and dress him and then Christine took over his care. Donna was a great carer, understanding Cliff and supporting Christine, helping her keep Cliff at home.

Gareth was a great support, visiting his Dad most days, doing the family shopping, taking his parents out in the mobility car for lunch or a walk and much more. Matthew too was a great help telephoning every day and visiting when he could with the grandchildren who Cliff loved to see.

Unfortunately, at the end of September, Cliff went downhill and was taken to hospital, then transferred to Chacombe Nursing Home in October where he died peacefully with his family by his side.

Cliff was a kind natured family man, loving husband, Dad, Grandpop, and will be sadly missed by all the family and those who knew him.

The Smith Family