

CONTACT OBITUARIES

For NCI's pensioners • annexe to issue no 73 • april 2022

George Duckworth



George Duckworth died on 29 June 2019, aged 90. You'll see from the tributes below that there are a variety of accounts of how he first came to be working for the Commissioners at Millbank. If you know the truth, please let the editor of *Contact* know for inclusion in the next edition.

Desmond Day writes:

George joined the Commissioners' staff after they sold the Halsall Estate, near Southport in Lancs, where he had worked in the Estate office. I am vague about dates, but I think he arrived at Millbank in the later '60s or early '70s. He worked in different departments, including Stipends Policy (later '70s), when I was Stipends Secretary. He was single and a rather dry, amusing character. We became friends and occasionally visited each other after I moved to the Barbican Estate in 2000. George was living 'just up the road' at Queen Alexandra Mansions in Judd Street, WC1. He had taken relatively early retirement before 2000.

Alison Harding writes:

I have very fond memories of the enigmatic George. I joined the office in 1979 and he was merciless in his ongoing cracks about being from the wrong side of the Pennines: he was of the red rose persuasion; I the white. Though witty and charming when he chose to be, he was always the perfect gentleman in an era before more modern gender respect codes were prevalent!! He was safe in the lift!!

David Lewis writes:

I have been trying, without success, to recall George's background before he joined the Commissioners, in 1970 I think. I can remember that he had been working at the Lancashire offices of one of the Commissioners' Agents/agencies (not Smiths Gore so possibly our Mineral Agents). He and Desmond Day were great friends during his time with us. Desmond's recollection about this may well be a lot more clear than mine perhaps.

Trevor Hazelgrove writes:

Very sorry to hear of George's passing. He was my HEO for a short period, a delightful man who appreciated the fine things in life and a great pleasure to work with.

Ed Peacock writes:

I remember George as an always entertaining lunch companion in the canteen at the top of Millbank and as a regular attendee at the weekly meetings of the Office Christian Fellowship, even if his views could be less than orthodox. He was one to puncture pomposity and challenge the received wisdom. Most likeable: I'm so glad I knew him.

Tony Batchelor writes:

Jan and I were sorry to learn of George's passing. He arrived at the Church Commissioners under somewhat unusual circumstances. Before joining the CC he was part of the management team on Lord Derby's Fylde Estate in Lancashire. I believe that one of the conditions imposed by the vendors when the Commissioners acquired the estate was that they took on the employment of George and his colleague. He arrived somewhat reluctantly in London. He became fully involved in the CCs' social activities. He was an average

but keen member of the cricket team. He performed frequently in Deansbank Players dramatic productions and was a competent artist. He was always cheerful with a slightly quirky sense of humour and he never lost his broad Preston accent.

Hugh Christian-Carter writes:

I'm sorry to hear about George's demise as we were friends for a time many years ago. He departed the Commissioners, as I understand it, with a great deal of reluctance and as a consequence never came to anything social thereafter. He had joined the CC, or so I was given to understand, when we had a branch office at Preston (from which he came). I don't think – though I may be wrong – that he was that keen to move to London. He was a stalwart for a long time of the Deansbank Players, several of whom should be able to give you more information. He also supported the Office Christian Fellowship and we shared the running of that with Tim Robinson for some time.

Jo Parkinson writes:

I'm so sorry to hear of George's death. He was my SEO in Pastoral South-East on my first day at the Church Commissioners in the autumn of 1973, my first proper job. He was such a lovely man, and so kind and encouraging to a very nervous young person. He must have been there from at least the mid-60s. I shall keep George in my prayers.

Jamie Milford writes:

George hailed from Preston. He was a keen follower of cricket and the crime novels of Ruth Rendell. He was often seen around the office with his pullover draped around his shoulders and his shirtsleeves turned up just a few inches. He was fond of literary and theatrical quotations. Regardless of his mood one of his favourites was 'I am in mourning for my life.' He was a very private person, and I had little idea of what he got up to outside the office.

The Revd Barney Milligan

Barney Milligan died on 11 January 2021 aged 92. He served as the Anglican Representative to the European Institutions in Strasbourg from 1990 to 1995, and as such had many dealings with Church House and Lambeth Palace in that time.

John Kirkham

The Rt Revd John Kirkham died on 10 October 2019, aged 84. He had been Domestic Chaplain at Lambeth Palace from 1972 to 1976, serving the two very different Archbishops Michael Ramsey and Donald Coggan. His *Church Times* obituary records how the day before he was due to leave with Archbishop Ramsey on an overseas visit he was hit in a road accident in Piccadilly. The hospital staff put it down to concussion when, on regaining consciousness, he insisted that the Archbishop of Canterbury must be summoned to his bedside. When at last he was believed he was able to tell the Archbishop where the tickets and passports were kept.

On leaving Lambeth he became Bishop of Sherborne, which post he held until his retirement in 2001. He also served as Bishop to the Forces from 1992 to 2001. Copies of his *Church Times* obituary are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

David Hopkinson

David Hopkinson died on 24 October 2019 at the age of 93. He had served as Chairman of the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance, and also as a Church Commissioner. In the 1970s he was prominent in what were often heated debates in the Board of Governors over stipends policy. His *Times* obituary records how at Chichester he realised that something was wrong with a quotation from an American energy company bidding to supply all churches in the diocese, and thus he prevented the diocese from signing up with Enron. His day job was as chief executive of the M&G unit trust group, which he worked for from 1963 to 1987, and which he transformed: in 1963 it had £25 million of investment funds under management, while in 1987 this had risen to £4.2 billion.

Copies of his obituary in the *Times* are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Gordon Pincott

Gordon Pincott died on 20 February 2020 at the age of 93. He had worked for Queen Anne's Bounty and then, after amalgamation, in the Commissioners' office. For the Commissioners he served among others in the Bishoprics and Pastoral Departments. His work in Bishoprics involved much contact with Lambeth Palace.

Frances Green writes:

Gordon worked for Queen Anne's Bounty at 3 Dean's Yard, Westminster. World War Two broke out and he served his country in the Royal Marines, in which he was a commissioned officer. After the war Gordon began at the Church Commissioners on Millbank where he stayed until retirement. Among many special duties that were requested and carried out by Gordon with care was looking after His Grace Archbishop Robert Runcie and his lady wife Lindy Runcie when they took up residence at Lambeth Palace.

The Runcies appointed Gordon as my mentor when I joined the Lambeth Palace staff, from January 1981. Since then until 20 February 2020 Gordon Pincott has been the kindest trustworthy companion to myself and kind to others. He was a credit to the Church Commissioners – and is now a free Spirit in Peace, a 'flying Angel'.

Gordon always wanted to have been a pilot in World War Two, but after tests that was not to be as he was colour blind.

Colin Bullen writes:

Although I never worked directly with Gordon, partly because he was never a fan of IT systems, I knew him well, both from the office golf society, and when we were both on the union committee. Gordon was an old school member of staff. He was with the Commissioners for many years, but often reminisced about his time with Queen Anne's Bounty, from where he carried over certain perks, including a longer holiday period than was available in the Commissioners, at least at one time.

For some years Gordon was chairman of the union branch, while I was treasurer, and later secretary. I remember that we always dreaded the length of the meetings, as Gordon was not the

most effective at reining in those who chose to ramble, but there was never any doubt that he had the interests of the staff at heart. He was sometimes incredulous at the changes which took place in the office, seeing a diminution of the old, paternal atmosphere, and I dread to think how he would regard the modern British office generally, which differs so much from that which we knew.

In the days when the office golf society held seven meetings a year Gordon was always there. He enjoyed his golf, and although not the most expert player, won his share of trophies. In retirement he worked in a golf club shop near where he lived, and turned up at our games even when he was too old to play, but came along for the company.

In later years Gordon wrote some articles about his time in the Home Guard, which were very interesting, and showed that the old idea of 'Dad's Army' was not far short of the mark.

Gordon was one of those whom I felt truly belonged to the family of the Commissioners, and his passing is a milestone in the gradual demise of that old fashioned, yet I think better, workplace.

Desmond Day writes:

It so happens that I've been thinking about him recently, as I realised he must be in his nineties. He was the first member of the then existing staff outside the Estates Department to approach me after my arrival in 1954, charmingly asking me if I should like to join the Social and Sports Club. Later, he was very active in getting the club a dedicated room on the top floor at Milbank. A nice man.

Fiona Rankin

We learned in March 2020 of the death of Fiona Rankin. She worked in the Board of Education in the 1980s as secretary to the Revd Kennedy Thom. She was in her late 50s.

Derek Fullarton

Our last issue carried news of the death of Derek Fullarton. *John Ripley has written:*

Thank you so much for sending me David Hebblethwaite's tribute [to Derek]. I 'enjoyed' reading it. How right I feel he was to conclude with a reference to Derek's multifacetedness (?) I knew him when we were both in our mid 20s, having each started work with the Commissioners in 1974 (I left 3 years later).

The facet I recall best is that of an ardent Royalist (remember this was 40+ years ago!) but minus any accompanying stuffiness. His impishness, which someone else referred to in *Contact*, ensured that.

[The news of his death] caused me to flick through my diaries from which I picked out 9 June 1977, the Queen's Silver Jubilee. It was typical 'royal' weather - heavy rain - and bitterly cold in the office! The Secretary had given staff permission to watch the Queen break her river progress to have tea with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs Coggan at Lambeth Palace. "Weather vile and didn't see much...." Later on.....

Derek and I made our way to the entrance of Horse Guards Parade at night to watch the young Duke and Duchess of Gloucester arrive for the Beating Retreat joined later by Prince Charles. Then, having snatched a sandwich from the foyer of the Whitehall Theatre, we made our way opposite Horse Guards to watch the royal guests arrive at some reception or other. Derek was taking photographs and was miffed that the

Duchess didn't get out of the car and oblige him (he had a soft spot for her!) with a photo opportunity - this was pre mobiles and selfies!

Afterwards, a meal in a heaving restaurant, Derek none too pleased about having to wait! We had to share a table with others, one of whom sneeringly referred to us as 'Monarchists'. That didn't faze Derek in the slightest as he muttered very loudly, and not merely for my benefit, about a "fat slob" in our midst. I seem to recall the said fat slob being bigger than either of us! Derek however had such personal charm, which he could turn on to complete strangers, that he was able to get away with it. Fortunately for both of us!

Despite heavy rain, we made our way to the Embankment which was awash, literally, with hordes of people. Here we watched the Royal Fireworks. Before they had finished we edged our way towards Parliament, no easy feat. We were determined to get to Buck House for the Royals' return and the balcony appearances. My diary records Derek's annoyance that we were tricked by the Police into missing the departure from the Palace of members of the Royal Family, including the Queen Mother. I noted "he is even more of a Royalist than me"! (Sadly, I didn't record Derek's thoughts on the Sex Pistols' single, *God Save the Queen*, which I seem to remember being No.1 in the charts then!)

Yes, time passes all too quickly. There is something rather salutary, to say the very least, about losing one's contemporaries (Derek was my junior by about 4 months I think).

Alan Tuddenham

Alan Tuddenham died on 2 August 2019. He was Administrator for the Decade of Evangelism and for the Board of Mission at Church House from 1992 to 2002. In 2013 he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. He spent two years in a nursing home and died peacefully in hospital following a cerebral haemorrhage. He was 73.

Canon Norman Todd

Canon Norman Todd died on 28 April 2019, aged 99. He was the first Archbishops' Adviser for Bishops' Ministry. He was appointed to that post by Archbishop Runcie in 1988 and served until 1994. Copies of the obituary that appeared in the *Church Times* on 21 June are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Bishop Roy Williamson



Robert Kerr (Roy) Williamson died in September 2019 at the age of 86. An Ulsterman, he was the 14th child in his family and had left school at 14. After parochial posts in the diocese of Southwell he served as

Archdeacon of Nottingham (from 1978 to 1984), and then as Bishop of Bradford (1984-1991), before being translated to Southwark (1991-1998).

Robin Stevens writes:

“It was with great sadness that I saw the announcement of the death of Bishop Roy. Among many responsibilities in the Church he was Chairman of the Central Board of Finance’s Christian Stewardship Committee. This brought him to Church House and sadly, in the late 1980s, he had his heart attack there.

I first met him in 1991, shortly after he had moved from Bradford to Southwark, when I was short-listed for the post of ‘Central Stewardship Officer’. He chaired the interview panel of five people. I came with a background of being an engineer in broadcast television and a reader in the Church. In my preparation for the interview I had rehearsed my reasons as to why a jump from that background to Church House was appropriate. Bishop Roy was much too on the ball to ask that kind of question, however. He opened with, “What excites you about God?” I knew, in a flash, that “Not a lot really” and “Can I get back to you about that?” were both wrong answers. I spoke from the heart and that, of course, is exactly what Bishop Roy wanted.

After I was offered the post and before I took it

up, I was invited to attend a meeting of the Board’s Stewardship Committee, of which I was, inter alia, to be the secretary. I sat quietly, trying to absorb the issues, but at one point I found myself speaking out quite vehemently on a matter. I apologised to the Bishop for my outburst and he said that no apology was necessary. ‘That’s why we appointed you’, he said.

As we got to know each other better, I felt that our temperaments were probably similar. Sadly, after I had been in post for only a year, he decided to stand down as Chairman because ‘he had been drafted in new directions’. Amongst many things, as a London Bishop, he had been made Chairman of the Central Religious Advisory Council.

He remembered his connection with the stewardship network and came to give a number of addresses at our conference a few years later. He was a great man of God – a gentle man but one who spoke his mind. He was also a popular contributor to ‘Pause for Thought’ and ‘Good Morning Sunday’ on Radio 2. He published some of his more amusing reflections as “Funny you should say that”.

So, yes. I do remember him – with affection.”

Ed Peacock writes:

“My dealings with +Roy were much less than Robin Stevens’, but when dealing with him when he was Archdeacon of Nottingham and I was in the Commissioners’ Pastoral Dept I was struck with how able and likeable he was, qualities we don’t always find in the same person ... ! I thought the same when he became a Bishop and I was first at Lambeth and then in Bishopricks.”

In his obituary of Bishop Roy (published in the *Church Times* on 27 September) Bishop Colin Buchanan wrote, “Roy was a wonderful Christian leader – whatever he undertook, his presence made all around feel secure, and thus empowered them for their own Christian responsibilities.” Copies of the full obituary are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

John Ferguson

John Ferguson died on 11 February 2020 at the age of 72. John joined the Commissioners in 1981 as Computer Manager and following the creation of the National Church Institutions became their Head of IT and Office Services. He retired in 2009. For several years after that he served as the Staff Member Nominated Trustee on the Pensions Board.

Andy Budge has kindly set up a donations page for Cancer Research, in John's memory. If anyone wishes to donate in this way the option is here: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/john-w-ferguson>

Frank Rogers writes:

I was very sorry to hear that John Ferguson has recently died at the age of 72. He was an enjoyable character and good fun to know. We used to meet up whenever he called into the offices of the Pensions Board. He will be much missed by all who knew him.

Jamie Milford writes:

He was always courteous and patient with my IT failings. We should remember him as a champion in matters of general staff concern.

Desmond Day writes:

John Ferguson was very young for these days; he was always very helpful to me and affable.

Matt Chamberlain writes:

John was quite a character. He was the first person who interviewed me for the Church Commissioners. It was an inglorious experience for both of us, since I had zero aptitude for technology (which begs questions about why I was even there) but we had a lively conversation nonetheless. John actually played a crucial part in my coming to work here because he seemed to quite like the kid who came all the way from Lancashire to discuss a job he didn't even want, so he mentioned me to other colleagues. I'm very glad he did - indirectly it led to me securing my first job, in Clergy Pay. Later, when I moved to the Policy Unit and then the Secretariat, I'd get to know John a bit better. People in roles like mine, essentially supporting the management, would have found John sometimes to be a great ally, and at other times a bit of a thorn in the side. But at



all times he was a quick witted and eloquent man, and a colourful character. May he rest in peace.

Eleanor Phillips writes:

John was a frequent visitor to Lambeth in the early days of Archbishop George Carey's time there in the early 1990s. Archbishop George was a computer fan – something new to Lambeth then, and there wasn't the necessary expertise among the staff when he arrived – so John provided the answers to the Archbishop's questions. He was a great help.

Archbishop George Carey writes:

Thank you for your information about John Ferguson whom I got to know well. He was a delightful man with an awesome knowledge of computer science. I learned a lot from him.

Stuart Froment writes:

I imagine many at the NCIs will remember that John was very instrumental in organising the staff restaurant in the basement of 1 Millbank, and later obtaining access to the staff restaurant of the Department for Education.

John's funeral was in Milton Keynes. A number of his NCI colleagues were able to attend. Copies of the speech Colin Bullen gave at his leaving party are available from Colin or the editor in request. The speech includes the following extracts:

“John was educated in Edinburgh, trained as a Chartered Accountant, then as a systems analyst, and spent time working for Thorn EMI and at Mathew Hall, an IT systems development company, before he joined the CC on 11 May 1981.

When he joined us he was joining a department which had, for the most part, been together for over a decade so it must have been somewhat daunting for him to come in at the top, and to make the changes he felt were necessary. Nevertheless he arrived like a whirlwind, his first actions being to dump the majority of the paper files that our previous computer manager Jim Willstead had carefully collected over the years, and to declare that, unlike Jim, he would not be burrowing round the back of machines to get them to work. Mind you he also told me that he would be moving on within 5 years and he stayed for over 28 years! ...

Another thing John liked to do was to bring in new gadgets about which he was filled with enthusiasm, and proceed to demonstrate them. Unfortunately they almost never worked at first so we would all hide in the hope that we would not be obliged to stand there while he struggled with them. To be fair they usually worked in the end. ...

As far as the staff was concerned John was a very good boss. His door was always open, and he never objected to people arguing with him about IT matters, although you needed to convince him of the correctness of your case. He was appreciative of the quality of those working for him and I think I am right in saying that, over the years, everyone achieved promotion within the department thanks to John's recommendations. ...

I believe that John was a regular visitor to Benidorm, and must be one of the few NCIs staff who actually had a pass to the Café Benidorm bar which attracts people such as Peter Andre, Melinda Messenger and Shane Ward. Unfortunately I have no idea who these people are, but I am assured that they are what passed for celebrities at the time. ...

In conclusion I think that, looking back, we had many good years while John was manager. We were creating our own systems, using software which was just becoming available, to provide user departments with what they required, and it was in many ways quite exciting. I know that I enjoyed my many years in the department, and this was in no small measure due to John's management style, and computer know how. He was an excellent boss, a good friend, and a thoroughly good bloke. I shall miss him."

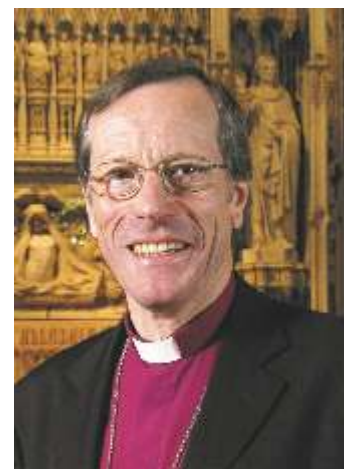
Ruth Webster

Ruth Webster died on 26 July, aged 87. She was the widow of David Webster (see *Contact* 72 for his obituary). With her mother Mitzi, Ruth (née Steindler) had fled Czechoslovakia in 1939, being Jewish, and found refuge in Britain. She was seven at the time. Her father and other family members stayed behind and perished in the camps. She went on to make a life for herself in England, married David, had a family and settled in Tunbridge Wells in Kent. She worked as a freelance Holocaust Educator at the Imperial War Museum and regularly gave talks on the Holocaust in schools. Ruth also instigated and spoke at the annual commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day at her church, St Paul's in Rusthall near Tunbridge Wells.

It was her wish that her funeral should reflect her Czech and Jewish roots as well as her subsequent life as a Christian British citizen. The service ended with an amazing recording made in Prague only months after the Nazi occupation in 1939, when the audience in the National Theatre spontaneously broke into the Czechoslovak national anthem. At the funeral this brought tears to the eyes, and not just to those of the Czechs present.

Bishop Richard Inwood

The Rt Revd Richard Inwood died on 14 April 2019 aged 73. He was a member of the General Synod and of the Crown Appointments Commission, and also served as a Church Commissioner. After serving in the dioceses of Sheffield, London and Bath and Wells he became Bishop of Bedford, and also Chaplain to the international Mothers' Union. After retirement he was asked to take temporary charge of the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.



Bob Beatty

Bob Beatty died on 11 March 2020, aged 85. He was born in Galway, in Ireland, and came to England in 1953 at the age of 19. The notice of his death recorded that “He worked for the Church Commissioners in Millbank for 43 years where he met his partner Barbara. Bob and Barbara shared a love of ceramics and together collected Shelley pottery and joined the Shelley Collectors Club. Sadly Barbara passed away in 1999. ... Bob will be remembered for his dry sense of humour, his excellent general knowledge, his love of country music and his copious corresponding.”

He had been living in a residential home in Reigate, having left his house in Catford in 2018. He had for many years run the Commissioners’ Xerox Department in the 6th Floor of No 1 Millbank. Since his retirement he was a faithful member of the pensioners’ committee, standing down only in 2015.

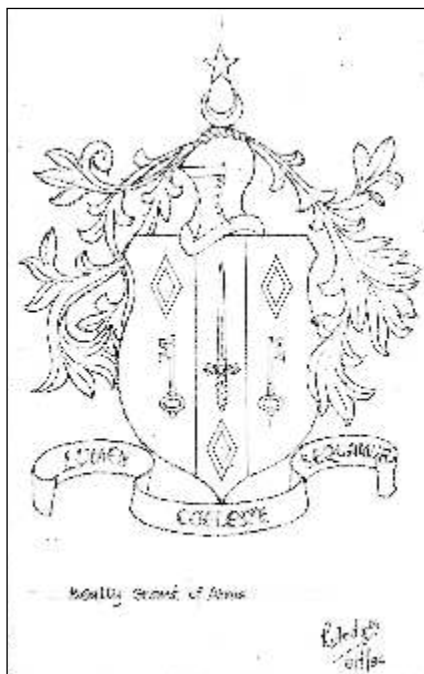
Because of the restrictions caused by the coronavirus his funeral was held privately. It is hoped that a celebration of his life will be held at some time in the future.

Bob was armigerous. His coat of arms is pictured (thanks to Bob Hodges for this beautiful drawing).

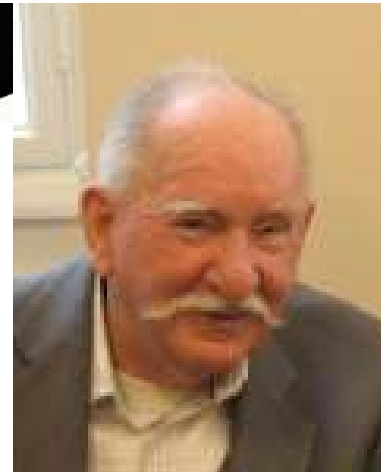
Bob Hodges wrote:

Bob Beatty served with the Commissioners’ staff for approximately 40 years. I only

knew Bob during the last 28 years of his life, beginning when I joined the Chief Architect’s Department in 1992. Bob was responsible for managing the Reprographic Department on the top floor of No 1 Millbank. Frequently he was asked to handle highly confidential minutes of the meetings between the Church



Commissioners. Not once did he ever betray that trust regarding vital and important affairs, and the consequent documentation remained secret and highly confidential.



Because of his extraordinary length of service at No 1 Millbank Bob could recall a great many senior Commissioners and Secretaries who had left their mark on the affairs of the Church Commissioners, as well as their particular idiosyncrasies.

In private life Bob’s passion was collecting English porcelain, so much so that he became an acknowledged expert in that field. His particular speciality was an in-depth knowledge of porcelain made by Shelley and Wildman. Often he was invited to lecture on Shelley porcelain, and in particular on his own fine collection which had taken years to accumulate. On several occasions Bob was invited to speak at meetings of the Shelley Group in Canada and America, where he made lots of friends amongst those fellow collectors.

Bob had a very dry sense of humour which, combined with an abundant knowledge of most things, appealed to people who knew him well.

I understand that Bob spent a short period after arriving in England working as a cameraman with an international news agency. He spent the remainder of his working life with the Church Commissioners.

His great wealth of personal knowledge combined with his incredible memory was truly remarkable. I am proud to have been one of his friends.

Ed Peacock writes:

If you were a new and junior member of staff in 1971 you soon learned that you should approach Bob properly and with the courtesy that was his due if you wanted your copying done, especially if you wanted it done extra quickly. Assuming that

he and his colleagues would jump to it if you gave some peremptory instruction was, er, a mistake. So too was trying to get away with sending up some personal papers for copying: I tried that and the folder came back empty save for my document and a short but clear and negative pencilled note from Bob.

Bob understood the ways of the office and would go out of his way to help me when Private Secretary cope with the exigencies of getting out the papers for the Commissioners' Board of Governors.

He was a great friend of Ruth Roderick, one of the secretaries on the First Floor at Millbank in the 1970s, and did much to look after her in her last years. For example, while she was in hospital her flat in Lewisham was burgled. He knew it would break her heart if she saw her flat in the state the thief had left it and, knowing too that she could no longer live alone, he made the arrangements for her to go into residential care without having to go back there.

He was proud to be Irish and would talk entertainingly about his visits to Ireland and to North America. He was on the pensioners' committee because he cared about his former colleagues. RIP.

Maureen Webb writes:

Getting familiar with Bob Beatty's working methods was a huge part of getting to know the Commissioners as a whole. No matter what he said, he never let a circulation of the Board of Governors, Assets Committee or other Committee papers go awry because of any failing on his department's side. He was a kind person who will be greatly missed.

Jamie Milford writes:

I recall that Bob's early experiences with the Christian Brothers jaundiced his feelings for organised religion. As for the Document Reproduction Unit, when notified that a particular piece of copying could not be processed quickly I gradually effected a method of engaging him in a general chat and, on returning to my desk, receiving a call to say he'd done the copying after all. I think others had the same experience.

Lord Habgood

The Rt Revd Lord Habgood died on 6 March 2019, aged 91. He served as Bishop of Durham from 1973 to 1983, then as Archbishop of York from 1983 to 1995. As such he was a President of the General Synod and on the Commissioners' Board of Governors. His obituary in the *Church Times* is available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

The Venerable Geoffrey Walton

Geoffrey Walton died on 23 July 2020, aged 86. Between 1969 and 1975 he was Recruitment Secretary for the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry (ACCM). He left to become Vicar of Holy Trinity, Weymouth, and his subsequent ministry included serving as Archdeacon of Dorset from 1982 to 2000.

Bishop John Neale

The Rt Revd John Neale died on 17 July 2020 at the age of 93. He served from 1963 to 1966 as Recruitment Secretary at the Central Advisory Council for the Ministry (CACTM) and then at the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry (ACCM) until 1968. His subsequent ministry included his time as Bishop of Ramsbury (1981 to 1988) and then as Secretary to Partnership for World Mission (PWM) from 1989 to 1991.

His *Church Times* obituary recalls that "He was the first Bishop of Ramsbury in the modern era, his immediate predecessor having retired in 1075. One Sunday after his consecration, John said in Ramsbury Parish Church that the last time a Bishop of Ramsbury was in this church had been nine hundred years before. A child was heard to ask 'Mummy, is he the same man?'" Copies of the *Church Times* obituary are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Sylvia Brantingham

Sylvia Brantingham died on 31 May 2020. She was 82 and had cancer. She worked in the General Synod Office from 1967 to 1997, and subsequently for the Church Union and then in the Diocese in Europe office. She retired in 2014.

Robin Stevens writes,

“I knew of Sylvia Brantingham when I was new at Church House in the early 90s. She seemed to me to be absolutely necessary to the running of the General Synod meetings and I couldn’t see how things would operate without her.”

Andy Male writes,

“I worked with Sylvia in the General Synod and Diocese in Europe offices. She was cheerful and friendly and a loyal friend and servant of the Church, both as an employee and as a devoted parishioner. She loved her routine and was never happier than doing familiar tasks.”

The *Church Times* gave Sylvia a full half page obituary on 10 July. In it Lord Hope, former Archbishop of York, recalled her help to Bishops when the General Synod met at York University. He wrote, “The halls of residence were most of them pretty basic. Sylvia, however, always saw to it that ‘her bishops’ – the Catholic bishops – had as good rooms as could be had.” [Did the Evangelicals ever realise? - *Editor*] “Moreover, she worked extremely hard to try to satisfy the demands of some Synod members – totally unreasonable many of them – but always with a

good grace and humour. I would often see her at her desk immediately after breakfast and still there at 10 pm and beyond. There could have been no more devoted or committed servant of the Church than Sylvia. She could have told some interesting stories about certain members – yes, and priests and bishops as well. I always thought that she would have made a good member of the Crown Appointments Commission.”

In the *Church Times* obituary ‘a correspondent’ wrote, “The Diocese in Europe’s office manager recalls getting a bit cross with her as she would quietly disappear to say her midday prayers. I also recall how Sylvia never wasted a moment: in the midst of the busyness of answering doors, phone calls, preparing refreshments for visitors and meetings, sorting post, and general office duties, if she had a spare moment, she would be found at her desk quietly reciting the rosary, in all likelihood with a special intention for us all.”

If you are ‘a correspondent’ and would like to add to this in the next issue of *Contact* please get in touch! Copies of the full *Church Times* obituary are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.



Sue Jones

Sue Jones died in November 2021. She served as a solicitor in the Commissioners’ Legal Department for many years, reaching the rank of Official Solicitor. She suffered from the rare degenerative condition called PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy).

Ed Peacock writes:

No matter how busy she was, even as Official Solicitor, Sue was always approachable and could be relied on for helpful advice. A good and respected colleague.

Martin Elengorn writes:

My first rather frivolous recollection concerning Sue was when Andrew Brown made the senior management team go away for a couple of days on a team building exercise to Roehampton of all places. The nadir of this was going to a bowling alley at Tolworth. All the blokey dads were in their element and became very competitive. At the other extreme Sue and I trailed in the last two places. Initially Sue was last but she staged a recovery and overtook me for an honourable penultimate place.

Dr Frank Robson OBE



Frank Robson died in a nursing home in Oxford on 22 April 2020. He had contracted the corona virus. He was Registrar of the Province of Canterbury from 1982 to 2000, was Oxford Diocesan Registrar from 1958 to 1998, and was a founding member (and for many years Chair) of the Ecclesiastical Law Society. He had for many years been a member of the General Synod's predecessor the Church Assembly. In 1991 he was both made OBE and awarded a Lambeth doctorate in civil law.

As Provincial Registrar he was regularly consulted by Lambeth Palace. He was also well known at Church House through his membership of bodies such as the Legal Advisory Committee and his participation at the somewhat arcane formalities surrounding the appointment of diocesan bishops.

In his obituary of Frank Robson in the *Church Times* John Rees, his successor as Provincial Registrar, writes, "What mattered to him was the provision of clear, crisp, and accurate advice given in ways that made immediate sense to the very many clergy, clients and colleagues who received it. ... Those who knew him well would say that his manner was always disarming: his kindness and humanity were often disguised beneath a carefully cultivated façade of curmudgeonliness."

Graham James, domestic chaplain at Lambeth for Archbishops Robert Runcie and George Carey, and subsequently Bishop of Norwich, writes: Frank loved to give the impression of the dour Northerner trapped in soft Southern England. But the cultivated curmudgeonly image did not entirely hide his warm heart and dry sense of humour. We were in frequent contact in my six years as the Chaplain to successive Archbishops when he was Provincial Registrar. His legal knowledge, wisdom and pastoral good sense were frequently needed. Frank never seemed too surprised by the ways some bishops got into a tangle, either personally or professionally. He was

a great sorter out of messes in the advice he gave the Archbishop. He helped me see things in proportion and cooled people down when they were about to go "pop". The better I got to know him the more humour we would find in the things with which we had to deal. It was great preparation for being a bishop myself!

Frank and Helen had a very happy family life. When Frank retired he had a well-deserved dinner at Lambeth Palace hosted by the Archbishop. You could see the pride his family took in his achievements and the strong mutual love."

Eleanor Phillips, personal secretary to Archbishops Runcie and Carey, writes:

Frank was so helpful to the Archbishop, and to all of us on the staff at Lambeth. He seemed to know everything, and never minded my joshing him about his 'legal mumbo-jumbo'. He was always approachable."

Ed Peacock, Administrative Secretary at Lambeth in the 1980s and 1990s, writes:

I handled the paperwork for the Archbishop's considerable ecclesiastical patronage outside his own diocese, at the time when the whole muddled and historic system of appointing incumbents was overhauled by the General Synod. Frank was indispensable in helping us work our way through implementing and then using the reformed system. He would see what the sensible outcome of a problem was and would use his immense legal knowledge to work out the way to get there. He was thus of enormous practical help to the Archbishop and the clergy and the parishes concerned."

Copies of the obituaries that appeared in the *Church Times* and on the Ecclesiastical Law Society and Diocese of Oxford websites are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

The Revd David Johnson

The Revd David Johnson died on 22 April 2020 at the age of 66. He served at Church House as Communications Secretary of the Board for Mission and Unity from 1982 to 1987. He then had incumbencies in the Dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough, but retired on grounds of ill health in 1995. He was also television critic for the *Church Times*.

The *Times* gave him no less than a whole page for his obituary, and his old employer the *Church Times* half a page. His obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* includes the following:

“Based in Church House, Westminster, Johnson, who was always generous in sharing his talents, made good use of his networking abilities. Ecumenical dignitaries visiting from abroad were charmed to be greeted with a hamper from Fortnum and Mason. It is said that on one occasion, when a French Catholic bishop needed to return home in a hurry, Johnson used his contacts in the military to fly him back. During this time, he also served for three years as a Priest-Vicar (Honorary Minor Canon) at Westminster Abbey. Life in central London offered Johnson many opportunities for socialising, which he took up with alacrity.”

The *Times* states of this period that “He was encouraged in some ways by Sir Derek Pattinson, then secretary-general of the Church of England [sic]. He was a key influence on Johnson at this time, acting both as establishment father-figure manqué, but also something of a lord of misrule.” It also records that in his Abbey role David Johnson “would make a point of marching up to unsuspecting American tourists in baseball caps

and barking: ‘Hats off in church!’”

The *Church Times* records that at BMU “his brief included involvement in the pastoral visit of Pope John Paul II in 1982. He much preferred dealing with scarlet cardinals to grey Nonconformists.”

The obituaries also record his reputation as a public speaker, raconteur and prankster. Famously, his japes included the publication in 1981 of an issue of *Not the Church Times*, a parody that even carried advertisements and errata. Andrew Nunn recalls that it included “the Church Notices - Solemn Festival Mass and Touching for the King’s Evil: in the setting *Missa Per Ardua ad Astra* (Bader)”. The *Church Times* remembers its ecumenical headline “Church to covenant with Vanuatu headhunters”.

In 1994 David Johnson and priest-author Toby Forward sent spoof letters to senior churchmen, with the results published as *The Spiritual Quest of Francis Wagstaffe*, the profits from which were shared with a homeless charity. His tricks included asking, for example, for information on who had made the recipient’s toupee, proposing that there be a monument to the Cumberland sausage in Carlisle Cathedral, or suggesting to the Bishop of Norwich a TV series called *Beach Mission* based on *Baywatch*.

The *Times* states that he was also chaplain to Stringfellows night club in London, though it does not say what his duties were there.

Copies of the *Times*, *Church Times* and *Telegraph* obituaries are also available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Alan Davis

The Venerable Alan Davis died on 3 March 2021. Aged 82. He served as the Archbishops’ Officer for Urban Priority Areas from 1990 to 1992, succeeding Pat Dearnley. After leaving Church House he was the Carlisle Diocesan Communications Officer until 1996, and he then served as Archdeacon of West Cumberland until 2004.

The Revd Eddie Carden

The Revd Eddie Carden died on 13 April 2021, aged 65. He was a Selection Secretary in Ministry Division from 2000 to 2005. He then served as Deputy Chief Executive of Chelmsford Diocese until 2008, when he became Chief Executive of the WHCM Christian counselling charity.

Ivy Cheetham

Ivy Cheetham, formerly of the Commissioners' staff, died in February 2019 at the age of 99. She had retired in February 1980.

Tony Ramsey writes:

I believe "Cheetie" started working for the Commissioners soon after the war; certainly she had already been there some considerable time when I first met her in 1973! She spent much of her career in what was then Benefice Payments, where one of her great strengths was to remind everyone of the importance of the payees, whose interests she felt were too easily overlooked. Whenever something went wrong, her constant refrain was "But what about the man?" (meaning the clergyman). At the same time, she had a keen sense of humour and regularly enjoyed joking with both colleagues and diocesan contacts.

When she retired, she moved to Northampton where she was heavily involved in the life of her local Methodist church, as well as keeping busy with sewing and knitting presents, making jam, growing vegetables and maintaining her garden. In her final years, sadly, she was a victim of dementia and had no recollection of her earlier life, but she still had a twinkle in her eye as she died, following a stroke, in February 2019, having just passed her 99th birthday. She had no surviving family, but we offer condolences to her goddaughter, Veronica Booth.

Jamie Milford writes:

Ivy was known as 'Cheetie'. She worked for many years in Benefice Payments. She was very chatty, and enjoyed a conversation!

Christopher Campling

The Very Revd Christopher Campling died on 9 December 2020 aged 95. From 1988 to 1994 he served as Chairman of the Council for the Care of Churches, while he was Dean of Ripon. Copies of his obituary in the *Church Times* (which, curiously, does not mention his work for the CCC) are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Ollwyn Collier

Ollwyn Collier died on 28 September 2021. She worked in the Pensions Board's Housing Department for many years. Ollwyn always attended the Reunion.

Stuart Froment writes:

I started working at the Pensions Board on 6 November 1978. One of the first people I met was Ollwyn, then Ollwyn Hodgskin. The Pensions Board was then in 53/55 Tufton Street and I joined Ollwyn and a young lady called Elizabeth in a ground floor room at the back of number 55. These were in the days before the CHARM Housing Scheme so, apart from issuing mortgages, the Pensions Board owned approximately 150 rental properties and about nine residential homes with one nursing home. Ollwyn worked predominantly on these. Of course, these were the days before computerisation and accounting was done with comptometers.

Mr Geoffrey Lancaster, a head of department, worked in the room above. He was one of the few members of staff who had a swivel chair. He was a portly gentleman and just occasionally a thud was heard when it tipped over backwards and staff had to rush upstairs to his aid.

Later, Ollwyn moved to a top floor front room where the wind made it sound that the manual typewriters were typing by themselves.

Ollwyn always enjoyed visiting family in New Zealand, which she found very beautiful. After retirement, Ollwyn, with family members, always enjoyed meeting up with her friends at the Reunion.

Ollwyn will be greatly missed by all privileged to know her.

Michael Ewart

Michael died in March 2021 after a long illness. He worked in the Commissioners' Pastoral and Houses Departments in the 1980s before leaving to train as a solicitor.

June Inman

June Inman died on 3 January 2021 at the age of 87. After a stint working at Smithfield Market she joined the staff at Lambeth Palace in 1965 and stayed there for 30 years.

Christopher Hill, Assistant Chaplain Counsellors on Foreign Relations and Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs (1974 - 1989), and subsequently Bishop of Stafford and then Guildford, writes:

June was a key member of that department at Lambeth Palace which for many, many years was known not only in the Church of England but throughout the ecumenical world as CFR. The original Council on Foreign Relations was established in 1933 as a hybrid office accountable to both the Church Assembly and directly to the Archbishops. It dealt with Church of England relations with non-Anglican churches overseas. When the General Synod was invented its architects did not like any organisational untidiness but Archbishop Michael Ramsey insisted he needed 'his' CFR. So it was reinvented as the Archbishops' Counsellors on Foreign Relations with the continuing use of expert advisors on the various (foreign) churches: these included high level Foreign Office colleagues.

It was in this fascinating department that June came to work in 1965 situated in an annex to Lambeth Palace we called the Laundry but now referred to as the Wash House. Certainly an occasional amount of ecumenical 'dirty linen' was discreetly washed there from time to time!

June worked with Canon John Satterthwaite, Canon Michael Hamond Moore and later myself on Lutheran, Reformed, Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox relations world-wide but especially in Europe. This entailed some protocol and knowledge of official titles, a sensitive matter especially among the Orthodox. June knew who were their Eminences, Excellencies and Beatitudes. (Roman Catholic matters and student exchanges were covered by myself and June's colleague Anne Tyler.) CFR also covered the Nikaeian Club and the Archbishop's international hospitality and the overseas ecumenical Observers to the Lambeth Conference. June also knew all the foreign clergy in London and wider

and greeted them personally at their annual reception at Lambeth.

June typed immaculately, even under pressure, in the days of manual machines and carbon copies. All paperwork was circulated to the two principals so each 'section' knew what the other was doing. This was standard Foreign Office procedure, accompanied by a brief morning meeting over coffee for all the staff to ensure good communication. This was called 'prayers' again after Foreign Office custom, established years before by the formidable Miss Wallace who created the CFR procedures on the FCO model. June much preferred direct dictation and kept her short-hand up. She wanted direct personal contact rather than an impersonal tape. This also meant she would occasionally ask, 'do you really mean to say that?' She was invariably right and something more diplomatic was substituted.

On occasions when CFR had distinguished ecclesiastical visitors from foreign churches June was always discreetly in attendance ready to help them in any way. But June was also intelligently aware of the occasional suspicious characters who in the days of the Iron Curtain might have had too close a relationship with the KGB, the Securitate, or equivalents!

June was a real local girl from South London, unlike many other secretaries at Lambeth. Though conscious of this she was never daunted by it. She was invariably cheerful and unflappable with a robust sense of humour! Her desk was always clear by 5.30pm! The Archbishop of Canterbury recognised her sterling work through a party for her at Lambeth marking 30 years of service. Didn't she do well!

June began to decline in the last two years especially after a close friend and neighbour died. She kept in contact with Michael Moore and myself and with Mary Cryer. Her God-daughter Michele Sault was able to speak with her (and see her by video link) after June went into hospital following a serious fall. Michele spoke with June just the day before she died.

May June now rest in peace. And may her memory remain a blessing to all who knew her and worked with her.

Prebendary Pat Dearnley

Pat Dearnley died on 12 November 2020 aged 86. He had served at Church House and Lambeth as the Archbishop's Officer for Urban Priority Areas from 1985 to 1990. This was a vital appointment to ensure that the lessons of the *Faith in the City* report were learned and followed up by the Church. He worked with the Advisory Group chaired by Bishop Tom Butler and created the network of diocesan link officers. A contemporary at Lambeth remembers his zeal in making a success of the Church Urban Fund, which he saw reach its initial target of £18 million by the time he moved on.

In his *Church Times* obituary Bishop Butler is quoted as describing him thus: "He was a dedicated, effective and hard-working visionary whose vision for the regeneration of UPA areas and churches basically stemmed, not from any political ideology, but from an uncomplicated Christian faith."

Bishop Colin Buchanan, who wrote the obituary (copies of which are available on request from the editor of *Contact*), adds "As a friend of nearly 50 years who lived locally to him in retirement, I enjoyed his continual probing at the idiocies of the Church of England and his unceasing critique of our political structures."

Tony Granville

Tony Granville died in October 2021, aged 68. He had worked in the Commissioners' office.

Colin and Bernadette Bullen write:

Bernadette and I knew Tony for over 40 years, at the office, as part of the Deansbank walking group, and as a friend with whom we went to restaurants, the theatre and the Opera. He was a reserved, gentle person, who never raised his voice, and was always polite.

He was kind and generous. He regularly visited and helped an elderly lady whom he called 'auntie', although she wasn't his auntie, and he loved animals, nature, and was a vegan out of principle. When on the walks he was always at the back, taking photographs, which meant that a great many contained views of peoples' backsides going over stiles, and he had an unfailing habit of taking frontal pictures of the walkers, just as at least one of them would be blowing their nose!

During lunch on the rambles Tony would always look for onion rings on the menu, which was something we always tried to provide when he visited us, and which will evermore bring back memories of lovely times. He was a proud father, indulgent and supportive to his children, and a good friend to all. He will be very much missed. He has left us far too early.

Bishop John Waine



Bishop John Waine died on 29 December 2020 at the age of 90.

He was Bishop successively of Stafford (1975-1978), St Edmundsbury & Ipswich (1978-1986) and Chelmsford (1986-1996). He chaired the Church

Commissioners' Board of Governors in the 1990s,

during the difficult times of their financial troubles. He was also the Queen's Clerk of the Closet, which earned him a KCVO on his retirement.

His obituary in the *Church Times* on 8 January (copies of which are available on request from the editor of *Contact*) said, "Often described as one of the last prince-bishops of the Church, John had in his heart a strong faith, a deep humanity, and a real love of those around him. A godly man, he said his prayers faithfully, and this was reflected in his preaching."

Barry Wright



Barry Wright died on 9 January 2022. He had been one of the longest-serving staff members for the Commissioners.

A number of former colleagues from Millbank were present at his funeral on 11 February.

Colin Bullen writes:

Although I didn't deal with Barry over work matters very much, I knew him very well because of our mutual interest in sport, particularly tennis and golf. I was usually able to beat him in the former, but it was the latter which was his greatest strength. For a while Alan Guthrie-Jones, Barry and myself played for Deansbank as a team in some competitions and, while Alan and Barry were excellent players, I just made the numbers up. I remember playing in one match when it was actually snowing, and we used red coloured golf balls in the hope of finding them. It was not usually a problem for me, but the other two hit them so far I think we had to give up in the end.

Barry did his bit on the administrative side, sitting on the section committees, and organising the handicaps for our society days, a thankless task, as people usually disagreed with whatever they were allocated.

Barry was a friendly, kind hearted and jolly chap, and he was a thoroughly good bloke. He will be much missed.

Jan Scott writes

"When I joined the office in 1982 on the second day I went for lunch with my Dad who worked in the office too. Barry said to my Dad, who was the bit of skirt you were out to lunch with, Stan? That's my youngest daughter was his reply, whoops, Barry was rather red faced. Barry worked in Redundant Churches Department when I was in Pastoral so our paths crossed regularly. Barry and Fiske were pals and we often all had lunch together. He had a wicked sense of humour but he was a family man through and through, he always talked about his wife Maureen and son Steven".

Robin Hayman

Robin Hayman died during the first lockdown, in 2020. He had served in the Architects Department at the Commissioners.

John Wallace writes

Following the Commissioners' agreement to alter and extend the Ripon and St Edmundsbury & Ipswich See Houses, planning approval was obtained for the work to both houses. At this time Robin was recruited from private practice in the 1980s. Robin and I worked together and he took on the preparation of the detail drawings for the next phases of both projects. The outcome was very successful and well received by both Bishops, their families and staff. Robin went on to look after other See Houses with the same care.

Isobel King, an architectural student joined us for her year-out experience. She shared an office with Robin and he mentored her and she assisted him. Isobel delayed her return to architectural studies and stayed for a second year. During her time working with us she developed hugely in confidence and ability. This said so much about Robin's skills as a mentor and teacher.

Robin's parents lived in Thames Ditton and he continued to live in the family home after he married and thereafter when he inherited it. A rare thing to live in one house all your life.

I was reminded of Robin recently watching The Repair Shop programme on television. A few of the experts were wearing two sets of spectacles at the same time to increase magnification. This is something Robin would do when working on the drawing board.

I had great respect for Robin and enjoyed his company. A quiet man, the phrase "gentleman and scholar" is a suitable one to describe Robin. He will be missed.

John Cheesman

John Cheesman died on 7 December 2021 at the age of 96. He had worked for several decades for the Commissioners, latterly in the Pastoral Department. Born in 1925, John joined Queen Anne's Bounty for a year before doing his National Service in the RAF, mostly in India. When that was over he returned to his old job. He worked for the Church Commissioners (QAB having amalgamated with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1948) until his retirement in 1987. He met his wife Margaret in the Parsonages Department, marrying in 1956.

He brought great knowledge and long experience to his work – for example, his understanding of the Pastoral Measure, its workings and how it could be used to achieve a desired end was unrivalled. He was Chairman of the Millbank Gramophone Society.

He had a dry humour that was not always apparent at first meeting. At his leaving party he told us how he knew that Jim Shelley would become Secretary when he saw him come to work on his first day in a bowler hat. That brought down if not the house then at least the ceiling of the Board Room at 1 Millbank.

After retirement he and Margaret travelled much in this country and Europe in a camper van, known to the younger members of their family as “the ice-cream van”.

A number of former colleagues from Millbank were present at his funeral on 12 January.

Desmond Day writes:

He was always kindly and supportive but very reluctant to agree with any reduction in the departmental staff, when I hinted that perhaps we could release a Clerical Officer, showing his concern both for the staff and the efficiency of the Pastoral Department!

Adrian Garrett

Adrian was the chauffeur to the Bishop of Leicester, died in December 2021 at the age of 63.

Ed Peacock writes:

He was a very good colleague of mine in Pastoral, especially through his kindness, and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the various Measures we had to operate by (and the ways of getting round those same Measures). I don't remember his losing patience with me when I was slow in the uptake in learning from him! His kindness and sense of humour were special.

Bernadette Bullen writes:

My memories of John Cheesman are centred on the wonderful Gramophone Society during the seventies. We were a small group. The rest of the Commissioners' staff probably found the title a little archaic and perplexing in the post-sixties 'rock' days but the group came together once a month in the Sports and Social room simply to listen to classical music.

We played good old vinyl on equipment built by John himself, and which required some technical knowledge to put together at the beginning of the meeting. The adjacent small sports and social room was used by the Bridge Group who could hear the music, and one week were somewhat dismayed to hear Chopin's "Death March" being played as they looked at their cards! After the meeting, the group would always repair to a local Italian hostelry for reviving food - and a little wine - and the conversation covered an incredible range of subjects, but never touched on work. Good times and wonderful memories.

I did work with John in Pastoral for 6 months where his endless patience and support never really unravelled the mysteries of the Pastoral Measure for me, and my escape to the less interpretative world of number crunching in Accounts came as a relief both to me and Pastoral. I will always remember John's kind and thoughtful manner and the wonderful music and pasta we all shared.

Jacqueline Mary Templeman

Jacqueline died on 7 August 2021.

Sir William Fittall



Sir William speaking at the reunion in 2017.

Sir William Fittall, Secretary-General to the General Synod and the Archbishops' Council from 2002 to 2015, died on 10 March 2022 aged 68.

The Church House website records the following:

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "I am deeply sad to hear of the death of William Fittall, who as well as being a valued colleague was also a dear and much-loved friend for over forty years. His tireless service to the Church of England ... exemplified the kind of man he was: exceptionally able, respected by all, dedicated to the church and committed to Christ.

"As a Reader, and as a gifted organist, he served his local church faithfully for very many years. The Church of England owes him a great debt of gratitude. In the years before he was Secretary-General he was a distinguished and effective civil servant, working on issues of security, reconciliation and seeking to bring hope in dark times.

"I pray for William's family and friends, who will

miss him greatly, to be comforted and sustained by God in this time of grief. May he have found, in the eternal arms of his beloved God, the peace that passes all understanding."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "William Fittall was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and a wise servant of the Church of England. He used his many gifts and talents in the service of the kingdom and will be much missed. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

Sir William notably helped to ensure the passage of the legislation enabling women to be bishops, and the accompanying arrangements. Before joining the Church professionally, his civil service career saw him undertake roles in the Home Office, the Northern Ireland Office and Cabinet Office.

The present Secretary-General, William Nye, who succeeded Sir William, said:

"William will be very much missed by staff in the National Church Institutions, by members of the General Synod, and by many friends and colleagues. He was a dynamo of energy, who contributed hugely to the life of the Church nationally. Many Church House colleagues will recall fondly William's leadership, encouragement and good humour. He achieved very much for the Church, and also for the country in his previous distinguished public service. We hold his wife Barbara and their family in our prayers at this time."

Sylvia Morton

Sylvia Morton died on 9 March 2022 aged 87. She had worked as a secretary first in the Commissioners' Legal Department and then for several years in the Official Surveyor's team. She retired in the 1990s.

Jamie Milford writes:

Sylvia came to the Commissioners as a secretary having previously worked for the Queen's solicitors. After a spell in Legal Dept she joined the Official Surveyor's team, where she remained until retirement in the 1990s.

Sylvia enjoyed socialising over a good lunch but a long commute to and from Bournemouth restricted her opportunities to take part in Sports and Social Club activities. After retirement Sylvia and her husband Philip settled in Orpington where they were active members of their local church.

In recent years Sylvia experienced various health problems and became increasingly frail. Following her husband's death in 2021 she moved to a care home near Orpington where she died.

Bob Hodges



Bob Hodges died on 14 December 2021, aged 87. He had served in the Commissioners' Official Architect's Department. Before that he had worked as a cathedral architect, notably at Gloucester, Durham and York.

He was for many years a member of the NCI Pensioners' Committee and still was at his death, taking a keen interest in pensioners' business and activities.

His knowledge of ecclesiastical architecture was great and he had many stories to tell of his adventures high up in Cathedrals or other church buildings (not excluding Millbank itself). Over the years he contributed several articles to *Contact*. Letters from him were instantly recognisable for his beautiful handwriting, as clear as any of his architectural drawings. An example of his penmanship is his drawing of Bob Beatty's coat of arms on page 8.

His funeral was held on 20 January at Chevening church, near Sevenoaks. It was where he had worshipped for many years, which he loved and which contains several things he had designed or made. He was described at the funeral as "a lovely chap", "a gentleman" and "a good Christian".

Maureen Webb writes:

I remember especially our joint efforts to get installed the sundial Patrick Locke had chosen as his leaving gift. Since then I have thought often of Patrick and Bob and the work it took to get the

sundial to its pride of place in the Locke garden.

John Wallace writes:

Bob joined the Commissioners after leaving Stephen Dykes Bower's practice, the Cathedral Architect for St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Bob came to fill a vacancy in the See Houses team. After a while he was given his own portfolio of properties to care for and manage.

The St Albans See house in Abbey Gate Lane was one property that benefitted from his skills and knowledge. The See house was to be extended on the ground floor and as it was a listed building Bob was well placed for the project. During the very early stages Bob discovered that the location for the extension was scheduled as the site of an Ancient Monument, as there were Roman remains below. Bob dealt with that situation in his usual assured way.

All went well and the house was extended. Bob had introduced an internal corridor that bypassed the new extension to maintain privacy for the Bishop's family: he called this a 'slype'. This was Bob using his Cathedral knowledge, as a 'slype' is a narrow corridor or covered passage found in cathedrals or monasteries. The Bishop was amused.

Following his retirement, Bob was a very active member of the NCI Pensioners Association for many years. In addition, Bob kept busy helping with the care of his local church – St Botolph's in Chevening. This was enjoyable rather than a chore.

I enjoyed Bob's company he was kind, considerate and scholarly. He will be missed by many.

Canon John Rogan

Canon John Rogan died on 15 April at the age of 91. He was Secretary of the Church of England Industrial Committee from 1961 to 1966. After leaving London he served as Vicar of Leigh, Provost of St Paul's Cathedral in Dundee, and Residentiary Canon and Chancellor of Bristol Cathedral. His obituary in the *Church Times* on 19 June described him as "a man of learning, dignity, compassion, and fun", one who "brought sparkle and insight to important issues within both the Church and society." Copies of the *Church Times* obituary are available on request from the editor of *Contact*.

Alec Atkins

Our last issue carried notice of the death of Alec Atkins. *Bob Woodhouse has now written:*

It's always very sad to discover colleagues who have passed away. I remember Alec Atkins well. He also ran a pub in South Wimbledon. It was known locally as "The Black Hole" as it was so dark inside. I forget its actual name, "The Killkenny" rings a bell? Now a well known Irish Music pub.

I also recall that the CC were selling off some of the old furniture to staff at knockdown prices. Tables, chairs, desks, typewriters, etc. Alec was then Welfare Officer and responsible for overseeing this. I went to see him in his ground floor office in Great Peter Street. I was interested in buying one of the many old clocks that were dotted around the building.

I found it to be a rather awkward encounter. Why did I want one of the clocks? Who told me they were for sale? Etc. Etc. I felt like I was being interrogated. I told Alec to forget it and stormed out of his office, in a bit of a huff. Unknown to me, a few days later the clock I was interested in was stolen! If I ever encountered Alec again in the corridors of the office, I was always given a suspicious glare!

Alec also played Rugby. I was in a band and we played at one of his rugby club dances at "The Crown" in Morden. Another disaster.

However it's very sad to hear he has left us. May he rest in peace.

Marjorie Pryor

Mrs Marjorie Pryor died peacefully on 24 April 2019, aged 93. She was the widow of Maurice Pryor, former Financial Secretary at the Church Commissioners.

Helen Stonham

Helen Stonham died on 4 February 2019. She had joined the Pensions Board in July 1976 and left on 30 September 1997.

Stuart Froment writes:

Helen Stonham was a valued member of the Pensions Department of the Church of England Pensions Board for many years, serving in a secretarial capacity, first at 53-55 Tufton Street and then 7 Little College Street.

Helen's father had been a British doctor in India, and Helen came to England by a long and difficult voyage. Helen's flat in Westminster was full of fine Indian carpets and artefacts. Her mother was a beautiful actress, and there were portraits of her in the flat that were of museum standard. Helen lived with her mother, who often popped into the Pensions Board. They shopped frequently in the Sainsbury's then on Victoria Street, and bought baskets of fruit and vegetables from the Strutton Ground market stalls.

After her mother's death, Helen kept on the flat. Helen was a 'Zone 1' person, who was very reluctant indeed to accept an invitation outside central London. She is remembered fondly by those who knew her.

Caroline Mockford

Caroline Mockford died on 5 March 2019 at the age of 57. She had been Provincial Registrar for the Archbishop of York for only three years. She had previously served for six years as Registrar to the Bishop of Lincoln until she became York Diocesan Registrar in 2014.

For NCl's pensioners • annexe to issue no 73 • march 2022

CONTACT

Remember our website!

<http://www.bullen.website/penindex.htm>

Thanks to Colin Bullen for managing it.

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