



St Augustine of Canterbury, Belvedere

'GUS'S GOSSIP' October 2020

Parish Prayer – St Augustine of Canterbury Belvedere

Almighty God, who of your tender mercy did send your servant Augustine to preach the Gospel to our forebears; grant to us their children, both to follow the holy doctrine which he taught and with courage and love to declare your name to those who know you not.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen

Welcome to the October edition of Gus's Gossip, our occasional newsletter.

There's a Rat in me Kitchen... - Margaret Raymond

As many of you may know, my late husband Tom was a keen photographer and was lucky enough to have several photographs published.

Recently, while going through some of his photos, I came across a picture of the old church hall, just before it was demolished.

Finding this picture brought back many memories to both me and my son Edward. Social gatherings, uniformed organisation meetings, fund raising efforts, Christmas markets, fetes and New Year's Eve celebrations.

If you were ever unfortunate enough to be the first person across the threshold, you had to make as much noise as possible in order to give the small four legged residents the 'heads up'. Although they were rarely actually seen, their presence was always there so food could not be left laying round.

There was only one toilet in the building, and it was only ever visited if you were truly desperate.

It was during one of the many fundraising events that I met our late, and much loved Church Warden Elizabeth Sellick. She walked over to me and said "You're Edward's mother aren't you?" I said, "Yes." I didn't really feel I could say anything else. She had a way about her that was very friendly and comforting. Probably due to the fact that she had been a school teacher in her younger years. She continued, "Are you coming to the Mothering Sunday service tomorrow?" I replied, "Yes." She then said, "Oh good. You can do the mother's reading."

This was the first time I read in church. Within a month I was included in the readers list and gave readings regularly. Edward was eight years old at this time and had just started as one of the first cub scouts in the 6th Erith (St Augustine's) pack.

We had some wonderful times in the old hall, too many to recall except for a couple. The Scout group did a production of 'Oliver' as part of their annual gang show. Who could forget Don Drew, another of the Church Wardens, playing a very convincing 'Fagin' singing 'You've got to pick a pocket or two boy'. Eventually the hall reached a point where it was becoming financially unviable to stay in its current format and urgently needed updating or replacing.

As part of the effort, a fund raising team was put together and funds were raised to build the new church hall. The fund raising team comprised of Mavis Stagg, Margaret and Denis Lawrence, Mary and Peter Pocock, Don and Jean Drew, and many others who worked tirelessly along with Father Len and his wife Monica. During one summer fete, in an effort to raise more funds, Fr Len volunteered to place himself in the stocks and have various sponges and buckets of water thrown at him. His volunteering no doubt fuelled by a drop or three of Harry and Gloria's rum punch. The rum punch was always a very welcome and necessary ingredient for any church do.

As a result of our parishioners' efforts, the new hall was built and it is still in use today. With its modern facilities, it is such an asset to parish life today.

A picture of the old hall can be seen below.



After attending church recently, I was asked to volunteer a favourite hymn or two. It was only after trying to think of one that I realised that I didn't actually have a particular favourite. Yes there are hymns I am fond of, hymns that evoke memories but none that I could say could be considered a favourite. If I was pushed I would suggest the hymn "For the beauty of the earth".

I have always enjoyed travelling and the words of this hymn remind me of God's creation and bounty. I particularly like verse 4 which begins: For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child. Friends on earth and friends above...

My second choice is "Will your anchor hold in the storm of life".

I first heard this hymn while on holiday in Cornwall. It was played by a silver band, accompanied by a local male voice choir. It was sung with gusto on the village harbour wall during a local Carolare. The male voice choir regaled us with sea shanties through the evening. Whenever I hear the male voice choir, based in St Keverene. It takes me straight back to that evening with positive memories of holidays past. The Carolare was usually televised on BBC1's Songs of Praise and if we happened to be staying in the village when it was on, we would always try to watch Songs of Praise the following Sunday in order to see if we had had our five minutes of fame.

My final choice would be "Be thou my vision."

I have always enjoyed singing this hymn in that version of the tune. My son had "Lord of all hopefulness" to the same tune for his wedding. A good all round hymn.

Fr Michael's Memoirs - 5: Teenage Years.

Just before I became a teenager in 1953, two (or perhaps I should say three) significant events occurred. I've already referred to one of them - the Coronation of Elizabeth II on 2nd June: that was a great national event. The others were more personal - on the evening of the last day in June I was confirmed in Saint Barnabas' Church, Epsom, by the Bishop of Guildford, Henry Montgomery-Campbell. And then - following what was general practice at the time - a month later I made my first Holy Communion at the 8am Eucharist on 26th July: then home for breakfast and back for the Sung Eucharist at 11 o'clock.

Being confirmed meant that I could become a full member of the serving team. And, as it turned out, a sacristan too. Miss Littler (of whom I've written before) took her holiday that August, and she asked me to do her sacristy duties while she was away' So - aged just 13 - I was given a church key and turned up each morning to get things ready for the daily mass, and, if no other server was present, to serve. I learned a lot about the vestments, the sacred vessels, the altar linen and the service books: But - far more important than all that - I learned the central importance of the daily mass in the life of the parish and of the parish priest. I learned that it is at the altar that the priest, and the faithful, however few, who join him, bring the needs of the parish and of the wider world before God. It's a lesson I've never forgotten.

The following autumn a new Vicar arrived. There was no long 'interregnum' because the two priests exchanged benefices (I'm not sure whether that's a practice still allowed). Fr Allan Long was to be Vicar of St Francis for over twenty years, and it was he who nurtured my vocation to the priesthood, prepared me for my first sacramental confession, and set me an example of a priestly life centred on the mass, and with the daily public praying of Morning and Evening Prayer.

Of course there were social events as well: Parish socials with music and drama, including plays about our Patron, Saint Francis - more opportunities for me to mount the stage! And I became a member of the two church youth clubs - Thursday evening, open to anyone, and on Sunday "The Young Franciscans" - more serious and only for those of us - quite numerous - who came to church at least once on Sunday. In addition I had become a Sunday School teacher - unusually being asked to take youngest children. Church life was quite full!

Memories of a Church Organist - Jeremy Ducker

My father being a church organist and my childhood being surrounded by church music, there was an inevitability that I would follow in his footsteps and subsequently have played the church organ for 60 years. My first post as organist was at Swanley Village at the age of 17 and was slightly marred by the fact that my predecessor had run off with the vicar's wife. I was also organist at St Andrew's Bostall Heath in the early 60s and my father succeeded me and played there for many years. I have been organist in many churches including Warmley Parish Church in Bristol, St Catherine's Merston, St Barnabas Cheam and the American Church in Geneva when I worked there with the Civil Aviation Authority. When the CAA job became static I was appointed organist at All Saints' Belvedere when the late great Dick Barnes was vicar and Barbara Russell's daughter, Jo, was my head chorister.

In latter years I was organist at St Mary's Welling & St John's Erith until it became apparent that the new priest preferred a music group to the organ. Fr Paul Wright contacted me the day I left St John's asking me to cover for their organist at St Paulinus Crayford who was having a 6 week

sabbatical. I was asked to stay on as deputy organist which I did for 5 years and both Donna & I sung in the choir. I also joined the bell ringing team there. When the post of organist at Christ Church Bexleyheath became vacant in 1998 I applied because of the wonderful Hunter organ there and stayed for 15 years during which time I gave many recitals. Since 'retiring' as organist I have played regularly twice a month at St Martin's Barnehurst and covered for John at St Augustine's - two very contrasting churches!

As an organist you have to learn to be a jack of all trades. Midweek funerals can have you setting up the church, ringing the bell, playing the organ, leaping off the organ to ring the bell again and then clear up afterwards. On one occasion at St Paulinus I was just packing up my music when the then rector, Fr Anthony Lane, rushed back in and said "Keep playing Jeremy, the coffin is coming back - the hole isn't big enough!" I duly played for another half an hour while the situation was rectified. The best funeral I played for was a few years ago at All Saints, Belvedere and was for the drummer of the Monty Sunshine Band who accompanied such greats as Lonnie Donegan & Acker Bilk. His coffin was led through the streets by a New Orleans style Jazz band and we ended up having a jamming session mid-way through the service.

In my time I have played for many weddings. There was one notable occasion that started with all the congregation leaping onto the pews as the bride entered. The priest then gave the bridegroom a hymn book and the bride, at the top of her voice said "Don't give him one, he can't read." At the end of the service, two young choristers ended up in tears because some wedding guests had removed money from the collection plate instead of putting it in! Another notable wedding was when 2 of the bridesmaids had a fight during which a shoe went flying over my head while I was trying to play a hymn. My favourite wedding story is that of an irate mother at Christ Church Bexleyheath. It was a choir-less wedding and a CD was being played during the signing of the register. The CD wouldn't play at which point the mother ran to the sound system to rectify the situation and her words "If this doesn't play I'm going to kill that bleeding vicar!" resounded around the church, the microphone still being on.

My biggest love as an organist is improvisation. It is the thing that has always given me great satisfaction. I attended several improvisation courses with my then teacher, Gerard Brooks, and various guest tutors including Martin Baker, ex-organist at Westminster Cathedral and Sophie-Veronique Cauchefeur-Choplin, organist of St Sulpice, Paris. I particularly enjoy improvising on Welsh hymn tunes.

Although recent health and sight issues have prevented me from playing as often as I would like to, I am hopeful that I will be able to continue playing into the future.

As to my favourite hymns - anything with a Welsh tune is always enjoyable. 'Guide me o thou Great Redeemer', 'Jesu, lover of my soul', 'All hail the power of Jesus' name', 'Alleluia, Sing to Jesus'.... I remember after playing 'Guide me o thou Great Redeemer' as the last hymn at St Augustine's one Sunday, Tom Raymond told me that he thought I was going to take off from the organ seat! If pushed I would say 'Love divine, all Loves Excelling' to the tune Blaenwern of course with 'Angel Voices Ever Singing' and 'Christ Triumphant' as my top three.

From Fr Clive's 2nd Cousin – Major Michael Jones

Part 1. In The Beginning....

I entered the Salvation Army Sunday school at the age of 10 and was later enrolled as a Junior Soldier. I learned to play a brass instrument, and finished up in the band at the age of 15, playing a cornet beside my Uncle Charlie.

As the pages of my life turned, I married, and my wife and I had two girls Susan and Elizabeth. In 1971 we emigrated to South Africa and settled in Durban, which is sub-tropical, where we attended the Salvation Army. We became involved in a busy church programme there, and were in Durban for 19 years.

In 1990, we were aware of an urging to go into full time service, and sold our house, and moved to Johannesburg. Initially we were appointed to run the Army Trade shop at the headquarters, which provided uniforms, books and bibles, and the many sundries which were needed, like hats, ties and flags. About two years later I was appointed to the Officer (minister's) Training College, and we both served there for over eight years before our retirement to Cape Town in 2002.

The Salvation Army ministry work in Southern Africa covers the provinces of South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho and the island of St Helena in the Atlantic, and for several of our early years also Mozambique, which was recovering from a devastating civil war.

There are many adventures we experienced in serving the Lord in this special ministry among the officer cadets (students) over those years in the training college. My main responsibility as the training officer was to ensure that the training curriculum and the time table was followed. Betty, my wife, was responsible, with the staff, for the domestic side of the college, meals, laundry and cleaning, and welfare of the cadets. This was very fulfilling for us, because although we were not directly serving in a church ministry, we were able to pass on to the cadets our experience, and understanding about the work which would face them through their ministry in centres around the country.

There is a thread which we can trace of the Lord's leading and guidance through the years, and His blessing and grace as we dealt with the challenges of service we were able to offer. We still have letters and contact through email with many with whom we served, and had fellowship with at that time, and value the experience of being involved with that special ministry to white and non-white people there.

I hope to tell you something of the challenges and blessings in future newsletters. God bless you

*The next edition of Gus's Gossip will be a **Christmas Special**. The deadline for articles is Thursday 26th November. We would love to hear your Christmas stories, your favourite Christmas Carols, memories Christmas past at St Augustine's. Please email Fr Clive at frclive@tiscali.co.uk or Donna at staugustineofcanterburypa@gmail.com .*

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Window Cleaning

Fr Clive recently engaged Scott Dillnutt who he met many years ago when chaplain of Trinity School. He did a great job on the vicarage windows 07780 439436 email: scottdillnutt@yahoo.co.uk

Garage

Gilbert Rd Service Station (opposite church) has re-opened for servicing and MOTs....they sponsor our mass sheet so do support them. They service Fr Clive's car and have always proved efficient and reliable.

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