

What does Remembrance Sunday mean to me?

by Colonel Bob Stewart DSO MP
MP for Beckenham

I heard a huge explosion just after 11pm that night, 6 December 1982. It was obviously a bomb. As Major Bob Stewart and the Duty Field Officer of my Battalion, the Cheshires, I immediately rang the Guardroom to find out what had happened. The Guard Commander, a Corporal, said that he thought it was in the 'Shoppin Well Centre', where there was a discotheque which our soldiers used. I jumped in my car and was there in two minutes. The discotheque had been blown apart.

With a torch I went into the dark wrecked building. The first person I came across was one of my soldiers, Private Mark Young who was just 18 years old. He was lying against a bit of wrecked fence in great pain. I knelt down to see what I could do. There wasn't much. I thought he would live and said so to him but he has never walked again.

Further into the gloom I found mangled dead bodies and many other people grievously hurt but surprisingly little noise or screaming. I spoke to and cuddled a girl in my arms as she died. We talked for the two minutes that took. She was incredibly brave and knew she was dying; I believe in a state of grace. It was overwhelming

and utterly awful. She was 18 too. I could do little and wept until I gripped myself. We needed massive help and I had to get to it.

For the next seven hours I became the Incident Commander and tried to coordinate firemen, medics, lifting gear and even the media. Our Padre, John Hooley, moved amongst the debris praying over remains and comforting the wounded as they waited to die or be rescued. Nothing had ever prepared him for what he had to deal with that night. Later I recommended him to be Mentioned in Despatches which he thoroughly deserved and received.

I had been playing squash with my clerk, Lance Corporal Clinton Collins, until I had dropped him off at his house at 8.30pm earlier in the evening. I found him trapped under mangled concrete in the discotheque. His wife Tina was lying beside him. I spoke to her. She was amazingly calm but told me 'Clinton isn't moving'. At 6.30am the next morning, after we had recovered all the living, I sat beside Tina's bed in Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry and told her what she already knew. Clinton never moved again.

After that it took me about five hours, to formally identify my soldiers' bodies in the hospital morgue. What a ghastly duty that was. Clinton Collins was the most difficult. He wasn't physically damaged as far as I could tell but he



Major Bob Stewart in January 1983

looked nothing like the young energetic man who had beaten me at squash the night before.

Seventeen people, eleven of them soldiers and six civilians died that night. All were youngsters. Three of the civilians were girls including the lovely lady who had died in my arms. Six of the dead soldiers were mine and the other five soldiers were from my Battalion or attached to it. Over thirty out of the 120 soldiers in A Company that I commanded were injured too.

A few days later I sat beside the coffins as they flew back to England in a Hercules aircraft. Then I attended six funerals in Cheshire. Five of the six sets of parents put their arms round me at the graveside. What incredible people they were. I felt humbled and guilty. After all I was the officer who was responsible for

their sons. I had failed in that respect. I still feel that way twenty nine years later.

A few days before Christmas 1982, as I came out of St. George's Church in Stockport after my sixth and last funeral I saw an old lady crying on the pavement opposite. I crossed over and tried to comfort her by saying that my soldier was now beyond all pain and safe. She said I didn't understand why she was crying. I remember exactly what she told me. "When I was a very little girl in 1915 I stood here and watched 800 young men of the Cheshires go into that church. They went off to the Somme and when they came back they filled three pews. That's why I'm crying. I'm remembering them as well."

That's what Remembrance Sunday means to me too.

Special Services for the weeks to come

Sunday, 6 November

4.00pm - Service to Remember Departed Loved Ones

A book will be placed in the church porch for you to enter the names of those you would like to be especially remembered at this service. Candles will be lit during the service in memory of our departed loved ones.

Sunday, 13 November - Remembrance Sunday

10.15am - Family Communion and Parade Service

to include the traditional Act of Remembrance, the Two Minutes' Silence and the Laying of Wreaths at the War Memorial.

6.30pm - Choral Evensong

Responses: Radcliffe

Canticles: Dyson in F

Anthem: Turn back O man (Holst)

Sunday, 27 November - Advent Sunday

6.30pm - Advent Carol Service

Readings, Anthems and Congregational Hymns

Sunday, 4 December

10.30am - Toy Service

St. Mary's, Shortlands Advent Dinner and Dance

**Saturday, 3 December, 7.15pm for 7.45pm
at Chislehurst Golf Club**

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**Tickets £39, inclusive of three course dinner with coffee and all age
Dance/Disco, available from the Parish Office (8460 5682)
or from Churchwardens.**



From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:
8 Oct Adam Nowacki

Children Admitted to Holy Communion

We welcome to God's table:
9 Oct Rebecca Aldred
Callum Brown
Alexandra Nowacka
Anya Pearson
Laura Watson
Thomas Watson
Oliver Wright-Jones

Holy Matrimony

We congratulate:
29 Aug James Harper and
Julia Richards
15 Oct Paul Davidge and
Isabelle Sherren

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:
31 Aug Brian Rider, aged 80



Remembering

Brian Rider

Brian was born on 3 September 1930. He grew up and went to school in Edmonton, North London. He left school at 14 and after several jobs, worked as a draughtsman until joining the Air Force to undertake his National Service. He decided on a career in civil engineering and after many years of studying and hard work, achieved this ambition, eventually becoming a partner, and later chairman, of Ernest Green and Partners. Brian helped the business to become a public limited company and in 1986 was honoured with the freedom of London.

Brian met Betty when she was sixteen and they enjoyed 57 years of married life. They had two children and four grandchildren. Brian

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enjoyed rambling and painting - he led walks for the Ramblers Association. They travelled widely and enjoyed their second home in the Channel Islands.

A Service of Thanksgiving, conducted by Canon Paul Miller and the Reverend Jane Peters, was held at St. Mary's Church at which many friends and church members joined Betty, his wife, Graham and Jane, his children, and his grandsons prior to a private burial at Beckenham Cemetery.



Abbe Michel Rimaux to retire

It has been announced that the Parish Priest of St. Francis of Assisi, Douai, Abbe Michel Rimaux, is to retire. No announcement has yet been made about his successor.

Abbe Rimaux has been a keen supporter of the link with St. Mary Shortlands that exists between the two churches.

His last Sunday will be on Sunday, 19 February when representatives from Shortlands will travel to Douai to join his farewell services.

However we are delighted that he will be coming to Shortlands for the annual exchange visit in May and that will give an opportunity for us to give thanks for his ministry and his partnership with us.

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Shortlands Wedding



Julia Richards married James Harper at St. Mary's, Shortlands at a service at which Canon Paul Miller officiated. Julia and James now live in Bahrain where they are both teachers.

Julia was baptised at St. Mary's in 1983, confirmed at St. Mary's in 1996 and had been a member of St. Mary's choir.

Many family, friends and members of the church gathered at St. Mary's for their special day.

(photo by edboydenphotos.co.uk)



'Edwardian Extravaganza'

St. Mary's Christmas Fayre

on

Saturday, 26 November

from 1.00pm - 4.00pm

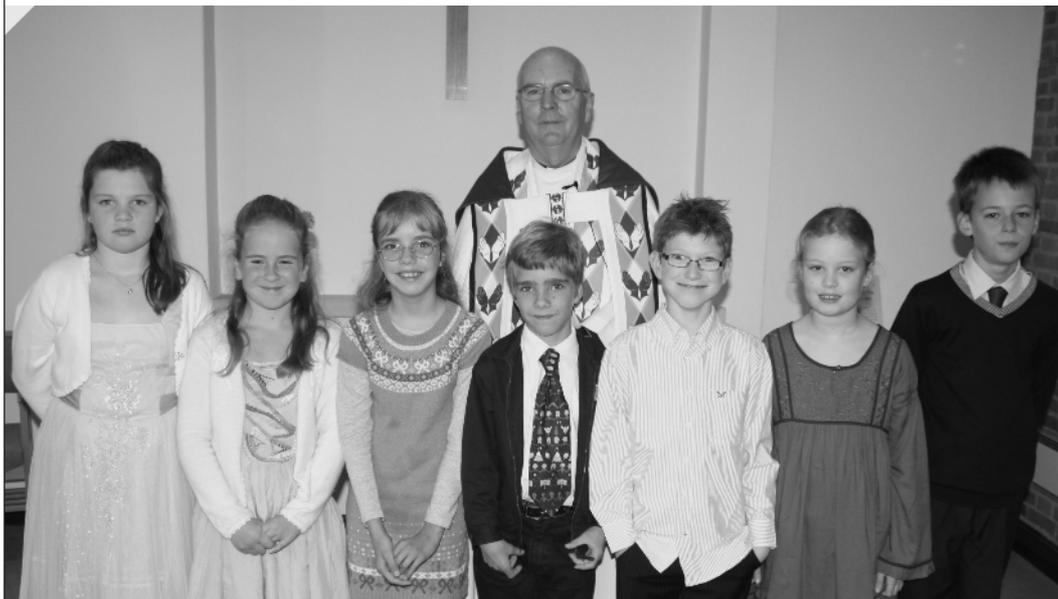
in the Church Hall, St. Mary's Avenue

Light lunches, cards, cakes, gifts, entertainment and by special arrangement - Father Christmas!

We look forward to seeing you.



Children admitted to Holy Communion



Seven children who are part of St. Mary's young people's groups were admitted to Holy Communion at a service at which Canon Paul Miller presided.

Photographed from left to right are Alexandra Nowacka, Anya Pearson, Laura Watson, Thomas Watson, Callum Brown, Rebecca Aldred and Oliver Wright-Jones.

Family and friends of the children travelled from many different places, including a large contingent from Poland.

About 40 parishes in the Diocese of Rochester now admit children to Holy Communion before Confirmation.

In welcoming each child Canon Paul Miller said these words 'in the name of James, Bishop of Rochester and this congregation, I welcome you to the sacrament of Holy Communion. May God bless you as you continue with us on your journey of faith.'

Mission of the Month

St. Christopher's Hospice

St Christopher's Hospice:

exists to promote and provide skilled and compassionate palliative care of the highest quality, was founded by Dame Cicely Saunders in 1967 St Christopher's Hospice was the first modern hospice.

St Christopher's Hospice offers:

- 48 beds on four wards providing in-patient medical and nursing care led by consultants in palliative medicine and experienced and specially qualified nurses
- Home Care led by clinical nurse specialists in teams focused on each of the five local authorities and primary care trust areas – Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark
- The Anniversary Centre which was opened last year offers a 'social hub' for patients and families, and includes a café with internet access, a rehabilitation gym, treatment rooms, a bathing suite, group rooms and a hairdressing salon. They offer a programme of social events which is also open to the general public
- Extensive planned day care and a range of supportive care services, including creative and complementary therapies and delivered in a variety of settings
- Inpatient and home care multi-professional teams that include social workers, chaplain and spiritual care lead, welfare advisers, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, occupational therapist, complementary and creative therapists, bereavement service volunteers and others
- St Christopher's Candle Project is a specialist service for all bereaved children and their families. It offers individual and group support, a national telephone advice line, consultancy and training
- Major programmes of education and research

On any one day, St Christopher's at home service cares for around 600 people in their own homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

St Christopher's Candle Project works with more than 250 bereaved children and their families each year.

St Christopher's cares for over 2000 adults each year. Each year they provide over 15,000 days of care on their wards and support around 2,000 people in their own homes.

It costs over £14 million to deliver all the services. Only about a third of this comes from the NHS. This means that they need to raise more than £9 million from supporters and the local community.

This charity is our Mission of the Month for November. There will be a display on the Missions notice board during November and further information can be found on www.stchristophers.org.uk

Beckenham and Rochester vote in favour of women bishops

The clergy and laity of the Beckenham Deanery Synod at its latest meeting voted in favour of the proposed legislation whereby women may be ordained as Bishops.

The legislation has been passed down by the General Synod, the Church's parliament, to all 44 Diocesan Synods to express their views, and in turn the Rochester Diocesan Synod passed it down to the 17 Deanery Synods, of which Beckenham is one.

Canon Paul Miller, the Area Dean of Beckenham, reported that the debate had been well attended. They heard the Theological Advisor to the Archbishop's Council, Dr. Martin Davie, clearly explain the 'for' and 'against' of the proposed legislation and thereafter a debate followed. The voting was in houses, the House of Clergy voted 6 'for' and 4 'against', the House of Laity voted 20 'for', 9 'against' with 2 'abstentions'.

The voting of the Deanery Synod was taken note of at the Rochester Diocesan Synod debate which was held in mid October at Trinity School, Belvedere. It was announced there that 15 of the 17 Deanery Synods had approved the legislation, with 2 Synods voting not as prescribed and therefore were not included.

And the result of the Diocesan Synod debate was:

House of Bishops:	'for' 2	'against' 0	'abstentions' 0
House of Clergy:	36	12	0
House of Laity:	34	11	2

The General Synod will debate and vote in February 2012.

Highfield Junior School Governor Vacancies

Highfield Junior School currently has some vacancies on the Governing Body for local community governors. Community governors usually live or work within the community served by the school or are committed to the success of the school. The role of a community governor is the same as every other governor, they all work as a team who, together with the head teacher, make key decisions vital to the successful running of the school. As a school governor you can make a really positive impact on children's education.

So please do consider whether you would be willing and able to contribute some of your time and expertise to ensure that Highfield Junior School continues to be an outstanding school. Please feel free to contact any of the governors for an informal chat.

Contact details can be obtained from the school office (020 8460 2597) or from the website: www.highfield-jun.bromley.sch.uk

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WORSHIP

Every Sunday

- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except the first Sunday in the month in term time. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 0-18.
- 10.30 All Age Eucharist or Parade Service (1st Sunday in the month, term time).
- 18.30 Choral Evensong (3rd Sunday in the month)

Every Monday

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

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