

Roundabout



**The Cotteridge Church
Witnessing at the Heart of the Community**

January 2020

Mike's message ...

Membership and Confirmation

If you're reading this you are part of our valued family here at The Cotteridge Church.

But are you a church member?

Maybe you're not certain. Maybe you don't know what I'm talking about. Maybe you didn't think being a member was anything different from attending on a Sunday or during the week.

The Cotteridge Church operates a Membership List. If you attend on Sunday, or are part of our church life during the week in any way, then you belong here, you are part of our family. Becoming a member is the next important step on the journey. Only members can help out, or have a say, in certain aspects of church life. I would very much like you to become a member if you aren't already. Stop me and talk to me about it.

The Cotteridge Church offers you the chance to make this step of commitment by being 'confirmed' and 'received into membership'. This means that there is a service in which you make promises - these are the same promises that are made when someone is baptised. **That service will be on Sunday 1st March at 10.30pm** when the Bishop of Birmingham will be joining us. Here at The Cotteridge Church when you become a member you automatically become a member of The Methodist Church, The United Reformed Church and The Church of England. Three-for-One! Once you are a member you keep your membership of those churches, whichever congregation you become part of if you move in future.

I need to know who is interested in making this step of faith as soon as possible.

Please let me know in person or by email at
mike.claridge@thecotteridgechurch.org.uk

These are the components of membership. A church member will promise to:

Worship within the local church, including regular sharing in Holy Communion, and through personal prayer

Learning and Caring, through Bible study and meeting for fellowship, so that I may grow in faith and support others in their discipleship

Service, by being a good neighbour in the community, challenging injustice and using my resources to support the Church in its mission in the world

Evangelism, through working out my faith in daily life and sharing Christ with others.

By the way, if you have been a church member in another church then we can add you to the membership list anyway. Again, let me know. Also if you are uncertain as to whether you are a member already or not, ask me.



Good News!

Three names that have been appearing on our prayer list recently are Freddie, Lauren and Adam and I thought you might like to know that Freddie has been successfully treated for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and that they are relatives of Suzanne Bunn. I have been keeping in touch with her mum Chris Dixon who has been sending me updates on Freddie's condition...here is what she last wrote

"I'm sure all the prayers that so many people have said for him have helped. People who don't know him, as well as those who do. His journey has been hard, with awful episodes of almost uncontrollable pain, mouth ulcers, stomach cramps, infections galore. Days when you wonder how one little boy can stand it. Days when you wonder how his parents have coped, but they did, marvellously. Days when we, Ian and I have felt useless, always wanting to protect our children and grandchild, as any parent would want to do, taking away their pain, even though in my case none of them is mine by blood, only by love for them all. The continuing love, support, prayers and practical help that people have given us all has been a blessing, and we thank them all from the very bottom of our hearts. We're also so very grateful to the medical staff who often were overworked, but never grumpy,



always ready with a smile and comfort, not only for Freddie, but all the other poor children on his ward, some of whom may not have the same outcome as we so thankfully have had. When mum and dad, Lauren and Adam, came out, after an hour with the consultant with Freddie between them, with a smile on his face, Ian, Adam's dad, and Liz, Lauren's mum were there for them to share the good news, before phoning us to tell me and Lauren's dad the good news. On another point, over thousands of pounds have been raised for Bloodwise, the charity for leukaemia and related blood cancers, (Freddie had Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma), with Suzanne Bunn kicking it off doing a double marathon, and raising the first £1,000 plus, then there were many other groups and individuals raising money for toys, and equipment for the ward he was on. Money was also raised by Lauren's brother, uncle and friends, along with Adam's workmates and friends, and motor racing marshals at Donington race track. Our "I'm Phab" group for the disabled also gave money raised from raffles, and a local youth group raised money to help the family. At a wild guess the amount given for the hospital and various related charities is approximately £10,000 plus. So many people were willing to give money to help, as they felt helpless in any other way. Freddie is now looking forward to the future when he's grown up and can work with birds of prey as a falconer - he loves nature, animals, the countryside and birds - and of course any techie gadget he can find!! Love and best wishes to you all for your prayers and kindness, and here's wishing everyone a loving and peaceful Christmas xxx "

Lin Brown

Friends & Family

Congratulations to Hazel Nash, who joined the octogenarian club on 6th January. Sadly we record the deaths of Ian Walters, brother of Neil in November, of Joyce Clarke, whose memorial service was held at Cotteridge on 4th December, and Pat Walker who also died in December. Her funeral takes place at Cotteridge on 7th January. Pat will be best remembered by many of us for her long service to the Girls' Brigade.

It was good to welcome Ivor Ravenhill back with us after a stay in the Queen Elizabeth hospital.



We bade a fond farewell to Jane & Graham Jones as they begin a new life in Cornwall. They have worked tirelessly for our church for many years, and we wish them much joy in



their new home. Jane cut the tape to open officially the new safe area for young people.

[If you would like to share an event with us, in Friends & Family, please let me have it - anytime will do. Editor]

New year resolutions

Some 4,000 years ago, the Babylonians were probably the first people who made promises to their gods at the start of each year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts. Doing this would let their pagan gods bestow them with favours. For them the new year began in mid March, rather than January 1st - to coincide with the crop planting.

In around 46 B.C. Julius Caesar tampered with the calendar and made 1st January the beginning of the new year in honour of the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named. Janus has two heads -one looking back, the other forward.



For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future. In the medieval era, the knights took the "peacock vow" at the end of the Christmas season each year to re-affirm their commitment to chivalry.

In 1740, the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Also known as watch night services, they included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the raucous celebrations normally held to celebrate the coming of the new year.

This tradition has many other religious parallels. During Judaism's New Year, Rosh Hashanah, through the High Holidays and culminating in Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), one is to reflect upon one's wrongdoings over the year and to both seek and offer forgiveness. People can act similarly during the Christian liturgical season of Lent, although the motive behind this holiday is more of sacrifice than of responsibility. In fact, the Methodist practice of New Year's resolutions came, in part, from the Lenten sacrifices. The concept, regardless of creed, is to reflect upon self-improvement annually.

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are mostly a secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through). According to recent research, while as many as 45% of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, only 8% are successful in achieving their goals. But their dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions - after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice.

*What are **YOU** going to do?*

With thanks to Wikipedia, and history.com Celia Lester

**A big thank you to all the supporters of the book sales
and photo competitions.**

The photo displays raised £90 for the Day Centre to buy little extras for the clients, A thank you from them! The next theme Light is going well and this will close towards the end of January. Plenty of time to get a photo in! Thank you for your continued support.

The next theme in Spring will be Flowers which should make a very colourful display.

The book sale target was £1,500 but, thanks to all the support it received, we exceeded the target. When the final total is available I shall put it up in Pennine Way The books were very varied and attracted readers of all tastes.

I have enjoyed stocking the shelves - as you know books/literature is an interest of mine - and I have made a lot of new friends through sale of the books.

Please support the venture in 2020 as the money raised benefits all the various areas of the church. Keep reading to benefit us all.

Linda Woodhouse

Boys' Brigade



Our Anchors and Juniors have been collecting items for the foodbank and they were handed over to Helen Gale before Christmas.



At the church Christmas fair the company ran the tombola stall and raised £78.

Many thanks to all the church members, relations and friends who made a donation to our BB week. The final figure was £640.81

Chris Butt and Euan Clayton have now completed their Youth Leaders Training. Our Christmas party was a great success and enjoyed by everybody. Finally thanks to all of our staff who give up their time each Friday to look after all the boys.



Bob Hotchkiss

Services for January and February

	5th January	12th January	19th January	26th January
9.00 am HC	Revd M. Claridge	Revd R. Collins	Revd M. Claridge	Revd R. Collins
10:30 am	Revd M. Claridge P	Revd R. Collins HC	Revd M. Claridge	Revd R. Collins HC
6:30 pm	Revd M. Claridge HC	Café Church	Revd R. Collins HC.	7.30 pm PNP
	2nd February	9th February	16th February	23rd February
9.00 am HC	Revd M. Claridge	Revd R. Collins	Revd M. Claridge	Revd M. Claridge
10:30 am	Revd M. Claridge	Revd L. Dixon HC	Miss S. Spencer	Revd M. Claridge HC
6:30 pm	Revd R. Collins HC	Café Church	Revd M. Claridge HC	Miss Hazel Nash

Service types: HC - Holy Communion P - Parade PNP Political Night Prayer

 denotes Young Church

Communion Services are held each week at 10.00 am on Tuesdays



The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council
Summary of Proceedings 17th October 2019

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed to discuss with Rainbows, Brownies and Guides if they could provide their own security on Tuesday Nights
2. It was agreed not to make Catering Services a separate enterprise from the Church
3. The JCC agreed that the day to day management of the kitchen would be performed by Alex Woodhouse
4. Subject to the contract with the Robins Care Home an apprentice should be taken on in the Kitchen
5. It was agreed that C2U would help develop a marketing strategy for the Coffee Bar
6. The continuation of Pam Waddell as Chair of Catering Services was approved
7. The changes required to make the Church's revised constitution compatible with the Churches in England model constitution were approved
8. It was agreed that 125 cloth chairs in Cinnamon (20 with arms) for the Malvern Room should be purchased. With 25 vinyl chairs in Skylight for the Cotswold Room, 40 vinyl chairs in ROT for the Pennine Way and 15 cloth chairs in Cinnamon each for the Chiltern and Cheviot rooms, along with 6 trolleys

Summary Proceedings

1. Laurie Brown reported he had attended a domestic abuse course and is registered as the contact person, but for practicality he had nominated David Pycock and Mike Claridge as the initial contact points
2. The need for two doors from the Chapel and the Ministers vestry was discussed and it was noted that it was not possible to move the AV desk through the door into the Cotswold room as it was too narrow
3. The treasurer reported that the Church is in a deficit of recurrent expenditure and there was a need to think carefully how to trim expenditure and/or boost income
4. It was reported that the membership of the Church had reduced to 162
5. It was reported that a Rempod had arrived at CCDC with two scenarios: a Bar and a Railway Carriage to aid in simulating peoples memories
6. It was noted that Young Church would now only meet on the 4th Sunday of each month
7. It was reported that Bumps and Babies would be closing as number were too low, those who do attend would be incorporated into Saplings
8. It was noted that the Christmas Fayre would be held on 30th November between 10:00am and 12:00pm this year
9. The meeting discussed more convenient storage for the Sapling Group

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Tuesday 19th November 2019 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by: Neil Walters Chair of the Cotteridge Church Joint Church Council



The Cotteridge Church
Joint Church Council
Summary of Proceedings 19th November 2019

Key Decisions

1. The JCC agreed that the front of the Church Building should be designated 'No Smoking'
2. The JCC approved the suggestion that Smoking could take place in the Garden close to the Green House
3. The JCC passed the decision on Charitable giving this year to the Finance and Property Committee
4. The JCC decided to reject the request from C2U for garden exercise equipment at present as currently there was not enough space available
5. The JCC approved next years' CCDC and Catering Services Budget
6. The dates for next years JCC meetings were approved
7. It was agreed that the spare Arm Chairs in the Client Room should be disposed of
8. The addition of a mirror outside the client room to prevent Food Bank day accidents was approved
9. The purchase of a display refrigerator for the coffee bar was approved

Summary Proceedings

1. Laurie Brown reported that Safeguarding Training had been revised by the House of Bishops and now designated 'Basic Awareness, Foundation and Leadership'
2. Stephen Audley said he now had the costs for materials to build Sapling Storage in the Malvern Room and was sourcing a carpenter to cupboard
3. Laurie Brown reported that the six trolleys required for the new chairs had now arrived and the chairs should be delivered week beginning 9th December 2019
4. The Treasurer reported that he was budgeting for an expenditure over income deficit of around £14,000 for 2020 and we needed to re-look at increasing income and reducing what we spend if the Church was to be kept in good financial health
5. There were concerns that after a year in operation Messy Church should look to become self-funding

The next meeting of the Joint Church Council will be on Wednesday 11th December 2019 at 19:30.

This Summary is authorised by:

Neil Walters Chair of the Cotteridge Church Joint Church Council

Cotteridge Church Keep Fit

The Keep Fit group started originally at Kings Norton United Reformed Church to support a group of ladies doing a sponsored slim to raise funds for the proposed Cotteridge Church. I agreed to continue the group after we had moved into the new building and the first class was held on Tuesday February 28th 1989.

At first I only expected about 10-12 people but by the end of April there were 30-35 regular attendees each week. Classes reached a peak in April 1992 when 72 ladies sweated it out in the Malvern Room and I changed to two classes a night, 6.30-7.30 then 8-9pm. This kept me very fit until 1994 when I had to go into hospital for major surgery and I knew I would be unable to exercise for a while. I then had temporarily to halt the ladies' group.

A men's group started on Monday nights from May 1989 at first doing exercises, then unihoc and when that got too dangerous changed to volleyball. I am proud to say that two of the original members, John Adams and Tim Sprackling still come most weeks after 30 years.

The women's group restarted when I had recovered and, despite brief pauses for



several other operations, has continued to the present day with a smaller group of regular attendees. Less aerobics and leaping about these days, more of a warm up and pilates based exercise to music. I'm pleased to say that two of the current group were there in 1989 too Jayne Harfield and Hazel Fitzsimmons (both previous members of the Cliff family).

Unfortunately recently I had another major surgery planned and have had to close the ladies' group after nearly 31 years. The men's volleyball will hopefully continue on Monday nights 8-9pm but could do with another 3-4 members if anyone is interested.

In 1989 my target was to raise £10k for the church funds. I am pleased and proud to say that after over 30 years:

The total donated to the church is: £30,554.

I will be sad not to see my lovely ladies each Monday but I think I have to consider my own health and retire. I will still continue my love of walking regularly.

Thanks to anyone who attended over the last 30 years.

Christine Adams

Jeanie

Why am I still talking about Jeanie, 3 years after she died. Because the pain and the memories never go away. We just learn to live with it. To me it seems that it was only days ago that Jeanie, my best friend, soulmate & wife of nearly 40 years, died. Certainly there is no day goes by when she is not in my thoughts, and then I



Jeanie with the smile
I always remember !

remember that it was 3 years ago on December 15th, always a particularly upsetting time. People called us BOGOF - buy one, get one free! I look back at so many happy memories - we ran 8 marathons and 200 half marathons together; we worked together in Maldives and PNG for 10 years; and conducted our research and development in India, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi; all of our Scouting roles were joint roles; we visited 50 countries and 6 continents together; and so much more. The only consolation is that her death brought an end to the pain she was suffering from cancer, and which she did her best to hide from everyone.

Jeanie was my moral compass, my spiritual guide, my inspiration, and the love of my life. I am what I am today because of her. I owe so much to her, which I can never

repay. I hear her voice reminding me of the promises she wanted me to make before she died:-

1. 'Don't spend too long grieving' – I fail, but Jeanie's death gives me the inspiration to work at improving our NHS and supporting other people who are bereaved. I am looking forward to training for The Ramblers-CRUSE short Friendship Walks to support other people who are recently bereaved.

2. 'Move on with your life' – It is difficult without Jeanie, my constant companion for 40 years. I try. At least I now have greater empathy with people who live on their own, who are lonely, and find it difficult to get out and join in on their own. I think that this is a major challenge for our society.

3. 'Continue with the work we were both committed to' – so I continue to seek opportunities to improve health and social care, particularly for the most vulnerable people; improve understanding and cohesion between people of different faiths and cultures; and seek justice for people who are less able to speak for themselves.

Three such opportunities presented themselves this year. Firstly, I was appointed Independent Community Facilitator for the Crown Prosecution Service Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel. Secondly, I joined the Schools Appeal and Exclusion Panels. Thirdly, I was elected as a Public Governor to the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust, and shortly appointed as Chair of the Governors' Oversight Committee for Children's Services, which represents the public interest in overseeing the Trust's action following the CQC and Ofsted reports.

I pray that I will serve in these, and my other roles, with courage, integrity, caring and compassion

Peter Rookes

Mission Through Action

CoMAG (Cotteridge Mission through Action Group) reviewed the actions suggested at our Mission through Action Service in May under the heading “What we could be Doing”.

Issues we have already pursued are:-

1. Raise money for an overseas project – develop a relationship with an overseas church – We considered Pakistan, which didn't look viable, so we are now looking at Malawi.

2. Twinning with another church – there is support for renewing our relationship with Villa Road Methodist Church. Revd Alison Richards, the Villa Road minister would like to pursue this with us. We are considering the possibility of inviting them to a Life and Soul service in the New Year, followed by a meal.

There are 8 other suggestions that we are working on.

The Birmingham programme for National Interfaith Week was a great success with 24 activities in total, the aims of which were to strengthen interfaith relations at all levels; increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Our Cotteridge Café Church group was made very welcome at the Clifton Road Mosque Family Favourites evening, which was attended by over 80 people of different faiths and ages ranging from 1 to 90 years, a true family event. The event coincided with Remembrance Sunday and also the week of the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Reverend Duncan Strathie from St Mary's Church explained to us the significance of Remembrance Day and Sheikh Nuru enlightened us on the life of our Holy Prophet and his mission. A game of family fortunes was then played and thoroughly enjoyed by all guests. In keeping with our efforts to protect the environment, plants were awarded to all who participated in the game.

A hot meal was served at the end, as people rekindled old friendships and made new friends.

At the December meeting of Café Church, my friend and colleague, Mahmooda Qureshi, joined me in leading a discussion on Islam and gave many insights into how her faith and beliefs influenced her life. There was realisation how much Christianity and Islam have in common, and that there would be merit in pursuing a relationship with Clifton Road Mosque to further closer understanding between our 2 communities.

Every Blessing for 2020

Peter

Dr. Peter Rookes

Mission Coordinator

Cotteridge Church

Don't just visit ... do something!

Late in October, the B30 Foodbank received a visit from Andy Street, the current Mayor of the West Midlands. The visit was at Andy's request and had been planned for several months.



He was shown how the foodbank operates and spoke to one or two clients. He said all the right things about how awful the situation was and we said all the right things about how the situation was not getting any better and then ... well, nothing.

He was extremely sympathetic to our situation and even sent a personal donation for which we were very grateful, but ... nothing changed.

Over the last few years we have hosted numerous visits from MPs, councillors, reporters, minor

celebrities, CEOs, local business men & women, but ... nothing changes.

We debate what point there is in having anyone else to look at us. We can give them all the statistics that anyone could want. We can offer them case study after case study. We can outline research findings. We can provide clients who are willing to tell how the food bank has been a lifeline to them ... but nothing changes.

As we start a New Year with a new government, we would like to tell them that the total food received by the B30 Foodbank since we started in 2013 is about to hit the 400 tonnes mark. That is the equivalent of 1.5 million meals donated by the public to one single Foodbank.

In the words of one of our area managers, our message to all our politicians is ... "Don't accept that this is normal. Continue to be shocked and saddened by the news of increased food bank use and use your power and influence to work towards a future where food banks are not needed."

Hunger in the UK is not about lack of food. It's about people not having enough money.

And we know that *things must change*.

Helen Gale

A New Year Poem

Look up, not down, with a smile not a frown
To the stars not the gutter, think jam not bread and butter
Be brave, don't fear, take time, lend an ear
See the good not the rotten, let the bad things be forgotten
Work hard, do your best, remember you are truly blest
Serve the many not the few, Jesus Christ was born for YOU

THANK YOU!

As I began to prepare the accounts for the end of our financial year I realise that a huge thank you to us all who contribute financially to The Cotteridge Church is due. Without these generous donations the Apportionment (the amount we are required to pay the Anglican Diocese, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church every year) which for 2019 was just under £72000 would not be met. Many of you in addition to that have given throughout the year in other ways along with donations made at the Gift Service. On behalf of The Cotteridge Church, JCC and members, Thank You.



You will be aware if you have read the annual report and accounts from our auditor that the finances of The Cotteridge Church are complex and much of our income also comes from room lettings, catering and fundraising, but a large amount is claimed back in the form of Gift Aid. In 2019 I was able to reclaim over £16500. At the last meeting of JCC a motion was passed to change the way our giving and Gift Aid is collected, collated and claimed. The Parish Giving Scheme, a charitable organisation set up by the Diocese of Gloucester, will sometime in the New Year take over the responsibility from me as Gift Aid Secretary and Amanda Homer, who is the Diocesan Finance Officer for CofE Birmingham will come and explain this scheme and guide us through the process. It will not be complicated for us or make any radical change to the way we make our donations, but it will lessen the work and responsibility of the Treasurer and me as the Treasurer's book keeper!

Lin Brown

FORGIVENESS OVER US. (Managing non-forgiveness) A NUTSHELL TESTIMONY.

A little while ago, a powerful difference of opinion between me and someone I admired meant that in an attempt to pour oil on troubled waters, I felt it vital to apologise. I found the moment and as sincerely as I could rendered words of apology in the hope of reconciliation. However, I was brutally repelled by the fiercely snarled rebuttal

“Go away !”

I had hurt by my opinion, I was hurt by the reaction to an olive branch. This hurt provoked a suffocating anger that caused overwhelming self destroying guilt, but I had to ask myself was it because the person my opinion had hurt had responded through a cohort who had the power to withdraw (and had withdrawn) a privilege I valued and treasured highly and was I smarting under punishment. I had forgiven with my tendered apology, was not forgiven, and so came into danger of replacing my forgiveness with bad thoughts. I harboured such thoughts, even though they were embittering, only so long as it took to realise I needed to disclose the situation to a mentor, a trusted advisor. It so happened that the aid sought came from a certain Licensed Lay Minister, who reminded me of the Christian obligation to seek the way of Jesus. The very power of Jesus' name was itself empowering and after a little proper thought my mind came back to peace and rest. My new Forgiveness overcame all ideas I dreamt of vengeance and revenge. Instead Understanding quenched hatred, Mercy explained the divergence, while Forgiveness conquered all notions I had of response except for Forgiveness.

Gordon Parsons

Lovely

My brother, Ian Walters, was born in 1947 amongst the first of the baby boomers. Tales he told of his time at school reveal a time of equipment shortages and classes of forty children or more because of the boom. His abiding passion was in railways. A much-loved family story which illustrates this concerns The Cotteridge and my Great Grandmother James. Great Grandmother James was the matriarch of the Walters family and a formidable woman, so it was a great occasion when she agreed to come and visit my father's new house in West Heath. This entailed changing from the tram from the city centre to a bus for the final leg at The Cotteridge. To ensure all went well my Aunt Alice, accompanied by my young brother, were dispatched to The Cotteridge to aid Great Grandmother make the interchange. Arriving early my brother, always the charmer, managed to persuade my aunt to take him to the railway bridge to watch the trains going and coming at Kings Norton Station. As you have probably already worked out, they missed Great Grandmother's tram, who on finding no-one waiting for her immediately got back on the tram and returned home. My aunt and my brother returned home in disgrace and my father had to leave off preparing for Great Grandmother's visit and drive into the city to pick her up in his works van. It was a long time before my aunt was trusted with anything so important again.

When my brother was a child much was still on ration and toys were expensive and difficult to come by, so imagine his delight when my parents saved up and bought him one of the first new train sets Hornby produced after the war, the dublo LMS 'Duchess of Athol' in crimson lake with two carriages and a circle of track. He cherished these until he was taken ill and kept it, although it no longer ran, in a special cupboard and would often take it out and show me.



When my brother left school, at sixteen, much to my mother's dismay who wanted him to join the forestry commission, he followed his best friend Stuart Howe into the General Post Office to become a telephone engineer. He stayed with the GPO or British Telecom as it became until he retired at sixty, doing various job including being in charge of the Telephone exchange at Calthorpe Park, which was very useful to my father and I as he allowed us to park there when we went to see Warwickshire play at the county ground. He combined his enthusiasm for railways and his skills as a telephone engineer when he became a member of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway Preservation Society when after volunteering as a labourer on the permanent way he helped install the railways first telephone system.

I don't want my brother to seem fixated on railways as he had a wide number of interests ranging from Naval History, the American Civil War and Industrial Archeology. He went on a Practical Industrial Archeology course run by the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre at Plas-Tan-y-Bwlch in the early eighties and returned every year until the year before he became ill. He helped excavate early iron furnaces and the remains of the once great Welsh Slate industry and was much in demand for his skills in technical drawing, learnt at school, his education, like mine, designed to produce factory fodder for 'the Austin' at Longbridge.

In the last four years of his life it became apparent that he was unwell, falling frequently and becoming more and more forgetful, until just after his seventieth birthday he fell down his stair at home and was rushed to hospital where he was diagnosed with vascular

dementia. He was in and out of hospital a number of times after that coming home to his beloved house with a care package in the beginning and finally spending the last eighteen months of his life in the Austin Rose Care Home, almost insight of his own home in Lilley Lane West Heath, where he became a much-loved resident.

I have told you a lot about what my brother's interests were and what he did in life, but I haven't talked about Ian Walters the man. One of the many questions I was asked every time Ian was admitted to hospital was 'does he get angry?' and I could truly say, up to the day he died, I never saw my brother angry. He was kind and patient with me, always helping me when I got into difficulty. Many people have said that I was very good to him while he was ill, but my response was always, 'if the roles had been reversed, he would have done the same for me'. Through-out his illness and even before that the epithet most used when describing my brother was 'lovely'. Even in the five weeks he spent in hospital before he died, although no longer speaking, he bonded with the nurses looking after him and they all said they liked looking after him because he was so 'lovely'.

So, although my brother is being cremated, as was his wish, if he were to have a grave stone it would read:

Ian Walters
1947 – 2019
Beloved Brother
A Lovely Man

Neil Walters

The Value of a Smile at Christmas

It costs nothing, but creates much.

It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich that they can get along without it, and none so poor but are richer for its benefits.

It creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in a business, and is the countersign of friends

It is a rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the soul, and nature's best antidote for trouble

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is no earthly good to anybody until it is given away.





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