

THE BAINBRIDGES, GREENFORD AND HOLY CROSS

We are hoping soon to be moving from Greenford to Leighton Buzzard so that we can help our daughter Judith and son-in-law Ian with the up bringing of our newest grandson, Robert. We've been asked to write an article summarising our time in Greenford and Holy Cross over the last 40 years or so.

We first became aware of Greenford in the mid 1960s when Margaret and I took a Jason's cruise from Little Venice to the Black Horse and back. The journey on the canal was fascinating – after passing the built-up areas of Paddington and Ladbroke Grove, we were amazed at the wild life, green fields and hedgerows around Horsenden Hill. After a refreshing drink in the Black Horse, we returned in the dark to Little Venice. The reflections in canal were beautiful and the route back was magically transformed so that it appeared completely different. We were regaled by horror stories, from Victorian times, of wires slung across the canal by criminals so they could rob the boats. The round trip was very successful, so a positive image of Greenford was planted in our minds.



We were both working and living at the time in the Kensington and Paddington Areas and, after our marriage, we moved to a flat in South Wimbledon. We intended to buy a house before settling down, hopefully, to have a family. A College friend was working in Greenford at NCR and advised us that Greenford was a reasonable place to live. So we started looking for houses by travelling out on the Central Line to Perivale, Greenford and Northolt. This was about 20-25 minutes travelling time from work, which cut our commuting time considerably. Eventually after a few false starts, we arranged a mortgage on the house near Greenford Station, which was to be our home for the next 40 years. There was no Greenford Flyover, Butler's Warehouse was a large green field and Lyons were still packing tea and burning (roasting) coffee.

As we were both working fulltime, our social life in the area developed very slowly. Father Douglas Griggs visited us soon after we moved in and told us about Holy Cross and the Operatic Society. But at this time most of our musical activities were centred on Morley College in South London where Brian was in a recorder consort and a Bach Choir. Our two daughters were born within three years of moving to Greenford, which changed our family life considerably and restricted our social life. We did attend Holy Cross, with our young family, on a few occasions but found Father Oman and the atmosphere in the church a little difficult. By 1971 Brian had found Greenford Light Opera Company (GLOC, formerly Holy Cross Operatic Society) and rapidly became well integrated. This was a turning point as we met in rapid succession Colin Neville, Ann Clarridge, Tom Drinkwater and Johnny Johnson. We were also active in the "Save Betham House" campaign and were fortunate to meet Norman and Daphne Tams. We became aware through them of Holy Cross Church and the changes being made by Malcolm Smart. After returning from a year living in Holland, we began to attend church regularly and Brian joined the church choir, an association that was to last for over thirty years.

By 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, we had integrated even further. Margaret had become involved with the Brownies and was helping or running a number of Play Groups. Brian was a Betham Trustee and School Governor and very much involved in School life. He was also an active member of the Morris Dancing Side which was started to celebrate the Jubilee. This lasted for a number of years and at one point we performed at six local fetes and fairs in one season. One memorable performance was on the Rectory lawn when Malcolm Smart sprained his ankle. The Morris dancing was revived for the Millennium in 2000 which was the subject of any earlier article in Magna.

We helped Alan King to organise a street party for the Jubilee and we were active in Folk Concerts and in carol singing in the area. A year later we started the tradition of singing at Greenford Station (although Colin tells me we were not the first!) initially collecting for the charity Crisis at Christmas but later for Save the Children Fund at Beth Morris's suggestion. The Jubilee seem to run seamlessly into the Edward Betham Bicentenary in 1980 and Brian was heavily involved in organising a Village Concert with the co-operation of the whole community and a Music Festival with contributions from the Church Choir, Colin and local Schools.

Our two daughters, Ruth and Judith, both attended Betham School and were baptised, confirmed and married in Holy Cross Church. They attended Burlington Dane C. of E. School, as Twyford High School was not established until later. They were in the Brownies and the Guides and Judith took a part in the musical play "Here We Go". They were also active participants in the First Medieval banquet held in the church and supported the church until their studies, relationships and accommodation inevitably meant moving away from the area.

Acting and singing on stage has figured prominently in our activities and, as mentioned already, Brian was an active member of GLOC as well as joining the Holy Cross Players for various pantomimes and concerts. Two of Brian's strongest memories are of the first performance in the new Church of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" and of "Scrooge" in the Infant School Hall. A younger Brian auditioned for Joseph but was even then seen to be more suitable for the part of Jacob, Joseph's father. Other concerts have also figured strongly including Folk Concerts, Crisis Concerts, Holy Cross Choir Concerts as well as more recent concerts organised jointly with our German friends from Gerschede.

As also mentioned before, the church choir has been an almost continuous thread through our time at Holy Cross. Brian helped to organise the choir with Marjorie Giles during Malcolm Smart's time when Albert Butterfield at 90 years was still a member. More recently, Margaret has also joined the choir which has added to our enjoyment. We've seen a variety of musical styles and sung under a number of choir leaders including Colin Neville (at least twice), Betty Simpson, Michael Banister and now Krystyna Palamarchuk. It has been a real and continuing pleasure to be involved in the musical worship at Holy Cross as well as on a few occasions at St Edwards.

The Greenford Magna Recorder Consort also has a long history, starting in the early 1980s with a consortium purchasing a lovely Moeck bass recorder. Brian has been allowed to keep this bass recorder on condition that he returns to Greenford to play in the Consort from time to time. Neil has always been a keen member of the Consort and is also an active soloist. We have played in church services and concerts as well as in the local schools. Numbers have varied and recently we have been reduced to a quartet so it was a particular pleasure to play in an enlarged Consort with our German friends earlier this year.

On the social side over the years, we have enjoyed the parish away days, the dinner crawls, pancake parties, the parish camps, the Quizzes, the barn dances, cricket and many other activities organised by the Social Committee. The Lunch Club has become a key part of our week now that we are

retired. On the more serious side, the Lent Study groups and other study sessions have increased our knowledge and provided a useful focus for the spiritual aspects of our church life. As members of the Education and Worship committees, we have been interested to contribute our ideas and support. One of the high spots of our worship was when Brian led the choir for the broadcast of the morning mass for BBC television. The congregation was rather larger and a number of people dressed more smartly for this service.

This article will necessarily have given a very personal and probably rather incomplete impression of our four decades at Holy Cross Church. Neil has been in the Rectory for about 25 of these years and it has been a real pleasure to have had him as our Rector and now Prebendary. Our membership of the church community has been very enjoyable and immensely rewarding and we hope that we have been able to contribute to the phenomenon, which is Holy Cross.

We are very grateful for all the help, support and friendship of many people at Holy Cross, some of whom are still in Greenford but others of whom are sadly no longer with us. We shall always remember our time in Greenford and hope to be back from time to time for special occasions so we can keep in touch.

BRIAN BAINBRIDGE