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*Our very special memories of*  
**BRIAN BARNES**

**Who died in March 2020**

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Brian and Una came to Staplehurst as a breath of fresh air. Two delightful and down to earth people it was a pleasure to know. Brian's powers of persuasion were great. He could see your potential where you had not thought you had any. I would never have put myself forward as chalice assistant, or indeed any of the other things in which I became involved, without his kind encouragement. His "We will try this for six months and then review" was a well known phrase when changes were being suggested. I thank him for his thought provoking sermons. As my spiritual advisor, and as a friend to both Una and Brian, I shall miss my chats with him.

 **Audrey Bullock**



*the wedding of Sarah Foreman*

Brian's years of ministry in Staplehurst were very special. He, by example, showed us what a Church Family could and should be. He gave us the opportunity to experience such a wide variety of worship and to explore our own spirituality. We enjoyed Iona tradition, Celtic style worship, Agape meals regular quiet days and week end retreats. They were years that saw huge growth in our regular attendance Sunday by Sunday. It was under his leadership we became a training Parish for the Diocese. The Parish weekends held for many years at the York Hotel in Eastbourne became a regular must. He established The Friends of All Saints which brought us together in so many social activities some just for fun others to raise funds for the building. The years were filled with love, laughter, a lot of hard work made so worthwhile by what was achieved. Our village was truly enriched and blessed by having Brian and Una as part of the community.

 **Val Wallis**

Brian was both a very special, and at the same time, a very ordinary man. This is not something that many people manage to carry off, but anyone who had the pleasure of meeting Brian would be able to recognise this summation of his character. He was truly a man of the people, down to earth, one of us, and a thoroughly decent bloke. But at the same time, had had an incredible talent for bringing out the best in others, and for making anyone he came in contact with feel valued. I cannot think of him without seeing that crooked and slightly ironic smile, never far from his face whomever he was talking with.

As Rector of All Saints he was responsible for a number of notable achievements, which I am sure many others will attest to as part of his "formal" acknowledgement. But for me, and many like me, his greatest achievement was in the nurturing of a truly eclectic and progressive congregation, who were a real community in every sense of the word. He was inclusive in his theology, and everyone from elderly academics to scatty and noisy children, via cheeky teenagers and forthright young adults, and the (supposedly) set in their ways middle-aged, were able to connect personally with Brian on their faith journey. He taught me, above all else, that God meets us where we are.... and how we are.... and that there is so much to learn about God in our everyday lives.

We are all much richer for having spent time in his care. We send Una and the family our very warmest wishes, and thank them for letting us borrow Brian for the time he was here.

 **Chris Mahoney**



Not long after he moved to the parish, Brian encouraged me to become more involved with children's and young people's ministry. I was already helping with the oldest group in Sunday School, but Brian wanted to change and expand the groups. Together we spent many hours working out detailed schemes that covered the Bible and Church Life and eventually we had three groups: Explorers for 8-11 year olds, Crusaders (the name chosen by the group and later changed to Cru) for 11-15 year olds and the YPF for 15-18 year olds. Later we added 18+.


Explorers and Cru met weekly during the term time and YPF every two weeks and they helped plan a youth service that was held every month. Throughout the year we would have a variety of fun events – parties, outings – which invariably ended at McDonald's, rounders, and for Cru and the YPF

Residential Weekends away.

We also, along with the Mother's Union, set up the All Age Workshops. Brian was great at encouraging everyone to have a go, to bring out their skills and make sure no one felt excluded, and worked very hard in preparing things too.

He was particularly good with children and young people, not only in teaching but in his sense of humour and fun, and in return they all had a great deal of respect and were very loyal to him too.

Colin, as one of his churchwardens, remarks that he was a very 'hands on' Rector. When the bells were being refurbished, Brian used his carpentry skills to make a safety frame, as well as other practical jobs.

 **Marion Whatmore**

I was an organist at All Saints during the ministry of Brian Barnes and found him to be a good friend with a sense of humour and a keen music lover. We both had a special love for the music of Elgar

He was also fond of Cantique de Jean Racine by Faure. I shall always remember Brian as a thoughtful and kindly man.

Rest in peace my friend,

**Ted Hall.**



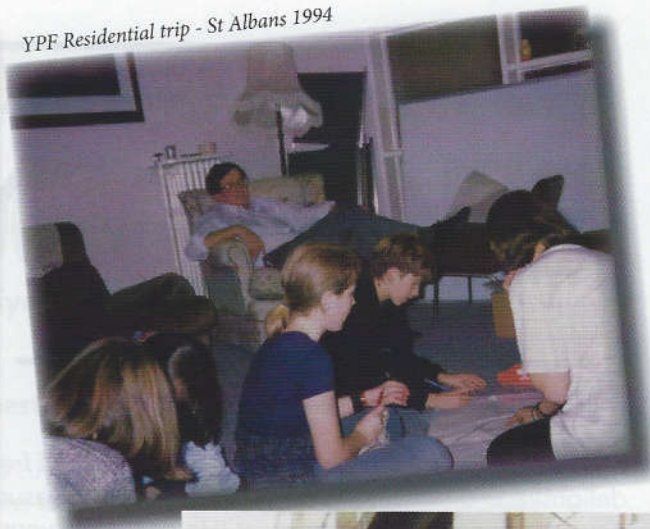
YPF Westfield Camp 1997

Brian could see people's qualities and encouraged them to use their talents in so many ways for the benefit of the Church and further. This was so rewarding and made a huge difference in how our Church developed. Before we were married Brian and I were invited to a dinner party. Brian was apprehensive as all those going were "churchy" people, including Brian and Una. It was a turning point for Brian, and I am so grateful to Brian and Una for their encouragement, leading to Brian's confirmation and the growth of our faith together.

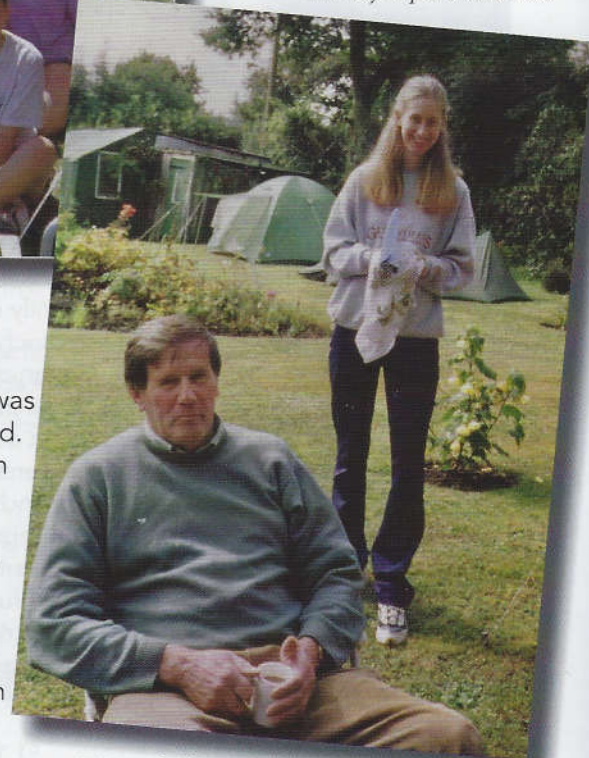
Brian had a wonderful way with words, saying the right things at the right time, a real gift. Una also had a way with words, although in a more "flowery" language!! They complemented each other and in both ways gave encouragement, fun and inspiration to so many.

 **Alaine Summers**

YPF Residential trip - St Albans 1994

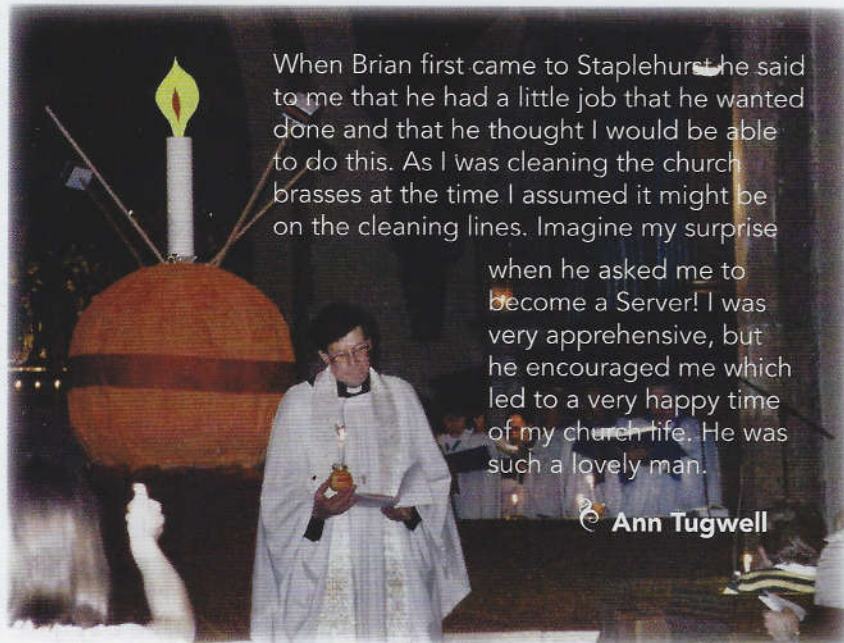


YPF Day Trip to France 1998



YPF Westfield Camp 2000





When Brian first came to Staplehurst he said to me that he had a little job that he wanted done and that he thought I would be able to do this. As I was cleaning the church brasses at the time I assumed it might be on the cleaning lines. Imagine my surprise

when he asked me to become a Server! I was very apprehensive, but he encouraged me which led to a very happy time of my church life. He was such a lovely man.

 **Ann Tugwell**

A few memories of lovely Brian Barnes. We moved here from Perthshire in 1999. Word got about that floristry was my forte (?) and we decided to have a flower festival in the summer of 2002.

Brian was very apprehensive as the previous one, can't remember when, had caused a disagreement amongst the flower arrangers, which he did not want to see repeated. However I promised there would be nothing like that (how did I know!) and with his reluctant blessing we went ahead. Sadly Brian and Una were to leave the parish before the arranged date of the said festival, but in the September they returned to attend the occasion. There had been no fall outs (as far as I knew) and it was a tremendous success, and I had such a big hug from dear Brian with his congratulations. Gill had arrived as the new rector and she wrote the opening paragraph in the festival programme. On another occasion, when we had only been here a short while I attended the 6.30 service. The hymn was 'I the Lord of sea and sky' and it brought back some very sad memories of a friend in Scotland, which caused me to be very upset. Brian came down from the pulpit and escorted me out to the porch to comfort me. I will never forget that. He was a most gentle, kind man and I know will be very badly missed.

 **Marion Christie**

I am sure all who knew Brian will remember him as a most kind, helpful and caring Rector of All Saints with a tremendous sense of humour. I think I am right in saying that during his time with us the Rector's vestry was created upstairs and the glass doors were installed; both of these were a great improvement to the church. In August 2000 Brian officiated at a full Requiem Mass – saying as far as he was aware this form of service had not been conducted at All Saints before. When Brian retired from Parish ministry he and Una moved to Lincoln and was often called upon to preach in the Cathedral, and then occasionally would spend the afternoon at Market Rasen racecourse: he certainly got his priorities right!

 **Pat Sherlock**



*Brian & Trevor*

Treasured memories of a wonderful man who shared happy times, sad times and very spiritual times with me and my family. Never to be forgotten Brian.


**Margaret Thornton**

When Brian came to Staplehurst as Rector I was involved in printing the parish magazine using my office Gestetner duplicator and so we met regularly. We soon realised that we had similar backgrounds working in the construction industry and having been lecturers in further education.

I was a member of the Parish Council and Brian suggested that with my local knowledge of places and people, I should become a Newlyn Trustee. I accepted his invitation and am now the longest serving trustee. When our son Matthew married Nikki and became a Muslim in Malaysia, he wanted to bring his bride back to the UK to introduce her to his friends and family. Brian was a great help in planning a Service of Blessing in All Saints' which was much appreciated.

**Robin Oakley**

Brian was a caring man who had time for everyone. When my father-in-law died, after the funeral in church he travelled down to Hastings with us, where my father-in-law was then buried with my mother-in-law. I would never have become a Churchwarden without his support, encouragement and guidance. He was also a down to earth man who, for me, was able to relate scripture to everyday life. I particularly enjoyed the Quiet Days he led and, the other extreme, the Parish Weekends away, filled with laughter and friendship.

 **Sheila Brooker**





Frank and I met Brian and Una soon after they came to Staplehurst through our involvement with the Parish Magazine. It was not long before we were friends with both, and we shall always remember their help and advice. But, if we had only one thing to say about the kindness to both of us it would have to be this. When we were given a party in the Parish Room on my retirement as Editor, we were so surprised and delighted that Justine Lees was there for us. As we were saying thank you to Justin for travelling to Staplehurst to be part of our day, he said that if we looked behind us we would see someone who had travelled a lot further. We looked round and there were the smiling faces of Brian and Una!!! We will always treasure his horse racing Christmas cards, and the loving messages inside each one.

2 Pat Page

The last time I saw Brian was at Pat and Frank's retirement party. As soon as Brian saw me he walked straight over gave me a big hug and we chatted about the good times we had had together. Brian presented me for my Confirmation and so we would meet every week for lessons which were often fun but rewarding. Memories I shall always remember of Brian was seeing him walking up the hill to every service, in a white gown and carrying his Bible in both hands. He did this in all weathers sometimes with his umbrella up. Brian will always be someone I will always remember.

Anne Brenchley



I remember Brian as a very good parish priest caring for his congregation and everyone in the village. When he first came to All Saints he took on the chairmanship of the McCabe Day Centre caring for the elderly. Later, when I was on the committee of The Friends of All Saints, he was always supportive of the events we organized and was always available with practical help and advice. A good man.

Valerie Dilnot

There are many memories of Brian but the death of John Cramp has jogged my memory. During Brian's induction to All Saints various village organisations welcomed him. John Cramp's contribution was memorable: *"On behalf of the Parish Council I, a carpenter, welcome you a carpenter to this House of the Carpenter"* Brian was a time served carpenter.

Vic Holdaway

Brian was responsible for bringing me back into church life after an absence of 20 years. He was a deeply thoughtful and spiritual man with a very mischievous sense of humour. He and Una were very kind to my mother Isabel and she delighted in receiving Christmas cards from them with pictures of race meetings right up until she died in 2015. Brian introduced me to the diocesan and ecclesiastical conventions which I needed to know to be Church Warden, and he taught me never to take anything seriously other than the love of God.

Mary Shaw

One of our memories of Rev. Brian Barnes is the memorable Christingle Service he did. Churchwarden and Reader Emeritus, Peter Mortley built a huge Christingle which Brian used during the service. The 'sermon' during the Christingle usually took on the form of a pantomime led by Brian. Una often took on the part of the baddie and various other members of the congregation were involved with the other parts. They would roam around the church with the usual pantomime echoes of "O yes he did!" or "O no he didn't" ringing out around an absolutely heaving church.

Brian was instrumental in the formation of The Friends of All Saints as a registered charity 24th May 1994. The primary reason for the formation was All Saints Bell Re Hanging project. This major fundraising project culminated in the 8 bells removed, a new steel frame installed, and 2 new bells cast. The number two bell cast in 1996, bears the inscription *DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF STAPLEHURST AND IN MEMORY OF BRIAN C MITCHELL - B BARNES RECTOR*

The first peal was rung on the re hung bells in December 1997 by a mainly local band of 5039 Grandsire Caters. When Brian & Una moved to St. Leonards Church, Hythe, our team of bell ringers were involved in the quarter peal at his induction service and peal on the following day, both of which were fittingly Grandsire Caters. Brian's legacy to All Saints Staplehurst and the fond memories he has left with us, will forever live in the hearts and minds of all of us.



2 Debbie and Andrew Brady