

Peter David Stubbs 14.9.1928 – 19.4.2007

Memories collated by Janet Bird



Peter Stubbs was a very private man but was also a friend to so many people in and around Hertford.

He was born in Kings Cross Hospital in London, within the sound of Bow Bells; the family moved to Oakwood, Enfield when he was 4 years old. During the Second World War he was evacuated together with his sister Christa to Porlock in Somerset.

On returning to Oakwood he joined Oakwood Methodist Church and their newly formed Scout group. He spent 2 years in the RAF before going into the poultry industry firstly in Tewin and then in Queen's Road, Hertford where the family kept 6,000 hens producing eggs on a smallholding behind their home at number 69.

On moving to Hertford, Peter joined All Saints' Church where he was a sides-man, a member of the PCC for 33 years and served as churchwarden from 1977 until 1980 and again from 1993 until 1997.

He looked after St John's Hall, arranging bookings and keeping the hall clean and tidy and took a full part in the social life of the church and in the life of Churches Together in Hertford. He supported the Lent Lunches for Christian Aid, attended Taizé Services and took great pleasure in supporting the music at All Saints'.

Peter was also busy outside the church. He was a member of the Company of Players which he joined in 1964 to help with the lighting, joining HDOS two years later also to help with the lighting. He was made a life member of COPS for services to the society and is remembered as somebody who worked really hard behind the scenes, but who never sought the limelight.

He was a long serving supporter of the local branch of the RNLI and very involved in fundraising and was a member of Hertford and Ware Railway and Steam Society. He was a friend of Hertford Symphony Orchestra and of Hertford Choral Society, usually spending concert days at All Saints' helping to prepare for the performance (moving pews, organising lighting etc) and then being one of the last to leave at the end of the day as he put the church back together for the next morning's service.

The details above were taken from the obituary which Peter wrote for himself and which was found amongst his personal papers when he died, together with details of who to contact in the event of his death, details to be given to the church and COPS regarding heating etc and a vast number of keys!!

They tell the story of a busy man who cared very much for other people and was always ready to help out, but they don't begin to tell about the real Peter who we all knew and loved.

I've been asking people for their recollections and the most common reply is "He was just Peter – he was always there!"

If ever there was a job to be done Peter would make himself available. If you needed help or advice or encouragement he was there. He knew all that there was to know about All Saints – the building, the services and the people. He kept things running – stocking up with whatever was needed, reminding us if there was something which

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had been overlooked and doing everything with the minimum of fuss.

He greatly enjoyed the music at All Saints' and was a staunch supporter of choir events and Soundbites and greatly increased the donations made at Soundbites by encouraging the use of the white gift aid envelopes.

I remember Peter as a true friend and fellow churchwarden. He eventually trusted me enough to let me take charge of the microphone sometimes, although when Don Graves took over from him as Churchwarden Peter sat behind me for several weeks to remind me when to turn the vicar on and off!!

When I began to preach from the pulpit it was Peter who made sure that I had a box to stand on and I knew that I could always rely on him to be constructively critical, and whenever he told me that he had enjoyed a sermon I knew that he was sincere and was really pleased.

Peter was a true friend to Jean and Bill Kemm, as they were to him, and he often joined them for Sunday lunch. He got on particularly well with Harry the dog and Jean tells me that her abiding memory is of Harry nibbling Peter's ear!!

Dorothy Toyn remembers Peter at her New Year gatherings and how he always made time to talk to James.

John Earle remembers the support that Peter gave him when he began to read the lesson in church.

Peter was the one to cut the grass at St John's Hall and keep the hedge trimmed. He helped with the cooking at the barbecue and served the drinks when we had functions in St John's Hall. Denise and Brian Dilley said that whenever they went to the hall Peter seemed to be there. It seems strange not to see his red Metro in the hall car park.

When school groups visited the church it was usually Peter who opened the doors for them and he never made a fuss about whatever requests might be made.

We will all miss him for so many different reasons and we know that it will be impossible to replace him (at least not without a complete team of people!)

We all feel that he was taken from us too soon, but would not have wanted to see him suffer nor could he have coped with becoming an invalid. Peter was a man of faith and, although we are desperately sad that he is no longer with us we can rejoice that he has gone to be with the Lord he loved.

We will never forget him and all that he meant to us all and in time we hope to have some sort of permanent memorial in or outside the church.

Grow a dahlia for Peter

It has been suggested that a special floral tribute should be done in memory of Peter Stubbs at the forthcoming Festival of Music and Flowers, September 21st-23rd.



As Dahlias were amongst his favourite flowers, these will be used in the arrangement. We were asked by someone if they could add a dahlia to the arrangement they will grow in their garden, which we thought was a lovely idea.

Would you like to add some dahlias you have grown to Peter's arrangement?

Just grow a dahlia and bring a flower or two to All Saints' on Wednesday 19th or Thursday 20th September, where there will be a container to put them into. We will then add all the flowers to the arrangement. Any shape, size or colour is welcome, but please make sure the flowers are of good quality and can last over the Festival weekend.

Thank you
Dorothy Toyn