

Vicar's Blog

September 2016

Sharing our treasures

One of the challenges, yet privileges, of ordained ministry is the opportunity to support and get to know people when they face death. This summer three funerals were held for people of Longlevens who have each had a significant connection with this community and the Church. Jean Smith, who died just before her 90th birthday, was a gentle and quiet woman who is remembered by many for her kindness. At one time she would visit friends, church members, members of the wider community when they were ill or housebound. When her own health started to fail, this did not prevent her from giving support to others. Instead of visiting, she sent written messages to encourage and show her caring concern. Many people have commented on the way Jean would always find something meaningful and valuable to say. Her cards and her words have been cherished by many.

Dr Evelyn Christmas, who died in June was a historian and teacher, as well as author, in 1966, of Longlevens, Parish and Place, a history of Holy Trinity Church. She was also an active supporter of initiatives in the local community, including being the driving force behind a successful campaign to save Oxstalls College and retain higher education in Gloucester. Her memory will live on through those she inspired through her campaigning, her teaching and through the book she wrote. When I came to Longlevens, Evelyn was inevitably mentioned when I asked any question about the history of Longlevens and the church. Although I never met her, I feel I know something of who she was, how she was valued and how she will be fondly remembered.

Jim Porter, was extremely active as one of our local Councillors, a Rotarian, church member and family man. It was only the impact of illness that could stop him from continuing with his multi-directional commitment to people, to place and to making a difference. Jim needed to be pushing forward, he needed to be an agent for a cause, and he had an ability to focus on practical outcomes.

Three very different people, yet three people who will be remembered by those whose lives they touched. Each of them, Jean, Evelyn and Jim will be remembered as special for the values they lived out through their words and actions. Three different individuals each using their talents in a way which made a difference to others. Three people who used their talents for the benefit of others.

As we remember them, may we be mindful of how we can each live life well, sharing our treasures with others.

Gwyneth