

## ***APPRECIATIONS***

### ***Tributes to "Pillars" of our Church Family who are with our Lord***

#### **Ernest Elliott**

Ernest was born in 1915, and like many of his generation was affected by both World Wars. He never knew his Father, who was killed just before the First World War. Ernest served in the Second World War and was sent to India. He talked of his experiences during that time but not of his rank, Lieutenant Colonel. This was only disclosed at his funeral.

Ernest was widowed in 1960 and brought up his two school aged children on his own. He spoke of his many years at Barnhurst Methodist Church, Kent, where he was involved in the Sunday School and Youth Club, and over the years held nearly every office in the Church.

Due to failing Health he moved to Battle in 2003 to be near to his daughter, Sue, and became a regular and faithful member of our Church family. He enjoyed singing hymns in his own unique style. Ernest was very generous to our Church and very excited about our new project.

In 2011, after a spell in hospital, he moved to Richmond MHA, in Bexhill, where he settled happily. He was always pleased to see visitors and to know how the plans for our new Church were progressing. How he would have loved to see it completed! Ernest was a great example of a true Christian gentleman and will be greatly missed by his family and all those who knew him.

*Pat*

#### **Peter Coote**

Upon my first visit to Battle Methodist Church in 1984 I met Peter and Marjorie Coote. Peter excitedly told me about the recently re-launched Sunday School as Joanna and Christopher were six and four at the time. On my third visit he asked if I would like to help him and Ann run the Sunday School! This tale, I think, clearly demonstrates Peter's passion for the church and its young people. He continued to be interested in what all our young people were doing as they grew up and moved into the world of work, right up until the end of his life.



I was the pastoral visitor for Peter and Marjorie for many years and on all my visits to them he would always be full of interesting and funny tales about his life, and he never repeated a story – a remarkable feat, I think! Everything he did in life he did with enormous enthusiasm, from his time in the Indian Cavalry, to trying to make a living as a professional violinist, to teaching maths, to painting and writing stories. His computer kept him busy for hours looking up information about all manner of things.

Throughout his life his love for Marjorie was very obvious - and she clearly only had to say a word or two to reign him in! Peter Coote was a great Christian gentleman and I feel privileged to have known him.

*Paula Foord*

### **Ann Mendes**

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of Ann Mendes on 3rd May. Ann had been suffering ill health for some time, during which she had still managed to joke about her predicaments as only Ann could.

A group of our congregation attended her funeral at Trinity on 23rd of May. Our hearts went out to Emily, David and Elizabeth as they shared some of their memories of Ann.

Several generations of our children have grown up loving 'Auntie Ann '. We remember, with affection, the little plays written and produced by Ann. Watching with laughter and tears as our young ones performed in their own style, whilst Auntie Ann frantically prompted and encouraged. We give thanks for Ann's commitment and love so generously given, over so many years, as she shared her knowledge of Jesus and the Bible with her class.

My memories of Ann will always be of her sense of fun and her many practical jokes, which of course the children were charmed by. Ann will be fondly remembered by many people from Battle Methodist Church. God bless you Auntie Ann and thank you.

*Dana Budd*

### **Peter Mata**

Peter was a faithful member of the Chapel Working Party. I will always remember the lights he produced to replace the original factory type florescent tubes, suspended goal-post style. His idea was an 18" cross above a 12" cross with a florescent tube joining



each arm of the top cross with the corresponding arm of the lower one. Attractive and much more "churchy"!

He was an authority on Space and regularly gave an end of meeting talk at the Eastbourne Astronomical Society. He was well respected by the founders for his knowledge and experience. Win insisted that I have tea with them before each of these meetings and Peter insisted on driving to Eastbourne. He was the sort of guy one instinctively liked and I shall miss him.

*Ron Copeman*

### **David Sinclair**

David and Marjorie moved to Battle in 2013 to be near their family and linked straight away with the Methodist Church, amused to be worshipping in a pub. David was a gentle and gracious man. However you could not miss his pride in being a Yorkshireman from Bradford, and his enthusiasm for cricket and rugby league.

His reputation was as a staunch worker in the church: he was a steward for very many years, and an encourager of young people, especially youth brass bands and travelling with them to the continent many times. But what we came to realise, along with those who knew him much longer than we did, was that he knew Jesus and served him faithfully.

His desire for us all to move into the new church building to serve our Lord there was keen, but in the autumn of last year his health deteriorated. He died early in March 2014. We shall miss him and we pray for God's peace and comfort for Marjorie and the rest of the family.

*Christine Freeland*

### **Lillian Bardsley-Ball**

Lillian was a North Country lass, and grew up in the High Peak region of Derbyshire in the village of Hayfield, Three quarters of a century on, Lillian was still proud of her day as the village May Queen, the year before War broke out. She was a beauty.

Lance Corporal Lillian France was 'called up' and soon posted to secret work at Beau Manor, though having signed the Official Secrets Act she never talked about what she actually did in those enigmatic wartime huts. She made many lifelong friends among the



girls she worked with, visiting one of them, Mary, in Fort William. Her brilliant intellect never left her and she was fun company even in her nineties.

With her good looks, as a schoolgirl and even in her ATS uniform, she could have taken her pick of many suitors. But when her childhood friend, Ron, returned from his years of incarceration as a POW of the Japanese, it was he that she married.

Lillian left Hayfield when she and Ron moved to London ~ and like the North Country Maid of folksong fame, 'with her nature it did not agree'. She moved several times, always making firm friends with the neighbours. She at last settled here in Battle to be near Jackie and her family, still maintaining very close contact with her other loved ones,

I did not know this marvellous woman in the days of her beautiful youth, or as a young mum with growing family, or as a loving wife. But I did know her as a sparkling, witty and plain-speaking friend. Her memory was phenomenal, not only for her own past, but also remembering in detail what I shared with her each week. It was a great privilege to know her, and be welcomed as a close friend.

I thank the Lord that she was part of my life.

*Jean Wells*

### **Eric Diss**

I first met Eric in the late summer of 1986, shortly after we moved to Battle. He called in to ask if we were church goers and, if so, would we be interested in attending the Methodist Church. As we were brought up in the Church of Scotland, we found the similarity in the style of service to be very reassuring and immediately felt at home. Thus began our association with the Diss family.

Eric was always there at the door of the church on Sundays, greeting everyone and handing out the bibles and hymn books as appropriate. He was a very welcoming presence and helped to promote the friendly family feeling of the congregation which has always been important. Having worked in banking, he was well aware of balance sheets. The costs involved in trying to maintain the chapel were escalating badly and he and a cohort of other members became our unsung heroes, doing essential repairs on a



regular basis, thus saving the church many thousands of pounds. This continued until age and the magnitude of the problems meant it became an impossible task.

He loved his garden and grew hundreds of flowers which he cut and put out at his gate with an honesty box, the proceeds of which went to the church to help with funds. Each year we had a church picnic in his garden and 'field' - basically an immaculate lawn with a pitch and putt course surrounded by trees and shrubs that he had planted. There you could play hide and seek, or cricket, or take a leisurely stroll along the shady paths.

Eric joined the church choir that we formed and would enjoy the rehearsals at Doreen Durrant's house when practising for a 'performance'. He also enjoyed painting and proudly showed me pictures of ships that he had done.

Family was always important to him and after church every Sunday the Diss clan would descend 'en masse' on Virgins Lane for lunch followed by fun and games. When in 2011, the congregation voted to sell the old chapel and move to our new location, the family felt uncomfortable with this change and transferred their membership to Trinity at Brede - which bears an uncanny resemblance to the old chapel in Battle. However, they stayed in touch with us and received all our newsletters, attended some of our summer garden parties and thus kept in touch with the Battle church family.

The last year or two saw a steady decline in his health, but with the support of his family, he was able to stay at home until the last couple of weeks of his life.

Eric - you were a 'character' and will be sadly missed by us all.

*Jane Munro*

## **Dana Budd**

It is with great sadness that we are adjusting to the loss of a wonderful member of Battle Methodist Church and the wider community in Battle, Dana Budd. Dana died in hospital following a tragic cycling accident on Battle Hill.

Dana was an integral and much loved member of our Church family for over 18 years, taking a very active role in the life of the Chapel and at our new home in the Emmanuel Centre. She served as a steward, pastoral visitor and helper with the young people's work. Her name was to be found on many rotas and there was genuine warmth and sincerity in the welcome she extended to all.



Dana was well-known for her generosity of spirit as well as her unshakeable belief in God. Prayer was important to Dana and her faith shone through in all aspects of her very busy life of service and witness to others.

The local community in Battle is also mourning the loss of Dana. She was often seen riding her bicycle or walking her dog in and around the town. She loved nature enjoying the changing seasons and carefully nurturing plants and animals alike.

Dana was a popular member of staff at the Whitegates residential and nursing care home, where she cared deeply for the elderly residents and went out of her way to organise activities in which everyone could participate. She was incredibly perceptive and understanding of those suffering with dementia. Dana was well respected by her colleagues and known for going the extra mile to help them out.

Dana will be greatly missed by all that knew her and this was demonstrated by the huge gathering of over 200 who attended the service of commemoration for her life held on Tuesday 13 September 2016 at Battle Methodist Church's Emmanuel Centre.

Dana was a very much loved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter and friend to many. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family who are very much in our thoughts and prayers.

Dana, your love touched every one of us in a special way and we will do our best to share that love with others as you would have wanted us to. God bless you.

*Jackie Knowles-Baker*

### **Ron Copeman**

Ron bore his long illness with courage, quiet dignity and without complaint. Even during periods in Brighton and Hastings hospitals he made no fuss and no demands. Ron died peacefully in St. Michael's Hospice just as our Minister, Peggy, was preaching at Battle's morning service on 'From death to Life'. How appropriate!

Ron was extremely fond and proud of his step-daughters, Irene and Jill, grandchildren and great grandchildren. They cared deeply for him and recently reorganised his lovely home in order to make it easier to continue his independent way of life with the wonderful assistance of Kerry. Even when he was in discomfort he still insisted on



making a cup of tea for a visitor and his answer to, 'How are you Ron?' was always, 'Not too bad'.

We all miss Ron's quiet presence at Battle Methodist Church. He and his late wife Irene joined 25 years ago and he soon put his practical skills to good use as a member of the working party who met regularly to maintain the fabric of the old chapel.

Ron missed Irene and would often speak about her with wistful fondness. He liked to reminisce about his earlier life in London where he trained as a draftsman and subsequently became a civil engineer, responsible for the supervision of large projects in hotels and even the construction of accommodation for employees on oil rigs.

Ron enjoyed life. Irene spoke of his 'unconventuality' and sense of fun. Who else would choose the theme tune from 'Dr Who' and 'The Ying Tong Song' by the Goons to conclude his Cremation and Thanksgiving services? There were even bowls of liquorice allsorts dotted amongst the sandwiches.

He was an avid reader of a wide variety of subjects including science fiction, space adventures, the National Geographic Magazine and Dandy and Beano which he continued to read throughout his life. Ron enjoyed astronomy meetings, loved anything to do with numbers, watching films and lunching out whenever he had the opportunity. He was easy to visit because conversation flowed and covered some fascinating subjects.

Ron was a regular attender at our Home Fellowship Group, where he would sit quietly, then after a while, ask a pertinent question or make a point which no one else had thought of and which promoted discussion which he relished. Ron was not afraid to speak his mind if he felt strongly. He never pretended, and was always down to earth. He would patiently listen to advice and suggestions and then go his preferred way. Ron always had a twinkle in his eye. He was a loving, faithful friend, caring, brave, a man of integrity, with a strong Christian faith and an inspiration to us all.

We will never forget you.

*Gillian Muhlemann.*

## **Denis Sayers**

Denis moved to Hastings in the early 1960s with his wife Jeanne and their young family. He worked locally as a chartered surveyor until his retirement and also put those skills into good use advising on circuit property matters. As a Sunday school teacher at



Central, Wesley and what was then Park Road, Denis influenced many young lives. He also started a Sunday School at St Peter and Paul's Anglican Church, got involved with LOAF and Youth for Christ. He was a helper at the Gateway Club. His gentle nature and sense of fun ensured a natural relationship with everyone.

Having been widowed in 1987, Denis met Jill at Park Road and they were married at Little Common Methodist Church in 1995. Denis enjoyed accompanying Jill as she preached around the circuit. He would often read a lesson and was known to quote lines from the sermon over Sunday lunch. They also shared a love of touring the Scottish Highlands and visiting the New Forest together.

At Battle, Denis has been for many years a part of the church family, always quietly there in the background but supporting all that was done. In the old chapel, he was part of the Men's Working Party – not necessarily doing the practical work but enjoying the fellowship over tea and biscuits! He worshipped at the Emmanuel Centre until very recently and his presence at morning worship was a real blessing to us.

Denis was an encouraging and supportive kind and gentle man, jovial and friendly with a strong Christian faith underpinning everything he did. We will miss him, and our thoughts are with Jill, Paul and Simon at this sad time.

*Mary Collins*