

FROM THE VICARAGE

STEVE: ERIC STEPHEN GREAVES

4th December 1942 – 26th September 2019

Churchwarden 2014-2019

Some words taken from his Funeral Address

Feering Church has lost a devoted friend and a fine servant. After a long, serious illness lasting several months, which was only very lately diagnosed as cancer of the oesophagus, Churchwarden Steve Greaves died suddenly and unexpectedly in the early hours of Thursday 26th September.

Steve was a very hard-working and committed churchwarden, but of course there was a much more to him than this. He was a genuine man of the world, since in his chosen career as a mining engineer he worked in more countries than many of us have visited.

Eric Stephen Greaves was born in Sheffield on 4th December 1942, and – of course – was a proud Yorkshireman. From High Storrs Grammar School in Sheffield he went to Camborne School of Mines in Penryn, Cornwall to train as a mining engineer. He graduated in 1965 and the following year went out to Zambia, beginning his working life with three years in the Copper Belt with his newly married wife Dot. The next three years (1969-72) were spent at a tin mine in Malaysia, and the next 9 (1972-81) on a Swedish-run iron ore mine in Liberia. Steve went there as a planning engineer but rose to be mine superintendent. One of his great loves was rugby, and it's a little-known fact that Steve was a member of the Liberian National Rugby Team. Of course, this wasn't quite as grand as it sounds - the team was all European expats and in fact there were only 2 rugby teams in the whole country! Travel in Liberia was difficult, to say the least, so they had only one 'international fixture', against Sierra Leone (more of a weekend away, really). Steve and Dot had to leave Liberia very quickly in 1981, following the violent coup of the previous year - it hardly needs stressing that this was a pretty fraught and frightening time. They returned to the UK and then from 1982-85 he was in Indonesia, in an Australian tin mine, learning Indonesian while he was there.

Then came three years in Egypt (1986-88), working for the UK Overseas Development Agency, which he found very dull, as he only had to produce one report a month! After two short postings, first to Sierra Leone, which was pretty rough (they frequently ran out of oil and electricity) and then to a bauxite mine in Ghana, the following nine years (1990-99) saw Steve in Saudi Arabia, where he oversaw the construction of large underground tunnels that were used to store oil that had been extracted. Then Steve finally returned to the UK permanently, working on the (then) new A120 from Stansted and for Wimpey, retiring in 2008. Steve loved his work and was outstanding at it: what he did was valuable and worthwhile, providing essential materials and creating work and jobs for others. He also loved the relaxed lifestyle that usually went with it and - again usually - loved the weather! One of Steve's ambitions was to see the world, and you can see that he pretty much achieved this.

Steve's Christian faith grew as he grew older; by the time I arrived in February 2014 Dot and Steve were regulars at All Saints'. I was delighted when he agreed to be churchwarden in 2014: he proved to be thorough, efficient and resourceful, and especially good at the upkeep of this building. Grade One Listed Buildings like ours eat money - this didn't go down well with a Yorkshireman! As a true Yorkshireman, Steve had to be persuaded to put the heating on a bit longer on Sunday mornings, and he burned the altar candles right down to the end, with no waste! He took on so many of the 'boring jobs': upkeep of the boiler, setting the heating, getting better deals for our gas and electricity, sorting out the removal of dead or dangerous trees from our churchyard and cemetery; and this is by no means a comprehensive list. He dealt uncomplainingly with the long-winded and tedious process of

faculty applications. In other words, he just 'got on with it'. However early you got to church on Sunday, Steve would be there, usually in the sanctuary, clearing away dead insects with his broom. There were few days when his car wasn't seen parked outside the church. His faith was lived out through the myriad practical things he did. An abiding memory for me is of Steve and Dot bringing the collection up during our Sunday service, then Steve closing the communion rail gates for people to receive Communion and opening them afterwards, having received Communion last himself.

Steve faced his final illness with quiet courage and dignity. Right up until almost his last week he continued to carry out his duties as a churchwarden. At his funeral we read from chapter 14 of John's Gospel - some of Jesus' words to his disciples on Maundy Thursday, the night before he died on Good Friday. Jesus tells them, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid". This promise of bringing us to himself in his Father's eternal dwelling-place holds just as true for Steve as for Jesus' disciples then. The promise of a new, risen life with Christ also holds true for Steve, as for all who seek to follow the Christian way. Steve held to his faith in those last difficult weeks and days; and in turn he was held by God too.

While we struggle to accept Steve's all-too-sudden going, we must give thanks for him too, and for the eternal peace in Christ in which he now rests - the peace that Christ alone, not anything in the world, can give. We mourn Steve's death deeply, but we still give thanks to God for all his life, for his love and friendship. In the words of one of Jesus' parables, we too say: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

Steve strongly supported our building project, so he'd have been delighted with the success of our recent fundraising event, the **Kelvedon Singers concert, *Music for an Autumn Evening***, on Sunday 20th October. A full church was treated to a wonderfully varied programme ranging over six centuries, from John Willbye's sweetly reflective and melancholic madrigal *Draw on, sweet night*, to Queen's *We will rock you* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*! There were songs of all shades and for all tastes in between - traditional folk songs, songs by classic English composers, Victorian ballads, two by a contemporary local composer, Colchester's Alan Bullard, plus some classics from the jazz swing era and arrangements by the King's Singers. I was unsure if Director Chris Phelps and the Singers would pull off *Bohemian Rhapsody* at the end, but they did it with aplomb! It was really heartening to see our church full for such a friendly and sociable evening. Our grateful thanks go to Chris and the Kelvedon Singers, and to key organiser Claire Romer-Lee, along with all who decorated the church, donated the cheese and wine, got the church ready and cleared up afterwards. It was a tremendous team effort - I'm not sure how much we raised for our project, but I'm pretty sure it is well into four figures. Thank you so much, all of you, and for all who attended. Please look out for future events!

A quick push for two family events: our next **10.00 am Family Service on Sunday 17th November**, which as ever will be short, informal and accessible, with some lovely home-made refreshments; and our **Christmas Messy Church on Saturday 30th November at 3.00 pm**, with fun Christmas crafts and refreshments too, ending with a short closing candlelit service around 4.00 pm.

From your Parish Priest,

Simon

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The Vicarage, Church Street, Kelvedon, CO5 9AL

From the Parish Registers, October 2019

We offer our prayers and condolences to the families and friends of:

Burial of Ashes

9 October – Derek Larner (St Martin's Cemetery)

Funeral

21 October – Eric Stephen Greaves (All Saints' Feering and Chelmsford Crematorium)

There were no baptisms or weddings at All Saints' in October.

CHURCH SERVICES for NOVEMBER 2019

THURSDAY 31ST OCTOBER - ALL SAINTS' EVE/HALLOWEEN

11.00 am House Communion for All Saints' Day, at 'Upperfield', Kelvedon High Street

SATURDAY 2ND NOVEMBER at ST MARY'S KELVEDON

'In Loving Memory' – A Service for Remembering and Reflecting

4.00 pm Bereavement Service with lighting of candles, followed by refreshments

SUNDAY 3RD NOVEMBER – ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY: *Our Patronal Festival*

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

***9.15 am** Sung Holy Communion with the Act of Remembrance

**Please note the earlier time!*

SUNDAY 17TH NOVEMBER – *The Second Sunday before Advent*

***10.00 am FAMILY SERVICE**

A short, lively service without Holy Communion, followed by refreshments.

**Please note the later time!*

SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER – *Christ the King (The Last Sunday before Advent)*

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion

SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

3.00 pm Messy Church for Christmas

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER – ADVENT SUNDAY

9.30 am Sung Holy Communion