

## ***New Altar frontal for the Chapel of Remembrance***

Some of you may know me as the 'new kid on the block' having only been here for a couple of years. Others, though, remember me from 50 plus years ago, when I used to worship here with my parents and sister and sit in exactly the same pew as I normally do.

We started worshipping here in 1962 when Revd Cooper was the incumbent. I remember him as the equivalent of a very stern headmaster. I was confirmed here in 1964 along with 86 other candidates.

My sister was confirmed here too, but not as many candidates this time. I was married here in 1974 and my first son was baptised here in 1978 with, I think, 9 other babies!!

Sadly my sister and I stopped coming here when our married lives took us away from Bedford, but our parents - Judith and Derrick Simpson - continued to worship here until the 'Mowsbury Church of Golf' intervened and later ill health.

When Mother passed away in March 2015 I managed to encourage Father to return to St Mary's and he was overwhelmed by the welcome plus the fact there were still faces he recognised and knew but he still had to sit in that same pew.

When his own health started to deteriorate I returned to Bedford to be with him and keep him company. He was immensely proud of having served in the RAF and used to relay all sorts of stories good, bad, funny and sad. He passed away in December 2016 and never got over my Mother passing. They had been together since she was eleven and he thirteen.

To thank you for your welcome, your kindness and your blessing when Mother died he left a donation in his will to St Mary's. Helen and I wondered if it would be possible to put it towards the Memorial Chapel in some way and an Altar Frontal was suggested. With the help of Brian and Jane we agreed a design, chose the materials and put it forward for faculty consideration which thankfully was granted.

The Forces are a big part of my family, mainly RAF, but an uncle was in the Royal Navy. My nephew and his wife are both in the Police Force in Sydney, Australia and these days that is just as difficult a career. My second son is a serving officer in the Royal Artillery.

Helen and I feel honoured and blessed that this Altar frontal will be accepted as a fitting tribute to, not only those who have served in the forces and lost their lives, but to all the faithful departed. May they all rest in peace and rise in glory.

Hilary