

John Prickett

RIP

St Laurence Church has lost one of its most dedicated supporters. It was with great sorrow that we learned of the death of John Prickett in February, and we say farewell to a person who has served the church in the village for decades. It is sad that John was not able to come to church regularly over recent times, being obliged to shelter in his home during the period of the pandemic, though we were able to welcome him back in his 'usual' pew when restrictions were briefly lifted last year.

When Sue and I moved to Shotteswell in 1969 the Prickett bakery was in full swing. John's father Leslie was still baking and I can't quite remember whether he was still churchwarden, but he had certainly held that office for quite a long period up until that time. John and Carole lived at Willowbank opposite the Bakehouse, with John baking and delivering bread in Shotteswell and the surrounding villages.

If my memory serves me correctly, I think that John followed in his father's footsteps when he took over as churchwarden from Charles Gilkes who lived in Lane House. It was the beginning of our partnership as co-wardens, a joint responsibility we shared for many years. It was around that time that the parishes of Warmington and Shotteswell were united with Ratley and Radway, and John's knowledge of the villages in the benefice and the families who lived in them proved invaluable to us all. John knew everyone – he had been a pupil at Shotteswell School and knew the area and its people as friends neighbours and customers. From him I learned something of the ways of the village and its people.

John always had a zest for life. A very early riser, he was always around and available and never complained about evening meetings

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or activities even though he was getting up before 4am to bake the bread each morning. As we ordinary mortals struggled to get to the early morning service on a Sunday John would be there, having eaten breakfast hours earlier and with lunch already in the oven. John's contribution to worship was unique. He joined in with gusto and enthusiasm and although he might not always have been in time or totally in tune in the singing Sue said she really valued his presence because she could readily hear which verse she was playing. For many years it was the custom to auction the harvest produce from church at the harvest supper held in the village hall. John was the auctioneer to beat all others. It was one of the highlights of the year, and I can remember 80+ people crammed into the village hall, going home after the meal carrying huge bunches of beetroot and marrows that John had somehow managed to persuade them that they needed!

John was ever a huge presence and a wonderful example of commitment and service in our church community. As warden, as treasurer and as a member of the church community John gave his time and talents without reservation, and we will miss him greatly.