

Christine and Rod Clarke

Christine and Rod met at their Church youth club in Norbury, where Rod became Chairman, and Christine became Secretary. This was an early example of their life of volunteering and service.

Christine was born in 1944 in Fernhurst. It was during the War and her mother had been evacuated to Haslemere to escape the bombs falling on Croydon. However, her mother was unable to bear the quiet of the countryside and returned to Croydon. Christine then lived in various parts of Croydon until she and Rod got married and moved to Worcester Park. At 16, having done her O' levels, Christine did the secretarial course at her grammar school, having always wanted to be



Golden Wedding celebration at St Mary's 2019

a Secretary. But she was piqued that she had not been allowed to do A' levels, and so she enrolled in evening classes to study French and English at A' level, which she passed. This (and her three month stint working in Paris) stood her in good stead when conversing with her French pen friend Nicole, whom she met through a school exchange when she was 14, and with whom she is still in contact.

On leaving school, Christine went to work as a Secretary for the audience research department of the BBC in London. After four years with the BBC, Christine got a job with a small firm of publishers called Political and Economic Planning, where she also learned to proof read.

A three-month spell in Paris was meant to be longer, but Christine had started going out with Rod two months before, and she was homesick, so she came home and worked for the British Aircraft Corporation in Pall Mall for a while, moving on to the Architectural Press until their son Nick was born. "You didn't go back to work in those days, really," she said.

Christine joined the Young Wives group at St. Mary's six months after Nick was born. It was held in the old large hall, while the children's crèche, run by Elsie Spinks, Margaret Milsom and others, was held in the old small hall. It was not long before she was on the



Christine and Rod on their wedding day in 1969

committee. Christine later joined the Mothers' Union and was on the committee there too.

After some time, her great friend Christine White asked if she would be her secretary if she were to run the young families committee of the Mothers' Union for the Diocese, which she agreed to do and they partnered each other on this for a very enjoyable three years. She then took the minutes for the Deanery Mothers' Union for several years. In addition to this, Christine has also been Secretary of the Estates Committee at St. Mary's for many years, as well as running the St. Martha's Guild, making the coffee for the toddler group, and being a listener.

Christine, like Rod, has been very involved in the 2nd Cuddington Scout group. She ran the Beavers for 13 years, and then managed the letting out of Rowe Hall for members of 2nd Cuddington. When Nick was about 14, Christine helped her friend Barbara in her shop called Daily Bread. This she



Christine with the Beaver Scouts on the St George's Day parade in Epsom in 1995

did for a number of years until the sudden untimely death of her friend. She then went to work at Ewell Court Library, a job that she loved, where she worked until she retired in 2007.

Rod was born in October 1943 in Thornton Heath. He attended the Trinity School of John Whitgift, which was then a direct grant grammar school but has since become an independent school. Subsequently, Rod secured a place at

Southampton University to study electrical engineering, where he chose the electronic (light current) option. Rod's first job on graduating in 1965 was with EMI electronics, based in Hayes in Middlesex, where he was involved with radar and telemetry.

After a two year student apprenticeship following graduation, he joined the department dealing with microwaves and antennae, and for the rest of his working life he worked for the same company on antenna design. "The most interesting time was during the Falklands War when we offered the Royal Navy the chance to have a radar capability down in the South Atlantic... and that's when we produced a whole new product in 11 weeks, which was absolutely unheard of because it took us 5 years to develop the original thing. It was the Sea King helicopter with an arm out at the side and a 'big dustbin' hanging on the side of it." Rod thoroughly enjoyed his time working at EMI, in its various

incarnations, and liked being part of a team. Rod took early retirement in 2003 at the age of 59.

After Rod retired he became more involved with the Church and the Scouts. He had started helping out at Cub Scout meetings when Nick was 10, but he was then asked if he would become a trustee and serve on the Group Executive Committee as the Secretary, a post which he still

holds. Rod continues to help out at Cub meetings, as well as doing the photo display and award boards, the annual census, and helping out at the annual beer festival.

and chairman of the Buildings Committee. He is the Deanery Synod member of the PCC, and is the Vice Chairman of the PCC. He collates articles for The Listening Post, and every year he puts together the Annual Report. Rod leads Morning Prayer, occasionally leads a House Group, often leads the intercessions during the morning service, helps out at toddler group and is a listener and a chalice assistant.

Last year, Christine and Rod celebrated 50 years of married life. Along with several other couples also celebrating significant anniversaries, they held a lunch for the whole Church.

Christine and Rod together demonstrate a life of commitment and service, to each other, to the Church and to the community.



Receiving a Scout's Silver Acorn award at St Mary's in 2019

At St. Mary's, Rod works tirelessly for the good of the Church. He has been Churchwarden,