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belong to other churches. However, to pander to the little grey cells and give the evening added spice Fr Michael O'Dea, the Roman Catholic priest for this area, will spark off discussion of the person of St Joseph, who apart from being the foster-father of our Lord and husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary is also – to my way of thinking – a greatly unsung New Testament hero (his day is the 19th March).

Do come along and share in this time of fellowship! It's through meeting together in a relaxed atmosphere that divided Christians get to know one another better and the cause of unity becomes a more realistic possibility.

May they rest in peace!

Jean Esther Bright

GHR writes:

The question "And who is my neighbour?" is one that Jean Bright never needed to ask because, as all realise who have had the joy of knowing her in her forty-odd years of living in Bridge, she instinctively gave the answer through the manner of her life.

Educated at first at the Persse School and then Brampton Down, starting when the school was still in Kent, she went on to serve in the WRNS, and then to qualify in Oxford for her life's work as an Occupational Therapist, moving with her late mother to Canterbury in 1950. From there, they both came on to Bridge in 1951, where she lived at first in Weston Villas until after the death of her mother, for whom she had cared devotedly; then moving in 1973 to Dering Close where she enjoyed the happiest of companionship during her later working years, and those of her retirement which were to be so sadly curtailed by illness.

The 'job-title' of Occupational Therapist masks the reality of what was a profound understanding that Jean had for other people, their feelings, and their needs, and which showed up alike in her work – the value of which, and the esteem in which she was held for it, being indicated by the many former colleagues who were present as old friends at her funeral – and in all her daily contacts. If even some minor gadget existed which might ease tasks or movement for someone who had perhaps never thought for themselves of the need for it – then she would be there with the idea, and (as often as not) the article itself. The same thoughtfulness went to the choice of presents for friends, be it at birthdays or Christmas, with careful prevision devoted to selection, and instant modest self-deprecation at merited thanks.

This is but a mere skimming of examples of the sensitivity to the feelings of others and the entire and intuitive unselfishness which, with a gentle humour, characterised Jean's living and being, together with an unflinching hospitality of which the high point was always the annual Christmas-morning party, dating from the days of her mother, which she continued to hold with Betty, even until within a month of her death, welcoming friends of every generation.

Illness she defied; enquiry she turned to one side, rather than speaking of herself. In truth, everyone was 'neighbour' to her, and she to everyone; though all will mourn her death, we can still gladly warm ourselves from her example.

JP adds the following:

Jean had difficulty sleeping one night in the late 1960s when she lived in the High Street at Bridge because of the heavy traffic noise of TIR vehicles, since Bridge village was still the main A2 to Dover. She decided to give up trying to sleep and listened to the Overseas Programme of the BBC which was then the only 24-hour broadcasting in Britain. To her annoyance and then amusement she heard an interview that had been recorded with Brian Lewis, then a Bridge resident and Secretary of the A2 Group describing the problem of traffic noise in the village. Jean supported the Group very well.

Dorothy Mary Shirley

Having been a life-long member of the Roman Catholic Church the funeral service in St Peter's Church, Bridge prior to interment in the churchyard of Mrs Mary Shirley took the form of Requiem Mass celebrated by Fr Michael O'Dea. The Vicar read the Gospel and led the prayers. Mrs O I Knight sends the following tribute to this much-loved and respected Bridge lady who died on 26th January, aged eighty-four years:

The relations and friends of Mrs Mary Shirley met in Bridge Church on Friday morning, 31st January for her funeral service and to give thanks for her life and work, which centred particularly on the children of Bridge.

Mr and Mrs Samuel Shirley came to Bridge in the early 1950s to manage the Post Office. Many older residents of Bridge and neighbouring villages will remember Mary with affection for her cheerful welcome and the gentle response she gave customers.

After Mr Shirley died their son Lawrence took over the Post Office and Mary joined the staff of Bridge School as secretary. She also helped with remedial teaching, administered first-aid and comforted children when they were distressed. Mary had reached retirement age when the school moved from its original Victorian premises in Patixbourne Road to the present site, and reluctantly we had to let her leave us. But she loved children so much, she went on giving remedial teaching privately.

There must be many adults who were taught by Mary and remember her with affection.

On The Nail Noticeboard

Life for Laura Baby Care Appeal

Last month a mother at the K & C Hospital had to be delivered in the twenty-eighth week of pregnancy to save her baby. All the incubators in the Special Care Unit were occupied.