

JIM

I became a member of St. Philip & St. James almost 30 years ago during the ministry of Frank Millar when the church offered a very traditional, comfortable, and predominantly expat form of worship.

All that changed when Frank retired and a young Northern Irish Chaplain arrived. Jim Hawthorne.

From the start it was clear that Jim was going to do things his way. This came as quite a shock to some who were set in their ways and not great fans of change, but nevertheless within a short time, Jim began to put his plan in to action. This involved, amongst other things, introducing new innovative ideas into the weekly running of the church; the embellishment of the building itself, and an active calendar of events, all designed to put the church on the map.

The Coleman Hall was opened up to anyone who wished to use it for activities. There was a thriving Mother and Toddler group, The Thrift Shop, where nearly new clothes were sold; A Bitch and Stich group of ladies recycling Christmas cards. Centre Stage used the hall for its rehearsals, parties and performances. We had a church Souvenir stall where keyrings, purses, pens, bookmarks even bottles of wine that had had their labels removed and substituted with Anglican Church" labels were sold! We held Quiz nights, suppers, a yearly Palm Sunday Brunch with music and entertainment. The list goes on.

In those days I was School secretary at Queen's College and, at that time, the school didn't have a hall. I put it to Jim that we use the Coleman Hall once a month to hold a Discoteque for the 11 – 14 year olds. He loved the idea and as a result we enjoyed many a happy evening with a "real" D.J. complete with flashing lights and a smoke machine which delighted the youngsters and, of course, also, in a round-about way, introduced them to the church. Jim never missed a disco!

Jim was really keen to attract young people to the church and in time he built up a thriving Sunday-School.

He encouraged the local schools to hold their Christmas concerts in church and the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Scouts were always present on Family Sundays, as well as key dates such as the Queen's birthday, Remembrance Sunday etc.

In his aim to make the church building more attractive, Jim set out to commission a set of beautiful stained glass windows for the back of the church. The windows would be financed by personal donations. He achieved his aim and now for many years people have been able to enjoy the beauty of these windows which, without a doubt really have enhanced the look of our church.

The Garden of Remembrance was another of Jim's ideas. A place where people could sit quietly and reflect and also somewhere, when many were far from home, where a plaque could be placed in memory of a loved one.

On the fun side, Jim loved a party! Any excuse would do. The St. Patrick celebrations were legendary in church house. Everyone was asked to wear something green and lashings of Irish Stew were served along with unending supplies of "poteen". I still remember George Giri entertaining us with his fiddle dressed in a shirt that Karen had made out of a pair of green trousers!

On leaving he would always give us the same bit of advice. "If the pólíce stop you on your way home, remember to tell them you have been at the Salvation Army"!

Jim absolutely loved Christmas and always had extremely ambitious ideas regarding the decorating of the church for the festive season. Decorating could take up to almost a week. People with gardens were asked to bring along ivy, pine, etc. and huge boughs of greenery were made and hung from the ceilings.

Another year he asked each member of the congregation to commit to making a dozen NEULAS which are white, paper doilies with intricate cut-outs of Nativity scenes and used here in Mallorcan churches to decorate at Christmas. When hung, they gave the impression of large snowflakes gently wafting from above giving a beautiful angelic effect.

The Christmas Bazaar was another great tradition and Jim was keen to invite people from outside the church to "rent a space" to sell their wares at this event.

What had started out as a fairly modest affair became an important annual event for the local community as more and more of the locals became involved.

This was what Jim wanted. To make the church an integral part of life for everyone here on the island.

His aim was to take the church and its message out beyond these 4 walls and also, by the same token, bring in people who may never have considered ever being involved with a church.

He introduced a church magazine, CHAPLAINS, sponsored and funded by the advertisements of local businesses.

He was an innate story teller and published two books during his time here. His stories, as well as his sermons, would leave you spellbound and wondering how much truth and how much “blarney” was contained in them. One thing was for certain though, they always carried a powerful message.

He charmed people and became fondly known as the Rev Jim in the community. Many local business people supported him and would always help both financially and in other ways whenever the need was there.

He was a regular of the Africa Bar and Big Mo, was one of his firmest fans.

Mother Murphy’s kitchen in Santa Ponsa would hand over the total of their takings on the first day of the summer season each year as a donation to the church.

He said that most of his missionary work was done in Magaluf!

He loved a challenge and championed the underdog. He was fair and stood up for justice. On occasions he put his professional career on the line by supporting a cause or an individual in need.

His ministry was both controversial and effective and I think he loved it that way.

Jim summed it up himself in one of his articles:-

“If I wanted to lead a quiet life, then I would have kept my mouth shut. Sailing close to the wind has its dangers but it also has its rewards and I for one feel the rewards by far outweigh the dangers.

Life would be much easier if I stuck to tea and crumpets but then would I be true to my calling?

We are the Anglican church so our doors must be closed to no one.”

And they never were. Rest in peace, dear Jim.