

(In alphabetical order of surname.)

Korabandi Azariah, Evangelist, [CSI Diocese of Dornakal]Died 22.5.2010.



Korabandi Azariah died on 22nd May, the result of a road accident. He will be greatly mourned and missed by his wife, Vijaya, and so many, not only in the Diocese of Dornakal but also in many other parts of India and by his friends and supporters in Britain and the United States. Born in the Guntur district and brought up in the Lutheran Church, he came to live in Khammam, A.P, in 1956, with the intention of being an evangelist, and he was persuaded by Henry Jackson of New Zealand CMS and Dorothy Tate to join with them in evangelistic and pastoral work in the area.

Jennifer and I arrived in 1958 and we found him to be a marvellous tutor, not only in the Telugu language, but also in the gestures and actions that make for politeness in Indian company. He set an example in gracious manners, and he was always nicely but simply dressed, and at ease with all sorts of company, and he could correct us in the nicest way possible.

In Khammam he had a comrade in Mary Sithamma; from a caste background, she had been married and widowed as a child, and owned land in the area. Most of the Christians in that part of the Diocese were from the outcaste community, the result of the “Mass Movements” of the 1920’s, but Azariah and Mary were able to open up a movement among the caste people, yet staying in fellowship with the older churches and the Diocese. Congregations were formed and Church buildings were built. One of the first of these was at Jammalapuram, near Madira. The building was also used for meals – vegetarian. I remember taking part in a Christmas play (as an Angel !). There was always a very happy atmosphere in the gatherings there, and people old and young walked miles to get there.

In 1966, Bishop Solomon arranged for Azariah to study at Ridley Hall, Cambridge for a while. Academic study was never a strong point with Azariah but his lovely personality and shining faith galvanized his fellow students, and some of them got together to support his work with money, and after that Mr Charles Rose, a builder and others, formed the organisation “”Christ for all in Andhra Pradesh.”

Not long after his return to India he visited the USA where he walked many miles with President Jimmy Carter to raise money for the very effective housing scheme for low income families called "Habitat for Humanity". Other projects followed with different donors, for example, the Rotary which helped for education and medical needs in the area. "Christ for All" has provided for the St Mary's Hospital, Khammam and recruited visiting medical and surgical help there.

Some of the financial help from the USA has been linked with other churches, but Azariah and Mary were never deflected from their mission, and kept the new Christians as members of the Diocese; the evangelistic work goes on alongside these other activities. P.C. John Mark , the son of worker with Dorothy Tate has been an able helper to Azariah for many years and now takes over as leader of the work in India.

(Derek Elton)

Mrs Margaret Doreen Benfield (née Smith) [MMS 1961-1963, CSI Mysore Diocese, Holdsworth Memorial Hospital, Mysore]. Died 13.8.2009, aged 85.

Margaret & Colin Benfield - a short biography

On behalf of the family I would like to welcome you here today as we give thanks for the lives of Margaret and Colin.

It was the 5th November 1923 and it was a great day for a Probationary Minister in the United Methodist Church in Framlingham, Suffolk, who was also the Superintendent Minister, albeit with no other colleagues. A first child was born to Fred and Doris Smith, a daughter, Margaret Doreen. They later moved to Willington Quay on Tyneside, where Margaret's first brother was born, and then to Sheffield, where her second brother was born.

Margaret did her secondary schooling in Huddersfield and went to college on moving to Bradford, and it was here that she embarked on her career as a Pharmacist. Whilst studying for pharmacy she also received a Note to Preach (a Methodist phrase, for those non-Methodists present) and subsequently went On Trial before becoming a Fully Accredited Local Preacher in 1944. I well remember the first time I heard Margaret preach; I think it must have been the first service she took after going On Trial, and she chose the theme of her sermon from Ephesians chapter 6, The Whole Armour of God. It is interesting how one's memory can recall an event well over 65 years earlier.

After she qualified as a pharmacist, having trained at the Bradford Infirmary, she moved to London in the late '40s, initially to Guy's, I think. She worked in about five hospitals the London area, eventually becoming a Chief Pharmacist.

During her secondary schooling Margaret became very interested in drama, and this love of acting stayed with her for the rest of her life. Many of you will remember her involvement in The Enthusiasts at Marlowes, which, I believe, she ran. She was very active in her London days in The Religious Drama Society and made many friends also involved with drama. In particular she got involved in later years with the Friends of Theatre Roundabout, a two-person husband and wife team who toured around the country performing religious plays, many of which were performed in churches, and she became the Secretary of the Friends, a job she kept until just a few years ago.

As a preacher Margaret was following a line of Methodist preachers going back at least three generations, with her father and maternal grandfather both being Ministers, and two generations from her maternal grandmother's forebears who were Local Preachers.

In 1961 she felt a call to offer for work with the Methodist Missionary Society, having seen an advert in the Methodist Recorder for a pharmacist to work at the Holdsworth Memorial Hospital in Mysore, in South India, where she went in the autumn of that year. The main purpose of the appointment was to train local staff in pharmacy.

In January 1963, in a possible act of fate, a Pharmaceutical Congress meeting was postponed so Margaret took a holiday at a friend's coffee estate. Then on January 5th she met a young man at a children's party and then again shortly afterwards at a local jungle religious festival. And so entered Colin Benfield into the story. To quote from Margaret's letter home, "Colin is tall and well built, pleasant looking but no means handsome and everyone seems to speak well of him" It was a whirlwind romance with Colin proposing just four months later. They were married at Mysore on the 8th December that Year.

Colin was born on 17th October 1928 in West Ham. His father was a fireman and, of course, was extremely busy during the days of the Blitz in the early '40s. After leaving school, Colin became an apprentice at Cable & Wireless in, I believe, the communications section there. He learned typing skills on teleprinter machines, the main means of communication in those days, long before the advent of e-mails. He was enlisted in the Army for his National Service following his apprenticeship. This skill got him trained in the Signals Corps and eventually posted to Malaysia. After National

Service he became interested in horticulture and after a year at the Cambridge Botanical Gardens he was trained at the Edinburgh Royal Botanical Garden, where he spent a lot of time in the Cactus House. This didn't rub off on him and he was never a gritty person but a gentle man at all times. After qualifying he became the manager of a plantation in Kerala State in South India.

At the end of 1964 Colin and Margaret returned back to England on a six month furlough. In January 1965 Margaret gave birth to their son, John, but had the birth in England near Maidenhead, where my wife, Dorothy, and I were then living. Soon after Colin and Margaret moved into a house in Henley on Thames, one which I had bought (unseen by them) on their behalf under Power of Attorney. At the end of Colin's furlough they returned to India, but, as a result of Colin's health and the political situation whereby British ex-patriots were being replaced by Indians, they left India for good in late 1966, settling in Henley. With a small child money was tight: Colin worked for a time with a timber yard (he always had a love of timber) and Margaret did some locum work in local chemist shops, and also set up a small dressmaking business under the name of Magda.

In August 1969 Margaret took up an appointment as Chief Pharmacist at the Leavesden Hospital, and initially they lived in a hospital flat, but the following year moved to High Street Green in Hemel, and have lived there for the best part of 39 years. Soon after starting at Leavesden she became aware how isolated psychiatric pharmacists were and through her efforts what is now the UK Psychiatric Pharmacy Group was set up in the early 1970's. Margaret & Colin's Methodist Membership was first of all at their local Church at the junction of St Albans Road and Bennetts End Road, and then, after that church closed, at Marlowes until the Hemel Methodist Church was born just a few years ago by the amalgamation of the existing five Churches in the town. Margaret, naturally, continued her preaching in the Circuit until quite recently, and on 29th March this year at a special Service she was presented with her 65-year Certificate as a Local Preacher, and many of you will remember this event. According to her records she conducted almost 1,000 services during her time as a Local Preacher. Her needlework skills were put to good use and she made banners, no doubt with help from others, pulpit falls and so on for Marlowes.

Whilst in Hemel, Colin worked initially at Leavesden hospital as a higher clerical officer in the accounts department; however he soon transferred to become a member of the team keeping the grounds in good order which he found far more fulfilling. and then moved to Decorum Council in a similar role. He had three hobbies, photography, woodworking and listening to

classical music. His woodworking skills were used quite extensively at the Marlowes church.

One day early in January 1999 Margaret arrived home to find that Colin had suffered a stroke; he was taken to hospital, but he was paralysed completely down his left side (and he was left-handed!) which confined him to either a bed or chair for the rest of his life, with Margaret devotedly caring for him for just over ten years when he went permanently into a nursing home at the end of March this year, the day after Margaret's special Service. Two days later Margaret herself went into hospital for a second mastectomy (her first was in 1974); on leaving hospital she went into the Methodist Home, Elmside, at Hitchin for convalescence then returned home. Shortly afterwards in mid-May she had a fainting attack at home and John got her back into Elmside for three more weeks, but her health was deteriorating. In fact, her health never fully recovered after having a bad bout of shingles in January 2004.

On Easter Day in 1999 Dorothy and I attended morning service at Walton-on-Thames Methodist church, where our daughter is a member, and in the afternoon we both realised that God was telling us to move away from Sheffield, to where we had retired in 1988, and find a house in the Walton area. (By this time in our lives we had acquired six grandchildren who were all down South.) We believe part of the reason was that we would be nearer Margaret and Colin. and over the years have been able to visit them on regular basis giving support especially to Margaret. God really does move in mysterious ways!

By the beginning of July Colin was having difficulty in breathing and on the morning he was taken into hospital at Watford and breathed his last late in the evening. Margaret then went back into Elmside on 30th July although she had a chest infection resulting in a wheezy cough. In the late evening of 3rd August a member of staff found her dead in bed, and, after a post mortem it was found that she had bronchial pneumonia.

And so ends an era - nearly 86 years of life for Margaret, nearly 81 for Colin and almost 46 years of married life together.

In closing, on behalf of John and his family and my brother and myself, I would like to say thank you for your presence here today and your messages of sympathy and for all the support and care afforded to Margaret and Colin over the past ten years.

Colin Smith



The Revd John Clapham

The Revd John Clapham died on the 28th June 2010 after a distressing illness during the whole of which he remained his usual open and outgoing self. His body was cremated at the crematorium in Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol on Thursday 8th of July. The cremation was followed by a joyful and moving memorial service during the course of which many paid tribute to this "giant of a man".

John was born on the 2nd Sept 1927 and grew up in East London where his father was superintendent of the Bow Mission. He was educated at Kingswood School and did his theological training at Didsbury College, Bristol where he obtained a BA. In 1956 he married Sarah Bennett and in the same year was sent by the Methodist Missionary Society to the Bengal district of the Church in North India. They had three children, Jonathan, Justin and Beth. He worked at Sarenga where the family was close to John and Joyce Hastings until 1959 when they moved to Calcutta. This was a creative time until in 1969, tragically, Sarah died as a result of a road traffic accident after trying to save a child.

Despite being devastated by the tragedy, John remained in India for almost another two years working and helping with the refugee crisis following the war between East and West Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. On his return to England he completed a year's study at York University gaining a post-graduate diploma in community work. After having his application to join the Sector Ministry of the Methodist Church refused John resigned from the ministry, reverted to being a local preacher and worked for eleven years as the Bengali Programme Organiser in the Eastern Service of the BBC.

In 1983 he married again and resumed his work in the ministry of the Church in Hackney where he and Meg created a loving home where many have enjoyed their remarkable hospitality and the fruit of his culinary skills. He retired to Bristol in 1993 and edited Pilgrim for 13 years.

The Right Revd Sundar Clarke [CSI Madras Diocese, Bishop 1937-1952]
Died 10.6.2010 aged 83. Bishop 1937-1952]

Bishop Sundar Clarke was Bishop in Madras from 1974 to 1989. He died on June 10th, 2010 after a brief illness. His father was a dynamic Church leader in the Madras diocese and his mother was a convert from an

orthodox Hindu family from Vallam, near Thanjavur. His family traces back its Christian heritage to the first Protestant pastor in South Asia, Aaron, baptised by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and ordained minister at Tranquebar in 1733. He married Clara on April 30th, 1953 and they have four children. His ministry included service in rural and urban pastorates, including St George's Cathedral, Madras and St Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore.

Miss E Margaret James [MMS 1947-61, CSI Medak Diocese, Wesley Girls High School, Secunderabad] Died 7.12. 2009 aged 89.

EDITH Margaret James was born in Cardiff in 1920. Her father was a minister whose column in the Methodist Recorder was widely read. His spirituality rubbed off on her. On her mother's side, she was descended from a man who began work down a coal-mine at the age of seven and yet who grew, by his own efforts, to manage his own mine. His determination rubbed off on her.

She was a spiritual person, revelling in Iona, Taizé and retreats, with a fierce social conscience, with concern for the environment, justice, peace-making and the poor.

Affection

Margaret attended Trinity Hall School, Southport, and had a lifelong affection for the school. She passed the Oxford en-try exam but was only placed on the waiting list and had to a place at London University. But the war led to Westfield being evacuated to Oxford which she loved. Margaret was determined to follow her brother, David, to India, though leaving her parents was a wrench, especially after a night spent crouching in a cellar as bombs demolished their manse.

She taught first at Hunmanby Hall and then, after training at Kingsmead, was appointed to Hyderabad in the brand new CSI. Fifty years later she represented the British Conference at its Golden Jubilee. She was appointed to Wesley Girls' High School, Secundrabad, and within a year she was preaching and leading fellowships in Telagu.

Her letters home were full of information about clothes, food, excursions and, above all, about the friends she made. Many of her girls came from the poorest villages; she guided them into worthwhile jobs and was in touch with many until her death and could remember vividly the details of every girl who passed through her hands. After 10 years she was invited to become Diocesan supervisor of Religious Education in schools and prepare new syllabuses which lasted for many years.

The death of her mother led to her return to England to care for her father. She took a post at Bournemouth School for Girls, a very different experience, but even among the 1960s teenagers she proved a success. Then, out of the blue, she was invited to apply for the headship of Kent College, Pembury, an invitation which she could never have expected and to which she would never have aspired.

Her first reaction was that she could not uproot her father, but he insisted that he would go where she went.

Her Christian faith, Methodist roots, ecumenical ethos, boarding school experience and experience of girls of different races and cultures made her an ideal choice and she was a huge success, increasing the school roll, updating the buildings, widening the curriculum and writing the definitive history. She loved the school and adored its grounds.

Duties

She insisted on keeping contact with the girls by teaching, despite the increasingly onerous duties of a headmistress, and was still in correspondence with hundreds of girls and a constant attendee at meetings of former staff and old girls. Margaret loved her girls. A journey across America was punctuated by stops to be greeted by former pupils from both India and Kent College. Girls of all stations, from the consort of the seventh in line to the throne of England to those from the most primitive Indian villages, have reason to be grateful to her.

Retirement did not mean relaxation. She became an active member of Wareham church, for which she wrote a history. She played her role as preacher, pastoral leader and Overseas Mission secretary. The Council of Churches was her concern. She helped with the local hospital services, served on the duty rota for the Saxon church of St Martin and revised its leaflet. She even became a Samaritan. She loved the area, particularly the Purbecks, and was a great walker.

Margaret travelled widely in the UK and also visited America, India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Holy Land and most of Europe, making friends everywhere, including Russia, where an accident led to her having a hip replacement and meeting with the local church. Her family were a priority.

Generous

She cared for her brother and his wife as they grew older and was generous to three generations of nephews and nieces. There were nearly 300 on her Christmas card list.

In the end, she knew that she would not be able to return home and, with the faith that had sustained her throughout her life, she faced the final great adventure which she knew would end with her meeting again with the multitude of friends and family who had gone before.

Martin James

The Revd Stuart Luckcock [MMS 1932-1974. CSI Madras and Coimbatore dioceses] Died 17.2.2010 aged 101.

Stuart's theological training was in Manchester and Leeds from 1929 to 1932. He was ordained at Southfields Central Hall, London in 1932.



From 1932 to 1939 he was appointed to the Madras Methodist Circuit in South India. During this period he worked at the Guindy Evangelists' Training Institution, St Thomas Mount, Ikkadu and Nagari. His ministry included preaching in English, teaching in Tiruvellore High School, assisting in a Boys' Boarding Home and studying Tamil. He married Janet Ryder-Smith, the acting principal of Royapettah Girls High School in 1938. After her death in 2005 he said, "For 67 years we were God's team".

From 1941 to 1943, after furlough, he returned alone to the Poonamallee Tamil Circuit, living in St Thomas Mount where he was station chaplain to the Mount Garrison and did voluntary chaplaincy work to regiments stationed in Madras. In 1945 he returned to the Guindy Evangelists' Training Institution as Vice- Principal, teaching the Gospels and Epistles in Tamil. From 1948 to 1949 he did village evangelistic work during a period when there were many baptisms and new congregations being established. From 1951 to 1953 he was engaged in village evangelism at Madurantakam where he was manager of the Boys Boarding School. From 1961 to 1964 he was stationed in the CSI Coimbatore Diocese at Ketti in the Nilgiri Hills. He was Diocesan Secretary for Lay Preacher Training and for one year was chaplain to St. Stephen's Church, Ootacamund, and chaplain to St. Hilda's Girls Boarding School. During this period his wife Janet was able to visit for six months when the children were in boarding schools.

After a further period in England he returned again to Coimbatore from 1970 to 1974 where he was Diocesan Secretary for Lay Preacher Training, and Secretary of the South India Language Board. He was manager of the Boarding Home connected with CSI Union High School.

He retired to Cromer in 1974. Over the years he had been a prolific campaigner against alcohol abuse (he was teetotal all his life), gambling and nuclear weapons. He had wide-ranging interests and roles he played included Scout leader, amateur actor, gardener, photographer and painter. When he was well into his 90s he was still preaching regularly in the Dereham and Swaffham Circuit He died at Dereham on February 17th, 2010 aged 101. A notice in the Eastern Daily Press described him as a man “passionately in love with Christ and full of the Holy Spirit”.

Dereham Times, Tuesday, 02.07.2010

Mrs Ruth Keable Sherred (née Compton) [USPG 1950-1976, CNI Lucknow Diocese, Naini Tal] Died 9.8.2009 aged 88.



Tribute delivered by her nieces at a Celebration of her Life held in St Nicholas Church, Biddestone, Wiltshire on Saturday 5th September 2009

To start at the beginning ... Ruth was born on the 31st of December 1920 at 39 New Road, Langley Burrell, the fourth daughter of John and Ada Compton. The family was completed by the arrival two years later, on New Year's Day, of John, our father. Many of you here today will remember Meg and Winifred. Their other sister, Joan, sadly died before Meg and Winifred moved

here.

Her father's work as an Inspector of Taxes meant the family moved around a fair bit and when Ruth was about four, they moved to Woodford Green in Essex. In due course, she attended Woodford County High School, gaining her Higher School Certificate in 1939, her main subjects being Latin, English, History, French – she gained Special Credit in the oral examination – and Modern History. A note on her school record says: “A bright and eager little girl, she gradually developed powers of control and leadership and became Head Girl.” She was also a Dinner Mother, and

Patrol Leader in the School's Girl Guide Company.

In the autumn of 1938 she sat the Oxford and Cambridge Entrance and Scholarship Examinations and was duly offered places at both Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and Newnham College, Cambridge. She elected to take up the offer to read English Language and Literature at LMH, where she would forge friendships that last to this day. She regularly attended LMH reunions or, to give them their correct title, Gaudys.

C S Lewis was one of her tutors, and J R R Tolkein was Professor of Anglo-Saxon at the time. She once attended one of Tolkein's lectures "out of curiosity!" One of her former All Saints pupils, visiting her not long ago, asking about Ruth's famous contemporaries, was told that Mr Lewis had once remarked to Ruth and two friends that women could not write poetry. This was enough to set these three off – "we'll show him!" And so they wrote him a poem. "And did he respond?" I asked. "Yes. In verse. He wrote a verse for each of us." She went on to recite the poem and I was staggered because it went on and on and on. Her phenomenal memory did not let her down.

She graduated in 1942 and opted to go into teaching. One of her other tutors at LMH wrote a testimonial for prospective employers: "Throughout her course Miss Compton has always worked with great energy and keenness. She has an alert mind and always enjoys using it in intellectual problems of all kinds ... She is not content to take her opinions second-hand, but thinks things out for herself and, because she is an unusually sincere and honest thinker, and does not shrink from difficulties, the judgements she forms are always worthwhile. Often she sees further into a problem than many who form their opinions more quickly and easily. By personality, Miss Compton seems to me well fitted to teach ... I think she will know how to interest her pupils and that she should not have difficulty with discipline." Prophetic words!

Her first teaching post, in September 1942 was at Eversley School, Lymington. The following year, 1943 she moved to The Godolphin School in Salisbury as Assistant English Mistress. When she left Godolphin in February 1949, the headmistress wrote:

"Miss Compton now thinks that she should try to gain a fresh type of experience, a decision in which I fully concur, for her own sake, We shall however say goodbye to her with real regret, and I shall be sorry to lose a colleague on whose judgement and loyal co-operation I can always rely."

That fresh type of experience was to be a new and very different life, that would see Ruth leave her family, her friends and England, and travel to India under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to teach at a girls' school in the hill station of Naini Tal, in the foothills of the

Himalayas. But first, she undertook a teacher training course at The Selly Oak Colleges, part of the University of Birmingham.

Again, a glowing testimonial, from the Selly Oak Colleges:

“She was awarded the Certificate in Education with a credit in education, a credit in practical teaching and a credit on her overall performance. The credits were deserved. The headmistress of King Edward’s High School for Girls, Edgbaston, where she did her practice teaching, spoke of her in the highest terms as a good teacher, who prepared her lessons well and delivered them in an effective and attractive manner, and as a most agreeable and acceptable colleague in the staff room.

“Her written papers showed shrewdness, common sense, and an unusual amount of humour for an examinee. While Miss Compton has always a mind of her own, and a philosophy of life which governs all her thinking, she is always willing to discuss other points of view with tolerance and good humour. She is already an experienced teacher, but that has not deprived her of humility, and she will be a tower of strength to any headmistress who appoints her to her staff, and herself an excellent headmistress when she is given her opportunity to take command of a school.”

Both Alison and I were lucky enough to visit Ruth at All Saints, while she was principal, during what would now be called a “Gap Year”, and Alison also visited Ruth and Ron at Oak Lodge after their marriage. In the mid 80s, Ruth arranged for Alison’s stepson Harry to work at Sherwood during his gap year and met up with him in Delhi to escort him up to Naini Tal. “I will never forget,” says Harry, “her striding across that main square in Delhi in a yellow sari, hailing a rickshaw wallah, as cows, trucks and motorbikes parted in a dust cloud around her.” Can’t you picture the scene?

And so, to India, and I hand over to Alison.

Ruth sailed for India on February 1st, 1951, on the P&O liner Strathnaver. I am going to quote from some of the many letters she would write to her parents, by then living in Corsham. We have only had time to skim through them, but they are, as you would imagine, a joy to read, and I would like to share some of their contents with you to give you a flavour of her life in India, largely letting her speak for herself, as she recorded her impressions and feelings. I will also draw on letters we have received since her death.

“February 1st 1951; Dear Mother and Father, We came aboard at midday and sailed at 5 o clock. it doesn’t feel as if we are well afloat yet. The landscape looks very fine with some sun on it, and lovely Thames barges sailing by with cargoes of planks. I have a cabin on G deck, which is not the lowest, and it has an outside wall with a porthole. There was a nice pile of letters for me, to start me off feeling important. Otherwise, I feel a bit small, as I’m one teacher to four doctors in our party. All my luggage seems to have come through safely, and so far I haven’t discovered any major errors in my preparation, except that I’ll have to wear my best garden party hat to keep the sun off in Suez! Sometimes there are terrific bumps which may well be my box crashing off the crane and dissolving the pleasant partnership of Tom Kitten and C S Lewis.”

If only there were time to read the whole of her next letter, written a few days into the voyage; it’s full of wonderful descriptions of her fellow passengers and events, all in her own idiosyncratic style. Two bits I have to share, however, because, to me, they are just so very “Ruth”.

"Last night we all went to the flicks in the dance space on D-deck. it was called Duchess of Idaho, in glorious Technicolor, and was such that Claire Thomson and Jonah went after 10 minutes, Mary Whitestone after 20, but Margaret Dawe and I stayed to the end, just to see what more could happen. By the end I cottoned on to the beginning, and staggered down to have a bath in hot salt water which doesn't let the soap froth, but is otherwise most refreshing."

"Half the world was seasick again yesterday in a cold, gurgly bit of the Mediterranean. I just kept compos, and ended the day keeping entries for a frog derby and drinking midnight gin. (This last I add of course just to shock. Anyway, I'm sure the lime to gin was about eight to one; the lounge steward, called Gloria for his blonde perm, wouldn't give me anything fierce; he is most attentive, being convinced, I'm sure, that I'm related to the cricketer.)"

By the way, Gloria was not alone in this misapprehension; several correspondents, particularly Old Sherwoodians, have mentioned Denis Compton – many thought he was Ruth's brother!

She duly arrived, safe and sound, in India and travelled across the plains from Delhi and up, up, into the Kumaon Hills, which would be her home for the next 30 years, firstly at All Saints in Naini Tal and then at Oak Lodge, Bhowali, after her marriage.

Naini Tal is a hill station, nearly 7000 feet up in the Outer Himalayas, 100 miles south of the Tibet border and about 40 miles west of the Nepal border and the hills rise very steeply from 2,000 feet at the base where the railway has to stop. In the monsoon it has a very heavy rainfall, on average 90" in three months. When there was a sudden clear sunny day after days and days of rain, the school would have a "sunshine holiday". Day pupils would hopefully ring the school office, and boarders would be bringing out blankets, shoes, books, all manner of things, into the sunshine on balconies and in verandahs.

The school was founded in 1869 by local English people, primarily for English speaking children who could not afford to go off to England to school. It nearly disappeared after Independence in 1947. Just before the new school year began in March 1950, the Principal had to report to the Chairman of Governors, the Bishop of Lucknow, that she had only 17 pupils on the roll. By 1959 Ruth could report, in a letter to her parents, a roll of 150 pupils. Today it has about 800 pupils, and is a flourishing school, one of the most highly regarded in India.

I turn now to a letter we received from a former pupil, who is here today. She joined All Saints as a pupil just as Ruth arrived.

"My time at All Saints' was 1951-1956, very formative years. Miss Compton was our English teacher. This included English Grammar, English Literature and Elocution. Under this umbrella she also produced and directed the annual school play, productions such as *The Rivals*; extracts from *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice*; and, more ambitiously, *Helen of Troy* and *Antigone*. She was instrumental in getting a then very famous travelling Shakespearean company to visit our school and we saw *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Henry V*. The company was Shakespeare Wallah, headed up by Geoffrey Kendall and his wife, parents of Felicity Kendall. I remember Miss Compton telling us that Mrs Kendall's rendition of *Lady Macbeth* was the definitive performance and that we would never see a better *Ophelia* than Jennifer Kendall's interpretation of that role. I have to say Miss Compton was right. Future productions at the Old Vic with such notables as Maggie Smith and Vanessa Redgrave have not lived up to the simple ones I saw as a school girl with an itinerant family who were just mad about Shakespeare!

"Miss Compton also taught Geography and was our Games Mistress. On some Tuesdays she stood in for Miss King, the Head, as English Country Dancing teacher. Naturally, as Games Mistress, all events on Sports Day were organised and supervised by her so that everything ran to clock work precision.

"I'm afraid I haven't adequate words to describe what a super person and teacher we had in this fine Christian lady. She conducted herself with utter professionalism, gaining our respect and our love, for she was also a very warm, kind person. Her very manner brought out the best in others and she opened our eyes to an India most of us didn't know.

“She inspired as she taught and, although it may sound something of a cliché, she really was, in the very best spirit, a true teacher to whom teaching was a vocation, and not just a job. She went the extra mile and I shall never forget the wonderful geography walks she took us on where she opened our eyes to what was around us. Once in a lifetime does one meet, let alone have the privilege of being taught by someone like Commie, as we girls affectionately called her. She was also often referred to as Ma Commie.

“Miss Compton took us on geography walks to remote places around Naini Tal, to delightful little villages where she pointed out the ancient stone walls that surrounded the village; the walnut and mulberry trees; the little school house no more than a crude shack but which nevertheless produced amazing results. We saw rice being grown on the lower slopes, something none of us had ever experienced before! The only time I had seen a paddy field was from the distance of a moving train! Miss Compton gave us new values: to see the poor, the true India and to think about our surroundings and appreciate them.

“She took us to the cinema down in the town, jaunts to the bazaar and up Cheena Peak, the highest mountain at the head of the lake, always pointing out fauna, flora and life around us. She took such delight in everything around her and she conveyed this to us. She was fun. She was a classicist, a great scholar and a great teacher but it was all tempered with great humility. She made learning a joy and she touched us in a way that no other teacher has ever been able to since. Thank you, Pat.”

From another pupil:

“What she taught me in the six years that I studied in All Saints' is invaluable, lessons in life to be the best that I could be with honesty, courage and integrity. She taught us all to love and respect our surroundings, nature and the environment, long before conservation and 'green' became buzz words.”

From an Old Sherwoodian, now living in Australia:

“My sister, who studied at All Saints, always spoke of her with respect and awe. My early impression of her is a visual image of a school mistress who commanded respect simply by her presence. She carried her authority with an ease and quiet confidence and, though she never suspected it, for many years she was a constant topic of conversation in our home. Today we would call her a legend!”

Ruth became Principal of All Saints in 1961; she didn't really want to be Principal; she wrote in March 1958 to her parents: “Next year, I shall probably have to be Principal. I hope someone turns up; but I am trying to be brave. Dorothy has done a good long stint and wants to be back in England with her sister. It won't just be being Principal I won't like, but not having her around to knock a bit of sense into me, and to sing complicated plainsong next door when I am dressing.”

Later that same year:

“I am curled in a blanket on my bed, all the snuggler for a new thick blue jersey, and nice and warm inside because at last it's settled with the Bishop that Dorothy isn't going yet and I don't have to be a Principal. I don't have the right sort of nose; but nobody listens! For fear of what might fall, I have been growing my hair to make me look more my years.”

Nevertheless, wrong sort of nose notwithstanding and with hair she could now – just – put up, she did become Principal in 1961, and “managed my first report at prize giving with my knees knocking together and a script

which came off the typewriter at 5.01, one minute after prize giving began.” Despite her misgivings, she was a huge success, much respected and much loved. The current principal, Mrs Jeremiah, wrote to us this week: “She was one of the most appreciated Principals of her time, dearly loved and now missed by all who were there during her tenure. Our loss is irreversible – no matter what – she cannot be replaced. We can only cherish the memories so caringly and lovingly bestowed on us during her visits.”

Ruth’s love of India deepened over the years; she travelled widely and had a genuine appreciation of the culture, the sights and sounds of her adopted land. A vivid description from 1963 of leaving Delhi early one February morning:

“We had a glorious journey yesterday, fortunately getting out of Delhi quickly. Sometimes people spend an hour at it, waiting to cross the one way Jumana Bridge and then being foxed by a level crossing beyond. It was a lovely misty winter morning and all along the road were herds of cows and buffaloes, with little calves, and women breaking stones, and people at work in the fields. The road itself is awful; it is just being widened, which makes everything much worse! Imagine nosing around a steam roller, with brick donkeys galloping by, and a huge “Public Carrier” lorry, painted with strange swans and lions and the Shalimar Gardens, hurtling up head on at you in a hurry. And then stray cows saunter across with an air of “I always walk across just here at this hour on a Saturday morning” and provoking parrots leave their tails lying in the road till the very last moment and fly up with a shattering screech and bullock carts are loaded with sugar cane which stretches across the road to scratch the paint off unwary cars. Just before the big new bridge we passed a huge, sad, painted elephant carrying some solemn looking country folk, so we stopped to drink coffee so he would pass us again. He had a very sweet sounding brass bell hanging either side of his long howdah cloth, and I don’t know how this didn’t make everyone more cheerful.”

There is so much more in this vein, but we must move on, to 1977, to Ruth’s marriage to Ron Sherrard and her subsequent retirement from All Saints. Ron and his wife Phyl were old friends of Ruth’s, and after Phyl’s death, he and Ruth found great happiness together. Sadly, it was to be all too short-lived, as Ron died in 1981. Ruth was not at all well then, and her brother John flew out to India to sort out her affairs and bring her back to UK. Whilst there he had a couple of suits made by a tailor in the Naini Tal bazaar, one of which he is wearing today!

After a period of convalescence, mostly spent with the family in Scotland, Ruth came to live here in Biddestone with Meg and Winifred. By happy coincidence, both Naini Tal and Biddestone have a St Nicholas Church. Church Row became the base for many forays to visit friends throughout the UK, India, North America and elsewhere, and was a focal point for visiting former pupils and friends from all walks of life. Ruth’s most recent trip was to India in March and April of this year when she joined in the 140th birthday celebrations of All Saints and took, at the age of 88, her first ever elephant ride. To her lasting regret, however, in all her time in India, she never saw a tiger.

Later in the service, Alison Flint will speak of Ruth's life here in Biddestone, where she made her home for almost 30 years.

Ruth may not have been Denis Compton's sister but I think we would all agree she had a pretty good innings.

Dr James L. Somervell [LMS 1955-1968, CSI Rayalaseema Diocese, CSI Hospital Jammalamadugu] Died 20.8.2009 aged 82.

Former consultant surgeon in Jammalamadugu, A.P. South India and Walsall, b 1927, qualified 1951, married to Mary 1951, FRCS 1960 died, 20th August 2009

Jim was born in Neyyoor, South India, elder son of T.Howard and Margaret Somervell. After posts in England and Vellore, S.India, Jim worked for 14 years in the 1950ies and 60ies, in the Church of South India Hospital, Jammalamadugu. As a general surgeon, he gave , with his colleagues, a dedicated service to the people of this deprived rural area. After registrar posts in Birmingham he was appointed consultant in Walsall from 1970-1989. He was a general surgeon with a special interest in upper G-I and breast surgery. He was deeply compassionate with his patients, loyal to his colleagues and had a special affinity for those from the Indian subcontinent. For some years he was the medical representative to the Hospital Board, and was highly regarded by his colleagues.

His family and his church were central to Jim's life, and he was very supportive of his wife Mary's ordination to the priesthood in the Church of England. His hobbies were golf, painting and gardening. He also had a splendid sense of humour.

He leaves his wife, Mary, 3 children, Tgrandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Miss Ruth Mary Young [USPG 1947-54 St Stephen's Hospital, Delhi, Home Staff 1958-1968] Died 2.6.2010, aged 90.

In today's parlance, Ruth Mary Young could be described as a 'Child of the Raj'; yet she would not have seen herself that way, even though she had been born in Delhi. Her father was C. B. Young, Vice-Principal of St Stephen's College (part of the University of Delhi) and a Shakespeare scholar; her mother was Dr. Ruth Young, a doctor who helped set up the

Maternity and Child Welfare Services of India and later became Principal of the Lady Hardinge Medical College for Women in New Delhi.

Leaving India at the age of 11 Ruth Mary went first to St Swithun's School, Winchester, and then to the University of St Andrews, where she read Modern Languages; her facility in French and German was considerable and led on to her learning Hindi and having an interest in other languages. She might have followed her mother in medicine but without science qualifications she settled for nursing and midwifery, training at the Royal Infirmary, the Simpson and the Elsie Inglis Hospital in Edinburgh. It was perhaps natural that she then volunteered to return to India to join the staff of St Stephen's Hospital in Delhi in 1947. It was a critical time for India, very soon after Independence when there was a great deal of upheaval of every conceivable service. Her eight years in India made a considerable contribution to the maintenance of essential services for thousands of people, especially mothers, in North India.

Returning to England in 1955 she joined the staff of the USPG in London, where she developed and maintained contact with a large variety of people across the world, including British people travelling overseas or foreigners visiting UK. Her capacity for keeping in touch with people from home and abroad was phenomenal, and she was always ready to offer hospitality to them at her London and Edinburgh flats. Maintaining her parents' tradition of hospitality for Indian visitors, she entertained many of her friends from around the world, in particular those from Japan and Africa. Throughout her life she kept in touch with all her many friends from across the world, becoming a regular and excellent correspondent with each of them. Thus her capacity to be a link and a reference point extended beyond her own family, to the wider world family she had come to know and love.

From USPG in London she moved in the early '70s to Stirling as a Midwife and later on to Edinburgh as Senior Tutor in Midwifery at the Simpson Pavilion. During her time with the ante-natal clinic in Stirling she was a leading member of the team which successfully delivered the Bostock Quins; they not only survived, but became close friends of hers.

She finally resigned from professional work in the mid-'80s to spend seven years looking after her mother, who had had a serious stroke at the age of 92, until she died. It was during this time that she became an active member of Christ Church Morningside and the Fellowship of Healing. She was a regular participant in retreats and meditations, so enriching and reinforcing her many links with convents at home and abroad.

During this latter period of her life she also contributed fully to the life and work of the L'Arche Community in Edinburgh, providing help to people with

learning disabilities and demonstrating, again, her wish to support a needy community. She continued to entertain men and women from L'Arche when she moved to Norham in 2004 – so offering them a day out in the country. She settled quickly in Norham, immediately becoming an active member of St Cuthbert's and developing new friends and finding a new circle of people to whom she might offer support.

Not being keen on possessing material things, she was generous with her time, money and talent giving to charities as well as to individuals, and she gave unstinting support to her nieces and nephews and their families in times of need. A keen gardener, she was also a keen walker and traveller; her explorations took her as much into theology and ideas as into new places, so she was always ready to enter into discussion with others about how they saw the world.

She will be sorely missed by many people across the world.