

# Father Brian Retires from Tile Hill 6th Sep 2009

In 1994 Father Brian arrived in Tile Hill as the new Vicar. In the 15 short years he has been with us he has worked tirelessly for the church and the community and has achieved more than he, or we, could ever have hoped.

When Father Brian came here the population of Tile Hill was around 7,000 and he wanted to get to know them all. While he may not have met every single person in the parish, he must surely have come close. He established close relations with the schools and visited regularly, so you may have met him there. He may have helped you through the loss of a loved one, he may have married a member of your family, or baptised your children or simply been there when you needed a friendly ear. Or maybe you just ran into him in the Social Club.

Father Brian's extensive work with the local Schools - Limbrick Wood, Leigh Church of England, Tile Hill Wood and Woodlands – has made him a familiar face to anyone who has grown up in the area over the past 15 years. The rapport with Limbrick Wood children especially has been fantastic and he has been Governor of the school for 14 years. He will be fondly remembered for the 'thumbs up' sign to the children making them able to relate to him with ease and respect.

His open and friendly personality helped him to reach out to the people of the parish, and the congregation of St Oswald's more than doubled in his first few years. But, not content with renewing the congregation, Father Brian set about renewing the building as well. His enthusiasm and determination (along with an intense bout of fund-raising) produced over £250,000 of donations and both the Parish Hall and the church itself received a much needed makeover. A new Sacristy and Lady Chapel were built which freed the Hall for use by a whole host of groups (the Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Dance Academy are among our regular users).

A couple of years later he decided that the interior of the church needed attention too (perhaps he was bored), so the seating was replaced, the lighting enhanced and the whole church repainted. People who have seen Sir Basil Spence's Coventry Cathedral and then stood outside St Oswald's (also by Spence) may wonder "what on Earth was he thinking of?" If they step inside they will find a beautiful church and a peaceful sanctuary – and we have Father Brian to thank for that. He can leave us safe in the knowledge that he has done the most important thing anyone can, he has made a difference. Generations to come may, we hope, continue to enjoy the church as a building and a place of worship and peace, but his real legacy is one that will last only one lifetime. He has touched many lives in his time here; as teacher, pastor and friend. He has been there when we were ill, when we mourned, when we were worried or scared and at our times of celebration and joy. As long as we live we will remember the difference he made to our lives. He has been a part of our lives for 15 years and we are all the better for it. I'm sure that the fact that it now takes a lot less time to get a haircut than it used to is a small price to pay.

We at St Oswald's will miss him greatly and I'm sure the community of Tile Hill will too.

Father Brian will be celebrating his last Eucharist at St Oswald on Sunday 27 September at 10am and on Tuesday at 7pm a Service of Thanksgiving will be held in the presence of The Right Reverend John Stroyan, Lord Bishop of Warwick. Everyone is welcome.