

U DX308

Biography of Canon Bill Sargent

2007

Biographical Background:

William Richard Gerald Sargent was born in Battersea, south London on 19 July 1926. In the early 1930s the family moved to Long Melford in Suffolk where Bill's father ran a pub, but by the late 1930s the family had moved again this time to Braintree, Essex - and it was here that Bill attended the Grammar School. Bill lost his mother when he was 16 and his father died of a heart attack shortly after.

He completed his School Certificate and was offered a place at London University to read Russian. However his life took a different path when in 1944 a recruiting officer for the Indian Army visited the school and Bill, who had previously been a conscientious objector, signed-up. Bill enjoyed army life, being promoted to captain when he was just 19 but independence for India and Pakistan in 1947 saw Bill return to the UK.

Bill followed his friend Gerald Stevenson in joining the police force, and they walked the beat for 18 months before joining the Colonial Police to serve in Malaya in response to the military and political struggles. Whilst in Kuala Lumpur he met Jill Redwood who was studying the aboriginal peoples of the Malayan jungle and the two married in April 1953 and went on to have three daughters. They returned to the UK in 1954 and Bill took-up a place at Lincoln Theological College. He also reaffirmed his political beliefs – joining the Labour Party and organising a one day strike at the College in protest at the Anglo-French action in the Suez.

In 1958 he was ordained as a priest and his first position was at St Augustine's in Hull, moving to East London to be Vicar at Holy Trinity with St Philip in Dalton following in the footsteps of Canon Stanley Evans (see **U DEV**). He served as a local Labour Councillor between 1965-1968 and it was during this time that his interest in housing began, and he was a founding member of the Hackney Housing Association. In 1970 after 10 years in Dalton, Bill moved to St Mark's in Portsmouth.

He was a founding member of the Portsmouth Housing Association (PHA) which purchased and refurbished housing. By 1977 the PHA had so many properties that Bill reluctantly accepted the post of Chairman and oversaw the restructuring of the organisation as it expanded. During this time Bill continued pastoral care and was able to secure funding for a centre which gave respite care to families - the Roberts Centre was opened by Diana, Princess of Wales in 1991. Bill became Chair of the Portsmouth Housing Trust which took-over the Housing Association stock that had been built or renovated for disadvantaged groups and established a hostel for young homeless people but Bill died, in June 1989, before this project was completed.

Custodial history:

Donated by Canon Terry Loudon in December 2007.

Description:

A printed, though not formally published, biography of Canon Bill Sargent.

Extent: 1 item

Related material:

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'Imperfect love. The life and times of Canon Bill Sargent
(1926-1989)'

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1 item

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