



LOTTERY FUNDED

A Father and Daughter

Story...

John...

John remembers going to church from the early 50s when he lived in the Heath Park area. He was about six years old at the time. This was before there building had extended beyond Heath Park and there were fields between Heath Park and Romford. He remembers adults from St Marys coming to Heath Park and leading a train of children back to the church for Sunday School- this was because at the time there was no church in that part of the estate. It seems strange now that parents were happy to end send children off with strangers! John remembers his grandparents as not being church goers but trusting the people from the church.

When he was 14 John remembers being part of the youth group at St Mary's. There was Sunday School and a mid-week club where they played games. It was the only time boys and girls could meet- they all went to single sex schools! Once you were 13 years old you could go along to the Saturday night club run by the church. Here you could play games, chat to girls and there was always some sort of epilogue! Most of them would then walk to the chip shop opposite the Fiddlers' pub. Again this is where you could chat and impress girls! John remembers Jack Green, Bob Butcher and Alan Price as being the people who led these clubs.

John remembers Sunday School as being very crowded and very formal, they had to sit in rows on benches while they were being taught;

If you were a registered member of the group you could earn points and get a silver swordsman badge. This all changed in the late 60s and early70-s when things were more relaxed.

John met Nesta and they married in 1970.

When they married his mother in law, who at the time was not a Christian said "You can now give up church business!" John was part of the church life for over 20 years from the age of 21. He believes that good bible based teaching set him up in life for his own spiritual journey.

In 1980 he and Nesta were commissioned to move to Heath Park church hall as a church plant. Nesta was a reader in the church and helped to run the programme at Heath Park. There were often up to 30 adults and 20 children there at one time. For John and Nesta, lay ministry was a strength of the church, and for people to take ownership of the service developing an all member's ministry approach. John feels that the church at Heath Park attracted people who found it difficult to go anywhere else, most of them lived very local to the Heath Park building.

Dawn...

Dawn remembers Heath Park as being her church from a very early age and she can remember feeling very much part of a large church family and having fun. Church for her was a natural part of her everyday life and with her mum and dad so involved at Heath Park, she took it all in her stride. She made friends and as a teenager went along to church every Sunday and to other groups in the week, some of them at St Mary's.

Her family was very friendly with the Butcher family at St Mary's and it is where she met her future husband Paul. In 1995 Dawn made the conscious decision to move to St Mary's church, she loved the building and appreciated how the architecture could enhance her worship. Her involvement with St Mary's had been growing and it seemed to be the right thing to do.

Dawn particularly loves the stain glass window and the sense of peace in the building. Dawn and Paul subsequently got married at the church in 1999- the third generation of her family to be married at the church!

On reflection Dawn remembers many people who had an influence on her life and helped her to shape her own early spiritual journey. Her own children now attend church and come to events and enter fully in to church life. For all the family their faith is very important and is the centre of their relationships and friendships.



Dawn and Paul on their wedding day in 1999. Her parents and grandparents also married in St Mary's in 1971 and 1946 respectfully.