

## **MY MEMORIES OF BEING AN ALTAR BOY AT ST LEONARD'S 1948 – 1955**

*Specially written for the church by David Jones (now Sir David Jones)*

I lived at 13 Goodson Road, Malvern Link for 25 years – our house was about half a mile from the church – this was a walk I did many times; first with my mother when I was 4. I went to Sunday school under protest because none of the other boys in the road went and in the end I was bribed to go by the promise of an ice cream from Lannie's ice cream van.

I was christened at St Leonard's – my parents had chosen David Charles for my Christian names but Canon Hunt, the vicar, was so upset that they hadn't chosen to name me after the church, a third name of Leonard was added. I dropped this when I went to Primary School at St Mathias, Malvern Link, because the other boys accused me of being 'posh' because I had three Christian names.

As for being an altar boy at St Leonard's, I started as the 'boat boy' aged 7 years old; Mr Daffin, who lived in the Porter's Lodge, was the thurifer. My parents would come and watch me do my stuff and couldn't believe how po-faced I was! So unlike the boy at home!

Later, and to my great excitement, I was promoted to an Acolyte\* with my best friend Tommy. We used to arrive early every Sunday to polish up the bronze candle sticks\* that we carried – I'm amazed we didn't wear them away!

But the best job was ringing the church bell – there were two bells and you soon learnt to have a rope in each hand and ring them both alternately. I had one nightmare – I often used to read the lesson at Evensong (because of my posh voice!) and worried that I would mess it up, but I think this experience helped to give me the confidence to do public speaking, particularly as there was one word that I couldn't get my tongue around .... Gallilee!

Myself and my boyhood friends all loved being altar boys at St Leonard's and there was a great sense of camaraderie and lots of mischief afterwards! About six of us used to hurtle through the main gates under the arch on our bikes and screech up to the cloister doors, throw our bikes on the grass, dash in, and get robed up for the service.

Happy, happy days and my very best wishes to the current altar boys and servers; you are part of a great tradition at St Leonard's

Sir David Jones  
2014

*(Acolytes are the pair of servers who carry the processional candlesticks – and the bronze ones to which Sir David refers to are still in use today; a unique one-off pair made by a local craftsman for the church in 1920. There is a photo of Mr Daffin on the web page)*