

40.

John Betjeman Poet.

During the early years of working for Mr Harold, Ward Bugbrooke's local Ladder Maker and Undertaker, I was asked to dig a grave next to the path, that was opposite side of the pathway near to the Churches main South Door, I justly cannot put dates and times to this particular day, for on the morning of arrival at work I was told to take the tins and equipment we used for grave digging over to Bugbrooke Church yard, and meet the Rev Cannon Charles Harrison.

On arrival the Rev Harrison was to come out from the Church to show me the spot where the grave needed digging, we were to have a little chat before I started about what I was likely to come across when digging out this grave, for he was interested in the footings of old buildings etc that we came across while doing so, for in the same area I was to encounter a well whilst digging one grave so another spot had to be found, my brother Malcolm was to plant an oak Tree over the top of this well after we capped it off, it still grows there to this day.

Before the Rev Harrison returned back into his Vestry, he asked me to keep my eye open for a gentleman who was coming to visit the church hence the reason so he said, for being about in the Church at the time.

I was merrily digging away and was down to about waist high, when a strange looking fellow wearing a long flowing trench coat and a funny shaped hat, came walking up the path towards where I was working, he asked me if I was the Church's Sexton.

Not thinking as to what the job of a Sexton was within the Church, for our family were mainly Chapel people, not Church goers, I relied no I am just a grave digger, All the same he replied laughing and joking, Sexton is the name for a grave digger within the church he replied.

He told me his name was Mr John Betjeman and asked me as to what my name was and to the whereabouts of the Rector, for he said that he was expecting him, and would be about. I said about that he had asked me to keep an eye out for his visitor, and that he wanted me to take whoever to his Vestry on arrival, on the way into the Church he was to say that he had come to look at the large Wooden Screen that is inside Bugbrooke Church.

The Rev Harrison seemed so excited on meeting this man, for when they shook hands it seemed as though they were never going to let go of one another, for I had no idea as to how famous he was, for after he had departed after being showed around the inside and outside of the Church, and while doing so he wrote lots of notes down in his note book, the Rev Charles Harrison told me that he was the Poet Lauriat.

But before he left, he was to come back to the grave with me, while I worked away he was to sit and ask all about myself and the type of work that I did for living, along by asking about my family, and how long we had lived in Bugbrooke.

From what I can gather at the time he was writing a book about Churches called, (Chasing Spires), looking back it was quite an honour to have met the said Man.

Stanley Joseph Clark.