

Clifford Sadler 1916 - 2004

Clifford Sadler, a devoted member of our congregation for many years, died in November aged 88. To those of us who knew him only slightly, he emerged through what we learnt at his funeral as not only a calligrapher of note, a man of singular accomplishment, internationally recognised for his knowledge and skill, but also someone with wide ranging interests in the arts and of a sociable and generous nature.

Music was his earliest passion and he sang from the age of nine, in due course becoming a chorister at Eton and a life-long member of the College's Old Choristers' Association and, via this connection, also of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers Association as well as the City Glee Club. After the War, when he was requisitioned to work for the navy, he became a civil servant at the Ministry of Labour and moved to Chiswick with his wife, Ivy.

It was then that Clifford took up calligraphy and became a student at the Central School of Art, later joining the Society of Scribes and Illuminators – a much valued member. As well as practising his art he gained a great knowledge of the history of writing. Typically he did not keep this to himself but took great delight in sharing it with others, escorting parties to museums, cathedrals and libraries all over the country and attracting calligraphers from abroad. For some years he taught classes in Chiswick, as we heard from one of his former students, inspiring them with his enthusiasm and the range of opportunities he created for them. He worked as a calligrapher for Eton College, St Paul's Cathedral and the Musicians' Chapel at St Sepulchre's Church where he was the scribe for the remembrance book. At St Nicholas Church we have an example of his work in the list of vicars of Chiswick. The popularity of calligraphy today is in part due to Clifford's role in introducing so many people to the skill and pleasure of making letters.

It was from Jenny Garner, who had been a neighbour as a child, that we heard what a delightful companion Clifford was. She recalled visiting him in the Junk Room in the garden where, amid apparent chaos, he did his calligraphy. She talked of expeditions with him to Chiswick House, games of Scrabble and Pelmanism, the stories he told and how he enjoyed winding people up. She remembered his love of gadgets and electronics, and his experimental cooking. She spoke of his devotion to his wife, Ivy, and his care of her in her last illness, of his kindness, charm and generous sociability, of his ability to draw people together.

The Clifford we came to know at St Nicholas was always out and about, at concerts, locally and in town, at all the local festivals and going tirelessly to the theatre and exhibitions, often taking guests with him. His regular presence at St Nicholas and within the Chiswick community will be greatly missed.

Christabel Ames-Lewis