

**Martin Laker (joined about 1950-1956)**

*The following tribute, which is a shortened version of the eulogy read out at Martin's funeral on 27th July 2011, was sent in by his brother, Graham:*

Martin was born in Portsmouth on 3rd March 1939. His father was in the merchant navy and met his wife-to-be in Liverpool. Martin was the middle son of five boys - Edward and David, the older two and Adrian and Graham the younger two. In 1943 the four older boys and their mother were evacuated from Portsmouth to the small village of Tan-Y-Grisiau in Wales for the duration of the War.

Martin grew up in Marmion Road, Southsea and attended the local St Jude's School, followed by the Southern Grammar School. He was a talented actor, taking part in many school plays, a fast sprinter and an excellent boxer.

After school, he proved to be a hard worker taking a variety of jobs, but after all-night sessions spent reading and studying such authors as Byron, Dylan Thomas and Shakespeare, early rising proved not to be one of his strengths.

In the late fifties, Martin decided to move to London with some friends and rented a large house in Hampstead. This was close to the beginning of 'The Swinging Sixties' and there was much partying and carousing, so much so that the house could well have been named 'Cirrhosis On The Heath'. After a few months, Martin tired of this and rented a flat in Clapham, South London and found a job at 'The Garrick Club' in London's West End, a very exclusive club for the doyens of the acting community where he met such luminaries as Sir Donald Wolfit, Andrew Cruickshank, Alistair Sim and many others.

He returned to Portsmouth and took a job in the Dockyard but he was no longer satisfied just to drift from job to job and had begun to discover a deep significance for himself in Roman Catholicism. He joined a monastery in Sussex where he became Brother George and then went to Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight but neither suited him.

He then decided to train for the priesthood and attended Saint Edmund's College, Ware, Hertfordshire. He was ordained in Saint John's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Portsmouth on the 7th June, 1975.

His first position as a priest was at Saint Joseph's Church, Guernsey where he stayed until 1977, before returning to his local area, Park Place Pastoral Centre, Wickham, Hampshire. He left Wickham in September, 1978 to join the Church of Holy Rood, North Hinksey near Oxford until 1984.

Later that year, he moved to the parish of Crowthorne, Berkshire, his duties included administering to the needs of inmates at the nearby Broadmoor Hospital.

In 1999 he then transferred to Alderney in the Channel Islands where he became much loved and respected.

Six weeks ago, he was diagnosed with inoperable cancer of the kidneys. He died peacefully in Alderney on the 21st July 2011.

*Graham Laker, July 2011*