

The Reverend Edward L B C Rogers VRD MA(Oxon) RNR(Ret) 1922 - 2000

Master 1980



The Revd Edward Rogers, the late Rector of St Giles' Church, Cripplegate, was well known for his humanity, his friendship, a wonderful sense of humour and his distinctive laughter. A small place in history is his in that he was the first British baby to be born on the island of Tristan da Cunha. He enjoyed the company of people and was always able to make others feel at ease. He was also respected for his ability to keep confidences and provide useful and meaningful advice. He was a good listener, and in his parishes, his concern for people was well known. They were able always to come to him, knowing they would be received warmly and in friendship. One of his former parishioners has written: "he always had time to talk and make people feel that they mattered". Several of his parishioners went forward to Ordination or Reader ministry. In retirement he continued reading theology and material for the new liturgies, and attended Praxis training days to prepare to use Common Worship.

He always put other people first and was the most unselfish person. His personal material requirements were minimal and throughout his life he remained grateful to those who had helped him or his family in hard times, such as the Sons of the Clergy. He remained loyal to his old school, Christ's Hospital and his old college, Keble College, Oxford. His concern for others was demonstrated in a large number of charitable donations. Most recently he was enormously grateful to the individuals who had shown concern and had offered him support and encouragement in his illness and in particular to the staff at Farleigh Hospice. He was also very moved by the plight of all those in the world who have so little, and began to support the Mission Aviation Fellowship. This organisation provides assistance in disaster zones ahead of the relief agencies who need to use roads.

Edward did not like to owe money and settled bills on the day they arrived. Neither did he let people down. If he said he would do something he made every effort to ensure he did. His commitment meant that he attended meetings whenever possible and when the interest of others had waned he was still a committed supporter. Being a very kind person, he sought to set an example to others of how to live a Christian life, without being hostile or judgmental of those who failed. As a husband and father, he gave Charmian, his wife and Francis and Clare, his children, his total unconditional love and supported them in whatever they chose to do. He was there for them always, to help and advise. He was very concerned for their happiness and did whatever he could to ensure it. He collected newspaper cuttings and magazine articles to support their interests and development as well as his own.

Humility helped him to be at ease with all sorts of people - the Queen, when she visited Barbican, Prince Philip, dining on HMS President or at the Royal Naval College Greenwich, Princess Margaret, at a Guildhall dinner, Lord Mayors, and equally prisoners at Pentonville and other prisons which he visited. His humanity shone forth for all to see when with children at school or the sick at home or in hospital.

His interests were many and varied..... Tristan da Cunha, his family history and history in general, postage stamps especially from Tristan. When the volcano erupted on Tristan and some of the islanders came to Southampton, Edward visited then and kept in contact after they had returned. As an author..... he had ambitions as a writer. He had started writing his autobiography, and had written up facts for some of the organisations to which he belonged. He completed his History of St Luke's Church, Old Street before his death. A prolific reader. A lover of books - novels, biography, history and theology. He had pursued rowing and was still supporting the Keble rowing club. After his changing from the army to the navy at the bishop's request and serving as chaplain in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) which became the Royal Navy Reserve (RNR) he became interested in charities and missions connected with the sea. He was a loyal member of Barbican Lodge No 8494 and was as well the Assistant Grand Chaplain of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Many have been the comments and tributes in the letters received by his family.....

"He was a gentleman in every sense of the word"

"Edward always seemed youthful to me, despite his illness, I suppose it was something to do with his lively mind and wide interests"

"He was obviously an extremely gentle man who bore his final illness with great dignity and fortitude"
(from the Registrar at Farleigh)

"Interesting kind and gentle"

"Such a lovely man"

"Unfailing good humour and sound common sense"

"An example of how to live a good and fulfilling life" (one of his churchwardens)

"a reassuring, understanding person to encounter, very encouraging"

Edward L B C Rogers VRD MA(Oxon) RNR(Ret) was born on 21st September 1922 on the island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic, where his father, The Revd Henry Martyn Rogers was a S.P.G. missionary. Early education was entrusted to Christ's Hospital, Horsham 1932-39 (Prep A, Maine B) from where he went into the newspaper world and worked for Kemsley Newspapers, Daily Sketch and Sunday Graphic 1939-1940. The war years saw him enlist in the Leicestershire Regiment, but because of poor eyesight, transferred to Royal Army Pay Corps (Lt. Paymaster) and served in East Africa. He was released as a Z Reservist to go up to Keble College, Oxford to read Theology. After gaining a B.A. Hons in 1947 he progressed to his M.A. in 1951. Coming down from Oxford he spent 1948-49 at Wells Theological College taking his General Ordination Examination in 1949. He was ordained at Leicester in 1949 and became a Priest in 1950. His recall found him once again in the army where he said he wanted to be a chaplain. However, his bishop said there were enough army chaplains but there were needs in the Navy so he was "gazetted" out of the one service into the other. He served in the Royal Navy Reserve for 21 years and as well performed regular chaplain's sessions on HMS President on the Thames as well as Summer Training elsewhere. He was awarded VRD in 1965.

He married Charmian Sinclair on 29th December 1953.

During his priestly life he was in the forefront of everything that touched his people and the list here gives but a glimmer of his dedication and commitment.....

Ordained Leicester, September 1949; Priest September 1950

Curate - St. Mary Hinckley (Leicester) 1949-52

Curate in Charge - St. Guthlac's, Parish of St. Mary Magdalene, Leicester, 1952-54

Incumbent - St. Michael's Leicester 1954-59

- St Luke's, Old Street, London 1959-66

- St. Giles Cripplegate with St Luke's etc. 1966-87

Permission to officiate within the Chelmsford diocese 1987

His list of associations continues..

Freeman of the City of London, 1962,

President of Sion College, 1968

Honorary Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Barbers, 1985

Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve 1953-58;

Royal Navy Reserve, 1958-74;

Senior Chaplain London Division (HMS President) 1974-79

Scouts -

Wood Badge 1951, Scout Master 6th Hinckley, Ass. Scout Master 68th

Leicester, Group Scout Master 11th Leicester, involved 6th Finsbury

Chaplaincies -

Chaplain, Moorfield's Eye Hospital 1967-81

Royal Homoeopathic Hospital

Substitute Chaplain at Pentonville Prison 1974-87

Lord Mayor's Chaplain 1970-71, 1985-86

Chaplain to the Sheriffs of London 1982-83

Chaplain to British Petroleum

Chaplain to Whitbread's Brewery

Chaplain to Air Training Corps Cadets 1979-87

School Governors 1954-87:

St. Luke's C of E School (primary),

Prior Weston (primary),

Lady Eleanor Holles School (secondary)

Freemasonry -

Master - Christ's Hospital Lodge 1975;

Member & Chaplain Barbican Lodge 8494 - 1980's

Assistant Grand Chaplain - United Grand Lodge of England

Trusts & Foundations

Disablement in the City - member and Chairman

Cripplegate Foundation - Governor and Chairman 1966-87

St. Luke's Parochial Trust - Trustee and Chairman 1959-87

ToCH. - Nairobi, London

Lions International, Leicester (Midlands Zone Chairman 1957-1959)

Active member of various branches of Christ's Hospital

Cripplegate Ward Club - Master 1980

During his year of office there were many functions there was the AGM and Luncheon at the Mansion House on February 18; a visit to the Tower on May 13; a "Court Leet" dinner on June 4 ; Dinner in Guildhall Crypt October 30. This was the year when his younger sister died and he had to cope with visiting her in hospital, her funeral, selling the house, clearing up family treasures' in Leicester.

One of Edward's eyes was damaged at birth and nearly useless, so he had bad coordination which limited his abilities at sports involving balls but he enjoyed rowing at Keble.

Cancer was first diagnosed in 1998 when he had surgery to remove part of his colon. The surgeon thought he had cleared it all. It returned and he had a period of chemotherapy, then delays with appointments for scan and so on. On Maundy Thursday 2000 came the bad news that the cancer had spread. He took his last Communion Service on the Easter day, preaching whilst sitting. A week later he was in great pain. When he returned to hospital he was referred to Farleigh Hospice. Wider scans were arranged where it was discovered the cancer had spread to his kidneys, liver and stomach. He was very comfortable in Farleigh and they helped him prepare for his death and allowed Charmian to stay most nights. His wife was with him when he died and tells us how happy he was to be going to his Lord.....

He is survived by his wife Charmian, son Francis and daughter Clare.

These notes are taken from notes made at the time of his death and from addresses at his funeral in Chelmsford Cathedral officiated by Bishop Edward Holland, Area Bishop of Colchester and from the Memorial Service held later at his beloved St Giles Cripplegate.