

The Batt and Rymill family

by David Rymill

The Batt family has a long connection with Cuddington that began in 1937 when Ada and William (Bill) Batt moved to a newly-built house in Kingshill Avenue. Ada was born in Canada in 1908, but her father died when she was two, and a few years later she and her mother returned to Hersham. Her mother went back into domestic service, and Ada lived with her grandparents. She was one of about 20 first cousins, mostly living within a few minutes' walk. She sang in the choir at St Mark's Church, Whiteley Village, a nearby retirement village for staff of Whiteley's department store. After



Bob and Margaret Rymill's wedding at St Mary's in 1967
L to R - John and Margaret Rymill Snr, Bob and Margaret Rymill, Ada and Bill Batt

leaving school she became a book-keeper at Bentalls in Kingston.

Bill had grown up in south London, so Worcester Park was a compromise between their rural and urban backgrounds. He continued the family occupation of leatherworking, and had a small shop off Gloucester Road in Kensington, where he repaired suitcases and umbrellas. We still have a

paper luggage label from one of the Queen's suitcases which he was subcontracted to repair.

Bill had been brought up as a Baptist, and Ada in the Church of England, so they both fitted in well to the moderate tradition at St Mary's. Ada joined

the 'working party', sewing items to be sold at church fairs; she would later run this for many years.

Margaret was born at home in 1938 and her connection with St Mary's began when her mother went to be 'churched'. She was baptised here, and went to Kingsley High School in The Avenue and then to Nonsuch. She became a librarian, initially in Worcester Park Library in Windsor Road, and later at Ridge Road and Cheam, and in the cataloguing room at the old Sutton Library in Manor Park. She especially enjoyed encouraging children to discover the joy of reading.

Margaret became a Sunday School teacher at St Mary's. She had a lifelong love of sewing – embroidery, tapestry, knitting, making clothes and soft toys, and cross-stitch; she began helping on the working party stall, and made a tapestry kneeler for St Mary's and one for the new Guildford Cathedral. In 1958 she was a founder

member, and first Secretary, of the Cuddington Players Operatic Section, which rehearsed and performed in the Large Hall. A particular highlight was the world première of Turpin in 1964; the score had not been published, and she copied out the music onto Banda stencils from which copies were run off.

The Rymills moved to Cuddington in 1964. Margaret and John had met as children in Northampton. Margaret and her family had moved to Dorset, and Margaret became a teacher, in Lyme Regis and Weymouth. John's father retired from running a grocer's, to a farm at Bovingdon, Hertfordshire; he developed part of the land for housing, and John designed houses there. His later career ranged from clerical work to co-founding a breeze-block company.

For about 30 years they had lived in Hendon, and attended St Michael's, Mill Hill, where Bob was a server; John and Margaret were active in amateur opera and drama. Bob studied electrical

engineering at Leeds and, after National Service in REME, joined LEO Computers Ltd at Acton, teaching engineers and writing manuals. This company was the computing wing of the teashops, catering and food manufacturing company J Lyons which, having successfully built a computer to automate some of their own administrative processes, began producing computers for other companies, each individually designed after LEO staff spent time observing the clients' procedures.

The family joined St Mary's; Margaret (senior) joined the Mothers' Union and helped on the



The Cuddington Players production of Turpin in 1964
Margaret Batt (Jnr) is 2nd from the right

working party stall, and Bob became a server. He also joined the Cuddington Players, thus getting to know Margaret (junior).

Bob and Margaret married in St. Mary's in 1967. For about 15 years they lived in Edenfield Gardens, opposite the Paddock – a good location to enjoy watching the marquees being put up on the day before St Mary's Fundays from the 1970s. Initially Bob continued commuting to Acton, but after LEO was taken over by ICL, he moved to Decca Radar to avoid relocation, initially as a technical author producing manuals for marine Radar. He remained with Decca (subsequently taken over by Racal), working at their sites in Croydon, New Malden, Chessington and Hersham, latterly as Editor, until his retirement, which has given him more time for gardening and railway modelling.

After Bill died in 1973, Ada became more active at St Mary's (where she was known to many as 'Auntie Batt') as a server, as verger for weddings

and funerals, and looking after the altar linen and candles.

Margaret became a sidesman, and in the 1990s took on the roles of running the needlecraft stall (as the working party stall had become) and maintaining the linen and candles. In 2005 she worked the birds panel for the new cross-stitched Children's Chapel altar frontal.

David arrived in 1969 and Stephen in 1980; both were christened in St Mary's. David became a server, and Stephen was taught the organ by John Avery, Organist Emeritus at St Mary's.

After graduating David worked as an archives assistant in London and Surrey before qualifying as an archivist; since 1993 he has been at Hampshire Record Office, dividing his time between Winchester and Cuddington; he currently has secondments looking after the Winchester Cathedral and Highclere Castle archives. He has been interested in local history since he was 13, and has had the privilege of



Stephen Rymill's baptism in 1980 at St Mary's

L to R - Ada Batt, Margaret Rymill holding Stephen, David Rymill, Margaret Rymill (Snr)

hearing local people's memories of Worcester Park and Cuddington from 1908 onwards.

Stephen read computer science at Cambridge, and for about 15 years has been a programmer at Frontier Developments, a computer games company. He is married to Liz, a secondary maths teacher, whom he met through Holy Trinity, Cambridge. They are house-group leaders, and are involved in technical and musical aspects of worship at HT, and they have three-year-old twins, Lucy and James.