

CHRISTOPHER JOHN GARRATT

*This tribute to Chris Garratt was written by his brother Michael and read at his memorial service on November 11:*

Chris was born in Newark, Nottinghamshire on 30th January 1937, the first child of Ewart and Daisy Garratt. The good news is that he was a highly intelligent boy: the sad was that he was born lacking physical coordination in his legs which meant he could not play games as readily as most youngsters. This physical handicap (a form of cerebral palsy) could probably have been surgically helped these days, but the weakness remained and was an increasing factor in his mobility limitations as he grew older. It was amazing that he was able to master playing church pipe organs (which require close coordination) so successfully.

He had already started school when I was born and was in the top juniors when Peter arrived. At primary school, he gained the highest set of marks in the 11+ in Leicestershire even though he was taking the exam a year early and he went on to Loughborough Grammar School when he was only ten.

When we moved to Ashford in Kent, he had to change schools and made many friends there whose friendship he retained. He was probably happiest at Ashford Grammar School but another family move to Enfield after the divorce of our parents meant yet another change of school. Christopher's cerebral palsy was not then as obvious in everyday life but it prevented him being called up for National Service.

Although he was offered a place at University College, London, he had already taken the competitive open entry Civil Service Exam, was successful and felt he should enter the Public Trustee Office as an Executive Officer. He remained working there in Holborn until his retirement in 1994. He worked on many interesting trust accounts and was very meticulous in their maintenance. He was to use these accounting skills in his voluntary work as a treasurer for various groups and churches.

As we grew older, we brothers had more in common and all three of us often went for long bicycle rides on Saturday afternoons (as he had to work on Saturday mornings in those early years). Later he and Peter had joint ownership of a 1957 Vauxhall car.

Christopher had always had a lively interest in maps and as a child, produced intricate road maps of real and imaginary places with standard colouring of topographical features. With our Mother, he arranged and generously part financed family holidays to places in England (and later in Scotland and Ireland). He meticulously organised bus travel arrangements at home and on holiday and in a dozen or more holidays, I can only recall one occasion when our chosen outward bus did not run because he had missed that it was a Saturday-only service. (But he quickly found a substitute venue and running bus!). We rarely returned late from a day out or had to get a taxi back.

Allied to his love of places was his love of photography. He would wait patiently for the sun to emerge again from behind a cloud to achieve the desired lighting. He was the meticulous Secretary of the active office Photographic Society which covered many subjects but for Chris it was always geographical locations that interested him the most. Beyond photography, Christopher had a lively interest in world affairs and cricket and enjoyed going to test matches at Lords and the Oval.

However music was his greatest interest and he was a valued regular organist in several churches over many years and was always happy to accompany services in any denomination if he was free. He even played for a Catholic wedding in Rome on one occasion. Alison is still in touch with the couple and has visited them in Ireland in the last year.

Chris loved trying different organs in churches and cathedrals at home and abroad on visits arranged by The Organ Club of which he and Alison were such reliable members and to which Alison still goes. Chris was a founder member of the Enfield and District Organists Association. It is good to see representatives of both the Enfield and the national clubs present here.

Having begun by exploring the UK in the 50s and 60s, Chris now accompanied by Alison explored more extensively in Europe, including Scandinavia, the Baltic and eastern Europe. They travelled to Australia and New Zealand, China, South America and USA. They always tried to visit friends, Church and other contacts wherever they were. He and Alison enjoyed all these visits. His hope of visiting Easter Island in his Seventies which he had logistically planned despite its inaccessibility, was sadly prevented by his failing physical health. Unsurprisingly when he was offered the opportunity of joining the Royal Geographical Society in 1993, he accepted the honour of becoming a Fellow of that august Society and attended numerous fascinating meetings and lectures in London.

Christopher, even as a young man, could be very determined and obstinate. He always took his time, sometimes to the frustration of others! After our Mother died, he decided to end a local organist appointment and started attending Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church as a member of the congregation. There he met Alison who became the love of his life and his wife in 1979.

Chris loved children and was a loved uncle. While he and Alison were not to have children of their own, they enjoyed and shared four nephews, three nieces, six great nieces and one great nephew who, by chance, shared his birthday, 30th January. Chris was always interested in their activities and was very avuncular and caring and, had he lived just a month or two longer, he would have had a second great nephew.

He and Alison were a great support to each other throughout their married life, though Alison had to bear much administrative and decision making on her own in the last four years when Chris's hearing and eyesight were failing. When he was no longer able to drive, he came increasingly to rely on Alison and latterly to depend on her, other carers and the willing assistance of friends and neighbours to whom he and we are so grateful. He did not welcome his move to Cooperscroft but accepted its inevitability as he could no longer walk or move unaided. He was very grateful for the kindness of all the staff in his 18 months there.

Chris had a deep-seated Christian faith and loved good church music. He gave great service, particularly musically, to church communities over many years. He recognised his own fallibility and abilities but was from time to time upset by the less traditional musical tastes of some church people. When Chris could no longer travel up to Bloomsbury each Sunday, he found a welcome and a home in this more local Church.

Many people loved Chris for his kindly and generous nature and his friends recognised his loyalty and the way he and Alison put themselves out for them. He was a valued driver for Meet a Need with Christian Care in Enfield. All his extended family and friends remember

his wide general knowledge, his earlier cheerfulness and determination, even on bad days, and valued his involvement and advice, particularly when he became the senior family member.

Chris will be remembered by so many people and friends for a lifetime of service, loyalty and kindness. Indeed Alison has received over 80 cards and messages of sympathy. He was a loving husband, brother, brother-in-law, uncle and great uncle and we think today especially of Alison who will of course miss him the most.

Chris was a true Christian gentleman whom we remember with pride and affection and today we give thanks to God for his life and work, and for his many personal kindnesses and his great capacity for friendship.

*Michael E Garratt*