

## Tony Clements

I was born in Batheaston on 21<sup>st</sup> Nov 1939 and lived there until I was about 5. It was during the second world war and we had to move as our house was bombed. We



moved to Midsomer Norton as my Nan and Grandad already lived here. We attended the Catholic Church where my grandparents were the caretakers and I served at the altar.

I enjoyed my school years firstly at Welton Primary and then at Somervale school which was in the High street then. I played football for the school team and table tennis in the North Somerset league. In 1955 I left school and started work as an apprentice for the princely sum of £2-10 shillings a week at Casswells, the local Ironmongers. I was able to study at the College of Commerce in Bristol as part of the apprenticeship but there was thankfully still time for other interests like the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. I say thankfully because it was here at the age of 17, that I met Judy who was in the nursing division and 5 years later in 1961 we got married. We have been together now for 48 years and our daughters Susan and Rachel both have their own families giving us 4 lovely grandchildren.

Back to 1961. I had been working at the Ironmongers now for 6 years and felt that it was time to move on and so I joined Clarks Shoes at the Westfield site. I worked my way up in the company to become a supervisor and then a foreman. I then got the chance to travel in the Far East with the company in the 1970's, to resource training shoes and to study production methods. The last 3 years of my working life was spent between managing a Clarks factory in Lancaster and then foreman in the St. Peters factory in Westfield. During that time I was asked to become a Magistrate which became a very interesting part of my life, sitting at Radstock, Keynsham and then Bath. I am 70 years old this year so after 28 years, it is time to retire from that as well.

I have never been one to sit still though, and have always kept busy with other voluntary work, like being the Chairman of St. Chad's & Chilcompton Patient Group, Chairman of Paulton Hospital User Group and on the management committee of the Somer Centre, which for those that don't know is the local community hall.

Judy asked me many times to go to church with her but I always said I didn't have time although I gave her a lift. One Sunday when I took her I met Roy and Barbara outside the church. Roy used to be a Manager with the same ironmongers, Casswells at the same time that I was there in the late 1950's. Roy saw me driving away from church and told me "You're going the wrong way!". "I know", I said, "but I have lots to do", and I drove off.

Judy who had been going to the church for a while, had joined a housegroup and she got her housegroup all praying for me and for the other partners who were non-Christians. I eventually started going to a few things at the church with Judy and met lots of her friends which included Roy and Barbara. It was Roy who eventually sent

home an invitation with Judy for me to go to the next Alpha course. Although Judy had asked me before, this time I decided to go along.

The course was held at Manor Farm, the home of John and Mary Addicott, and the first time I went I was surprised at what I found. Everybody was very welcoming and the atmosphere was friendly throughout. This together with the super food that Mary and the team provided, made Friday nights an enjoyable experience for me. I met Bob for the first time at the course and he is being baptised today with me. Paul who is helping to Baptise me today was also there helping at the course.



After the first week of Alpha, I was looking forward to going again and as the weeks progressed, I realised that I wanted to become a Christian. It was just through the way Nicky Gumble (on the Alpha DVD) explained everything in a relaxed and understandable way that started to make things click with me. Each Alpha course has what's known as the "Holy Spirit Day" and it was just a few days after this that I made my commitment. This flabbergasted Judy and she took a few weeks to calm down from her initial excitement.

I would just like to say a big thankyou to Mike and John for their help in preparing me for my baptism. Also I would like to say thankyou to Roy and Barbara, for their friendship and help in me making the decision to become a Christian. I am very grateful that we met again, Roy, after 53 years. I consider at the age of 70 that I have had a very full life and now I have given my heart back to God.

Thanks for listening.