

Gill Hayward Interview, 05/11/2019, in the afternoon.

Mrs Gill Hayward, born 1940.

Gill is from Birmingham but her husband Leslie was a Worcester man. They didn't marry in St Swithun's due to the public toilet in front of the church so got married at St Martin's instead. Was part of the congregation for seven years before it shut - very small congregation.

She says there used to be a very good choir including Irene Williamson, Mrs Leahy, Harry Prior. The congregation numbered less than 10 and no young people. Mostly middle class people. George Rooke was the vicar of both St Martin's and St Swithun's.

Gill had a serious nervous breakdown in Birmingham before moving to Worcester and was clinically depressed but attended church each week. Gill relates an occasion when a chap left the church because someone was sitting in his seat.

The bells were renovated during her time in the congregation. Shortly afterwards a crack was discovered in the tower.

She recalls that the restaurant next door was their church hall. They used to pop in there for a cup of tea and a biscuit after services.

She remembers a wedding at the church, Pam and Percy Adams' daughter Penny Adams got married there to Phillip (see later interview). Apparently Pam disapproved of Gill's marriage in St Martin's saying they should have married in St Swithun's instead.

When St Swithun's shut for a while the congregation moved to St Martin's. Everyone was aware of a very different style of worship (Anglo-Catholic at St Martin's, low church at St Swithun's) and didn't get along too well.

Gill remembers that once a year the vicar would stand at the top of Mealcheapen Street asking people to give donations to St Swithun's. She mentions St Swithun's Close off Camp Hill Road where there are almshouses connected with St Swithun's. She says she had three Salvation Army friends who ended up taking up residence at the Almshouses.

Gill came to Worcester in 1970. Her husband was a lot older than her and was deaf but could speak. He was the first deaf student to gain a degree from the Open University in Philosophy. He made TV and newspaper appearances as a result. She says that her and her husband attended All Saints as well as St Swithun's and St Martin's – antagonism between all of them, big disagreements about women priests amongst other things. These issues particularly significant after St Swithun's shut due to the parishioners having to worship at Old St Martin's. Gill says she ended up migrating to the Cathedral in the end due to issues such as this.

Gill doesn't remember anyone being buried in the church during her time in the congregation. When I suggested there may have previously been a way in to beneath the church via what is now the restaurant next door she says there probably was.

END of interview.

