

SHAMLEY GREEN MATTERS

Michael Harding

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Michael was born in Shamley Green in 1933 and still lives in the house in which he was born, *Manelhe* in Sweetwater Lane. The name of his house comprises the alternating initials of his parents. His father, Albert (Bill) Edward Harding was killed in the War, May 1941, serving on HMS Warspite, and is named on the Memorial at Christ Church. Michael was educated at Christ's Hospital School near Horsham.

During National Service he specialised as a Military Intelligence Field Security operative. In 1953 he was involved in the Tidal Flood Emergency and the Coronation security. He was posted close to the Iron Curtain near the Harz Mountains in West Germany for 18 months.

On his return to the UK in September 1954 he trained as a teacher, obtained good qualifications and was awarded a Life Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). During 14 years as a member of staff at Chipstead Valley Secondary Modern School he was also a Civics Examiner for the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). He served on committees/working parties, as a lecturer and course leader for the Geographical Association (GA) and for the Field Studies Council (FSC). As a Rover Scout leader, volunteer Instructor and long term member of the Austrian Alpine Club he regularly helped lead expeditions to the High Alps during Summer Holidays. From 1968 to 1993 Michael taught at Riddlesdown, the largest Comprehensive School in Croydon as a geography teacher and, from 1974, as Deputy Head.

He has been a very active member of the community all his life and served as one of the Shamley Green Ward Parish Councillors, as its Vice Chairman for over twelve years and as one of its representatives at Surrey Association meetings.

For thirty years he has been Chairman of Shamley Green History Society and also has been a stalwart of Christ Church, Shamley Green, serving the Parochial Church Council, on many of its committees and working groups, as a sidesperson, dealing with ancestry searches and enquiries relating to the church and churchyard as well as tending our church grounds.

In the Borough of Waverley he was a volunteer Director, Trustee and Line Manager of Carer Support, Waverley for over seven years, until medical matters forced him to retire.

He compiled and edited '*Shamley Green – A History*' published in 1993 and '*A Guide to Christ Church Shamley Green*' for its 150th anniversary. For the Queen's Jubilee in 2002, he edited a book documenting life in our parish. He was also a major contributor to the Wonersh and Shamley Green Village Design Statement that is still used as a statutory planning document to this day by Waverley Borough Council.

At Easter in 2020 Michael received recognition for his long service to Church and community by the late Queen, a Royal Maundy gift, see the above photograph. The usual service in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, could not take place because of Covid. The Queen sent letters to all recipients.

In 2022 he oversaw the editing and publication, and was a major contributor to, the much enlarged 2nd Edition of '*Shamley Green – A Village History*', happy to make good use of the extra years that advances in medical science have given to him.

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