

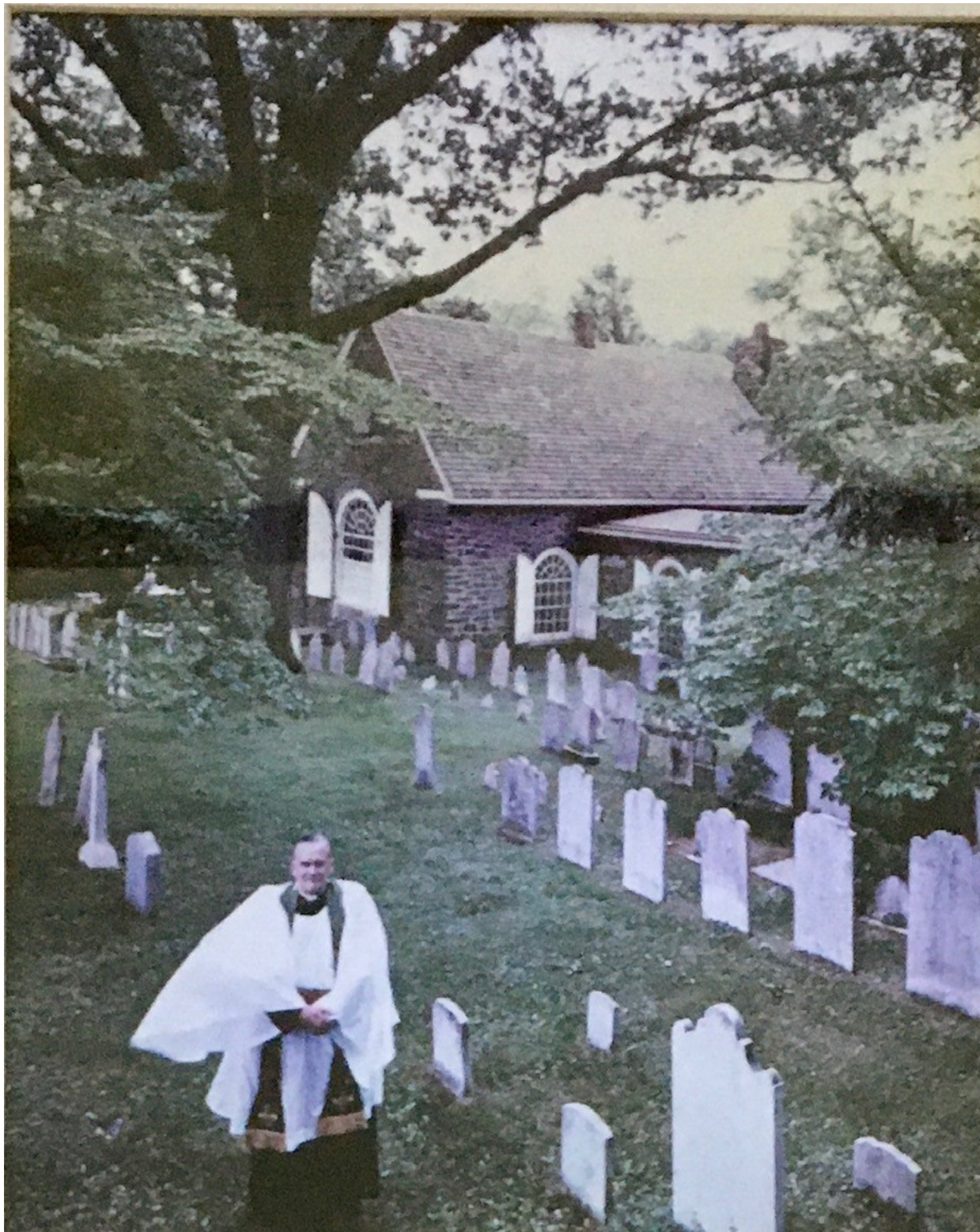
OLD ST. DAVID'S, RADNOR

ERECTED IN 1715



Victorian rectory with Knewstub family members, ca. 1965.

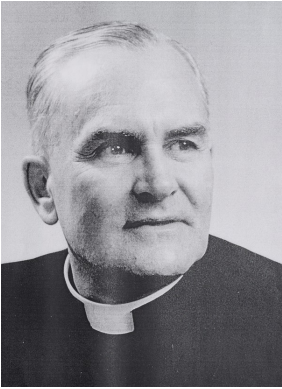
REMINISCENCES OF THE REV. JOHN KNEWSTUB'S CHILDREN



The Reverend John Knewstub in the churchyard outside of St. David's Episcopal Church.

Featured in Holiday Magazine, 1960s

Reminiscences of John Knewstub's Children



The Reverend John Knewstub,
Rector (1945-1966)

On January 19, 2020, members of the Parish History and Archives Committee met at Jill and Joe Bonn's house for a lovely lunch with three of The Reverend John Knewstub's children to learn about their lives here at St. David's while their father was rector from 1945 to 1966. Audrey Knewstub Coleman, Margo Knewstub Kraftson and Laura Knewstub Ianieri each shared family stories and offered their impressions of life in the Rectory reminding us that they were children at the time.

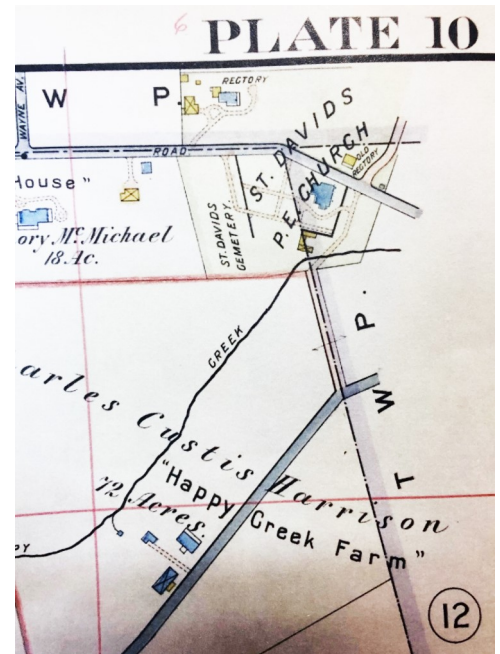
Our committee had questions regarding the controversy during the early 1950's that ensued regarding the building of the new 1957 Chapel as the congregation had become too large to fit into the Church for services. We recognized how challenging growth and change can be when Margo commented that some people considered it "sacrilegious to build a new church". Nevertheless, St. David's grew during that time to a parish of 490 families of 850 adults, 300 children and 150 young people.



The Reverend John Knewstub with his wife, Audrey.
Photo by Bradford and Bachrack

The Rectory, which housed John and Audrey Knewstub and their twelve children, stood more or less, where the Knewstub Education Building stands now. The house was built in 1889. The house stood on top of the steep hill where the school is now built. The barn was behind the house along the existing fence that faces Maplewood Ave. There was a chicken coop situated in the corner opposite the barn and two sheep and ducks grazed on the hill overlooking the Parish House. The Parish house, of course, was where it is now, below the hill. One could walk from the barn along the still existing fence line that runs along the property line of Dittmar Park (formerly the Forbes property) down

to the pasture stretching to the original Old Rectory. There was also a cow whom they named 'May'. Their brother, Fred, was awoken very early one morning by their father and taken to the barn to see a newly born calf, born moments earlier, being cleaned by his mother, May. Fred and Dad kept this secret and Audrey shared the story about how their father drove the children home from school one day and told them he had a surprise. There in the pasture was the new born calf! The baby bull was named Belshazzar. All of us were entertained hearing about the cow. The older boys in the family, Denny, Robert and John milked the cow in the mornings before school. She was difficult to milk and handle and often kicked over the bucket during milking. Apparently, their mother, Audrey, was the only person who could milk the cow gently enough to get a good bucket of milk. Then, Audrey explained that one day, May whacked the Good Reverend in the head with her horn as he was walking her to the pasture! There was another bull calf born but sadly, it did not survive. The sexton, Mr. Chanley, also enjoyed milking the cow. He lived in the Old Rectory which also had a small barn at the end of the property by Ravenscliff. May provided the family's milk, chickens laid the eggs, and ducks offered up Christmas dinner. "Dad took two ducks behind the



Map of St. David's from 19xx. Note the barn, indicated by a X over the building, located across from the old Rectory.



The Knewstub Family Christmas Cards
Photos by John Ansley



John & Audrey Knewstub and Family (1952)
(Left to Right) John, Fred, Deny (Joseph), Laura (angel), Robin (Mary), Audrey (baby Jesus), Margo, Robert, Ron, and May (the cow).

barn with axe in hand, offered up a prayer of thanksgiving for them and Mother plucked them.” After a while we became quite awed by their mother who cared for her large family, all the animals and tended vegetable and flower gardens as well.

At one point, the three sisters turned our conversation to their brothers who they agreed were “adventuresome.” It seems that one of the brothers and his friend were exploring the area above the ceiling in the Chapel. The friend began jumping on the ceiling and it gave way. Fortunately the boys were able to catch and pull themselves up before falling all the way through down to the pews below. The ceiling was repaired, but the damaged stucco continued to show for many years. At another time, two of the boys saw a ghost by the Church stone wall along Valley Forge Road as they were walking home one evening. Needless to say, it gave them quite a fright!

The girls told us that the family had two “Woodies”, “Car 1” and “Car 2.” For vacation, their father drove one with six children, towing a small trailer, and their mother drove the other with six children. Over the years, they traveled to New England, Canada, The Great Smoky

Mountains and Rehoboth, Delaware.

In the autumn of 1964, the family moved from the Rectory where the Knewstub family was raised and some of them even born, to the current Rectory on Beaumont Road. In 1965, the demolition of the Victorian Rectory began and the building of the Knewstub Education Building started. They loved their dear home, the peaceful Christmases there, the



Christmas Greetings From Us All

THE REV. JOHN C. AND MRS. KNEWSTUB

beauty of their country surroundings, tobogganing on the neighboring estate in the winters. It was heartbreaking for them all to see the great old house go. “Our father expresses well the feelings our family shared in what he wrote in the Bulletin, “The Record” January 1965:

“The demolition of the old Rectory was begun in earnest on January 4th and is still going on. At this writing, it is a sad and broken looking object. One would be wanting in sentiment if they were without some feeling about the old Rectory – built in 1889 and torn down in 1965 to make way for growth and expansion. A building does not make a “home”, nevertheless; the lives of those who dwell there become intimately identified with it as the years go by. In the old Rectory, since 1945 our family has shared great joys of birth and growth and life together and we have shared in the deep sorrow of loss in the family circle...” Rev. John C. Knewstub

Finally, it was heartwarming to hear about how grateful the whole family was to The Rev. Frank Allen who had officiated at their brother, Barney’s memorial service the day before our luncheon together, January 18th this year. They especially appreciated the music and the beauty of Kathy Wagner’s voice as she so beautifully sang the Beatle’s “Let It Be” and “Somewhere over the Rainbow”. The Archives Committee members were moved to realize that St. David’s continues to celebrate with the Knewstub family.

Photos of the Knewstub Family, 1950-1960s



Photos of the Knewstub Family, 2017-2019

Photos by Michele Griffin



Photos of the Knewstub Family, 2017-2019

Photos by Michele Griffin





St. David's (Radnor) Church

Parish History and Archives Committee

COMPILED BY MARIANNE COOK AND BRAD SMITH

JULY 2020