

SAINT MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, BARTON-ON-HUMBER

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

REPORT OF THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

This has been an interesting year, as the off-on-off saga of the Low Parishes has been thrust upon us, and I don't think any of us think we have an entirely satisfactory solution sorted out yet. Large amounts of time and energy have gone into planning our future together with no firm conclusions drawn as to how we are to offer care and support to the three congregations, all of whom are working tremendously hard to keep the flag flying in the villages.

We're also one of the very few parishes fortunate enough to be given a curate in training this year: at last count there were only three curates coming to the diocese, and we look forward to greeting Kath (and David) at her ordination as deacon, which will be held here on September 28th and will be taken by Bishop David (the priesting will almost certainly be by Bishop John in the Cathedral in September '09). We also have a priest in training, Liz B, whose course is such that we look forward to the prospect of an ordination involving the parish every year from now until 2011 ! On Advent I, I was very aware of our *embarras de richesse* as through our doors came three retired priests, a retired bishop, two priests in training, two readers, a retired Methodist minister and Alan and I. In the 1980's we'd have been accused of over-manning. It's very much in contrast to the situation in the rest of the deanery and in many parts of the diocese, where it's getting increasingly difficult to provide Eucharistic worship on Sundays, and where there is an acute shortage of Readers as well. We are regularly exporting Peter and John to parishes on the far side of Scunthorpe.

So what's been going on?

One great joy has been to see the rise of EIW to diocesan fame—practically anything creative in youth work in the diocese seems to have roots in our young folk and their original and imaginative work: The Bishop's Youth Achievement Award (and our home-grown newly-worked-out children's version, which may well be taken on as a diocesan scheme) has more support from this parish than from anywhere else in the diocese, the social and spirituality events the young people have put on are, (I believe) unparalleled, and they make an increasing contribution to our worship. We should be very grateful to them and to our youth work team, especially to Jenny, and to Rosemary for her administration of the BYAA scheme.

Although it's always unwise to speculate on patterns, we do seem fairly stable in numbers, perhaps even growing a little. One or two people have left, in search of a much more evangelical style of worship than it would be right for a parish church to offer, but others have joined us, and it's especially encouraging to see numbers at Evensong holding up so well, very much against the trend elsewhere. Complacency about our worship and what we offer is never a good idea, but we shouldn't be over-critical either. Similarly, I feel it is imperative that we continue to offer a broad tradition and a Gospel open to thoughtful and faithful exploration. I'm grateful to all those who lead house and study groups for their contribution to the adult discipleship of the Church.

One great achievement of the last year has been the completion of the kitchen refurbishment. Though it's not been without teething problems (am I the only one not yet fully conversant with the labyrinthine workings of the boiler?) and we owe thanks to Auriol's team for their work and planning, and also to Brian and Janet P for the huge amount of time they put in fitting the kitchen (and saving us a fortune into the bargain). As part of the impending Quinquennial we hope to look at some other aspects of hall refurbishment.

Looking beyond our own parish, we do support in prayer Gillian B, the new Methodist superintendent minister. Gillian has found herself in a very difficult situation with the indisposition of the only other full time Methodist minister in the Circuit, leaving Gillian with fourteen chapels between here and Kirton-in-Lindsey to supervise. We also expect a new house for duty priest to arrive in the Ulceby group in the next few weeks. The Anglican Church

worldwide continues to spin in turmoil, and we must hold Archbishop Rowan in our prayers as the Lambeth conference approaches. It is deeply encouraging that many people, including important folk on the more conservative wing of the Anglican Church such as the Bishop of Liverpool, are urging dialogue and listening and understanding against some of the more extreme positions being taken.

It's important to give some sort of idea of where we might be going in the future. If we take seriously the twin commands to love God and to love our neighbour, then the life of service and of prayer is to be encouraged and deepened. "*Orare est laborare*" said Benedict, 'to pray is to work'—and he also said "*laborare est orare*"—'to work is to pray'. Wherever our individual calling leads us, as part of the Body of Christ in this town we're called as a group to devote ourselves to both these callings. We have seen a number of quiet initiatives to deepen the life of prayer within the parish—the labyrinth has been one such—and I hope these will be developed further in the next year or two. Similarly we are very aware of how many institutions in the town (and beyond) depend on the willing service of Church members of all denominations, and as new opportunities for service appear we must welcome them. It's harder to spot where they might be—though I do have some (for the moment) private thoughts.

I'll end by offering my thanks for all the hard work done by St. Mary's people over the last year. The PCC has worked hard, especially on the irritating but important minutiae of things like Health and Safety, In worship, the choir (and organists), servers, readers, intercessors, bellringers, chalice assistants, flower arrangers and sidespeople turn out faithfully and give of their best. The quiet but essential work of house communions and pastoral visiting is done by the ministry team. We have support staff in the form of cleaners, Mike the caretaker, Beryl seeing to hall bookings and Carol doing parish administration. The children's work is done faithfully and calmly by Penny's team, and I've already mentioned the pioneering work done by E1W and its helpers and supporters. I'm grateful to Rosemary too for keeping me in line with various bits of form filling, and to Sue W for taking on the role of Bishop's Visitor at St. Peter's School. Thanks too to Anne C, retiring editor of the magazine, for all she has done.

We have had great support from our retired clergy: Bishop Donald no longer feels well enough to carry the burden of leading worship, and we thank him for all his work in the past. John P faithfully looks after one 8.00 each month, and we welcome Gordon P into our ranks as he has generously offered us his assistance in the parish.

Finally, I offer my thanks to Val and to Kath for their faithful diligent and unfailing support as wardens over another year, and it is with great regret that I have received Kath's resignation from chair of the Mothers' Union and as warden, though I do understand the anticipated work load on her during the mayoral year with Ted A. And properly finally, my thanks to Alan, whose unfailing wisdom, support, imagination and good humour has kept me on the straight and narrow—most of the time anyway.....

David

ELECTORAL ROLL

The revised electoral roll stood at 157, the previous roll having stood at 149.

REPORT ON THE CHURCH FABRIC

It has been a quiet year for the church fabric. There are some window panes that need repairing and we are awaiting the five-yearly inspection. Our architects since 1957, Bond and Read and Partners, decided that coming from Grantham was too far and declined our brief. We therefore asked Brown and Butterick and Partners to take on the fabric of-St. Mary's, which they have agreed to do.

We must have this done by law, and we have to do as the architects recommend. We managed to do all the work that the architects recommended in our 2002 survey. We were also warned that in the next ten years, the tower stonework, mainly the parapets, would need attention. Also, we would need to replace the copper on the north aisle roof and St. James's roof. It is likely to be expensive.

We have not been able to deposit money from the general fund as we used to, as our finances have been a bit tight. However, some of our parishioners have donated to the fabric fund, and this money can only be used for the fabric. Whenever it is needed we shall use it for the good of the church.

A lot of work has been done in the hall, mainly due to the work of Auriol T and the Social Committee organising dinners, lunches, selling books and many other activities. We needed a new kitchen, and toilets to meet new legal specifications and £13,000 was raised. Brian P, a church member and retired joiner, put together the new kitchen and saved a lot of money. Auriol has now turned her attention to the hall itself, hoping to re-shape the windows, the flooring, the electrics and new cupboards for the toddler group and Sunday school. Watch this space for more news.

Kathleen L

YARBOROUGH DEANERY SYNOD

Kath L, Marion G and myself completed our third and final year in term of office representing St. Mary's at the Deanery Synod. The Synod has met at various locations in the Deanery and we have also met up with our friends from the Methodist Circuit.

We said farewell to Rev. Gordon P leaving the Low Villages (but to our gain in Barton!), Rev. Annabel B leaving Scawby and Rev. Jim M, leaving Barton Methodist Church.

We have had various presentations, including Kirton-in-Lindsey's vision for the Wesley Centre, and recently, HOPE '08 which is an initiative to get the church more involved with the local community.

The Synod continued to debate Parish Share (which is an on-going issue for parishes that are struggling financially) and the Low Villages and who is responsible for them have been discussed at great depth.

The Passion Play in Brigg was such a success that a Nativity Play will be performed there too at Christmas this year.

Andrew H

CHOIR REPORT

"He who sings prays twice"—Anselm

The Choir continued to lead the worship of our church with music and singing. We have been very pleased to welcome three new girls who are already making a significant contribution to the treble line.

Although we are not a large choir, we still manage hymns, psalms anthems in four-part harmony. One Evensong each month we continue the great Anglican tradition of Choral Evensong. You will find this magnificent service sung in the cathedrals and major parish churches—and at St. Mary's. Do come and join us.

New members are always most welcome. Practices are conducted at a brisk pace, so be prepared for hard work. The reward is the enjoyment of singing and the contribution made to the worship of God

Ian H

JUNIOR CHURCH

We continue to be small, lively bunch in the Church. Our numbers have stayed about the same as last year. Our average is 5, but some weeks we can be as low as 2 or as high as 9! This can make some of our activities difficult to plan and prepare for as we can have such varied numbers. We always make extra activities to enable anyone who is visiting our church to join with us and feel included in the worship. Any newcomer or visitor is always welcome.

We continue to use the "Living Stones" books by Susan Sayers as a guide to our sessions and follow the aim for that day as it is linked to the readings and themes taking place in the church service. (In the future; we are looking at supplementing these books with other modern material). We structure our session in the following way:

- 1. Starter activity**—this is usually an active part of the session which involves the children searching for hidden clues linked to the theme of the day or playing a game which leads us into the quieter focus of the morning.
- 2. Teaching activity**—this often involves Bible stories and discussions about more intrinsic issues which are linked with the day's aim. At this time we try to link the stories to their own lives to help their understanding and make it more real to them.
- 3. Activity**—this is the making part of the morning and involves such things as making models, cards or colouring..
- 4. Prayer**—when the activity is finished we join together for a collective look at what we have been doing and a reiteration of the day's aim and say the prayer of the day together

We endeavour to get back into church before the Communion, and we have always achieved this, albeit by the skin of our teeth some days when we have got carried away and forgotten the time!

Thank you to all the people who help in the Junior Church, especially Kim and Julie, whose artistic capabilities are always used to the full! Thank you also to all the children who make up our Junior Church for their commitment and for making it a good place to be. We seem to gel well together—you only have to look at where we sit in Church on a Sunday (all huddled together in one pew). We are building up our faith together and, hopefully, laying good foundations which can be built upon in the future.

Michelle W

TODDLER TIME

We are still a strong group averaging 10 mums. This last year, we have seen the mums going off to the theatre together. For a Christmas Dinner we took over "the Place" with 15 for dinner including some mums from the past.

We have had visitors to the group:-

1. Michelle Briggs came with cutting blocs for us to make things for Christmas.
2. We had a visit from a dentist armed with advice and free mugs, toothbrushes and pamphlets.
3. A visit from the community police. Two WPCs came to talk to us about anything concerning the community and with balloons and a uniform for the children to try on. A photograph was taken of them.

We start our time in St. James' Chapel with a little service which lasts about 15 minutes, then on to the hall for drinks and play. Thank you to Mavis on the piano and the ladies in the kitchen.

Penny P

SUNDAY CLUB

We meet every first Sunday in the month. There are 10 children at the moment. We light the candle to show that God is with us» and then we play a game that is connected with the subject of the day. Then we divide into two groups. Amanda takes the older group and Penny the younger. We have a story and work sheets to complete. Then we come back together and share what we have learnt.

We talk about what we want to tell Jesus in our prayers, our wants and thank-yous. Our aim is to try to show children that it is easy to talk to Jesus. Our younger children have grown and moved into the older group so we have sent out nearly 70 letters. Last February we had a new member and in April we hope for more. I am working on it! Thank you to Amanda for all she does for the group.

Penny P

TRAI DCRAFT

It has been quite a year for Traidcraft. I have had the usual parties and taken the stock to Baysgarth museum, St. Augustine's and the Town Fayre. This year we were in the hall of the Salvation Army—much warmer, I didn't get to wear my ski suit!

Last summer we unfortunately had a break-in at the Church and the Traidcraft stock was stolen. May I thank all who donated money to help pay for the lost stock.

I receive a letter of encouragement each financial year. As this report is before the financial year, I can tell you that in 2006-7 we took £3016.06 which is 92p up on 2005-6. Thank you for all the support you give me.

Penny P

EIW

EIW has had a very busy year. So far we have raised money for some major charities by holding “cake sales” for Child Line and “Afternoon Tea” for Christian Aid.

We have also had fun trips like ice skating, ten pin bowling and a residential trip to Hathersage in Derbyshire, last autumn. With the support of St. Mary's; we have been able to organise a Family Service and other little inputs into our worship at church.

We have enjoyed organising and putting together themed events at church throughout the year, like social evenings, summer barbeques and afternoon teas to help us raise money for ourselves.

Older members of the group have also attended the “U2-charist” and a “Delirious” concert, both at Lincoln

Our latest event was a “Medieval Banquet” to finish off a weekend of celebrations at St. Mary's. The money raised from this event has given us the opportunity to (hopefully) buy a serving trolley for St. Mary's Kitchen, and a little bit left for us to carry on into the next year.

Jenny H

BISHOPS YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

As most of you will already know, on October 11 last year, the Bishop of Grantham visited St. Mary's to present some of the awards. Amanda and Joanna H both received their Higher Awards—for fifty credits plus two and one of the Standard Awards, respectively, for additional groups often credits. Tom S receives two Standard Awards and Declan W received one Standard Award. However the activities of the young people of St. Mary's did not cease in October 2007 and now both Amanda and Joanna are quite close to achieving the Advanced Award for one hundred credits. This is the highest award possible under the scheme. Tom is almost at Higher Award level: in fact he may have reached it by the time of the AGM and Ben W will certainly have earned enough credits for his first Standard Award. They have all worked hard for their credits and must be congratulated.

However it has concerned our Youth Leader, Jenny H, for some time, that there has been no scheme to recognise the work of the younger members of EIW in the Church community—the 11-13 age group—BYAA is exclusively for 13-19 age group—and now, with some input from her daughters, she has invented an award for 11-13s in St.

Mary's. It is entitled ST. MARY'S CHURCH CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS—CCAA for short and is based on similar lines to BYAA, with its own criteria for gaining credits and its own awards—for one, ten, twenty-five and fifty credits. The PCC agreed to the adoption of the new scheme at the February meeting and it also has the enthusiastic support of the Diocesan Youth Work Adviser who will regard Jenny's scheme as a pilot for something he had been hoping to launch in the diocese at some point.

Rosemary L

LOCAL MINISTRY TEAM

Barton continues to hold its probably unique view of who should be part of a local ministry team, i.e. our inclusion of, not only the Diocesan Lay Readers, but also of the Churchwardens and the lay Vice-Chairman of the PCC. Recently I was explaining the composition of our team to a retired clergyman of the Diocese (who does not live in Barton!) and he was trying to unravel it to work out who were mandated local ministers in the team. It was quite an interesting conversation! This year the group has been joined, appropriately, by Liz B, our resident ordinand. The meetings of the group are still held monthly, except in August, usually on the second Wednesday, and we discuss a wide range of mainly pastoral concerns.

Following a considerable period of minimal input from the Diocesan authorities, there has recently been a directive about local ministry team reviews and the Barton group is planning to hold such a review in the Autumn of 2008. This will involve a half day conference and the date for this should be confirmed shortly.

Rosemary L

SAINT PETER'S SCHOOL

“Christian principles and beliefs are deeply embedded and the spiritual effects can be felt and seen in all parts of the school”.

Alongside the excellent and very encouraging Ofsted report in September 2007, the National Survey for Church Schools also carried out an obligatory inspection, the report of which included the introduction to this report. Such opinions have been clearly demonstrated in the spiritual activities of the school this academic year. I have been privileged once again to witness the expertise and serious commitment of both staff and pupils in the school's celebration of major festivals—Elm 1 (years 3/4) used the colours of the rainbow to show various aspects of Harvest in song and drama, ending with *“I'm here for the God of Heaven”*. Ash 1 (years 1/2) presented a novel approach to the Nativity, whereby various obvious presents were given to the baby Jesus in a desperate attempt to stop the crying—all in vain—ending with Mary's kiss, which succeeded! The school also once again attended the Annual Church Schools' festival in Lincoln Cathedral on the theme of “Celebration”, led by Revd. Canon Alan Nugent, the Sub-Dean. Many pupils were involved in a drama to show that silent marvelling is a very effective and valid form of Celebration.

Also this year, our own congregation has witnessed the prowess of the school in a humorously original rendering of the “Twelve Days of Harvest”, the lovely singing of *“I, the Lord of sea and sky”*, and *“If I was a Butterfly”* at the Mayor's Civic Service and, of course, the Carol Service and the Nativity. Time has still been found for charitable giving—nearly £450 for Children in Need and £255 over Harvest to buy goats and 2 water systems for people in the Third World.

Thus, our link with St. Peter's School remains very strong and this is facilitated by the strong Christian faith of the Headteacher and senior leaders of the school—which was another observation alluded to in the aforementioned Church Schools Report.

Geoffrey L, Foundation Governor

MISSION COMMITTEE

The 2007-8 committee has met five times. One of the issues tackled has been the question of access to the Church for disabled people. At first sight it might appear that there is no need to do anything more in St. Mary's: steps are relatively shallow and the direct access to both Church and Hall is flat: there is plenty of space in which to manoeuvre wheelchairs, pushchairs and prams. Moreover, the Church is an historic one; we are not required to undertake major adaptations; and we do have the loop system. However there are always improvements that can be made, including to the loop system and suggestions and suggestions from the few people who completed the survey prepared by the committee in 2007 are being looked at. By the time you read this, some may have been implemented.

Another project, initiated by Peter L, with some minor input from committee members was the completion of a "Church Sightseeing and Pilgrimage Tour". Visitors to the Church website will find it at <http://www.stmarysbarton.org.uk> and a paper copy should be available soon.

The committee continues to support "Operation Christmas Child", the Samaritan's Purse annual shoebox appeal and the "Travelling Christmas Crib" and it contributes ideas to any many other issues of Church life and mission, from study sessions to appropriate child and vulnerable adult protection! I think that if you have an idea or an issue connected with Church mission that you feel needs discussion and perhaps referral to the PCC, you should approach a member of the Mission Committee—the names of committee members will be publicised after the first routine meeting of the 2008-9 PCC. Alternatively, you could seek to become a member of the committee, either by PCC membership or by co-option.

Rosemary L

"IN DEPTH" GROUP

"Faith seeking understanding" — Anselm

This group has been meeting each month since 1994. In that time, numerous "religious" topics have been discussed, all a great help to us in our journey of faith. This year we started by looking at global warming together with environmental issues. This is of major concern for the world. A helpful book published in 1975 by the late Bishop John Taylor, "Enough is Enough" concerns itself with this very topic. It is encouraging seeing the Church today taking this issue seriously. We are currently looking at fundamental issues raised as we study the major Church festivals of Christmas, Lent and Easter, helped by the book "Thoughtful Guide to Faith" by Rev. Tony Windross.

Ian H

THE MOTHERS' UNION

Our group is dwindling due to age, as are all organisations. We have the faithful few who are very willing to help. No man is an island and we need all the help we can get, otherwise it becomes a burden.

We have a magnificent programme arranged for this year; some really good speakers are coming to talk to us. Some travel quite some distance and we invite other branches in the deanery to attend to get the benefit, as the cost is very great.

We cannot tell what will happen after this year. Many branches are closing because of dwindling membership and no one volunteering for any office. You do have to be committed and attend meetings at Lincoln and Deanery level. We made posies for Mothering Sunday, beautiful flowers from Ralph, and four of us met in the hall, plus one husband, and we put together 140 bunches with appropriate greenery. We worked very well together and finished in fifty minutes.

We have a Deanery Festival in our church in May when we are joined by Brigg and Scawby. Sadly, Barnetby is closing. Also it is our Triennial at Lincoln on 5 July when all the branches in the Diocese will attend with our

banners for a service and to heat Bishop Inwood give the address. We have a coach going from Barton and we collect other members on the way. We shall leave at 10 am and return home at 4 pm. At the end of this month we have an Area Day at St. Hugh's in Scunthorpe when we meet with Manlake Deanery. As I said, we have a full programme and we are going to enjoy it.

Kathleen L

SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2007-8

This last year has been a very good year for the Social Committee. The lunches and suppers we held have been very well-attended and enjoyed by all. The high point of the year was the refurbishment of the kitchen. It is now a pleasure to work in. My thanks to members of the Social Committee who helped in one way or another. Coffee time on a Monday morning from 10-15 -11.30 am is becoming more popular. Everyone is welcome. I would urge more people to make use of the books and jigsaws which are available for sale.

My thanks to all who have supported the many events, including the bazaar and Garden Party over the last year.

Auriol T

BARTON CHURCHES TOGETHER

Meeting every two months, the committee of Barton Churches Together includes three people from St. Mary's Church (Rev. D. Rowett, Mrs. M. R, Mr. J. P). It has been responsible for organising the following events during the last twelve months:

- * Monthly United Prayer
- * Monthly Prayer Breakfasts
- * Production of the booklet delivered to every home in Barton each Spring, two 12-hour days of prayer—in May and November—on the themes of "Creation and the Environment" and "Ending Slavery" respectively.
- * United services in Holy Week and on Good Friday
- * United services in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and at Pentecost
- * Supported the Barton Christmas Festival with a Traidcraft stall
- * Sang carols at St. Peter's Court; Victoria House and "The Willows"
- * Helped organise the Carol Service at St. Augustine Webster's Church
- * Showed the film "*Amazing Grace*" in February

At the present time we are waiting for the agreed Constitution to be approved by the Revd. John C of Churches Together in England.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2007

In presenting my report for the year ending December 31 2007, I should first like to pass on my thanks to the many people who have assisted me in this role over the last year. In particular, I would like to mention the Churchwardens; and their team who prepare the week's collection for me on Sunday mornings. Without them; my task would be much more complicated. I would also like to acknowledge the many people working behind the scenes raising money and contributing to the Church in so many ways. If it were not for them; there would be no finances for me to manage. Thanks to you all.

I will now turn to my main report and it has been an eventful year for the Church finances; particularly in respect of the kitchen alterations which I will specifically mention later. Following the decision to cut our parish contribution for a year and to reduce our giving; I was able last year to present a budget showing a surplus for the year. I am delighted to report that this report has been achieved. We received; in addition to our forecasted surplus; a substantial donation; which has given a welcome boost to our funds. We must realise that this was a "one-off" donation and; as a Church; when planning our finances; we cannot rely on such generous benefactors. Our income

in 2007 remained constant with that of 2006; but with the forthcoming changes in gift aid tax relief; I would expect income in this area to reduce. With that in mind; I forecast a deficit for 2007; which is problem we must all address.

I will now return to the Kitchen/hall fund which I mentioned earlier. The kitchen alterations were completed in August; and I am sure we would all agree that a splendid job has been made of it. The original budget was £15:000 and I am pleased to report that the actual total cost came to a little over £13:000. It s not often these days that a project comes in under budget; and credit must be given to the organising committee—with particular thanks to Brian P—for this great achievement. We actually had £11:000 in the fund to finance the kitchen; so: in spite of the careful budgeting; we were left with a deficit of £2:000; which was reduced by the year end to £1 ;500. As this is a restricted fund; and cannot operate in deficit; this sum was transferred as a loan from the general fund at the year end. This will be transferred back as money builds up again in the hall/kitchen fund.

In closing this report; I can only reiterate that, following the decisions we made a year ago; which meant we could achieve a balanced budget without drawing on our reserves; we are now in a much healthier financial position. I can only hope that this process continues, and that we can achieve a stable and solid financial future for the future.

A. R. M, ACLB (Treasurer)