

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN , BARTON-ON-HUMBER for the Year 2009-10

NOTE: In accordance with agreed practice, the names of persons other than those named elsewhere on this web site have been abbreviated.

Parish priest's report

It's always worth remembering the comment of Bishop David Jenkins, 'There's more to life than the figures at the bottom of a balance sheet.' We mustn't underestimate the challenge our finances pose us. If we can't afford to run the show, then all our other splendid plans and projects come to nothing, and the funding programme is in the wings. But there is more to say about the life of the parish than the balance sheet, and in those things, perhaps we can begin to find hope for the balance sheet. I'd like to draw the meeting's attention, then, to some aspects of our life which might lead us to think that we're getting some things right.

The Ladies' Group has a waiting list; Our MU is flourishing and with a wider age range than many; Toddler Time continues to grow; links with St Peter's school in particular are deepening; our children's work develops further; Kathy and Liz's 'Open Door' project is starting to find its feet, while Auriol's Monday coffee group carries on its work steadily. A modest amount of re-ordering of services seems to be found helpful by worshippers; the youth work is held to be a beacon of diocesan excellence; our safeguarding is held up by the diocese as an example of 'how to do it'. Our numbers are steady, perhaps growing a little. I could go on, but won't, except to reflect that sometimes it feels as though we provide much of the religious output on BBC Humberside!

This isn't cause for complacency - we do have a quinquennial under way - and there are many things for us to learn from other places - but we shouldn't shut our eyes to what we manage to do, and do well here.

It is frustrating that the Low Villages situation is not yet quite done and dusted, although all the paperwork is now in London, with the vague hope that the scheme will come into being in late Spring. Just in time, rally, as we face the next round of cutbacks, looking to a time in the not-too-distant future when we may be down to two or three stipendiary priests in the deanery. I had a conversation with a voluntary priest (not from this deanery) which made it clear that the way forward is most emphatically *not* to saddle the likes of Alan, Gordon and (in a few weeks) Liz with slightly diluted stipendiary duties. We are now at the point where a bit of imagination is called for, so that when Kathy gets her own parish she isn't trying to do the work previously done by five vicars. That work in this deanery is just beginning, and I expect that there will be a great deal of input from Barton.

What is done in this parish is based on the hard and devoted work of many folk, giving generously of their time: only Kathy and I get any money out of it. The Ministry team here is able, varied and precious: we're lucky to have, alongside Alan and Kathy and Peter, the retirement ministry of Gordon and, though less so of late, of John P. Liz is already active here and in Barrow, and we may have another candidate for formal ministry coming through as well. But alongside this is the rest of the ministry team - for example, Mike and Margaret S ensure that the sick and housebound receive Holy Communion regularly through the Home Communion rota which they supervise, plus what I suppose in teaching would be called the Senior Management team, Geoff and Val as Wardens, Ian as lay chair, Rosemary and Alan M as secretary and treasurer respectively. I should also remind you the quiet work of David D, dealing with all the gift aid paperwork - and that we do depend on the support of long-suffering spouses resigned to seeing their nearest and dearest trudge out to yet another meeting when they could be staying in and watching Eastenders.

We're extraordinarily lucky to have so many people involved with the under 21s. Dave Rose

has come up to Barton to run a youth leader-training course, and it's notable, if sad, that only Barton's represented, with four members. It's been good to have Amanda A come on board to join Jenny and Amanda H. Similarly, Nadine R has joined the staffing at the lower end of the age range, as Michelle W and Sue W, along with Mavis N, with input from such varied luminaries as Alan, Kathy and Liz, have run our pre-teens work.

I know it's the wardens' job to draw attention to the labours of people like sidesmen and women, church cleaners, Mike the caretaker and so on, but a brief mention of thanks to them here, and also to Brian and Jan P, for their work on the fabric - in Jan's case, quite literally so! I'd also like to mention the servers and bellringers, readers and intercessors and choir for all their work within worship. We'd miss them mightily. I hope you did all notice that our tower team managed to ring all eight bells every Sunday all through 2009?

About a year ago, Rosemary announced her intention of standing down from the chairing of the Mission Committee; I think she should be thanked for her work over many years in steering that group. Similarly, Carolyn S has decided to stand down as head server - we thank her, too, for her work, especially the unsocial hours on grey Sunday mornings at 8 when no-one else can make it. And I'd also like to mention Rob S for his diligent work on Health and Safety - we may all groan when that sort of thing's mentioned, but we used to groan when Child Protection was talked about, and we've benefited no end from the persistence of those early voices saying, 'You can moan all you want, but it must be done.' Thanks too to Beryl C, also standing down as a server, for her work in keeping the hall booking side of things together.

While on the admin side, I ought to remind you of the work done by Carol J in keeping a lot of the day-to-day admin of the parish under control. She has the task of keeping track of all the enquiries about weddings and christenings, not just here but in the Low Parishes as well, and also handles a lot of the copying work. She takes a vast amount of work off my plate, and with great efficiency.

I know I miss people out. Viv tells me off repeatedly about it! But the main thing to say is that this is - and has to be - a team effort to try and give some sort of window into the life of God through our own funny little ways and goings on, and not just within the Church walls and Church diary but through engagement with the greater community too. A high proportion of the activities which make Barton tick are dependent on input from the St Mary's family, and the 'low walls' we have around the Church - indicated, I hope, by the literal 'open door policy' - is something worth hanging on to and preserving. There's a lot said about 'fresh expressions' of religion in the CofE at the moment, but we do need to remember that we're primarily engaged in a calling to be the people of God in the world where we've been put, and that the life of worship and the life of service are both fundamentally about witness.

I'm not pretending this is the most insightful of reports, and there's plenty to do. We've got Kathy for another couple of years, perhaps, and it's good to see her ministry growing and expanding. There are signs of a deepening spirituality within the parish, which *is* the unique thing we have to offer, when all's said and done, Christianity surely is more than just being good, it's about being holy as well, and finding out what that means to each one of us, at the sort of speed we can cope with. Even after nearly five years, it's still good to be here with you all, and to take part with you in that process of discovery.

Mission Statement

(As approved by the Parochial Church Council on 24 November 2008).

The inclusive good news of Jesus Christ calls us as members of the Christian Faith:
To support the growth of discipleship through generous service, education, prayer and appropriate worship.
To take seriously our calling to care for the planet and to work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll stands at 157. In the past year there have been 3 removals due to death and 4 new additions.

Sue W

Report on the Church Fabric

The old question about the length of a piece of string might be replaced for us by a similar question about the length of a quinquennial inspection. We are still waiting for ours to be completed, and perhaps we should bear this in mind when we are pursuing our stewardship campaign, since no quinquennial inspection comes without a substantial price tag.

This year has seen most money spent on a major overhaul of the bells. Roger L has worked extremely hard to obtain the necessary grants and the work was done with commendable efficiency. The cost was over £10,000. About half of this came from grants and the rest came from donations, including one from Barton Town Council.

Our other major project this year was in the hall, where new cupboards have been installed, there has been some re-arrangement in the storage of furniture, and we have bought a trolley to ease the transport of chairs between hall and church. Once again we owe a debt of gratitude to Brian P.

In the church the removal of some chairs which were suffering from woodworm has enabled us to adopt a slightly more open layout to improve the look of the nave. There has also been a little streamlining of the area round the font.

In June we passed a fire inspection by Neil T of the Fire Brigade, and in January our fire extinguishers were checked. We are in the process of replacing some of our water extinguishers with more appropriate chemical ones. Also in January our kitchen and toilet facilities were inspected and found to be satisfactory.

Easter saw the first use of a new white pulpit fall, donated by the St. Mary's Ladies' Group, and Auriol T has given us a new white lace cloth for the credence table.

The boilers have been serviced; the one in the hall has caused some trouble during the year. We hope that Coultas' most recent visit, in January, will prove effective. The white line on the step between the church and the hall has been replaced by something more metallic and durable.

Knowing that there are some windows still waiting for permanent repair, and we have been warned about the likely state of the roof, I return to my opening question. As far as the quinquennial inspection is concerned, I hope we shall soon know the answer.

Geoffrey B

Yarborough Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod has met several times during the year, on occasion these being joint sessions with Barton and Brigg Methodist Circuit. The most significant subject discussed has been the proposed reduction of the number of stipendiary clergy across the entire diocese, and the implications, for clergy and lay people alike. These discussions are on-going.

Liz B

Choir Report

Although for much of the year it has been "business as usual" for the choir, we have also had the pleasure of welcoming some new members, and of welcoming back one former member. Our new recruits have proved extremely reliable and we are delighted that they have joined us. Sam W has set his foot on the slippery slope towards singing a lower part, abandoned his ruff and joined the altos. We welcome him on Bad Girls' Row, and trust he will keep us all in order!

During the icy weather, a plague of broken wrists beset the basses, leading to various gruesome comparisons of surgery and manipulations, so we look forward to the warmer weather in the hope that it will allow us a full back row.

Although we extend out thanks to Alan and Geoff every year for their dedication and hard work, it would be unfair not to do so again. Alan has been Choirmaster here for almost 40 years and Geoff Organist for over 35. The amount of work that they have put in over that period is phenomenal and, as ever, we offer our sincere thanks and assure them that we do not take them or their commitment for granted.

Liz B

Junior Church

We continue to be a small, lively bunch in the Church. Our numbers have remained the same as last year. Our average is 4 but this number can vary from week to week. This can make some of our activities difficult to plan and prepare for as we can have quite a varied number. We always make extra activities to enable anyone who is visiting our church to join with us and feel included in the worship. Any newcomers or visitors are always welcome.

We are no longer using the "Living Stones" books by Susan Sayers as a guide to our sessions. As I mentioned in the report last year we were looking to supplement or alter the existing format and were reviewing several options. Together with the leaders of Toddler Time we chose the "Roots" scheme of work.

"Roots" is an ecumenical publication which is based on the *Revised Common Lectionary*. We subscribe to a bi-monthly publication which offers many ideas to support week by week worship and learning in the church. The ideas range from those suitable for very young children to those suitable for young people. Initially we felt that although it would involve more preparation it was the right way forward for us. However having worked with the scheme for almost six months we have come to realise that although it has a wealth of ideas they are often not suitable (or manageable) for the groups we work with. If the ideas are unsuitable we simply use the theme and devise our own interpretation which we know will suit our needs and convey the messages in more meaningful ways. We are now considering others possibilities including devising our own scheme of work.

Thank you to Kim and Nadine for their help in the Junior Church. Thank you also to all the children who make up our Junior Church for their commitment and making it a good place to be. We are continuing to gently build up our faith together and, hopefully, laying good foundations which can be built upon in the future.

Michelle W

Toddler Time

Monday morning attendance is going from strength to strength with fourteen Mums, including one from Bonby, on the register. The children are mostly three years and younger and two who are starting school next September. It's a lovely atmosphere starting with worship (lighting the candle, a talk based on the theme of the week) and action songs and prayers in St. James' chapel followed by play, themed activities and refreshment in the hall. Older children joined us for the Christmas party as the schools had broken up, creating a lovely family atmosphere.

The rota system of leaders and helpers is working well and we mustn't forget Auriol who tirelessly provides the refreshments.

Also a big thank you must be given to the disbanded Barton Childminder's group who have donated some of their funds to us enabling us to buy a new carpet, slide, ride a long toy and several 'Big' Bible Story Books to support the worship.

Sue W

Sunday Club

It has been decided to cease this activity as numbers have been dwindling for some time until for the past few months there have been only one/two children and this month none at all!

Therefore at the next helpers meeting an alternative will be discussed perhaps meeting on another day in the week.

Sue W

Ministry Team

This group continues to meet monthly to discuss ministry concerns. As always stressed, it does not make decisions other than on issues of ministry which concern only the team members themselves e.g. which of the people present is going to approach an outside agency on a particular subject. Other issues are referred to an appropriate individual or group, or to the PCC, possibly as a recommendation or perhaps as a point for debate. One perennial concern, as many people are aware, is with those whose names appear on the weekly news sheet and who have been referred to someone in the team as being in particular need of the prayers of all Church members. We feel that it is important to know how things are for these people and here we need your help too. Please tell one of us if someone is missing from the list whom you feel should be mentioned and similarly if it appears that a particular person is no longer in need of our corporate prayers. This can be done at any time in the week or month, of course. Our gathering is just concerned to understand the needs and to remember the individuals in our prayer at the meeting. We are aware, of course, that sometimes messages go astray. If that happens, please tell someone again!

Rosemary L

Mission Committee

This committee has met five times during the lifetime of the 2009-10 PCC and for reasons I shall mention shortly, has spent time assessing its purpose as well as continuing with the projects it had previously initiated, such as the Travelling Christmas Crib and the Samaritan's Purse shoebox appeal. From the Summer of 2009 the committee began to focus on possible "tools of mission" and this led to the production of a questionnaire for the congregation, seeking information about people's preferred routes to deepened spirituality. The answers we received were very helpful and we are currently planning to implement the most popular suggestions. For more details of the results of the questionnaire you can refer back to the February 2010 copy of "*Parish News*". With the answers to our questions we also came full circle in the year-long debate about the purpose of the committee. Increasingly, the comment is made that we do not appear to "do mission". I would not totally disagree with this assessment. However, speaking personally, I am not sure that effective mission can be carried out by an arbitrarily convened committee however well it represents the PCC and Church membership (and it does!). "Real" mission is almost always the work of an individual or of a small group working together on a particular task, and we can all think of examples of it. Now, remember that the word "mission" comes from the Latin word "*mittere* - to send" - and it may begin to appear that the task of the committee is to provide some tools for Christian mission - the mission of any and all of us! However it is indisputable that the title of the committee has become confusing and it has been decided to change it. This time next year you will probably receive a report with a similar content to this, from the "Outreach and Nurture Committee" (or similar!). Rather as happened to "Dr Who" recently, there will be regeneration - with continuity!

Rosemary L

Bishop's Youth Achievement/Church Children's Achievement Awards

There are currently seven participants from St. Mary's Church in the Bishop's Youth Achievement Award scheme and three in the Church Children's Achievement Award Scheme and, as I write, I am hoping there may soon be more. Following the last group of credit presentations it was apparent that some of the younger BYAA participants were approaching achievement of the Higher Award, for 50 credits and that one of the most senior participants was fairly close to achieving the Advanced Award, for 100 credits. The credits gained represent a great deal of activity and/or service on the part of the participants. The usual tariff is 30 hours per credit. The qualifying activities are not necessarily all connected with the Church, which is why there are sometimes queries about why participants seem to receive so many credits at one time. If anyone wants to understand more about the scheme, ask me to show you the list of possible qualifying activities. It is quite wide! Sometimes, too, the business of "labelling" activities can seem a trifle confusing - reading in Church, for instance, is not "Service to the Church" it is "Communication". This is logical because credits for this activity are not awarded for a single event and it can easily happen that a young person performs one or more public readings elsewhere than in Church, or, in the case of one participant, in another Church. The key to participation is that the young person has connection with the Church, not that everything he/she does is within or for the Church. These criteria apply equally to the junior scheme for the 11-13 year-olds, the only difference being that there are lower qualifying tariffs for credits within CCAA, 15 hours dedicated to an activity rather than 30 hours.

Rosemary L

Saint Peter's School

This has obviously been a somewhat difficult and traumatic year, with the recurrent illness and subsequent death of Janet Denovan; nevertheless, there are positive attributes to be recognised.

Primarily, the leadership and commitment of Janet Steward and all the staff has enabled the School to continue its success in the classroom, on the stage, on the field and in the community.

Such success was witnessed in the excellent SATS results of Year 6 this year, being the tenth best primary school in North Lincolnshire. In addition, the high standards of assemblies have been maintained, with Year 3's Easter contribution being the stories of three trees, which in turn were used for the manger, the fishing boat and the Cross. Also, Year 1 did a delightful assembly on Noah's Ark and the Christmas nativity. Again, we at St. Mary's have experienced the School's talents on Mothering Sunday and at their Christmas Carol Service.

However the lasting memory has to be the spontaneous contributions by the pupils of each year at the memorial service for Janet. Poems were written, letters read out and assembly action songs enthusiastically sung - each in its own way a demonstration of the Christian commitment which Janet has so effectively highlighted and a fitting testimony to her success and influence at St. Peter's.

Geoffrey L, Foundation Governor

Residential Homes Worship Group Report

Services at the residential care homes have continued on a monthly basis throughout the year, together with additional ones during Christmas time. Carol services were also held with Churches Together at St. Peter's Court and Victoria House. For the first time this December, we were asked to hold a carol service at the Christmas party of the Day Centre, down at Water's Edge Visitor centre. All the Christmas services were well attended.

The monthly services at the Willows, Beech House and Eagle House attract good numbers of residents, sometimes with staff and visiting friends and families.

The main concern, as always, is that there are insufficient people from our churches to help with the singing. This is particularly evident at Eagle House, where most of the residents need more support. This is very challenging, but so rewarding when things go well. Here, singing is so important, as, the old hymns, choruses, readings and prayers are embedded deep within the memory. Hymns alone are steeped in the scriptures, and can be a simple but effective way of sharing the Gospel.

As important as this is the opportunity to talk with residents. Keeping the channels of communication open to any person is vital, however briefly or hesitantly we do this, and no matter what the response. We can all talk to others. It is a simple ministry we can all exercise.

So yet again, I am asking others to come and share in these services, beyond our church buildings, whenever you feel able. I can assure you that not only will you bless others, you too will be blessed, but above all Jesus will be glorified.

Margaret E. S

Mothers' Union Report

It is hard to believe that it is a year since I became Leader of the Branch. I feel that it has been a good year and for that I thank all members for their support.

We have had interesting, worthwhile meetings culminating in our Christmas Miscellany where we all enjoyed singing carols, listening to readings, one written by a new member of our branch and Janet's mince pies with a cup of tea. All came together in a truly Christmas spirit which was for some of us our only Christmastide worship because of wintry weather conditions and broken limbs.

Throughout the year our meetings have been well attended and we are delighted to have gained new branch members along the way. We hope that they will continue to enjoy being with us. Many members also attend corporate communion at 9.30am on the first Wednesday of each month and several gather on the fourth Wednesday of the warmer months for our prayer meetings. We welcome you to join us on any of these occasions if you would like a taster of our activities.

As members of a National and International organisation we support the work of the Mothers Union through our annual subscription and our prayers. Those who saw the presentation given by Pam. B at the Lady Day service realise what a tremendous job the Mothers Union does in supporting marriage and family life worldwide. Closer to home we had a coffee morning to raise money for St. Benedict's drop-in centre in Lincoln as well as taking turns at providing drinks and light refreshments there. Members have made crosses for the Chaplain at Scunthorpe hospital to give to patients and we collected and delivered a large supply of kitchen goods for the Women's Refuge at Gainsborough. For our own church we raised money at the Summer Fair and the Christmas Bazaar as well enjoying at these events the delights of a beautiful garden in July and a warm and welcoming November day in our church. Last but not least we made one hundred and forty posies for the mothers at St. Mary's on Mothering Sunday keeping up a long established tradition here.

In March St. Mary's was the venue for the North Lincolnshire Lady Day communion service led by Rev. Jeremy G, our Area Chaplain. In April we joined Methodist and Anglican friends from Barton and surrounding villages at Trinity Methodist Church for an afternoon service. Rev. Felicity C preached an inspiring sermon, which was followed by a superb tea. In May a group of us travelled to St. Hugh's Church, Scunthorpe together with Mothers Union members from North and North East Lincolnshire to meet our worldwide President Rosemary K. After an enjoyable lunch Rosemary spoke about her work in the Mothers Union and stressed, too, the value of our own small and sadly often isolated branches. On a pleasant June evening nine of us travelled to Brigg to attend the Yarborough Deanery Festival, again followed by a supper and a chance to meet our friends from other branches. On a September afternoon we supported Brigg branch's money raising event for St. Benedict's, which took the form of a Songs of Praise which was much enjoyed. October saw Linda and myself at Haxey for another Area Day led by the Rev. Jeremy G. After a shared lunch and interaction between the various branch members Elsbeth G-C showed us many of her large biblically based paintings connecting them with her religious journey. Much to talk about on our way home.

We have a full programme planned for this year. If any of our activities interest you please do come along.

Sheila H

St. Mary's Ladies Group

The only group in church/town to have a waiting list with 105 members continues to thrive and provide fun and fellowship for its members of all ages!!!!

Throughout the year we have hosted a variety of Speakers including:- a retired consultant, who assisted with the making of *'The Royal'* operating theatre scenes, *'Experiences of a Vet'*, *'Living with an Artificial limb'*, *'Love Russia'* and the *'Life of a Writer'* and the *'Life of a Solicitor'*. As a result the speakers requested their fees be given to charities of their choice including Appleby P.C.c., Brigg and District Cancer Support, Trinity Methodist Church, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Red Nose Day, Love Russia, Muscular Dystrophy and the R.N.I.B., in memory of Vera Atkin who worked tirelessly for this cause.

Demonstrations included *'Dressing the Victorian Table'* with flowers and all kinds of vases, *'Christmas table decorations'* and *'Thai Massage'*. The year closed with an outing to Haddon Hall.

The A.G.M. saw most of the committee re-elected and Pauline C continued as Leader. Throughout the year support has been given to the church in diverse ways:- a pulpit fall to match the white altar cloth, a new heater in the kitchen, stalls at the bazaar and garden party and last but not least, Christingles for the annual service.

Angela D

Tower Captain's Report -January 2010 St. Mary's & St. Peter's - Barton upon Humber

Last year proved to be a very busy and challenging year, which started with restrictions on ringing due to the serious problems with the bell fittings identified in a bell hanger's report of December 2008. Serious fund-raising commenced with applications for grants to local organisations, Lincoln Diocesan Guild of Bell ringers, North Lines Council, etc. to raise the £15,003 initially quoted by the Bell hangers. The refurbishment of the bells and fittings was successfully completed in July 2009 at a final cost of £13,579.15 and we now have an excellent ring of eight bells, which should not need any major work done for several decades. During the past year we have been very successful in raising a total of £10,288.08 from various grants and donations from a lot of organisations and individuals, I am very grateful for all the support very generously given by everyone towards this project. The bells were rededicated on 4th October as part of the Harvest Festival service.

My thanks must go to all the ringers for their loyalty and support that has ensured all eight bells of St. Mary's were rung for every Sunday morning and some evening services last year. This is a considerable achievement that we are very proud of, particularly as most other towers throughout the country would find it extremely difficult to match. At the Lincoln Diocesan Guild's Northern Branch AGM at Market Rasen on Sat. 23rd Jan 2010, St. Mary's ringers were awarded the Hewitt Shield by the Branch ringing-master, which is awarded annually to the tower that has made the most progress during the past year. We now have a strong band of twenty very dedicated ringers who readily give of their time and expertise to ring for the services and other occasions; we welcome Kathy T, Andy & Jenny B, Joan B and Jenny M who have joined us during the past year.

Throughout the year the bells were rung for several other special occasions:

- 24th Jan 2009 - Barton was the venue for the Lincoln Guild Northern Branch AGM
- 10 Weddings during the year
- 18th Sept - Barton Civic Service
- 27th & 28th Sept - Quarter Peal to celebrate the ordination of Kathy Colwell
- 8th Nov - Halfmuffled for Remembrance day Service and Parade

- 6th Dec - Lindsey Lodge Hospice Service
- 24th Dec - Carol Service & Midnight Mass
- 25th Dec - Christmas Day Eucharist
- 31st Dec - New Years Eve
- 15th Jan 2010 - Halfmuffled for Janet Denovan's memorial service

There have been seven quarter peals at St. Mary's, one peal at St. Peters and four hand bell quarters at 8 Queen Street rung last year, all except two involved our own ringers. Congratulations must go to George for ringing his first quarters on 6 and 8, also to Joy, Ruth and Daniel for ringing their first quarters on 8 and Neil for his first quarter of triples on the Tenor. Also congratulations to Andrew for ringing his first peal (3 hrs. 15 mins.) of Stedman Caters at Lincoln Cathedral for the Christmas market. Well done to the two teams who entered the Branch 6 bell striking competition at Middle Rasen on 8th June which resulted in one team going forward to the Guild 6 Bell Plate competition on 12th Sept. where they came a very impressive third. Two of our ringers took part in the Guild 8 bell striking competition at Market Deeping on 24th Oct. and came a very creditable third place.

Tower outings to the Isle of Axholme and Thorne on 04/04/09 and West Lindsey on 28/11/09 were thoroughly enjoyed by all and my thanks to Geoff for his very efficient organisation.

Finally I would like to thank all the Tower Officers for their enthusiasm and dedication towards the weekly running of the Tower, it does make my job considerably easier.

Roger L (Tower Captain)

In Depth Group

The In Depth Group set up by Peter Large has been running for over 15 years now, and its current programme that could last some twenty five sessions has its origins in the 17 week project at St Mary's in 2008 when I produced some 250 historical archives for the church website, rewrote to academic standard a clergy training dissertation and wrote eight sessions of a contemporary theology course and a syllabus for 25. Now the material is being written for each month's meeting.

The task is a comprehensive review of theology, and to quote one member's response, "It certainly isn't Sunday School." The group employs a critical approach to theological issues, and after starting with a survey of theology and ethics, it spent many weeks tackling theologians who used systematic, biblical or socio-economic means to match modernity with Christianity. We then looked at Anglican controversies, starting with the first liberal crisis of *Essays and Reviews* (1860) and something of Charles Gore's *Lux Mundi* (1899), the latter trying to restore Jesus's divinity (as in the Oxford Movement) to the liberalism of these other Oxford theologians, producing something like the more open 'Affirming Catholicism' seen today. We then tackled more recent liberal Anglican and ecumenical controversies over several sessions. That leads on to some traditionalisms and reactions in the contemporary setting and then the range of theologies available today.

The object of the In Depth presentations is not to uphold any particular belief but to use critical faculties, and to simply present a paper and discuss. Being based on adult education principles, it means that participants bring their own insights and experiences to these questions, their own reading and interests, and not forgetting the social reasons why people gather in such groups.

A comment has been made that we'd like to think such investigatory discussion groups existed

up and down the Anglican Church, but somehow we doubt it. It has, perhaps, a different ethos from the expected. Perhaps the central question at the heart of every discussion is how people commonly think today in a practical and this-worldly sense - the ideology of thought that follows on from technological solutions - and how religious traditions from the past can relate and reform to this thorough shift of perspective.

Adrian W (presenting the papers)

Social Committee Report

The Midsummer Supper and the Harvest Supper were very well attended and enjoyed by all. The Garden Party exceeded all expectations, the sun shone all afternoon and again it was very well attended. Our thanks go to Ann L and her husband for the use of their garden. The Bazaar also proved very popular.

The bookcase and jigsaws in the church hall have this year tipped the £300 mark. Please keep supporting this venture. All money raised at these functions is going towards the refurbishment of the church Hall.

All members of the Social Committee would like to thank everyone who has supported us, and we look forward to seeing you all in the future.

Auriol T