

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PARISH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, BARTON-ON-HUMBER

For the Year of Our Lord 2013

Vicar's report.

This is the part of the proceedings which is probably the most predictable of the lot. And it's right that I should thank on behalf of the whole congregation and of the wider community those who so generously give of their time, effort and skills to make up the mosaic of our parish church's life. This place runs on volunteers, and if they get a bit of fun or fulfilment out of it - and we hope they do -, they're still pouring sweat, tears, and (I hope occasional) blood into this place (please see the accident books for further information) and are to be held in great appreciation, especially the more hidden ministries which take place away from public view - care of the building, for example, or handling administration, or visiting the sick and housebound. That list alone is a long one, and it's a sobering thing for anyone to do to sit down to write out the many ministries which go on here: for starters-

Worship (*with the teams under Andrew L Geoff B and Val D, Rob S, Geoff B*). The building (*Mike M, Ian W, Brenda S, Jan P and her band of cleaners (and Brian) Shirley C*)

Lay ministry and home communions (*Peter L, Mike and Margaret S*).

Social concerns: (*Margaret Si and Penny P with the Foodbank and Fairtrade; Angela H and her work with the Caistor Road community, our school governors*).

Education and prayer and fellowship (*the MU, Ladies' Group, Social Committee, 'In Depth', Auriol, Ian, Peter, Sue, Linda and their associates*).

Youth and children's work - *Michelle, Mavis, Jenny and the two Amandas; our baptism visitors*. The 'hidden work' of admin - *especially Carol J's work as parish clerk - deanery synod, PCC, Alan, our temporary treasurer and David D with his Gift Aid brief*

And that's before we get into the more nuanced areas of cultural contacts and civic and general community cohesion, and those who bring the presence of God into their daily contacts with people at home or in the workplace. Take that away, and see just how many holes there are left in the social fabric of the town.

Now something like that's probably been said by every parish priest in Barton going back to the year 1000. Not that it makes it any the less true, but it strikes me that a Vicar's report should be more than a list of thanks, important though that is, and more than a recitation of statistics, which you can get from the register of services.

I want to start from one of the more unpleasant events of 2013, that anonymous letter to Bishop Christopher. One of its complaints was that I was trying to turn St Mary's into a monastery; that accusation gives me a perfect starting point to outline what I believe we're called to do here, and where I'm called to lead you.

One of the duties of a parish priest is to try to be aware of where the Spirit is leading the Church: not just St Mary's, or the CofE, or Anglicanism, but The Church in all its variety. For at least the last decade, there has been more and more talk right across the denominational spectrum about something called 'The New Monasticism'. From all traditions, the feeling is that the Church must rediscover its primary vocation, which is to live for God.

A book I picked up at Ampleforth last week contains the following:

'If one were asked to define what is meant by 'Christianity' today, a variety of different responses might be forthcoming. Evangelicals might describe it as a personal encounter with Jesus. RC's Orthodox and many Anglicans might speak about belonging to the Church. Other Christians, more liberally inclined, might describe it as a moral code. Charismatics or Pentecostals would tend to stress conscious spiritual experience. Yet in the letters of St Paul, Christianity is consistently described as mystery. [We] become present to God who first makes himself present to us in Christ. '

It's from this becoming present to God, being prepared to spend time with Him, that everything else flows - the worship, the service, the experience of the Other.

Sometimes it may feel to some as though St Mary's is ploughing a strange and idiosyncratic furrow: there's so much about discipleship, praying, study, retreats, spiritual direction and so on, when surely we should be

talking about evangelism' and/or improving the heating. But in the world beyond Barton, including our own diocese, and even other congregations in our own town, you will find exactly the same language of discipleship and encounter being spoken. No matter which denomination or tradition you choose -- read a bit and you'll find that we are seeking to be very much where the mainstream is at, and you'll find that 'New Monasticism' term time and again.

Today is the first anniversary of my being made a full member of the Benedictine family, and I count it a great joy and a great and humbling privilege -- but I don't expect you all to go off and become Benedictines (or Franciscans, or Carmelites or whatever). But I do want St Mary's to embrace the call to be present to God. I don't pretend to be very good at it myself -- who is -- but it seems to be what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

Reverting to type, it'd be wrong for me to submit my report first without us remembering, among those who've passed from our midst this last year, Rosemary and Geoff Lamert. They're both greatly missed and we were privileged to have them among us here. The position of PCC secretary which Rosemary so capably filled is still open! And among our newcomers a particular welcome to Frs Mike and Sue P-C, who we hope will have a long and happy retirement among us

Finally, my profound thanks:

to Geoff and Val, who with their assistants Ian and Brenda do so much, often unnoticed and unimagined, to keep St Mary's in good health;

to Fr Ivan and Fr Gordon whose support, work and prayers are of great importance to us; to Peter L and Sue B for their reader ministry with us;

and to my closest colleagues, Alan and Liz for their tireless work, support (and personal friendship).

Fr David

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll stands at 116. There have been five removals and four additions.

Report on the Church Fabric

Two important themes this year have been satisfying the requirements of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company, and getting our damaged windows repaired.

After a visit from our insurers we were required to have the church and hall checked for asbestos and all our electrical systems tested and updated. Fortunately our asbestos check revealed that no work was required, but the electrical work took four months. Having windows in the tower, the chancel and the north aisle mended has been a long and complicated process, but our object was finally achieved at the beginning of this month (April). At the same time wire guards were attached to two vulnerable windows in the tower.

A welcome development this year has been the appointment by the PCC of two Assistant Wardens, Ian W and Brenda S. Ian is particularly concerned with the church fabric, and his knowledge and skills have already been invaluable. It is not everybody who can haul a long ladder to the top of the tower to reach a blocked drain. I felt quite brave just holding the ladder steady in the belfry. Both Ian and Brian P were involved in re-erecting the notice board after it was blown down in a gale. It should be said that the notice board is now much more firmly fixed than it was before.

The usual regular jobs have been done; the ground level gullies and drains have been cleaned twice in the last year, David C has been up on the roof cleaning up dead leaves and the boilers in the church and hall have been serviced. Last July part of the ceiling in the hall lobby collapsed. It was repaired (and the lobby redecorated) at the expense of our insurance company.

Although riot directly associated with the church building (though the rent helps to pay for it), the wardens were asked to provide evidence of St. Mary's ownership of the Bell Field on Eastfield Road. As a result our ownership of the field has been confirmed.

I have already mentioned several people who have made a significant contribution to maintaining our

church. Last but not least, I must thank those who clean the church, with particular thanks to Janet for organising this.

Geoff B

Organ

The organ continues to play as many right notes as the organist can find. Apart from regular tuning and maintenance, this year has seen extra work on the pedal department, where the action to one or two notes had failed and is now restored.

The diocese runs a scheme to encourage more young people to play the organ. As part of this scheme, Thomas M, who plays at Grayingham, has been having lessons from me at St. Mary's. A few weeks ago he played some of the music at our 9.30 Eucharist, was much admired, and will, I hope, make a return visit later in the year.

Geoff B

Choir

The Choir has seen some changes this year. After many years of faithful service, Ian Holt and Norman Broughton have retired from the choir stalls and settled in the pews. We thank them for all they have given to St Mary's Choir over the years (and know they'll be able to tell when we get it wrong). We also said goodbye to Charlotte Smith who has been a member of the choir for almost half her life. We hope we may see her again in the future. We have been delighted to welcome Fr Ivan H to the choir. Ivan is an asset to the tenors and his wicked sense of humour is an added bonus. He also has the excellent habit of providing chocolate buttons at regular intervals! For some time we have counted Faith W as our youngest member, but that distinction now belongs to her younger sister Angelica who joined us in January. As yet Angelica has not been awake at any practices, so we hope she's taking in the music in her dreams.

After taking a break from the choir, Alan re-joined us after Easter last year and has been much involved in choosing the music and conducting over the past year. We were glad to have him back, although the rest from his labours has done nothing to improve the quality of his jokes!

In January, Geoff B celebrated forty years as St. Mary's organist, so we let him off the bench long enough to receive a presentation. Geoff is usually hidden behind a pillar - and happy to be there - but his contribution to the musical tradition here is outstanding and we owe him a great deal. The choir are a friendly bunch and we'd welcome new recruits.

Liz B

Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union have met three times each month - first Wednesday for Corporate Communion, third Wednesday for our afternoon meeting, fourth Wednesday, April- October for our prayer meeting.

Throughout the past year, without leaving the hall, we have travelled to France, India, Iona and the Holy Land, sharing a variety of experiences, faiths and cultures. We have learned the origins of the St John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem and of the Samaritans and their relevance in today's world. We have also enjoyed fellowship together in our 'in house' afternoons.

We have joined with ladies from other denominations for the Women's World Day of Prayer and the Methodist Rally, as well as sharing some meetings and services with Mothers' Union groups in the Glanford Cluster (Yarborough and Manlake Deaneries having combined in 2013)

Locally as a group we raised funds for St Mary's at the Garden Party and Bazaar, as well as being responsible for the flowers behind the Trinity Altar. We provided 140 posies for Mothering Sunday and regularly support each other and the parish with our commitment to prayer. ALL of our annual subscription (currently £20) together with any proceeds from any special effort we have, goes to Mary Sumner House to further the work of the Mothers' Union worldwide.

Visitors are always welcome - so keep an eye on our notice board. Do come along; you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Linda B

Tower Captain's Report.

First my apologies for not being able to Join the St Mary's Annual Meeting this evening- I was elected tower captain at the March AGM and would have liked to have met the PCC and parishioners at this first meeting during my spell of office, I am away on long-arranged visit to my daughter in Spain.

I am delighted to report that St Mary's church still has a loyal band of ringers who make every effort to ensure that all of our 8 bells are rung for every Sunday morning service throughout the year. Throughout 2013, there was only one Sunday when the band failed to ring the eight bells - a most remarkable achievement. Though we did lose two ringers this year, the ringing skills of newly-arrived Ivan and Valerie H are a valuable addition to our band's strength. In early 2014 learner Clive joined us and has now made sufficient progress to enable him to join the Tuesday practices.

Tower captain Andy B carried out his duties with his usual aplomb - his weekly reports to the ringers kept all in touch with relevant developments. Our young ringing master, George T, led the band with skill and dedication and as a result was elected to lead the band for another year. As usual steeple/clock keeper and band treasurer Linda H fulfilled her duties with energy and skill- The clock never failed to do its work, all stages of our tower must be amongst the cleanest and tidiest in the country and the bells are maintained to a very high standard, Linda organised the purchase and installation (along with help from Rose L) of a new set of ropes - these with high visible sallies which should help ringers with impaired sight- Her further efforts included the purchase of 8 new ash stays, organising the removal of possible danger in the stair well, repair of the belfry camera and monthly checks on the bells' stays, clappers, sliders and ropes. Amongst her other valuable work secretary Sue T produced most impressive 2013 Minutes for the 2014 AOM. Publicity Officer Joan B's informative monthly contributions to the Parish Magazine keep the ringers in touch with the parishioners and the parish and vice-versa, Special events celebrated with ringing included St George's Day, Fabian Stedman's tercentenary, Prince George's birth. Barton Open Gardens, 'Vestiges of Spirituality' and Barton's Victorian Day. This year we hope that it will be possible to add Barton Bike Night and the tercentenary of the Longitude Act to the list,

Two Barton teams entered the local 6-bell striking contest and both won a place in the all- Lincolnshire finals; in August the band took its turn to ring the Lincoln Cathedral bells whilst the local band took a holiday, in December we had a most enjoyable ringers' Christmas dinner and the band provided ringers for 12 weddings and 5 funerals.

Geoff B

St. Mary's Ladies' Group report for the Annual Church Meeting, 2014

The group continues to thrive with a membership of 90 this year, still providing an evening meeting for ladies of different or no faith background. Once again we have enjoyed a variety of speakers including the History of Wedding Dresses, Death Customs (Geoff Bryant), The history of Chimney Sweeps. Radio Humberside broadcasters- Andy Comfort and Rev. Sue Pegg (who talked about 'welcoming the stranger'. Outings including 'Thursford' - the Christmas Spectacular, the Ropewalk film theatre and Goltho Gardens near Wragby. We also had our usual Harvest Supper excellently catered for by Cooks of New Holland and a Christmas Supper, again supplied by them, with entertainment by Alkborough Choir.

As you can see our programme is varied and we raise a lot of money both for the church and for local charities- this year to 'The Women's Refuge', Child Line and the Air Ambulance. We supported the Church by having stalls at the annual bazaar and Summer Garden Party. Also by helping with church cleaning and making Christingles for the Christingle service in December. The meeting aims to provide something of interest for everyone, not forgetting our church 'roots' -originally as an offshoot of the Mothers' Union for 'Young Families'. New members are always welcome.

Sue W (secretary)

Home Communion

Home Communion continues to be ministered each month to the sick, housebound and elderly, in their own homes. Communion is also taken to Church members wishing to receive, who reside in one of the

residential homes in Barton. This important ministry is very much appreciated by those receiving their communion in this way, and helps them to still feel part of the body of Christ and the family of St Mary's Church.

Mike & Margaret S, Peter L

Toddler Time

Toddler time has continued to grow in numbers and we have, on average, ten to twelve mums and often more. The earlier start of 9.30am has benefitted our group with mums coming in directly from the school or playgroup run. This start time is very flexible as we usually wait until 10.15 to have the service part of the session, to ensure that everyone is included. We all know and appreciate that children and buses don't always run to time, so this gives extra flexibility to everyone and no one is ever feels 'late'. The poster on the outdoor notice board has brought us some new mums to the group who, in turn, have told others. Consequently we have become a very large and lively group. This is often larger still in the school holidays when we welcome back returning mums and children who have moved on to more formal preschool provision. We are one of the few groups that run throughout the year, something that is much appreciated by all the parents! We continue to incorporate a craft type activity in the sessions which is always well received by both parents and toddlers alike. As a result we have spent a little more money to replenish craft materials.

We had a Christmas party and some of the group came to the Christingle and Mothers' Day services in church.

Mavis and I are the only leaders of Toddler Time now and it works very well. The parents and children alike appreciate familiarity and that in turn enables us to develop good relationships with one another. A huge thank you to Mavis for her time and all that she does for the group and special thanks to Auriol for providing the refreshments and giving generously from the money she collects.

Michelle W

St Mary's Servers.

My thanks go to all of St Mary's servers for their commitment to the job. Thanks and congratulations go out also to Joshua H on attending his first mass as a Server. Last year, I was also pleased to welcome back the former Head Server Carolyn S to the servers group after a period of absence. My congratulations go to Kerry E, who assisted with the chalice for the first time at the Mothering Sunday Eucharist this year. Once again, I am running low on names to add to the servers' rota. If anybody is interested in becoming a server, or knows someone that may be interested, I would love to hear from you. Serving is easy to learn and full training will be given. If you are interested, get in touch with the clergy or myself on 07809124738 or 01652635337 (that is my landline). You can also e-mail me at (address removed)

The servers gathered with family and friends at the George Hotel this year for the annual servers' dinner. It was a very enjoyable evening and hopefully will be held again next year. Join the team, and you can join the dinner too.

Andrew L (Head Server)

Social Committee

I am pleased to report that we have had a successful and enjoyable year. The New Year, Midsummer and Harvest Suppers have been very well attended and we hope that will continue. The Christmas Fair was very busy and, again, well attended. The Summer Fair did not do so well and this year we are thinking of moving to a Saturday morning. There are more people about in Barton on a Saturday morning and we hope this will help us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have supported us over the year and hope you will continue to do so.

Auriol T

