



Fresh Opportunities

*"The pews in St Margaret's are dreadful.
When you sit I can hear all your sighs.
For the most uncomfortable seating,
These pews without doubt take first prize.
But did I perchance hear a whisper
At the end of somebody's prayer,
'We really would be most grateful,
For some comfortable padded chairs!'"*
(Jean Staveley, Chichester Diocesan Magazine, Summer 2010)

Long before you'd ever heard of Graham Knott those who were members of St Marys will have become familiar with the Church Development Project. For those who, like me, have joined the church in recent months and years the aim is to try to describe what it would mean to make our building much more flexible for the fresh opportunities for ministry and mission in the twenty first century. What are the first impressions of people who may be thinking about Christianity and the Church? Those of us who have been around church for decades and are English through and through find it hard to see through the eyes of those who have never been in a church before. Our church building is as alien an environment to them as going into a club at 2.00am in the morning would be to most of us. St Marys Church has provided a sacred space at the centre of Watford for many, many centuries. In being a focus of hope, peace and life in Christ for generations of people it has also gone through many changes to become the building it is now. Many of those changes really only took place during the last 150 years and do not reflect our long history at all. Moreover were we to be building a new church from scratch we would never build to the design we have now. This is because we now emphasise the God of love and belonging more than the God of power and distance which is reflected in our design.

The desire of everybody is to ensure that sacred space continues to be at the heart of Watford both in our generation and as we prepare for the future. We must not entrust to the future either a museum which reflects the artifacts of the past or a mausoleum because the current generation will have passed on without successors. That is happening up and down the country and is a genuine concern in our deanery. The proposals which have gone through much discussion and prayer both in St Marys and within the diocese are that the pews be

removed and replaced with chairs and the floor be levelled with underfloor heating installed throughout the church. In a building of our significance these proposals are costly and need to be done well.

It is now time to move on to the implementation of all those plans. On Sunday September 26th we are planning to launch the major appeal for this part of the Development project. You will hear much more about this in the coming weeks. The Vision Plan for the future grown from our work together on Nehemiah last year will give us many fresh opportunities for using the building in Christian worship and ministry in a flexible way as these changes take place. I hope you will be able to respond wholeheartedly and generously in every way as we continue to give ourselves to being a growing Christian community in the heart of Watford. And what of the poem at the beginning? Do you think you can do better? Why not have a go? A small prize will go to the best one submitted to me by the end of July.

Graham Knott

A poetic account of the Christian Cruising & Sailing Association

We're on the CCSA cruise again
And now we're up to ten
But people come and people go
So I'll count them at the end.

This year we're quite an ancient bunch
Is that why they've helped us out.
For all the men have just one name
Which is certainly easy to shout!

I wonder what St. Benet's Monks,
Would make of the worship hall
But the welcome and the refreshments
Probably haven't changed at all.

A windy night with noises off
Gave many a restless night
But thanks to Pat's attention
The boat was secured tight.

When yoked together with the yacht
The air was getting blue,
But happily we cut the ties
And cruised off with our crew.

By five o'clock at Acle
Ann was back on shore,
Then up to Malthouse Broad we raced
Not knowing what lay in store.



The yacht was nowhere to be seen
We all began to fret
Ah, ah its chugging into view
We'll get the story yet.

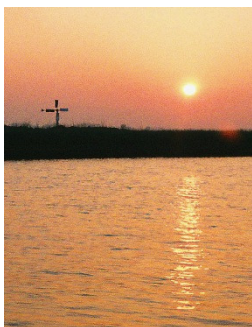
The divers had to check it out
The propeller was entangled
With that and all the gunge they found
The clutch was totally mangled.

The morning saw a brand new clutch
Then we were on our way
Through Ludham Bridge up to How Hill
With Boatle to end the day.

Wednesday was spent on Barton Broad
With four enjoying sailing
They even managed the jelly to pass
Which stopped the pudding failing.

In case this all seems trivial
Morning meetings raised the tone
Aby led by Pat on foolish things
With reminders to take home.

There isn't time to tell it all
But every one played a part
To make another CCSA cruise
Just like a work of art.



This poem was one of a number written on the holiday, for one of the evening meetings. Mave Christine and Ann are ex St. Mary's

Pre-School News

FARE THEE WELL

Many of you have asked about the changes taking place in the Pre-School, having seen the Co-Leaders Job advertised in Contact. Well, it is now official. I (Judith) am leaving the Pre-School after nearly 9 years heading it during its initial planning stages, early days, and up to the present. It has been a long and adventurous journey together with Gill, and all those who have been involved, especially you folk who pray faithfully for the work.

It is difficult to say exactly why I am leaving. I have struggled emotionally over recent months, and am also aware of the conflict of interests between effective parenting and continuous improving professionalism. There were a number of situations outside of the Pre-School in February and March which led to me looking for different jobs, and having started the process of job-hunting, it seemed fairer to give notice of my resignation, so that the pre-school team and committee had time to plan and adapt to the changes.

At time of writing I have not yet got another job to go to, but am still looking. Meanwhile I am planning to enjoy some time off, recharging physical, emotional and spiritual batteries, as well as catching up with 9 years worth of household and gardening jobs! I shall still be attending St. Mary's - you can't get rid of me that easily!!

HELLO!

It is with great pleasure that I can announce the appointment of Joanne Wilks as the new Co-Leader. Joanne has worked at the Pre-School for a number of years, and has recently completed the training relevant to a Leadership role. She has been a Christian since her Sixth Form days, and is now married with 7 children, ranging in age from 26 to 9 years. She currently attends Watford Community Church, and her husband John is involved in music leadership there. He works at LST. Joanne brings a number of areas of expertise to the Leadership of the Pre-School. As a Maths and Biology graduate, her skills include Curriculum Planning and ideas for creative development. She is especially good at developing a rapport with children, and supporting parents. She is a great asset to the team, and will help the Pre-School go from strength to strength.

PRAY

Please continue to pray for the Pre-School as it goes through the period of adjustment these changes will create. Especially pray for Gill as she shoulders the responsibility during the induction period, and for the team as they get used to a new dynamic. Also, please pray for the development of the Outdoor Play Area, as we hope some of the building work may take place in the next few months.

Thank you for all the support you have given to me over the years.

Judith Ballard

Memories of St Mary's

I'm Mr Lawrence Prior born in 1946 in Pinner and lived until the age of 7 at Harrow on the Hill. I was Baptised at St John's Church Harrow.

When I was around 8 years old I joined St Mary's Parish Choir.

I sung at many services on Sundays - attended Choir Practice on Friday nights. We were paid for our services and a special boost to pocket money came from Wedding choir work on Saturdays.

The late George Stone was organist and when I was first taken to Sunday services the organ was in a recessed pit on the right of the choir screen steps just between the chancel and the Essex Chapel. I used to watch George Stone playing the organ during hymns, anthems, responses and so forth and it was after an end of service voluntary that my mother asked him about my having piano lessons and so I went through many terms over several years until I was about 13 having lessons at George's home in Cassiobury Drive every Saturday morning.

Head chorister at this time was Andrew Davis, a Watford Grammar School boy at the time. He was a bit older than me but had lessons with George Stone on Saturdays just before me. I would arrive at Mr Stone's house and Andrew would be finishing off his advanced pieces at the end of his lesson whilst I waited in the back room to start mine. He became deputy organist at St Mary's and would stand-in for George Stone when we all went to the St Albans Abbey to take a service there. Of course Andrew Davis became the world famous Sir Andrew Davis and ended up conducting some of the worlds best Orchestras and then we saw him on "Last Night of the Proms" for a few years running.

The Vicar who took over at St Mary's when I joined the choir was the Reverend John Downwood. He took over from the retiring Rev St John Thorpe.

A few of my school friends were in the choir with me from the Chater School days. Also one chorister I remember well was Paul Tucker who tragically died and there is as you know a stained glass window in the Heydon Chapel. I well remember Paul Tucker's parents being in the front row of the congregation every Sunday both before Paul's untimely death and after. I don't remember his father joining the choir but I have read that he did.

Our choir was invited to stand-in for the St Albans Abbey choir during their summer break and so we were rehearsed a few times in the Abbey and sang Sunday services there instead of at St Mary's for a couple of weeks at a time.

We also entered the Diocesan Choirs Festival and were under the direction of Peter Hurford who did much to develop the Abbey music and even began an Organ Scholarship on a regular basis that became famous throughout the world.

I used to enjoy buying prawns and cockles from a weekly stall right outside the One Bell Public House when I came out from Choir Practice on a Friday night or away from the end of a Saturday back to back group of weddings we had to sing for. A plate of cockles was about sixpence in those days before decimal. A "pint" of prawns was about half a crown. They sold them from a pint mug with shells on then. In today's decimal that's about 12p but in today's value it would be about £4 or £5 for that many prawns.

I was never called upon to sing solo but two of my peers were regularly required to. I didn't have the "nerve" to stand up in front of hundreds of people and sing solo. We knew a lot of the

responses off by heart but where psalms were sung we only knew the tune but had to read all the text as we sang it. They would set any psalm at random and put any of a set of stock tunes to each one so they were all interchangeable from a singing point of view.

Some years later long after I left, the organ was made portable and could be moved out - probably the old organ pit was filled in.

I still remember the bells. They had a character all of their own. We could see the ringers from the choir stalls up in the loft. I would go to church on a Sunday to the sound of the bells on my way from my home just round from the Town Hall in Rosslyn Road. An easy walk there and back.

The choir was always well received, well rehearsed and well organised.

We often sang new works at Sunday services. We didn't often misbehave. Though I do remember being party to crunching a glass stink-bomb with a friend in the vestry approach to the side door into the church one Sunday morning. George Stone thought someone had thrown a bad egg in through the doorway and the smell did drift into the church which was for them rather embarrassing and for us a source of much mirth. We were never found out!

I do remember sometimes one party or other being married would faint on the spot which wasn't much fun. I can't remember what happened or whether the service was continued, I just remember the shock of someone fainting. It was probably caused by excitement and stress and having to stand still whilst feeling very nervous.

The only other "incident" was my brother (also in the choir for a time) colliding with one of the Vergers after dark when my brother was cycling with me through the church yard after dark and said Verger emerged by The Free School and my brother hit him head-on with the bicycle. I think it hurt the poor man but didn't knock him over. He did protest quite rightly as we were not supposed to ride cycles around the churchyard.

Around 1954 George Stone took me with him to Harrow School Speech Hall for the inauguration of a new pipe organ there. Various dignitaries were there including the famous recording organist Sir George Thalben-Ball. It was a great thrill for me to be able to turn music pages for George Stone as he was given a chance to try out the new organ. I always remembered that day. The organ had pipes on both sides of the hall and was like an early form of Antiphon or Stereo!

Another occasion George took me to St Albans Abbey for him to try out an organ piece after the organ had undergone a refit or refurbishment. We went there one winter evening and the organ loft was lit by just one lonely light bulb and the music desk lamp. The whole of the rest of the Abbey was in total darkness but the atmosphere with George playing Cesar Franck's Prelude Fugue and Variation was absolutely uplifting. I would have been about 10 years old then possibly 11. A truly spiritual experience for me.

Lawrence is now retired and living in South Devon (www.priorfamily.co.uk). If you would like to contact him I'm sure he would be pleased to hear from you or if you have any memories of St Mary's that you would like to share with others please let Kay Rees know.

Chris Nicholls

Goodness me, I thought - I wonder what Ginnie and Chris Cates have been feeding him on! No sooner had Chris Nicholls started with us and I was looking forward to getting to know him better when he was taken into hospital. Perhaps working at St Marys isn't such a healthy place to be after all! So I got to spend some time with Chris. Man, he looked rough and I have to say he didn't say much - only the odd grunt and groan. But we vicars get used to that coming from hospital beds.

Well, before too long Chris was up and about and has become a real part of St Marys. He has done everything asked of him which around our office means pretty much everything! He has grown in confidence and noticeably matured in ministry during the year. Chris has been seen out and about in Watford involved with the Schools Trust, the Chaplaincy, St Lukes and praying here, there and everywhere. And all too soon his year as an intern is up and we must say thanks and wish him well for the future.

But just a moment - he's not going anywhere! He's staying with us. Was it Graham's wise words in bible study that captivated him? Definitely not. Was it Karen's trendy youth Services? Probably not. No we all know the secret - it's Ginnie's lasagne! I am delighted to announce that from September Chris is starting an apprenticeship scheme that will lead to a youth worker qualification in eighteen months. So we have the same person but a different role. Chris will need some space during the week to do the necessary study and we will be working out how to reassess his commitments in order to achieve the best training possible. So please don't simply assume that because he looks like the same person he'll be doing all the same things.

I believe Chris has a heart that is both desperate to know God and eager to grow in him. He also wants to serve Christ totally and follow where he leads. He has the heart of a worshipper and longs to see God's people released in worship. Just as he has blessed us during this past year we pray for Chris as we look forward to this next season together.

Graham Knott

Mission Gift Day

Alastair gave a very challenging sermon based upon service to God. He engaged well with the children and it was interesting to find out how many of St Mary's children get up before 6.00am. However it is a sobering thought that whilst our children think about what breakfast cereal they want to eat, children of the same age in third world countries have to think about walking miles to get water to start their day.

At lunch we had an enjoyable traditional Sri Lankan meal served by Keshey Trundle. We heard about the country and the origin of some of the symbols on the flag of Sri Lanka. Keshey then told us about the work that Mano was doing. In the evening Keith and Joyce Wood shared with us some of the work OMF is doing in the Far East, in particular Japan. Whilst not a third world country the need for missionaries is still great. Keith left us with a number of challenges and a reminder that as God sent Jesus so he is sending us out into the world. Mission Gift day raised £7102 to help St Mary's mission partners all over the world. Thank you all for your generosity.

Karen Thompson

Confirmation

The Bishop of St Albans, Bishop Alan attended St Mary's church on Tuesday June 8th to confirm candidates from All Saints Leavesden and from St Mary's Watford. The day was hectic as furniture was moved and refreshments prepared. By early evening we were just about ready and the Bishop arrived and made an impromptu visit to the bell tower where he enjoyed ringing St Mary's bells . Apparently he has been a campanologist since the age of ten. The candidates had a great evening, which was made more meaningful with the Bishop's sermon linking Bill Bryson and science to the gospel. Time was then spent enjoying the fabulous refreshments. Congratulations to all the candidates: Patricia Ford, Enoch Naini, Simba Nyengera, Delroy Oldacre and Leah Watson and Noah Howell and Elizabeth Lawrence from All Saints Leavesden. May God continue to bless their journey.

Karen Thompson



Diary for July 2010

Sunday Services:

- 4 July** 8.00 am Holy Communion
11.00 am Joint Service at the Bandstand No 10.30 am service at St Mary's.
6.30pm Evening Worship. Karen Thompson. Dream, Drama, Destiny: Joseph
- 11 July** 10.30 am Holy Communion. Revd Graham Knott. Fan the Flame.
6.30 pm Evening Worship. Karen Thompson. Dream, Drama, Destiny: Joseph
- 18 July** 10.30 am Family Service
6.30 pm Holy Communion with a celebration of wholeness & healing.
Karen Thompson. Dream, Drama, Destiny: Joseph
- 25 July** 8.00 am Holy Communion
10.30 am Morning Worship. Loved for Life: Living Joyfully & Prayerfully
6.30 am Evening Worship. Karen Thompson. Dream, Drama, Destiny: Joseph

During the month of August there will be:

- 8.00 am Holy Communion every Sunday morning.
10.30 am Morning Worship, with preaching on Philipians: "Loved for Life."
6.30 am Evening Worship with a Summer Series: "I wish I'd learned that sooner"
(there will be no children's groups)

Church weekly events:

Monday: Mothers' Union: 12 July: Bring and Buy 8.00 pm. (No meetings in August)

Tuesday:

House of Prayer (with breakfast) 6.30am. **Centre Club** 9.30am (20 July last meeting for the summer)

Lunchtime concert 1.00pm: See below (No concerts in August)

Fellowship Hour: 13 July: Kirsten Russell and 27 July: Afternoon tea (last meeting for the summer) 2.30pm

Wednesday: Prayer Meeting 7 July 8.00pm in the Church . **Wednesday Lunch:** 7 July 12.30pm

Thursday: Mothers' Union. 22 July: Retreat, Sisters of Radlett at 2.00 pm. 1 July **Organ Recital** at 7.30 pm

Friday: Morning coffee 9.45am-12pm

Saturday: Morning coffee 10.00am-12pm. **St Mary's runners** 8.30am. (6 Cassiobury Dr)

Lunch Time Concerts

6 July **Ian Brameld Dixie Land Band**

13 July **Gilbert and Sullivan Highlights**

20 July **St Mary's Summer Concert**

27 July **Holiday Time Concert**

Home groups are open to all and meet at various times during the week, meeting both in the Church Centre and in people's homes. If you are interested in joining a group or in joining one of the uniformed organisations please contact the church office.

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