



March 1996

Free throughout the Parish

Mustard Seed

St. Thomas' Church Brampton, St. Peters' Holymoorside, St. John's Walton
--going for growth in Christ--

FACELIFT FOR ST. THOMAS'

St. Thomas' Church is preparing to enter the 21st century. Imaginative plans are afoot for a facelift for the interior of the building.

The Church has been a familiar landmark on Chatsworth Road since 1831. It may not be beautiful, but it is solid and noticeable, making it clear that a Christian community can be found in the locality.

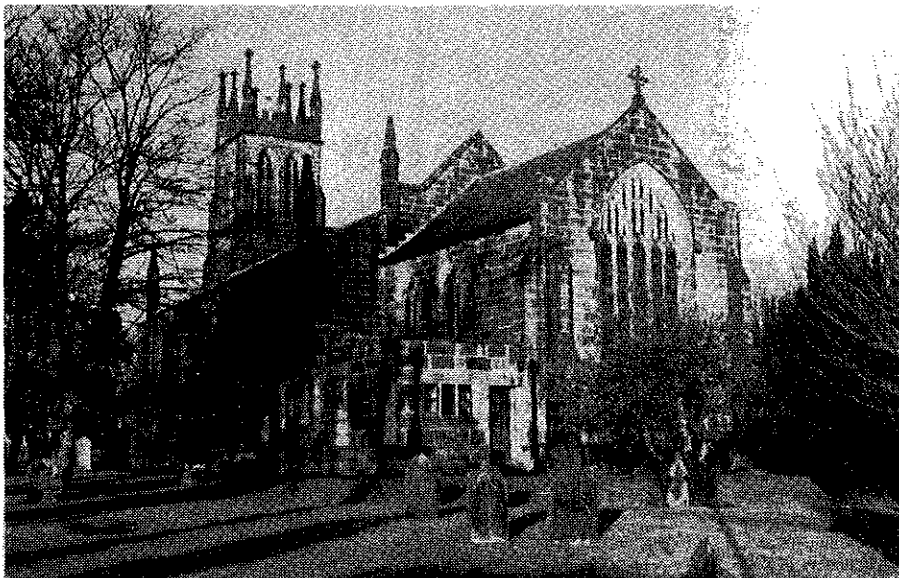
Each generation has left its stamp on the building, improving - or at least altering it to suit the needs of the time.

At the very end of the 20th century, the interior of the building is to be reordered. If you come inside St. Thomas' these days, for a regular service, a funeral, a wedding or whatever, you find a rather scruffy place. The old pews creak and are prone to collapse - one did collapse when a Bishop's wife sat on it!

The seating is to be made more comfortable and more flexible. Concert-goers won't any longer need to bring discreet cushions with them! The building will be tidied up and made more welcoming with improved lighting, improved layout and improved visibility.

At the same time, a new Garden of Remembrance is to be created on the West side of the church. The aim is to create a beautiful place, where cremated remains can be buried, for quiet memories and prayer.

Work should take place in the autumn. Church members are making gifts to pay for the operation, estimated at about £70,000, on Sunday 17th March.



St. Thomas : familiar landmark

Looking to the 21st Century

It was the era of cloth caps, wooden rattles and rows of little boys sitting along the touchline to watch the footballing greats of three and four generations ago.

Huddersfield Town's old Leeds Road home was typical of the Victorian venues which were becoming increasingly unsuitable both for the comfort and safety of the modern spectator.

Two years ago the club moved to the new prize-winning, state-of-the-art McAlpine Stadium, with its futuristic curved roof lines and excellent facilities. Today's fans watch their team in surroundings which are ideal for staging football.

Robin Dawson cites Huddersfield's soccer club as an example of an organisation facing up to change. And as chairman of the group looking into changing St. Thomas church as a venue for worshipping God, he sees parallels with the problems facing the football officials a few years back.

"Their old stadium was inadequate for the job which it had done for nearly as long as St. Thomas church in its present form. The new place is a much more fitting place to hold a game of football. And now, of course, there is talk of a new stadium for Chesterfield."

NOT A MUSEUM

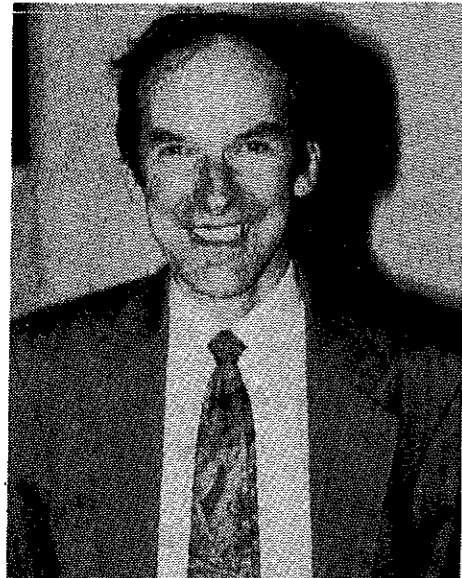
You have to go back more than 100 years to when the last alterations were made to
(continued over the page)

Looking to the 21st century

(continued from the front page)

the main church building and the century has seen many changes to the way Christians worship.

"A church is not a museum but a roof under which people can worship God and the way we worship God should change as much down the generations as the rest of life does," explained Robin, a St. Thomas' Lay Reader since 1989 and a civil engineer whose latest job was to lead the design team on the £110m Derby southern bypass.



Robin Dawson

A whole range of problems have brought St. Thomas' congregation to the point where it has been agreed to go ahead with changes to the interior of the church later this year. These include cramped space for groups such as Parents and Tots, and uncomfortable pews which will be replaced with moveable, and more comfortable chairs.

The alterations will also include a larger area of permanent staging at the front of the church for music and drama groups, improved amplification and stage lighting and a new, larger communion table.

At the same time, a new Garden of Remembrance will be created in the church yard for the burial of ashes, including a low wall where plaques bearing the names of loved ones will perhaps be fixed.

A much larger scheme to build a major extension has been put on hold for the time being because the church council felt it was too ambitious in the current financial climate.

Even so, the proposed work inside and out will cost in the region of £70,000 which will come from the church's own resources - the sacrificial giving of its members.

"The man in the street will ask why we are spending all that money when the church looks perfectly all right to him. But if we see the church as a living organism, something that develops, then the building and the equipment in it has got to develop too.

"What we have at present is restricting us. Rows of pews send a message that things are rigid, that we all face the same way and that everything comes from the front. This is entirely appropriate for some services but chairs can be moved and by arranging them in a semi-circle you can be more conscious of your Christian family.

"There is a move to make worship more relevant to everyday life - it's become more than just recitation of prayers, canticles and hymns. The Church of England's

If we see the church as a living organism, something that develops, then the building and the equipment in it has got to develop too.

expressions of worship have opened out so much in the last 20 or 30 years and at St. Thomas', with four quite different services on Sundays, we have a very broad range from the traditional to the livelier, modern styles," said Robin.

Christmas 1996 should be an exciting time as the St. Thomas' congregation celebrates for the first time in its new surroundings the birth of Jesus. Robin Dawson's prayer is that, along with the outward changes to the buildings appearance, there will be a new spirit of freedom among the worshippers.

THE ARCHITECTS

Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams are the firm of architects that the Church Council has chosen to help to design the new interior. The firm specialises in church architecture. Mr. Buttress is Surveyor to the Fabric at Westminster Abbey. Nicholas Rank is in charge of our project.

The architects have designed the scheme to the church's brief and are now obtaining the approval of the Derby Diocesan Advisory Committee (without whose approval no alterations can be made to our church.) Once the scheme is finalised they will supervise the carrying out of the work.

ONE MEMBER'S VIEW

Jim Crawley has been part of the fixtures and fittings of St. Thomas', so it seems, as long as the wooden pews which are set to be taken out in a full-scale reorganisation of the church's interior later this year.

But Jim, who started going to the church 30-odd years ago at the age of ten, won't be sad to see the old furniture go, to be replaced by comfortable new chairs.

"When friends gather in a house you don't sit in serried ranks looking at the back of other people's necks - there are seats around the room so you can face one another and make eye contact."

"That needs to be the same in church - God's house - and we can go some way to achieving that feeling of togetherness, that we are all one family, by changing the layout of the seating."

He would also like to see a return to a role

that churches played in centuries gone by, as a focus for their neighbourhood. "In medieval times the church building was an important meeting place for everyone in the community.

"It would be good to think that our church could also become a valuable resource for people in this area. We have a huge space but it's hardly used - just four times a week on Sunday for worship and then at other occasional times of the year."

Jim, who now plays a key role in leading worship music at St. Thomas', was for many years in charge of Sunday Club for children and teenagers and believes the alterations will give a real lift to the life of the church.



Jim Crawley

"We have a variety of worship but the building can't adapt to that variety. The space we have at present doesn't do justice to the different requirements of our music groups and the choir."

If all goes well the church should look a transformed place in time for the well-attended carol services at Christmas and Jim believes the alterations can have an equally radical effect on the hearts of those worshipping at St. Thomas'.

"My big hope is that as a result of the internal changes, and people feeling more comfortable in their surroundings, that they will feel closer to one another and closer to God."



Artist's drawing of the proposed reordering

MUSTARD SEED

MUSTARD SEED is our way of saying: "We want to keep in touch with those who live locally." It goes free to all homes in our parish.

Mustard seeds are proverbially tiny things which can grow and grow. We trust something worthwhile will grow out of this MUSTARD SEED.

Jesus compared faith with a mustard seed. A person doesn't need great faith. So long as it is in God, a small grain of faith is enough because God himself is great and there is no limit to what He can do.

A WORD FROM THE RECTOR OF ST. THOMAS'

Reordering St. Thomas' Church has been talked about for ages. At last we are taking the plunge.

Some people are really excited about it. They can't wait. Some are apprehensive and find it hard to imagine what the new St. Thomas' will be like.

Speaking personally, I find that I am looking forward to it immensely.

I guess that there are two main things that I look for. As far as worship is concerned, there should be **greater reverence**. We look for more of a sense of God's presence. The Bible tells us that He is to be found, not so much in a building, as among His people. Awareness of being together in the presence of Almighty God can make a huge difference to church services.

The second thing is **greater versatility**. St. Thomas is a large building and we want to



Christopher Frith

be able to use it more during the week. With mobile furniture, the range of community activities can increase greatly. We hope to be able to lay on more for the elderly - and also for children and young people.

I am confident that, when it is complete, nearly everyone will like the new St. Thomas'. Even more importantly, we will have a building suitable for the varied needs of the parish for the foreseeable future.

ENQUIRIES

General enquiries should be made at St. Thomas' Church Office, which is usually staffed between 9am and 12.30pm, Monday to Friday.
Office telephone : 01246 558461

Enquiries about Weddings and Baptisms should be made at St. Thomas' Church on Mondays between 6.30 and 7.15pm.

CLERGY

Rector Christopher Frith 232717

Curate Peter Wilkinson 231089

NSM* Judith Henderson 569106

*non stipendiary minister

Please complete this and return it to : The Secretary, St. Thomas' Church Office, Chatsworth Road, Chesterfield, S40 3AW.

I would like to receive:

A copy of St. Thomas' bi-monthly Parish Magazine, 'Ploughshare'

Details of how I can find out more about the Christian faith.

Details of children's/ youth activities.

Information about how I can contribute financially to the re-ordering project.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel: _____

You are invited to worship

AT ST. THOMAS'

8.00am A simple, small, quiet Communion Service.

9.09am An unconventional, all-age service, strong on involving everyone, with a real feeling of community.

10.45am The largest congregation, a blend of traditional and contemporary worship, with a robed choir, Sunday Club for children and young people under 15, and plenty of variety.

6.30pm An informal but reverent service, with prayer for healing available afterwards. Youth service : 1st Sunday each month.

AT ST. JOHN'S, WALTON

9.30am A wonderful mixture of all ages, this service teems with life. Sunday Club on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sunday.

AT ST. PETER'S, HOLYMOORSIDE

9.30am This warm service of Holy Communion usually includes several young children.

6.00pm A beautiful, quiet service with hymns, using the old 1662 Prayer Book.