

## **Ploughshare February/March 2000** (Selected articles scanned in from the magazine)

### **From The Rector**

Millennium celebrations are underway - and should last all year. Whether anyone will have any energy left, come 31 December [2000], to celebrate the real start of the new millennium remains to be seen! Christians do have every reason to see this as a special year.

Feedback from the different projects and events in our parish has been positive. Great appreciation was expressed for Millennium candles - a genuine free gift! Likewise people have appreciated Millennium Gospels, especially the children's ones which came with special torches. Several parishioners have asked for free copies, as offered in *Mustard Seed* and also copies of AD, a booklet about our Christian heritage. The video "So, who is this Jesus?" is doing the rounds. The various parties have been great.

Millennium services seem to have gone well. The 'New Start' theme has struck a chord and enabled us to pray that the remarkable optimism and confidence felt throughout the nation may be lasting. The Prime Minister did say that he wished he could bottle it!

Our motto for 2000 is just the reminder that we need.

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."*

For a start it points us in the right direction. If Jesus isn't its focus, there is no justification for celebrating the Millennium. Then, it reminds us how utterly reliable he is. He doesn't blow hot and cold, he doesn't have moods, he doesn't come and go. He is always the same, always relevant, always available.

He offered a new start to people of all background and needs in 1st century Palestine. Ever since then people have found their broken lives mended, their confusion dispelled and emptiness replaced by purpose, as they have put their hope in Jesus.

Our millennium message is that he will continue to do just this. He always has. He always will. *"I am making everything new!"* he says. (Revelations 21:5)

**Christopher Frith**

### **St John's Walton: A New Parish for the New Millennium**

The year 2000 sees the creation of the new parish of St John's Walton. In addition to the part of Walton which is within St Thomas', part of St Augustine's will also move into the new parish.

No doubt it prompts lots of questions.

#### **Why is this happening?**

There are many reasons: Walton has grown enormously (the new parish will have a population of about 7000) - it is now a place in its own right. St John's has also grown and it is felt that it is able to take on the responsibilities of being a Parish Church. Most importantly it is felt it will help St John's to identify with Walton more clearly and so enhance its mission to the residents.

**When will it happen?**

The creation of a Parish is a legal matter requiring the approval of the Privy Council in London. It doesn't happen overnight! It is hoped it will occur some time in June or July 2000.

**Will anyone be expected to change Churches?**

No. There is no expectation that anyone will change their Church membership just because they are now living in a different Parish.

**What about Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals?**

The new parishioners of Walton will now look to St John's for these services. However, where there are strong existing pastoral ties with St Thomas' or St Peter's we will seek to encourage those and not insist on them coming to St John's. This will remain the case for Baptisms and Funerals. Due to the legal complexities of Weddings, the decision to allow those from Walton to be married elsewhere will be reviewed after five years.

**Will the existing links be lost between the churches?**

Not at all. A Group Ministry is to be created. This is a formal acknowledgement of our desire to work together wherever appropriate. Joint activities such as Alpha and Wednesday Lunch Plus will continue; one-off events, such as the visit of Roger Jones last year, will happen; opportunities to worship together will be explored and there will remain fellowship and support for the Clergy. St John's Church Centre will continue to be available free of charge to the other churches.

**What can I pray for?**

Thank you for asking! Do pray for all at St John's as they prepare for this change, for the people of Walton that it will be received well by them and for the on going relationship between the three Churches.

**Andy Broom**

## **A Deserved Retirement and a Welcome**

**Pam Brimelow**, our faithful secretary for the last 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years, has retired and we are going to miss her. Week after week, Pam has produced newsheets of the highest quality in addition to innumerable minutes, agendas, leaflets and so on. She has done the background organisation for Baptism Enquiry and Marriage Preparation courses. She has revolutionised the acetates for the overhead projector, typing and printing out all the songs we use, as well as innumerable other pieces of liturgy, and filing them in a most efficient system.

It would be hard to imagine a more conscientious secretary. Despite the ever-changing, often unreasonable, demands, Pam has calmly done all that has been required, never complaining, always cheerful. She and Angie McGovern have consistently run an office which is truly efficient and always friendly and welcoming, an unusual combination.

Pam will continue to be available on a voluntary basis, which is excellent news. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude. Hers will be a hard act to follow.

Our new Secretary, just appointed as we go to press, is Anne Duff. Anne is a new member of St Thomas', having recently participated in an Alpha course. She has many strings to her bow, being also an aerobics teacher. What difference will that bring to the office? Compulsory morning exercises for the Rector? We welcome Anne to our office staff. **Christopher Frith**

## **Mavis Martin**

*Mavis died on 6 December 1999, a huge blow to St Peter's. Her funeral, the first in the newly extended St Peter's, was packed, standing room only, with her numerous friends and admirers. Judith Henderson has sent us this appreciation.*

Mavis has been at the heart of St Peter's, Holymoorside in recent years. She had a very special ministry of welcoming and noticing and was the one who knew when someone was missing. She always spoke to newcomers and made sure they felt welcome. Her ministry of prayer was also a great gift, immediately responsive to any request and vigilant in following up with regular contacts. Reading and leading prayers in the evening service particularly was a lovely enhancement to our worship.

All the new babies were always taken to Mavis for a special blessing and she had many lively friendships with the very young and their parents. She had her own special letter-writing ministry with Amnesty International. A real concern for international justice was an important part of her life.

Mavis was very gifted making individual cards for every Church activity and using her beautiful italic script. Cake stalls were also her forte and, quietly assisting Harry, she adorned the Church for festivals - having her little flower box at the ready.

She supported every aspect of Churches Together, especially Communion and Coffee, which she helped to initiate. It was her idea that the under 5s should be called Little Lambs! The Tuesday group gave her an opportunity to study the Bible and to discuss theology - often controversially - but she was always able to return the conversation to basic Christian principles.

The building of the new extension to St Peter's was at the centre of her thoughts in recent times. She really longed to see the plans come to fruition. On the DCC, she was a tower of strength, believing that, if it was the will of God, then it would be fulfilled.

She had more than 50 years married life and she and Harry together have made a home and niche in the community which has been a haven for many.

Always, willing to encourage and appreciate, she was a good friend and, despite all her recent trials, faith and trust in God remained strong. In a letter just before she died she said that she knew that the decision of those who were caring for her at the hospital would always be in her best interests.

It was the best interests of the Church family which motivated her life.

I'm so glad that she lived long enough to see the rededication of St Peter's and in a sense that she now has the rest and peace she richly deserves

**Judith Henderson**

## Two Thousand Years

Year one for the Romans  
Was the foundation of their city,  
The Greeks dated events  
From the first Olympic games.

The focal point of our history  
Is a birth in royal David's city;  
The birth of Jesus,  
Name above all names.

Now, at the end of two millennia,  
Which saw many empires rise and fall,  
Jesus' words are as relevant as ever  
And many believers still answer His call.

**Andrew Banks**

## My Song: A Modern Psalm for 2000

Jesus is my Living Word, my Way, my Truth, my Life.  
The Bible is His written Word, His ordnance survey map of life,  
Showing me the highways and byways, pitfalls and crags.

When all things were made through Jesus  
He gave me a heart, mind, will and body  
To love Him, trust Him, know Him, obey and follow Him.  
He gave me the Holy Spirit to be my companion  
After He went to His Father in heaven.

He gives me the power to live  
To tell the Good News that God loves us so much,  
There is nothing He has not done, nor will not do  
To free us from the sin and evil that entangles us like barbed wire  
And crushes us like a sledge hammer.

He gives me freedom:  
To love my neighbours, to forgive them as God forgives me,  
To know companionship, laughter and weeping, sharing and caring,

Good health and sickness.

Freedom:

To earn my food and drink, to sit with my family  
"Under our own fig tree and vine".

And not be afraid.

Freedom and Power:

To live and to love.

Freedom:

To enjoy His beautiful Creation, hills and fields,  
Moors, mountains and valleys,  
Rushing torrents, deep flowing rivers, living streams;  
Trees and flowers, animals and birds.

Freedom:

To love mercy, to act justly, to walk humbly with my God

**Ray Hearn**

## **Hope for Eastern Europe – 1999 Update**

A very heartfelt thank you for all the love, encouragement and positive support this mission work has received over the last five and a half years. You, our faithful friends and prayer partners are strategically important to the overall success of "Hope for Eastern Europe". We as a team hope you will realise the enormous part you play in reaching out in love every day to the sick, lost, poor, rejected, homeless, hurting people around the world.

**At the beginning of 1999**, we responded to an emergency appeal which Rev. David Bailey of Cross Street Baptist Church received on the internet. It was from Pastor Eugen Ovean about the plight of many gypsies under his care. Winter conditions were so severe that many were dying of starvation through lack of warmth, nourishing food and shelter.

My husband Les quickly volunteered for this mission, along with Peter Jones from Cross Street Baptist Church. I travelled out alone on this journey putting my faith in God to link me up with the drivers in **Tinca Oradea**. It was truly a very challenging eye-opening mission. I was personally very shocked and moved by the appalling conditions they were surviving in. Apart from their physical needs of food, clothing and shoes the gypsies in **Tinca** need our love and encouragement to restore hope, spiritually and materially. The knowledge that Christians in England are willing to drive across Europe to respond to their cry for help gave them encouragement that brings new hope.

**Our Easter Mission was followed by our Summer Mission** in July. This proved to be one of the most fulfilling and rewarding missions the team have ever experienced. Approximately half our supplies were unloaded at the church in **Tulcea**, our first stop, for distribution to many poor families. Next day we visited a very poor town named **Isaccea**, where a new church building has recently been planted, providing evidence that the Lord is moving in the hearts of people in **Isaccea**. It is here, in this town that 170 orphans live. The government has made a cut of 78% in funds to run their school! The Director of the orphanage approached the church for help. Through the response of many generous people we have been able to continue to support the staff and children by providing two meals each week. These

meals have proved to be a lifeline during the last year. Another major need was conversion from wood fuel to gas central heating, to cut labour and running costs and provide extra warmth throughout the long hazardous winters.

We next visited **Tichilesti** where the people suffering with leprosy live in a small community. Our friends were each given a gift bag with our love. We also left various supplies. The residents all really look forward to our visits and they have become our personal friends. Most of them asked for prayer for their families and themselves. It is such a privilege to visit them and support them.

The next stage of our journey led us to **Basarabi Constanta**, the home of **Dina Tintean** and her family. Dina you will remember has been called by God to be a missionary in India. She is now back in Romania and working amongst the street children in **Constanta**. When the time is right she will be returning to India to complete her training. Dina would like to ask for your prayer support to help her fulfil her calling. The rest of our supplies were unloaded here to help this very poor region. One mother of six, Maria and her eldest daughter accepted the Lord into their hearts, and asked Him to help their family situation. She walked three miles to church the following Sunday. Our four English boys joined Romanian teenagers and their organisers on a summer camp - they had a great time and made lots of friends. This was a wonderful unexpected blessing for them and they thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.

We all linked up in Bucharest for the return journey - mission accomplished, with lots of exciting stories to share.

**Our final visit this year was at the end of October.** Members of our team were invited to the opening of **Basarabi Community Church**. It was dedicated to our Lord on 31 October 1999 with great celebration. This church will be used as a place of worship, a medical and dental centre, kindergarten, library and outreach centre.

We then returned to visit the **Gypsy community** on the Romanian border. Dorothy and myself, with the help of the gypsy leader and his wife, visited many of the poorest homes. Many were living and sleeping in just one room with an earth floor and the daylight seeping through the roof. The families were extremely kind and hospitable and so thankful that we had returned. We prayed together to invite God into their lives and situations - it was a very moving experience. We took lots of photographs to share with people back home - who would hopefully respond to this emergency situation. We left lots of supplies of food, clothing and Christmas presents. We were also able to help them purchase extra food locally with funds that had been generously given back in England.

Since our return home God laid on my heart that the two main concerns were the gypsy homes and the gas heating installation at the orphanage. God has graciously answered prayer for both needs.

May God bless you too in the year 2000 from our team.

**Pamela Gratton**