

**Ploughshare June/July 2000**  
(Selected articles scanned in from the magazine)

**From The Rector**

St John's Walton is very nearly a parish in its own right. By the time this is read - probably a month after I write - the date of the transition may well be known. It is in the hands of the Privy Council; everything this end has gone through smoothly.

"It's rather sad isn't it?", someone said to me the other day. "Not really", I replied. "It's rather like I felt when I gave my daughter away at her wedding here five years ago. I feel rather proud and pleased." St John's has grown up and is gladly taking on the responsibility and demands of independence. It's natural and good and healthy and right.

It will certainly be sad if St Thomas' and St Peter's lose touch with St John's, but that is far from our intention. We are to become what is known as a "Group Ministry" and the Wardens and Clergy are working out together how we will give expression to this. We will continue to be sister Churches taking a keen interest in each other's progress. No one will be expected to move from one church to another. As they do all over the country in this mobile pick-and-choose generation, church members already cross parish boundaries to find their favoured Church to belong to. This is fine. Steady, natural development and growth is the aim of all three Churches involved.

The Bishop of Derby is to come to St John's to celebrate this great step forward on Saturday 23 September. That will be the public occasion to express our love and congratulations. However, on behalf of all at St Thomas' and St Peter's, I want to say we praise God for what He is doing at St John's. We commend this exciting, growing Church to Him for His continued guidance and inspiration. And we shall continue to regard you as very special to us.

**Churchwardens at St Thomas'**

We have a long line of wonderfully faithful, hard working Wardens. We are so grateful to them all.

**Thank you David:**

David Holden has passed the baton on after completing his three years. He has given himself unstintingly and prayerfully to the task and we owe David much gratitude.

**Welcome Pam**

Pam Brimelow is the first female Warden of St Thomas'. Having served as Church Secretary with such distinction for 5 years she is ideally qualified for the task. Some retirement!

Our Deputy Wardens are Michael Mann, Graham Brown and Karen Riley.

Praise God that they all, in common with so many others, are using their gifts in the service of His Church

**Christopher Frith**

## Spring Harvest 2000

This was the fifth time that I have been to Spring Harvest and I don't know if it's just me, but it seems to get better each time I go. Now, I am not sure if it is Spring Harvest that is getting better, or if it is me growing in my faith. Maybe it's a bit of both.

Butlins, Skegness, itself has greatly improved. There are a lot more facilities, most of which are under cover. The food is plentiful and we were fortunate that the sun shone more than it rained.

There were 51 of St Thomas' folks that went this year. This included children, teenagers, students and us adults. We felt bad about deserting church over Easter, but I think we all experienced a special Easter at Spring Harvest. There were 8,500 other Christians on site, from every denomination.

A group of us went to a series of seminars on Spirituality, which seemed to link very well with the Lent course that we had followed at St Thomas'. They were led by two very interesting Christians, who used formal information, interspersed with their own experiences to make the sessions lively. There was an added dimension as one of the leaders was a Jewish Christian, so we heard some Jewish prayers, and saw another view of the Old Testament, or Jewish Bible as he called it. The Bible Study sessions were excellent, full of sound biblical information, again interspersed with humour and real life stories.

Worship in the Big Top is something to experience! All those other Christians joining together to sing and dance and praise the Lord. We even had hundreds of balloons released into the air. When they popped, which they seemed to do together, they sounded like fireworks. What an exciting way to come into God's presence. We even had Steve Chalke on site, and his sermon was very powerful.

The calibre of all the people who speak at Spring Harvest is very high. They are all very experienced in sharing their knowledge of God. They are inspirational. Spending that much time just focussing on God is such a joy. You can actually feel yourself being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We did have some quiet times. The hour and a half at the Cross on Good Friday was very powerful. It was held in the middle of the concourse, with everyone going by, getting on with their own lives, just as it would have been while Jesus hung on the Cross. There were meditations and dance, and times for people to reflect on how they felt watching the familiar story of Jesus' suffering unfold before them.

On Easter Sunday we had a communion service at ten o'clock at night! Very strange! We thought, as Anglicans seemed to be the minority on site, that there wouldn't be too many people there. But we were wrong, there must have been 200 people there. The Provost of Bradford took the service. His talk gently introduced us to his mother and his son and he related his feeling about them to how God felt losing his Son, and how Jesus felt about his mother. Drawing the service to a close, we stood, holding hands, in a large circle around the tent. Then we turned, facing outward from the circle, facing out to the rest of the world. Such simple things seem to become very powerful at such times.

I'm already planning to go to Spring Harvest next year. I know I'm going to need renewing again. We discussed how good it would be if the whole church could go together, which I know is unrealistic, but I can dream!

**Valerie Durkin**

## Recommended Reading

Are you like me and know that it's time to read the Bible from front to back again? But you find it hard going and you really have to gird your loins and grit your teeth and with grim determination press on: Genesis - wonderful reading, Exodus - fascinating, Numbers - monotonous, Leviticus - well? Deuteronomy - ditto ,1 and 2 Kings - ugh, Oh Father do you really want me to read Kings, again????

Well, thanks to Selwyn Hughes and Trevor J Partridge I am reading from Genesis to Revelation with eagerness and hunger. Why? Because this time I'm reading chronologically. As it happened. The fog is lifting, the fragmented jigsaw pieces are falling into place. I am experiencing a renewed awareness of the Greatness of our God and am in awe (once again) of the depth of his love for his beloved children with whom I (we) number.

Each day there are a number of readings followed by a thought and a contemplation, and running along the bottom of each page is a date line (creation Noah flood Job etc)

I haven't reached Kings yet, but this time there is hope and expectancy in my heart instead of dread.

So I invite you to join me on the journey through the Bible with the aid of 'COVER TO COVER Through the Bible as it happened" by Selwyn Hughes and Trevor J Partridge. Each book of readings covers 60 days and a years supply costs £9.99 (I think) from: , CWR, PO Box 230, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8XG, Tel: 01252 784710, [www.cover2cover.org](http://www.cover2cover.org)

**Enid Sheldon**

## Communion and Cuppa's 10 Birthday

Maundy Thursday was extra special for those who come to Communion and Cuppa. It has been running every month for 10 years.

Originally, it was organised by David and Marion Smith (and they paid a return visit to mark the birthday). Now John and Brenda Trickett have taken over.

An army of drivers to give lifts, bakers to provide delicious cakes, tea makers, washers up and organisers come together to provide fellowship for our oldest members. Basically it consists of a simple Eucharist for half an hour and another half-hour of home made cakes and eager conversation.

May God continue to bless Communion and Cuppa for another decade.

Christopher Frith

## Millennium Yew Tree Planted at St Thomas'

On Mothering Sunday, our Millennium Yew Tree was planted during pouring rain behind the Garden of Remembrance at St Thomas'. It comes from a tree which was alive at the time of Christ.

The Yew tree was planted by Ian Gordon, former PCC Secretary, who had acquired the tree and masterminded the operation.

Christopher Banning, one of St Thomas' Discoverers, read a piece expressing our Yew Tree's feelings:

*"You plant me now to mark the start of the third Christian Millennium.*

*God willing and with your help and the help of your descendants I shall bear witness to this faith in another thousand years."*

## I said a Prayer for you Today

I said a prayer for you today.  
And I know God must have heard.  
I felt the answer in my heart  
Although he spoke no word.

I didn't ask for wealth or fame  
(I knew you wouldn't mind).  
I asked him to send treasures of  
A far more lasting kind.

I asked that he'd be near you  
At the start of each new day  
To grant you health and blessings  
And friends to share your way.

I asked for happiness for you  
In all things great and small.  
But it was for his loving care  
I prayed for most of all.