

## **Spearhead April/May 1990**

### **From the Rector, Christopher Frith**

I am really looking forward to Easter morning. I shall start our services with a shout,

"ALLELUIAH CHRIST IS RISEN"

The vibrant reply will come:

"HE IS RISEN INDEED. "ALLELUIAH

Easter is the best festival of all. Its visual aid of springtime is all around. New life. Death has been beaten. Eternity beckons. And it's true! Jesus died and within days was seen alive again by hundreds of people - a historical fact.

Not everyone will feel the joy. "Even if someone rises from the dead, they will not be convinced" Jesus had warned. For many, public holidays and Easter Eggs are as far as it goes.

Many will join the worship, of course, but, if it is really to make sense, the build-up must have been there. The pain and struggle of Holy Week are inescapable. Jesus couldn't avoid them and nor should we (in our own limited way). Our Holy Week programme is imaginative and gives every opportunity to enter right into it all.

If we do, our hearts will leap and our fingers tingle on Easter morning.

"HE IS RISEN INDEED. "ALLELUIAH

**Christopher Frith**

## **The Bishop of Derby Writes about the 'Initiative in Giving 1990'**

I believe parishes, and not least the clergy, are often weighed down with a need to find the parish share, to say nothing of the financial expenses that a church has, yet only a small increase in giving by congregations would set everyone free to concentrate on the main tasks of the church.

Later this year I shall be asking all parishes if, in a specific and simultaneous period, they would consider the regular giving of their congregations. I've asked a group to advise me and more detail will be coming, but I wish to share some of my preliminary thoughts with you. Many of the clergy will have already heard me speak on this at last year's Clergy conference.

Firstly, a simultaneous period would enable everyone to know they are part of a diocesan wide activity, which has been initiated by myself, as Bishop.

Secondly however, the exact form will be left to the parishes, but with advice and resources available on which they can draw.

Thirdly, my own staff and the Bishop's Council have agreed to say anonymously what they themselves give. I expect to be asking others, particularly in our Synods, to take part in this process and step by step to publish the aggregated results. My idea in doing this is to give a lead by letting church members know what people in places of responsibility are prepared to give and hopefully stimulate some to reconsider their giving, asking what the proper level is in proportion to their income.

Finally, I hope that all this will go hand in hand, not with a sense of weariness that we are on the subject of money - again, but with an understanding that it is a joyful response to all that God has given us.

**Peter Derby**

## **Barrie Birkin Moves On**

After Easter this year, Barrie Birkin will no longer be our organist. He seeks a new challenge and has accepted the post of organist at Baslow Parish Church.

His desire for change after 20 years is understandable and we certainly wish Barrie well. We are truly grateful to him for using his wonderful gift to enrich our worship. I identify with all that Keith Bates says in his tribute to Barrie.

We shall miss him greatly and he will be hard to replace. To mis-quote Oscar Wilds "To lose one organist (Philip Herrick) may be regarded as a misfortune, to lose two in a year looks like carelessness". We must pray both for Barrie and for St. Thomas' as we look for an organist and a music director to oversee all our music in worship.

**Christopher Frith**

## **Libby Holden**

We are delighted to announce that Libby will be staying with us for another six months, until September as our Pastoral Assistant. Her other good news is her engagement to George Lane; they intend to get married in October in Charlesworth, Libby's home church.  
(tel.

## **Barrie Birkin A View from the Back Row (of the Choir Stalls)**

It's always a shock when the established order changes, and the impending departure from the organ stool of that seemingly permanent and immovable fixture of St. Thomas' Church, Barrie Birkin, provides no exception. For almost twenty years he has successfully filled the by no means easy dual role of Choirmaster and Organist, exercising his considerable influence over the musical affairs of the church. We have enjoyed and admired his expertise on the organ, playing without fuse or ostentation (except for occasional flamboyance and over-loudness in his favourite hymns). On the contrary he has often been unduly modest and self-effacing; he never ceases to be worried or nervous about his playing, which means he cares.

As choirmaster he has brought out the best from a long succession of choristers. The advent of girls (and more mature girls) he took in his stride. Not a strict disciplinarian he has, however, coaxed and cajoled many an excellent performance from his small band of charges, bringing pleasure both to them and to their hearers. A series of young boys and girls (and older ones too) have good reason to be very grateful for his enthusiasm, patience, encouragement and instruction. Much has been learned by many.

He has been generous with his time and energy; he has been kind and friendly. We have appreciated his treats; buffets at the George - it was rumoured he had a practice organ there and at his home, and choir outings principally for the younger element. And Christmas morning wouldn't be the same for the front row without their selection boxes.

In all that he has done he has been sustained by Jean and eventually helped vocally by his daughters.

We shall miss him sorely, but change and a new challenge call him to Baslow. We wish him every success and happiness there, and thank him for enriching the life of St. Thomas' Church with his skills, and for all his good works and pleasure given to the Choir.

**Keith F.H. Bates.**

## Drama by Jabbok at St Thomas'

A drama group called **Jabbok** visited St. Thomas' on Sunday evening 25th February 1990 to present "**Up the Wall**".

Jabbok are touring to highlight the Church-Urban-Fund, provoking thought, discussion and hopefully, action. The drama depicted the day of judgement with the separation of the sheep and the goats; the two male actors being judged by the female; was she St. Paul? Jean Brodie? or a cross between Cilla & Esther?

The two men judged were stereotype caricatures of two people from very different backgrounds. One was from a poor inner-city deprived area with associated social problems, including limited educational opportunities with little choice or prospect of employment. The play depicted the pressures this can induce including feelings of being powerless, stigmatized and lack of self-worth.

The other person depicted was from an "Upper-middle class" Christian family where the expectation and financial ability were able to see him through public school and University. This led to a good job and receiving respect, being seen as a leader and of course a Christian.

The play centred around dialogue between the two men, prompted by the ever changing judge, to give account for their lives. The scenario showed basic inequalities, and more pertinently, how the powerful react to these. The play concluded to explain about the Church-Urban-Fund and how it can finance projects to ease inequality and provide more opportunity for those in deprived urban-areas.

We have lived through the charity decade which I applaud, but fundamentally little appears to change. I felt again if we put our hands in our pockets we can appease our conscience. Jabbok to their credit didn't make a simplistic party political broadcast, perhaps implicitly they wanted a more political response but will leave it to the individual to formulate their own conclusions.

After the play we as a congregation discussed the presentation, our responses ranged from guilt to those who felt their work brought them daily into conflict with these issues. The presentation was very professional, powerful and it left me thinking around the content rather than the performance. It provoked many responses but not one of indifference. I hope that we as individuals, and corporately as a parish, will be sensitive to how God would have **us** respond.

**Steve Green**