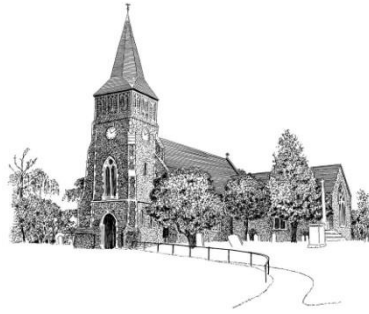


THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. NICHOLAS
WICKHAM



**REPORTS
FROM
ORGANISATIONS**

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

18TH OCTOBER 2020

BELL TOWER REPORT

Throughout the year we have been supported by many ringers from other local Towers which we appreciate enormously and without which the following highlights would not have been possible.

- In March we took part in "An Afternoon Out" where we were able to show visitors the ringing chamber and explain the history of ringing. Guests seemed to particularly enjoy their hands-on chiming experience!
- We had visiting bands from Kent in April, Fordingbridge in June and again from Kent in October.
- The Portsmouth District Quarterly meeting was hosted in April and the Calendar meeting later in November.
- We rang for Weddings in May and in August with kind support from ringers from Shedfield and other local Towers.
- In June the Wickham Ringers, with donations and help from other ringers and friends, once more supported the Fete with the 'Barrow of Bottles'.
- Later in June we rang to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day as military vehicles and Royal British Legion Riders passed by travelling the route taken by Eisenhower from Southwick to Greenham Common.
- August saw the return of the Wickham Festival and we again had a number of visitors from festival-goers.
- A Quarter Peal of St Simon's Bob Doubles was rung in late September as part of the annual Portsmouth District Quarter Peal Fortnight and a special 6-bell practice was held in November.
- The Bells were rung on the first Saturday in November at the service at the Field of Remembrance on the Village Green and then half-muffled on Remembrance Sunday. *Greg Painter*

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

During the past year the most visually noticeable event has been the overhaul of the church roof, which proved to be more complicated than originally envisaged, and the church room was also found to be in need of a new roof. The work was expertly carried out and greatly enhances the external appearance of the church. The overall cost was close to £70,000, but this was reduced by a successful claim for a refund of VAT and grants from the National Churches Trust, the Hampshire & the Islands Historic Churches Trust, and a most generous donation from the Friends of St Nicholas, for whose support we are very grateful. There is always the ongoing need for further work to be done and we are now planning to carry out in the next few months the replacement of damp-affected plaster in the chancel and redecoration of that area and a few smaller areas in the church. The ground gutter around the church also needs repair and repointing. The successful churchyard working parties have continued and they are now being supplemented by a gardening group to carry out regular maintenance. This group is led by Mike Hall, who is well respected in the horticultural sphere. The excellent work of both groups is already apparent. The footpath to the rear of the Rectory leading to the Memorial Garden has been widened and fresh shingle put down. Other footpaths are being cleared of overgrowing grass and restored to their original condition. We are grateful to Graham Pike for his upkeep of the grass throughout the year, and to Ron Burt for faithfully opening and locking the church each day and tending the lawn in the

Memorial Garden. Thanks to those who took down two dead trees at the end of March. A survey of the trees in the churchyard is due to be carried out in early April and we will wish to implement its recommendations.

A monthly detailed inventory check of moveable items within the church has been initiated by Richard and is proving to be both helpful and effective.

To comply with health and safety requirements, a Fire Inspection Report was obtained in early 2018, and its recommendations were gradually carried out, the last being the installation of emergency lighting in the beginning of 2019.

The sound system has been checked and reset and an upgrade has now taken place to enable modern devices, including those using Bluetooth, to play through it. This will enable those who want their own music at weddings or funerals to be able to use the system more easily.

At the APCM in April 2018 Robert Goulson retired as churchwarden after a number of years of faithful service. He was replaced by Fred Crosskey who works alongside Richard Cannadine, who remains in post.

Richard Cannadine / Fred Crosskey

CHURCHYARD GARDENING GROUP & GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

A dozen volunteers agreed to help with routine Churchyard maintenance in the early part of 2019, initially for a one-year trial period. This arrangement worked well and, with thanks to Di Frost, we were able to access an £800 grant from Winchester Council. This funded a small shed and a few hand-tools, with others being donated by the volunteers. The shed was officially 'opened' by Cllr Patricia Stallard on a very wet 11th October.

Feedback from a range of sources suggested that the Churchyard appearance had been improved and that the arrangements worked to everyone's satisfaction. As a result, we started 2020 with another annual rota and with fifteen volunteers. Two of the volunteers, Alison Forbes and Jane Hall, assumed responsibility for the Garden of Remembrance in 2019.

The extraordinarily wet winter period and damaging gales caused a fair bit of damage and the Church authorities engaged contractors to clear fallen trees and to fell others that were dead. Nevertheless, the volunteers rallied to assist with the clearance of brushwood and this work was greatly appreciated.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to everyone who is either directly or indirectly involved. In recording that sentiment, I believe it important to record two of the many benefits of our work. Firstly, I believe we have demonstrated the value of community work in action and secondly, that the work helps with the mental and physical health of us all.

Since writing this report intended, of course, for the planned March APCM, Mike Hall, the Garden group co-ordinator has stood down from this role. We owe him a great debt of gratitude for devising and setting up the group, as well as his hard work and horticultural expertise inspiring and guiding us to achieve, what I hope you will agree is a noticeable improvement! I am now co-ordinating the group. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to join us. It really is enjoyable - mentally and physically. We work in pairs for approximately 2 - 3 hours every 7 weeks or so, it is not therefore a huge commitment and the more pairs working obviously the less frequent each pair's turn. My contact details - Tel 01329 835754 or email: rosecrane@gmail.com Rosemary Crane

CHOIR REPORT 2019-2020

The choir has enjoyed a busy year, which came to an abrupt halt in March 2020, just as we had begun to rehearse music for Good Friday.

In 2019 we sang on Good Friday at Shedfield, with David Burgess on the organ and Julia conducting, she was almost completely recovered from her accident. The next joint choir's occasion was the Ascension Day service in Wickham, and in June at Shedfield's Patronal Festival, Julia was well enough to play the organ.

The following Sunday was another joint choir occasion when Revd. Ruth had her first service in Wickham, and we sang a lovely new anthem, "Dedication" by Margaret Rizza. In August, by special request, we held another Hymns & Pimms afternoon; a good crowd gathered to enjoy the lovely weather, the refreshments and the singing.

Our Harvest Supper programme was rather less elaborate than previous years, as we were rehearsing for our 2020 concert in our 'spare' time. However, the whole choir began the entertainment with 2 sea shanties, and a group of choir ladies sang 'I know him so well'. There were several individual items, and the grand finale was provided by the Rectory band.

In addition, throughout the year the choir continued to sing hymns and anthems at all the services, plus weddings and funerals both at Wickham and Shedfield. After Remembrance weekend we stopped rehearsing for the 2020 concert and began work on the Christmas music programme.

December 1st was Advent Sunday and in the afternoon we put on our Victorian clothes and sang carols in the Square for the switching on of the Christmas lights. The following Sunday was a special Patronal Festival service attended by the Bishop, to launch our 2020 celebrations. The joint choirs sat in the chancel, facing the congregation, and sang Stanford's setting of Psalm 150, and the anthem 'Be Thou my vision' by Chilcott. Later in the month we sang at the service of carols in the Square, at our own Carol service with 5 choir items and Jackie provided a splendid choir supper afterwards in the church room, and Midnight Mass and Christmas Day saw the end of our choir duties for December. In January we resumed rehearsals for our '900 years of music' concert, and we were proud to be asked to sing Mozart's Ave Verum at the funeral of Barrie Marson. February's Evensong included a new setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Archer. After 6 months of problems with the two pianos, the church invested in a splendid electronic keyboard as an alternative to both the piano and the organ. The Lockdown has meant that it has hardly been used as yet.

Grateful thanks are due to organists Angela Robinson, who retired in December, to John Mansfield, and to Heather Oswald, who has taken over the planning of the organists' rota. VS

DEANERY SYNOD

Purpose: To discover what God is calling us to do to be more effective in Mission across the Bishops Waltham Deanery

The item of note during 2019 was the changing of the guard. The licensing of Revd Canon David Isaac as the Area Dean for Bishops Waltham took place at the synod on the 24th September. This will be for 3 years, effective from 1st September 2019. Thanks, together with presentations were made to the outgoing Area Dean Revd Gregg Mensingh, by both the Archdeacon and the Lay Chair Norman Chapman. The new Area Dean thanked everyone for the welcome and we were encouraged to contact him with thoughts and expectations for Deanery Synod. Archdeacon Gavin gave an address on Live, Pray, Serve in which he called us to pray, to look to God for guidance and to serve, particularly those in need.

In November Canon Nick Ralph, Director of Social Enterprise and Engagement, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Mosaic Segmentation Data. We could see how this might be a useful tool to understand the demographics of the deanery by parish. It was a little out of our comfort zone for many synod members but the analytical, statistical-minded and IT geeks lapped it up.

Stephen Dominy, Area Representative, returned to talk about Christian Aid – the focus then being to support those who, having had virtually nothing, were beginning to find ways of helping themselves. Accompanying him was Anna Sketchley from Titchfield who was keen to promote the Bishops Waltham Deanery Sponsored Walk, an annual event which takes place every May and is supported by a number of Wickham walkers. She was looking for a Christian Aid Walk Champion from each parish to liaise with and to encourage schools and families to take part. If anyone would like to take this on, please get in touch.

At all meetings reports were presented from the Treasurer, Diocesan Synod representatives, Mission and Pastoral Committee, Hackney and Ghana links. The synod's relationship with Hackney Link was felt to be at a crossroads, so many other local organisations needing support, and its future was being discussed. The Ghana Link was on hold following difficulties with communication but Liz Quinn, deanery representative, had recently returned from a visit to Ghana and was looking for a way forward to rebuild the relationship. *Sabrina Gwynn*

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The total on the electoral roll for October 2020 is 114. There have been six deaths and three additions since the last report. *Margaret Edgworth*

FRIENDS OF ST NICHOLAS

Because of the way the Friends were set up the fund-raising activities have been unaffected by the current Covid-19 pandemic. However, we were unable to hold our AGM, this has been delayed until such time as meetings can be safely and legally held. In the meantime, the Executive of the organisation is carrying on.

We were delighted to be able to contribute £6000.00 to the PCC for remedial work. This was described with photographs in the last issue of the Parish Magazine.

John Landaw

LUNCH CLUB

2019 saw our diners enjoying a variety of cooked meals from our lunch club cooks throughout the year, ending with a Christmas Party lunch and a sing song. Our numbers have fluctuated between 6 and 12 gradually growing towards the end of 2019, we have had several new cooks join us who enjoy a chat with the diners whilst producing excellent food. We have 8 teams of three who take it in turns to cook roughly 6 or 7 times a year. We always have room for extra cooks and diners so please come and join us.

Di Frost

PARISH MAGAZINE

Despite the onset of lockdown and all that entailed, the Magazine continued to be produced, albeit to start, as an online version. We are pleased that we can now, under current guidelines, produce a print version as well. This has meant extra work for the editor, as online and printed versions have different styles. The team have deliverers in place to continue this unpaid service to the community.

I am delighted to say, a co-editor has joined me, and he has started the daunting task of learning how to do the job. *John Landaw*



Our Mothers Union' branch is part of a worldwide organization of over four million members in eighty-three countries. There are three other branches in the Bishops Waltham Deanery.

The purpose of Mothers' Union is to be particularly concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life. At international level we have a disaster fund to help people caught up in natural events such as earthquakes and floods. Our overseas programme also involves projects such as bringing numeracy and literacy to women, particularly in Africa. In Portsmouth Diocese we have partnered with the Clewer Initiative, a project to enable Church networks to develop strategies to detect modern slavery in their communities and help provide victim support and care.

Some members attended the big event of 2019 – the Mothers' Union General Meeting, held in Portsmouth Guildhall. The Diocesan President, Revd Elizabeth Groves, introduced the new Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, who said it was a joy to be part of a family that transforms hearts, lives and families in step with God. Groups spoke from around the UK and a project which particularly caught our attention was the "Bags of Love" for parents of children starting school. We plan to introduce these bags in Wickham.

Our parish meetings are on the second Tuesday of every month, normally in members' homes but as numbers have increased we are grateful to have been invited to meet in Normandy Court. We start with a short act of worship which is followed either by a speaker or an activity planned by ourselves. Many thanks to our speakers who provided us with a variety of interesting topics during the year. Anyone is welcome to join us. We hold two modest fund-raising lunches each year and make donations to diocesan and overseas Mothers' Union projects.

Three new members were admitted to the branch in July – Sabrina Gwynn, Pearl Mack and Rosemary Simpson. The membership number at the end of the year was twelve.

In November Margaret Edgworth stepped down from leading the group. Sabrina Gwynn took over and, after thanking Margaret for her long and faithful service in two separate stints, acknowledged that the challenge going forward was to show the relevance of Mothers' Union to the younger generation.

We value the loyalty and friendship of our members and thank Revd. Jane for her support.
Sabrina Gwynn

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Our 1st December 2007 sixteen men of Wickham answered the call to an excellent inaugural Breakfast of kedgerree cooked by Peter Lucas in the church room. Morgan O'Connell thoughtfully brought an aperitif and after the meal gave us an insight into his work as a psychiatrist dealing with veterans of the Falklands War, so setting the habit of our meetings.

We found at our first anniversary breakfast at Lilly's that our good housekeeping had yielded a modest surplus in our funds. We decided to share the money between an agreed charity and the Friends of St Nicholas, a practice which we have continued ever since, the total having now reached nearly £2500.

Among our speakers this year we were fortunate to find Jeremy Prescott, a retired Army officer whose lecture 'Sacrifice and Remembrance' is the first of a number of talks he has prepared on a wide range of military history. We hope to invite him again next year. For the most part, we have been lucky again to be able to call on our trio of consummate speakers Harvey Griffiths, Dennis Boylan and Mike Hollis to hold our attention, but this year we were pleased also to welcome from the village Mike Hall and Geoff Philpott. We hope that they may be moved to join our ranks in the future. *Robert Goulson*

MESSY CHURCH REPORT

Our messy church is now in its eighth year and its continued success is down to the amazing team of messy helpers who provide a warm welcome (plus biscuits) a variety of crafts – singing and worship time and a hot meal which ends with delicious cakes for pudding – no wonder our families come back month after month! We currently have around fifteen families registered and a regular attendance of about sixteen children. We also planned a craft session on Good Friday with hot cross buns and an Easter egg hunt which could not go ahead.

Messy Church is for all people at all stages of their faith journey and of any age and its aim is to introduce Jesus, and grow in faith. It is primarily for people who don't already belong to another form of church.

This is a joint benefice project and I am indebted to Chris Denny from Shedfield who helps lead the sessions. We meet on the second Thursday of the month in term time so do please visit us as a visitor, a helper or a participant.

Sue Pittam and the Messy Church Team