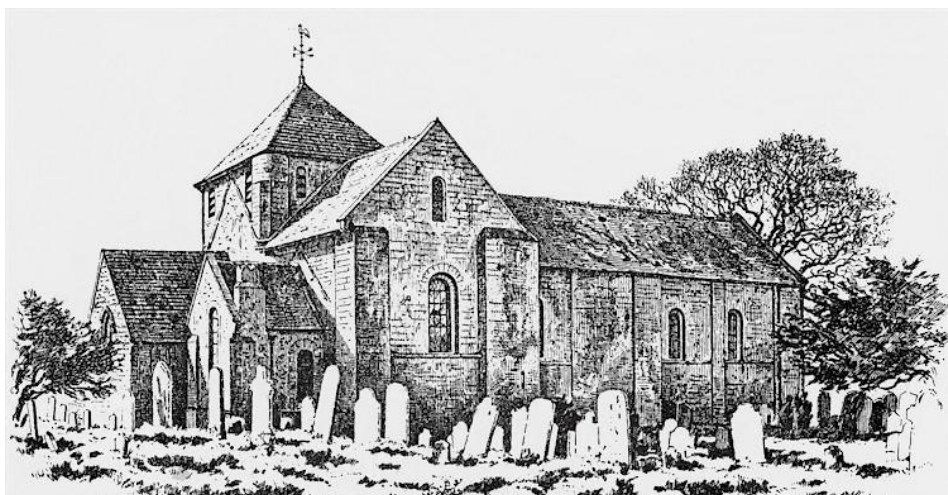


# Keeping in Touch

The Newsletter of St Mary's Church  
Portchester

No. 44 July/August 2018



## **From the Vicar ....**

In March this year I came to a crossroads in my ministry here at Portchester, and I hinted at this in a newsletter – to stay or to go? I had been here for five years and had seen a great deal of blessing and encouragement: the church had grown, many new people joined us, new ministries and outreach had been started, finances were provided, and I enjoyed being here, sensing the love and support of our people. But in every decision there was also a downside: numbers attending services had remained static for some time, in fact had slightly declined; families and younger people had not stayed with us; the land at Seafield Road had been refused planning permission, finances were tight not allowing any expansion, and the heating was proving to be a major headache. It would have been easy to walk away!

I went on retreat and prayed for guidance. The answer came in an unexpected way: within a few weeks of returning, the Bishop phoned me and asked if I would consider being Area Dean of Fareham (that is, in addition to being Vicar here!). This is a position you don't apply for, but are invited to take. I felt both honoured and anxious – the anxiety being that I was already busy with little time to spare. But like the soft-hearted 'earth mother' type of former generations, who was asked if they would take in another waif or orphan to their already large family – I agreed. I'm not the only Vicar of Portchester in recent times to have done this job, Rev Michael Cooper also did this.

The office is more widely known as Rural Dean, but in urban based dioceses like Portsmouth, 'rural' sounds strange in the middle of a city. There are seven Area Deans in our diocese. They act as a link between the Bishop or Archdeacon and the parishes. Fareham Deanery has 11 parishes stretching from Portchester in the east to Warsash in the west. Area Deans have a pastoral care for the clergy in times of

sickness or difficulty; are more involved with churches during vacancies (there are no pending vacancies in the deanery as far as I know); they sometimes take services in other churches; chair meetings of the synod and committees.

So, this means you have me at Portchester for the next five years! After that, I should be ready for gentler pastures. But in the next five years there are going to be some great challenges here: how do we grow the church and encourage more people to be committed? How do we raise more money? How do we get more people involved? How can we make St Mary's more of an outward-looking, serving church? How do we minister to the expanding village with its growing population?

So, what keeps me going? Firstly, being married to the most patient woman in the world! Secondly, by being part of a loving, friendly and supportive congregation; thirdly, it's a privilege to be part of Portchester which is an active, supportive and caring community. But the answer is not by human endeavour alone. Recently someone gave me three 'P's – Practical (do all you possibly can); Prayer (God's power alone will bring success) and Perseverance (keep going, stick in and don't give up when things get difficult).

But it's not just Vicars and Area Deans who are called to this sort of discipleship. All of us as members of the Body of Christ are called to do these three things, and to see God's Kingdom grow in our lives and in the areas we all can see changes in.

Have a lovely relaxing summer – and I'll also try and not work too hard!

Every blessing,

*Rev Ian*



**Heating.** Those of you who attended the open church meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June will know that our ongoing heating problem is proving to be one of the most challenging aspects of life at St Mary's at present. We are not being allowed by the DAC to proceed with any other building or fabric projects until the heating is resolved. It comes down to the temporary heating system at present in the church, which the church and community is in favour of being made permanent; as against the advice of the DAC who feel that the present system is not appropriate for a Grade 1 listed building. The meeting felt that a further meeting with the Archdeacon was needed for the congregation to express their feelings and to have an open discussion. However, on reflection, it was felt that an open meeting would not be helpful, and that the PCC would meet with the Archdeacon for a full discussion. We are hoping that this will take place in July.

**Bells.** You may have heard that there are plans to increase and install new bells. This project was discussed two years ago but put on the 'back burner' for the time being. In the meantime, we are having the tower surveyed to see if it would even take new bells. The survey is as far as we are able to go at present, and so any decision will be taken by the PCC but after the heating has been resolved.

### **The Later (11.30am) Morning Service.**

We held our first service on 10<sup>th</sup> June. Although it wasn't everyone's 'cup of tea' (but thank you for at least trying it!) most of those who attended seemed to enjoy it. There was a real 'buzz' after the service, and those of us who planned and led it were delighted with the support and response. We had a congregation of 73 (61 adults and 12 children). The congregation who attended were made up groups of equal numbers: those who attended the 10.00am but stayed behind to support the 11.30am; those who normally attend the 10.00am but

attended the 11.30am instead; and those new to St Mary's. Although we value the support of all, it is this last group we are particularly hoping to attract. Interestingly, all the 12 children belonged to this latter group. Many thanks to Pauline and the music group, and to all who helped. We are planning four more of these on the second Sunday of the months of July – October.

We have been very kindly given the exclusive use of the **overflow car park** – the paddock between the castle gate and the small car park, for these services, so parking should not be an issue.

If these services are well supported, and if we can get enough help, it would be our aim to have these weekly. But in order to do this, we will need a far larger supporting team so that not everyone has to be there every week. We are very much looking for more musicians, technical support (audio visual), children's helpers, stewards and welcomers, coffee serving, etc. If you can help, please speak to Rev Ian or any of the ministry team.

**Family Games and BBQ.** Remember that after our August service (12th August) at 12.30pm we are having a BBQ and family games. This is not just for those who attend the 11.30, but we hope that some who attended the 10am will come back for this.

### **Summer Gala**

Many thanks to those who helped with the church stalls, Tea Room and Burger/Hot dogs – we raised over £1,200 for general church funds. As well as being a great fund-raising event, it is also an opportunity to meet old and new friends of St Mary's. As ever we were grateful to Hazel for organising this, who as Chairman of the Community Association had enough to do that day! This event has great potential,

and we wonder if we could get some new blood into this event? Would someone out there be prepared to be the co-ordinator and get a new team together? Hazel is prepared to help, and share her experience, but does not want to run it anymore. Please speak to Hazel or Rev Ian. Next year's Gala is **15<sup>th</sup> June 2019**.

### **Christmas Fayre.**

Likewise – the Christmas Fayre. For several years Hazel has co-ordinated this, but would now like to step back. We need a new leader and team. Do you have some creative ideas, and would you be able to get a team of helpers around you? This year's Fayre is on Saturday **24<sup>th</sup> November**. Please speak to Hazel or Rev Ian if interested.

We should also mention that organising the summer Gala and Christmas Fayre is not part of the Churchwarden's role! Hazel did this as a member of the church; so anyone considering being Churchwarden need not think they will have to do this, and any member of St Mary's can take on co-ordinating these events.

**Card or cash?** We have now introduced a card reader so that those wishing to pay by card rather than cash can do so. This will be held mainly in the office so you can pay for your wedding, concert tickets, donations, etc. by this means. We are experimenting with its use in the Tea Room some days. Those who do not wish to use it will not be forced to do so, and we are planning a meeting to include training soon.

### **Evening Services.**

During the Spring/early summer we had two teaching series each preceded by different styles of worship. Rev Ian led a four week series on Prayer and this was followed by Derek Johnson's four week series

on 'Radical Discipleship.' Numbers attending have been good, so thank you for your support. We are very fortunate to have such well supported evening services when many churches no longer hold these. Of course numbers fluctuate, depending on the time of year and also the subject. 'Teaching' requires far more preparation than a sermon or homily for a morning service, and also, many of the services are created just for that evening – so there is a lot of hard work goes into these services. We want to deliver teaching that you are interested in, and also that which addresses current issues in the church. So please let us know what sort of things would interest you. We are also always keen to develop the teaching ministry of others in the church, so if you think you may have something to speak about – either a one off or a short series, please see Rev Ian. We plan to re-commence these mid-September.

**Healing Services.** We have held these on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening of each month. Although the numbers attending have not been large, this style of ministry has been greatly appreciated by those who have attended. We have had several people say that they have received a definite healing since being prayed for. Thank you to Derek and Vicki who have had a passion to develop this ministry at St Mary's.

### **House Groups**

Did you know that we have around 100 people in 10 house groups, which is around one third of the church? Some groups meet weekly, others fortnightly; some are held during the day, others meet in the evening. The purpose of small groups is to encourage mutual care and fellowship, also teaching and discipleship. During the summer the groups will be looking at 'Prayer'. The talks given recently by Rev Ian at the evening services have been recorded and a special study guide produced. There are four sessions, and if you are not in a house groups

but interested, please see on the notice board which one would suit you, and contact the leader whose photo will also be on the board.

### **SPECIAL SERVICES AND EVENTS IN JULY**

**The Friends of St Mary's** AGM will be held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 10.30am in the north transept. The membership stands at 52, but they would like to attract more. The 'Friends' are mainly people not members of the congregation whose main interest in St Mary's is more historical, and helping to preserve it as a feature of Portchester. They also raise money for items which can be used for community events. They are putting on a concert with the 'West End Singers' on 16<sup>th</sup> November. It is hoped there will be a Flower Festival in September 2019.

**Sea Sunday** will be on 8<sup>th</sup> July when the speaker at the 8.00am and 10.00am services will be the Rev Phil Hiscock, Mission to Seafarers and Officiating Chaplain to the Royal Navy. The 11.30am will not be a Sea Sunday service.

A summer **Barn Dance** will be held in the church on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 7.00pm. Tickets are £10 which includes a jacket potato. Please bring your own drinks. All proceeds are for the Building Fund. Tickets can be got from the office or after the services.

The July **Men's Breakfast** will be on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> at 8.00am. Our speaker this month is the Rev Simon Brocklehurst from St James Church, Southwick. There will be no meeting in August. If any men would like to be the speaker sometime in the next session, or know of someone, please let Rev Ian know.



## AUGUST

**Castle Event.** Over the weekend Sat 4<sup>th</sup>/Sun 5<sup>th</sup> the Romans are coming back to Portchester! There will be a weekend of historical re-enactments and events during the weekend. There will be special arrangements for those attending services at St Mary's, and we will open the overflow car park.

**BBQ and Family games** on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August at 12.30pm. This will be after the 11.30am service, but you don't have to attend that service to come to it. Please make it a special day for the church family. Details will be announced.

**Church High Tea** Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2.00pm – similar to last year, we will have a sit down tea of sandwiches and cakes. There is no charge for this, but we hope you will bring something to share. As last year, we will be inviting visitors to the church and castle to join us. This was very welcome last year – as well as pleasantly surprising our visitors. This is an outreach event so is only possible with the support of our congregation who help with the setting up, making refreshments, chatting with new friends and washing up! If you can help in any way please speak with Denise Simmons

**A Different Day** – Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>. After the success of our last one, we are putting on a whole day in the church for the elderly and housebound; those in nursing homes etc. There will be games, crafts, worship, film, conversation and company and a fish & chip lunch. Tickets are £3.50.

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **Steve Legg event**

On Friday 7<sup>th</sup> **September at 7.00pm** in the church, there will be a family 'Evening with Steve Legg'. Steve is a very inspirational speaker; a stand-up comedian and a conjurer (member of the Magic Circle' – magic as in conjuring not supernatural or occult!). He is also a gifted evangelist and will be sharing the gospel as part of the act. We are particularly aiming this at younger people and families, although anyone is welcome to attend. We will be limiting this to around 100 people, as there will also be a BBQ at the interval. If you feel that St Mary's is your church, but you don't get the chance to attend that often on a Sunday, this might be a good occasion to come. We are charging tickets at £5 but kids go free. Tickets are available at the parish office or after Sunday services.

**Alpha Course** starts on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September at 6.45pm in the Methodist Church Hall at the top of Castle Street. This is a 12 session course (including an Away Day at Shedfield). It consists of a meal, a DVD presentation and discussion. It is particularly helpful .....

- For those exploring Christian faith
- A great place to find out if Christianity is true
- Preparing for Confirmation
- Just curious

**Subjects include:**

- **Why does God allow suffering?**
- **Do all religions lead to God?**
- **Is there a conflict between science and faith?**

If interested, please pick up a flyer in the church, or speak to Vicki Powell Tel: 02392 200314; E-mail: vickipowell777@btinternet.com

**Port Solent Barbeque.** Colin and Diana Beaven who have recently joined our church are hosting a BBQ at Oyster Quay, Port Solent to get to know, and to get together our Port Solent members and friends. If you live in Port Solent and have a connection with St Mary's, or if you would like to invite someone, you are welcome to come. It will be on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September** at 12.30pm. Please bring some food for sharing. Confirm with Rev Ian or Diana and Colin Tel: 07577 390746.

**Exploring Baptism.** For those interested in having their children baptised/christened, the next course will start on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm at the Parish Hall. This will be a 4 week course, and if interested, please contact the Parish Office.

**The Harvest Supper** will be on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 6.30pm in the Parish Hall, and the following day will be an all age Harvest Thanksgiving service.

**Advance notice ....**

## **“BATTLE’S OVER”**

### **Commemorating the centenary of the end of the Great War.**

This autumn, St Mary's Church will be joining with the wider community of Portchester to host a series of events to commemorate the end of WWI. There will be a great variety of events, so you might want to put some of them in your diary now.

- **War Memorial.** The DAC has given us permission (subject to one or two confirmations) to build a War Memorial to inscribe the names of those who lost their lives while serving in the

forces during World War II. It will go below the present WWI memorial to create one larger war memorial. Richard Andrews has kindly given his services as a carpenter to make this. However, the largest expenses will be the brass and the engraving, and two leather-bound books with details of those lost in both world wars as well as civilian casualties. We are looking for around £15,000 for this project. A letter of appeal has gone out to all businesses and organisations in Portchester, as well as individuals who we feel might support this. It is hoped to unveil this later in the year and to have a well-known person (even a member of the Royal family) perform the ceremony. A list of subscribers will appear in the memorial books. If you would like to subscribe, please contact our parish office. Date will be announced soon, but the admission will be by ticket only. Priority will be given to subscribers, special VIP guests, families of those on war memorial, and the remainder distributed among the church and community.

- **Series of talks.** Our Vicar, Rev Ian Meredith will be giving a series of four talks in September/October (dates to be confirmed)
  - The Church and the War (repeated from 2014)
  - *Woodbine Willie* and WWI army chaplains
  - The German Church during the Third Reich
  - War & Peace: Ethical issues
- **Commemorative Booklet**
  - WWI War Memorial details / WWII names
  - War & Peace Poems (written by students from Portchester Community School)
  - Space fillers from autograph book belonging to Jacqui Wheatley from WWI casualties at Netley Hospital.

- **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm 'Poppies Red, Cornflower blue'**  
Concert with folk group 'Poacher's Moon.' An evocative and dramatic presentation.
- **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November. Film 'War Horses'**
- **November 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Exhibition of WWI local memorabilia**  
Created by Kate Tame. Photos, letters, newspaper reports, etc.
- **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November 'The Battle's Over'**  
Event in Castle  
5.30pm Open air service (youth emphasis), catering vans, beacon lit, trumpet sounds 'The Last Post' and bells ring – all as part of a nationwide project.
- **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> / Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**  
6.00pm 'Carols by Candlelight' with 'Woodbine Willie' WWI Army chaplain.

## **Open the Book**

Did you grow up knowing of God's love? Do you remember the stories of Joseph and David? Can you think of a parable or events in Jesus' earthly life? And do you know that many of the children today may never hear of them?

St Mary's Schools' Mission Team visits four Portchester schools three times a term, each, to bring the Bible to these children. Many members have served for years, and age, illness and life changes have meant that new ones are necessary, if the work is to continue.

We meet at the beginning of the month to discuss and rehearse the story. You could be invited to come just to observe, or to read a small part, but, over time, you may like to narrate, or to introduce the story,

to sum up, or lead a prayer. We like to send out teams of four, but these do not have to consist of the same people each time.

At present, assemblies fall on Monday mornings and Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. If you could spare an hour or two, a few times a month, to bring the Bible to today's children, please see me. (Diana Bolton).

**Mental Health Group.** In conjunction with 'The Richmond Fellowship' a national mental health charity, we are helping to launch a group for people suffering from mental health issues. This will be held on Mondays during the day at Portchester Library. It will be a peer support group and will include creative writing, painting, photography – but all based around the needs of those who attend. Mental health problems are increasing, yet the support is not always there, or immediate. We hope in some way to do something for those in our community who suffer in this way. If interested, please contact (in confidence) Rev Ian or Wendy at the Parish Office.

**Church finances.** St Mary's Church just barely manages to keep its 'head above the water' financially. Rev Ian has always been keen that we should not be in deficit, as we used to run at £10,000 deficit in previous years. But our lack of finances means that we are not able to extend our ministry. As in May we are running at a £5,000 deficit. This is partly due to the fact that our regular standing orders have now decreased by £400 per month due to people's personal circumstances changing. Several of our members have recently moved away from Portchester; others only put something in the collection when they come – and they don't come as often now. We don't like going on about money all the time (it annoys those who are already giving as much as they can!), but we are appealing to the great number of those who attend, but don't contribute regularly. It would be really good if you could take out a regular standing order. If all of our earning members

could give at least £20 per month (£5 per week), we would be able to pay our way and do so much more. Please consider doing this. Standing order forms are available from the office or from the Treasurer.

**Rev Ian will be on holiday** from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July (back on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>) and from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August (back on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>). During that time if you require a member of the clergy please contact:

Rev Anne Boggust on 01489 573586 or Rev Trevor Hubble on 07759 310524. For other enquiries (Baptism, Weddings Funerals etc), please contact Wendy at the Parish Office.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

#### **October**

- Friday 12<sup>th</sup> Concert with Portsmouth Cathedral Boy Choristers
- Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Concert with 'Poacher's Moon' Folk Group
- Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Alpha Away Day at Shedfield

#### **November**

- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm All Souls Service for the bereaved.
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Film 'War Horses'
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> Portchester Remembers (10.15am at Precinct)
- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Armistice Day services at 10.00am and 5.30pm
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Friends of St Mary's concert 'West end singers'
- Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Fayre
- Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> A Different Day
- Friday 30<sup>th</sup> American style 'Thanksgiving Meal' in church

## **December**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> Christingle

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Carols & Christmas Music in the Keep (4pm)

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> 6pm Carol Service (1)

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> 6pm Carol Service (2)

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Children's Nativity service (4pm) & Midnight Mass 11pm

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas services 8.00am and 9.30am.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Lunch in the Parish Hall

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Quiet Christmas.

### **St Mary's Parish Church**

**Portchester Castle**

**Sunday services: 8.00am; 10.00am and 6.00pm**

**'Later Morning Service' 11.30am – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday**

**(Baptisms 12.30pm)**

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