

The Parish Priest's Annual Report

This has been an extremely busy year, and a good one. The Church's Worship, which is always my first priority as parish priest, has been good, and people have expressed real delight at the variety and also the dignity of services here. Easter was truly magnificent, with the joy of Palm Sunday moving into the intensity of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and then the exuberance of the First Eucharist of Easter on Holy Saturday, and Easter Day itself. Christmas, too, has been such a time of showing and sharing the joy of the Christian message, and we have welcomed through the doors of this church literally thousands who have come for a multitude of Carol Services and concerts (including the Town Carol Service, described as 'the best ever'), 'A Light for Christmas' and the Christmas Tree Festival, the Christingle, Midnight Mass ... not to forget Mothering Sunday and Harvest, when children have been again most fully involved.

Our church does wonderful work with children throughout the year, and we are deservedly proud of the achievements of Sunday School, YOOF! and the Family Service, which has been a real innovation and is, again, so ably led by a lay-led team of enthusiastic and gifted leaders. Lockton Church have also benefited greatly from the team's willingness to use their talents to benefit other churches in this benefice.

Another wonderful innovation this year at church is YAK!, a social group led by Steve for younger adult members of the church. So many churches elsewhere lament that fact that they have no younger members: I'm pleased that our church is actively doing something about mission, and this work is really paying off.

It's been good to welcome new members to the Servers' Team, and to the Choir, and it's important to realise that this church thrives because of you, the people, who support me and the churchwardens and PCC, and do so by giving so freely and so professionally of your own gifts and talents, whether it's Sidespeople welcoming people to church at a service, or members of the Sanctuary Guild making the silver sparkle, or all the hundred and one jobs that are done and which I don't have space here to mention, but without which a church of this size simply could not run.

Special thanks must go to Lynn, who was appointed Associate Priest this past year, and to other clergy colleagues who likewise ensure all services at this busy church run smoothly, even though with interregna throughout this new deanery of Northern Ryedale they are in such demand elsewhere. Thank you. To Readers, too, and to Steve, our Pastoral Lay Assistant who quietly and devotedly supports many people in Pickering and beyond; to Clive, our organist, for music sets the tone for a service and we are lucky to have an organist so sympathetic to liturgy; to Anne Frank, who has taken on the role of Verger at funerals (though thank you to the many who have helped out in this important role in the past and who continue to do so).

The churchwardens are trusted officers for parish priest and people alike, and I thank David and Dennis for their work on all of our behalves. David has been so very heavily involved in planning the restoration of the pipe organ at Pickering for so many years, and that project came to its conclusion in 2009.

I believe that the church should be used widely by the community, and the exhibition of the art of Marc Chagall, and the series of concerts that have taken place here are beginning to make us better known to a wider audience. Promoting our church is a bigger task than may be realised, but I'm pleased that this work is really paying off, and I'm particularly pleased that we will be used more for music in 2010. Watch this space...

The wider community support this church so well, and there is a lot of goodwill, the Vicar's Gift Day in 2009 an especially good fundraising event. Money, though, continues to be a worry. The coffee mornings held on Monday market days were intended primarily as a source of social meeting and mission, which they most certainly are, but the money raised has been a real bonus too, and has already helped provide pew runners for the comfort of all.

The website www.pickeringchurch.com is attracting interest in our church from literally all over the world. I am determined that we will reach out to people in every way open to us, and in the five weeks leading up to Christmas we were featured in the local newspapers every week. A new Crib Set was donated to the church and Baby Jesus visiting a different shop for a day and a night during the season of Advent really caught the town's attention.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals took place, of course, and in 2010 we can look forward to a record number of weddings held here for quite some time. Couples are already contacting me about 2011.

The sudden death of Canon Tom Evans on the very last day of the year saddened us all. He was a wonderful priest who touched hearts and lives wherever he went, and he was a very dear and trusted friend to me from the start of my ministry here. He is greatly missed.

Also on a very personal note, early in 2009 I was diagnosed with a rather obscure form of cancer. I've made no secret of this, though have little more to tell than when I first spoke about it from the pulpit. Anyway, I've had bone marrow samples and gone through various x-rays, scans, trials and tests, and now I just go along to York every three months so that my consultant can prod me a bit more, and ask how I feel. She's a bit concerned about my spleen (which is now about twice its normal size), and talks of having it removed sometime, but I've told her that as I'm not on any medication, and wish to keep off it for as long as possible, she can put her knives away for the moment. Thank you all for your concern and, most especially, for your continued prayers.

Finally, thank you to all who support me in my ministry here. Your work is invaluable in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Pickering, and to visitors from around the world. Without you this church would not be the place it is; as it is it is a church of vitality where we worship God with dignity and with fun and joy, and so see the fruits of the Holy Spirit form and blossom.

Fr Antony Pritchett

The Church of St Francis, Marishes

Services have continued as in previous years with Holy Communion on the third Sunday of the month with an average attendance of eight to ten people but larger congregations for the Easter Communion and Christmas Eve Communion.

We again had a full church for the Harvest Festival and Carol services. The harvest supper at School House was enjoyed by all and we had punch and mince pies in the church following the Carol service.

No further work has been done to the fabric of the church but we await the report of the quinquennial inspection to decide the next work to be done. We are very grateful to Mr Brian Cowton who cuts the grass all round the church grounds which always look very tidy.

Brenda Beal

PCC Secretary's Report

The pattern of meetings of the full Parochial Church Council, and the associated committees and groups which serve it, continued during the last year in much the same way as in many previous years.

Items which always appear on the agenda of every PCC meeting are Finance and Fabric. Without sound finances and a well maintained building the parish church of Pickering would not be able to meet the needs of the parishioners and the regular worshippers. The PCC is well served by the finance and fabric committees, each headed by one of the two churchwardens and at every PCC meeting detailed reports are given about measures which maintain and improve the church's fabric and about the church's financial position. All this work, and it is

complex and time-consuming, is summarised in the report given by the churchwardens on Fabric, Goods and Ornament and the presentation by the Treasurer of the Church's Accounts, both given prominent space in the Annual Meeting.

The restoration of the organ, which had figured regularly at meetings since 2008, dropped off the agenda after September. The PCC was steered through this major project by David Billett whose experience and expertise were invaluable. What will be the next project? The project group has produced a wish list for the PCC's consideration but all that will be for next year's report.

Each of the six full meetings dealt with every aspect of church life and all were considered carefully by the members. The creation of a church website, the Advent perambulations of Baby Jesus, the tackling of new projects and initiatives, and the need to finance soundly the day-to-day costs, are all brought to the PCC. The Council is always informed about the events and developments in the deanery and in July it gave its consent to the union of Helmsley and Pickering Deaneries to form the Deanery of Northern Ryedale

One of the joys of being the Secretary is the recording of the approval, the acceptance and the enthusiasm of the PCC in its support of the growing mission of the Church and since the last Church Meeting this has gone on undiminished.

David Callow (Secretary)

Servers Report

Sean Holliday has left us after a long and dedicated service to serving at St. Peter & St. Paul. He has been a very important member of the team and I have valued his contribution during the 13 years I have known him since I became MC in 1997 and I sincerely thank him.

We have 3 new members in Pauline Percy, Victoria Bryant and, just recently, Mikey Abbott, following his confirmation. My thanks go to all the team for their dedication to duties.

I would like 2 or 3 more servers, so please think about it. Age is no barrier. Just give me a ring - 01751 472571. Serving at the Altar is a very important part of our worship.

Brian Lane MC

Organists Report

For much of the year the organ was out of action and being over hauled. Delays in having the work completed and then further teething problems caused heart-ache and concern as to the quality of work carried out. The choir have been tolerant of the inconvenience caused by their moving into the memorial chapel area for much of 2009. They have served the church well throughout this time and of course are now glad to be back in their true 'home' in the choir stalls. Many thanks to Dr David Billett who has worked tirelessly on the Organ restoration project and has worked on minor faults and liaised admirably with the organ builders in times of trouble!

There has not been a choir Sunday this year. We do plan to have one though in the very near future. So, watch this space.

It is sad to report, but I feel fitting to pay our respects through this report, on the death of Tom Evans. Tom was a great supporter of choral music and contributed much to the life of the choir and into the musical life of our Parish Church. Tom professionally enhanced music in our worship and gave such great support in additional services such as weddings and funerals as well as numerous social events. The choir and I would like to pay our

respects in this report and thank Tom for all his support, good humour, knowledge and camaraderie. He is sadly missed and a big loss to our choir.

Thank you as ever to Felicity Crouch for her sterling work as ever in helping me and the members of the choir and to Steve Bulmer who is an invaluable asset to the Church in so many ways and has helped me so professionally.

Also big thanks to the funeral organists who play for other services when Steve and I are unavailable.

Thank you also to Tom Wrench who is gaining experience through playing at services too. (Little does he know what he is letting himself in for!)

Many thanks to all those members of our church who have donated money to the organ project or helped in any way to raise money for use within the church for the organ appeal.

Clive Wass

Sanctuary Guild

Whilst the restoration of the organ was being carried out the ladies of the Sanctuary Guild had to acquaint themselves with different locations for storing the 'cleaning basket' as well as the brass cross and candlesticks. In some respects it was easier to have everything in the same area. In spite of these changes the ladies continued to work hard to ensure that the linen, brass and silver were kept in pristine condition.

Earlier this year Mrs Marjorie Marshall retired, having served as secretary and as team leader for many years. Mrs Anne Branson has moved from Pickering, however, her talent for flower arranging was appreciated.

During the year we have welcomed Mrs Francis Newman and Mrs Jo Paige to work with the ladies of the Sanctuary Guild. Once again a plea goes out for more people, male or female, to help clean to help polish the silver and the brass in order to help maintain the beauty of the Sanctuary and the Memorial Chapel. The duty occurs about four times a year. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who feels they could help in this way.

We are most grateful to all the ladies for their hard work.

Valerie Batchelor

Bell Ringers

2009 has passed which was again fairly quiet. We only had 3 weddings and we welcomed 6 visiting bands this year as well as a lot of summer and weekend visitors to our practice on a Wednesday night or on a Sunday morning. There was also one peal rung during the year which Simon organised for his 18th birthday.

In September we welcomed The Men's Society who came and had a look at the bells as well as having a go! We did this again in October with the Thornton Dale Cubs. Both groups enjoyed their evenings.

Also at the end of September Gerry organised a handbell concert by the Beverley Town Handbell ringers in aid of church funds. It was a great success and everyone who came had a great evening. Thanks to Gerry for organising it. We raised £500 towards church funds.

December brought the usual ringing for carol services and Christmas. Unfortunately due to people being away we weren't able to ring in the New Year.

My thanks go to everyone for ringing during December; it is a busy month with a lot of ringing and not always at the most convenient of times.

During February 2010 the bells fell silent as we purchased and put on new bell ropes. These were purchased out of our tower funds. They are now slowly being broken in.

We look forward to 2010.

Pamela Robb - Tower Captain

Pastoral group

The Pastoral Visiting team has maintained its pattern of regular visiting to parish members in particular need. This provides an opportunity for each person/family visited to develop a close link with 'their visitor' representing a connection to our church community. As before, arrangements to attend the Sunday Lunch Club can be made where appropriate, or a housebound person's name added to the list for Home Communion.

Members of the team meet at regular intervals during the year to share support and to review visiting. (All information about individuals is treated as confidential within the group.) During the year there have been special church services at which Pastoral Group members have been available, wearing labels to indicate their role, to give any support needed e.g. at the All Souls and at the Light for Christmas services.

As in previous years, Geoff Barry has made and sent cards in the name of the church to people who are ill, in difficulty or have been bereaved.

Our thanks go to John Grove who, although he has now resigned from the group, has provided us with a series of valuable training opportunities over several years. He has offered to be available in a training advisory capacity when requested.

Thank you to all members of the group for the care you give in the name of the Church.

Rosemary Schofield, Convenor

Children & Young People

During 2009 both Sunday School and Yoof continued and are seen as a large part of church life.

Sunday School

Sunday School meets regularly in Term Time with a planned programme of activities relating to the Church Year.

Banners continue to be a major focus of work and usually at least one is completed for each season and during the year several displays around the church have been renewed with enthusiasm by our members.

This year the Sunday School created its own Nativity Scene much praised by Church members and visitors alike.

Annual prize giving has taken place and the Children's Day was a huge success.

However David and I are mindful that those who attend our group regularly consist of several families and we are concerned about the lack of growth in the group of our young people. Having had numerous discussions on how we can attract more into the Sunday School it may be that we should seek fresh thoughts, input and ideas about its work. We both hope that the Sunday School may continue to thrive as it has done in the past whatever format it takes on in the future.

I would like to thank all those involved and to the church congregation who continue to support our young people, especially Jo and Fiona

Janet Warin

Church Youth Group - YOOF

Leaders of the group - 2009/2010 has seen changes in the leaders of the group. Lynn Grove now plays a more supporting role to the group. Jane Sampson has stood down from the group. The current leaders who are all CRB checked and approved by the PCC are Gail Radka, Cecily Rands and Claire Carter.

Supporters - We are very lucky that over the last year we have had support and input from Lynn Grove, Steve Bulmer and Clive Wass. This has allowed varying our activities for example using drama and music with the group. We are grateful for this support.

Meetings - We have met each Sunday evening at 7.00 - 8.30 in the Parish Hall. We meet in term time and take breaks for the school holidays. Through the year our membership has changed as we have seen 5 older members leave to go to university or concentrate on their studies. We have attracted 7 new young people and now have 18 young people that are registered with us to attend. On a normal week we tend to get between 12 and 15 young people. We are also aware that there are 3-4 new people that are 10 years of age this year that may join us. In July we had a day out at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. An excellent setting for a treasure hunt with clues set around the 5 miles of parkland. We all took picnics and had a really fun day out.

Our format for the sessions is 20 - 30 minutes of Christian input - we like this session to be interactive and challenging for the leaders and the young people. 30 minutes of art and crafts, drama or cooking - usually messy and fun. Then finishing off with games - lively, definitely interactive and very enjoyable.

An example from one of our sessions was to issue a newsflash to deal with:

Urgent newsflash Unfortunately all key members of the church have been confined to their homes with an illness that means they are going to be out of action for approximately 12 weeks. You have been asked to run the church and keep things going as best you can for this period. You will treat the next 20 minutes as time for an emergency meeting. You must elect one person to chair the meeting, a timekeeper and someone to note decisions and action points.

Please ensure that everyone gets chance to contribute and that you listen to everyone's ideas. Only one person to talk at once.

Below are listed some of the questions that Father Anthony and the PCC have asked that you answer:

- *What roles do you think each of you could take on; everyone should sign up to something e.g vicar, curate, church warden, in charge of refreshments, Sunday school, YOOF etc.....*
- *What would you do within the 12 weeks to try to increase the congregation size....all ages?*
- *What changes would you like to see in the Church or to the services?*
- *What would you call your Church?*
- *If you could have your own group name like the PCC are the PCC what would you call your group?*
- *Can you think of a symbol for your group?*
- *Is there anything else you think you need to discuss?*
- *How do you feel about taking over the Church? Ask everyone in the group?*

The young people had good fun taking over the Church for an evening and came up with some good ideas. It also gave them an insight into all the things that make up the Church week and how we rely on people to keep things running smoothly.

As a second example we looked at the Lord's Prayer and what the words mean. We had a go at putting movement into the Lord's Prayer. Two young people acted out a skit on the Lord's Prayer. They also had a lot of fun listening to alternative 'lord's prayers' found on the internet and writing our own Lord's Prayers. We have added some of these on to the website.

Between September and December Steve has helped to hold drama sessions asking the young people "Where is Jesus" and getting them to do sketches to answer the question.

Then January to March Clive and Steve have attended to help the young people write and compose their own song. They have brought along different instruments and worked together on this and putting together a service for the 28th of March.

During the year we have also, made totem poles, made pancakes, played rounders, modelled 3D Christmas scenes, played out park bench drama, used dressing up costumes, painted stones, solved puzzles, held a Christmas party and many more things that are too numerous to mention.

Since the new Church website has been available in November 2009 we have been completing a blog giving details of our weekly sessions and showing some pictures of what we have been up to.

We are always looking for new activities or visitors so feel free if you have an idea to let us know. Our challenge is to keep the sessions fun, exciting and interactive.

Gail Radka

Mission & Renewal Group

Three meetings have been held since last year; a fourth one was cancelled.

Completed improvements in church include clearer marking of the step at the entrance, seat runners for the pews and the organ restoration, although minor adjustments still have to be made. Ongoing work covers reordering of the Lady Chapel, lighting of the outside steps and porch and ramped access sign to show the disabled logo.

Services continue to be many and varied particularly those held in the Christmas Season. The outstanding one was the 'Light for Christmas' attended by many visitors. The various carol services were enjoyed as were the Chanticleer Singers at the start of the Christmas Tree Festival.

On All Saints and All Souls the services were particularly helpful.

The short Family Service held on the second Sunday of each month is increasingly successful and the leaders are to be congratulated. The Children's Day was outstanding.

Early in the year outreach to young adults was suggested. This has blossomed [see the entry under Young Adults Club (YAK)].

The Sunday Lunch group struggles to continue. It is appreciated by those who attend, most of whom would otherwise eat on their own. Unfortunately there is a lack of support by helpers. Three parish groups and four individuals came to the rescue. We still need assistance in April, May, and November.

Fund raising for the organ restoration included a successful concert by Beverley Town Handbell Orchestra and the sale of greeting cards for Easter and general use.

Margaret Casson

Social Group

The New Year party was well attended and the film show on Ryedale by John Blampey from Sheriff Hutton was well received. The hall was very cold due to inadequate heating, this problem has now been rectified. The entertainment for the Pancake Party on February 24th 2009 was provided by, yet again Adam Collier in the first

half with his typical Yorkshire dialect, and followed after supper with a rather unusual "smell" quiz which created more than a lively discussion.

The Mothers Day Lunch on 22nd March 2009 was very well supported with 73 people attending, the menu seemed to please and will be repeated next year.

The Benefice Advent Lunch at the Forest and Vale on Sunday 29th November 2009 was yet again a very enjoyable occasion with 65 people attending from the churches of Pickering, Lockton, Levisham and Marishes.

The Social committee has purchased a new microwave oven and 100 new wine glasses for the Parish Hall for all to use.

Brian Stockley

Communications Group

The term 'Communications' covers a wide field of activity and many things can be marshalled under this umbrella. However this report covers some of them only, as other church activities such as preaching, visiting, Lent courses, Sunday Lunches and Christmas Day lunch, Pew leaflets etc. all have a communications content as indeed our Christmas Tree lights do. We floodlight the spire at Christmas from early December through to twelfth night approximately to indicate to the townspeople the presence of the church. This is done by 3 x 500w floodlights which were renewed this year as the previous ones had succumbed to the weather. The new ones have been severely tested with the weather this year and thankfully have survived to provide a memorable display. Church leaflets printed in English have been reprinted and, apart from being available on the table by the door in the church, they are distributed to many places such as guest houses, hotels, caravan sites, Shearings hotels in Whitby and Scarborough and the Tourist Information Office etc. We use the Bookstall in church as a method of communicating many aspects of our faith and this is supplemented in Advent and Lent by a table of free secondhand books for visitors and parishioners alike to take away and read. In the N. Transept near to the candlestand is a table with bibles for people to use in church, to sit for a quiet time and read/contemplate on scripture, assisted where needed by a leaflet listing where to find many of the parables of Jesus in the Bible. A leaflet with suggestions of how to use the Bible when in trouble or distress is also on the table. Both these leaflets are well taken up and I have to reprint them regularly throughout the year. Also on the table by the door and by the candlestand are free bookmarks entitled 'To Help You Pray', 'The Parish Prayer', and 'I lit a candle...'

Two additional display boards were purchased this year to provide more scope for special displays in church; the Sunday School has one on show and David Callow used some for a wonderful display of our church history for the Heritage Weekend and beyond. The Church noticeboard is in the process of being updated - this is something that needs constant attention as names/addresses of Parish Hall users etc. frequently change and the noticeboard is a little behind at the moment. However, 2 x A boards and 2 noticeboards have been made to supplement the boards we put around our town to advertise our fund raising activities and special events, and now one noticeboard indicating the church is open and inviting visitors to view the famous wall paintings is put out most days at the top of the Market Place by the church steps to encourage visitors to our church.

There are many other aspects of the communication activities by the church such as the Deanery Magazine and its distribution, the Christmas card distribution to the whole town and many others which occur without perhaps notice but 'communicating is our calling; we are to spread the Good News not keep it to ourselves. We keep trying.

Charles Taplin (Chairman, Communications Group)

Project Fundraising Group

The Christmas Tree Festival including the 'Light for Christmas' tree was a huge success and raised over £3000. Twenty eight small Christmas trees representing local schools, businesses and voluntary organisations not only helped raise valuable funds for the organ restoration fund but more importantly brought the parish community together and gave pleasure and solace to so many of our church members as well as the larger community and visitors from afar. The entries in the Visitor book are testimony to the joy and pleasure this annual event provides.

Judith Short

Beautiful Gate Ministry

In 2009 Beautiful Gate celebrated its 15th year since founding and has developed its work from providing hospice care for a few destitute children with HIV/AIDS in an old property to an advanced programme of medical, social and spiritual care given in a purpose built residential centre. The children's HIV clinic is 3 years old and provides the life-saving drugs which are keeping nearly all the children well. Work in the surrounding community continues to expand and supports 70 families there too. Each month in the past year has seen more children reunited with a family member and able to live at home or to be fostered, but also 7-10 new admissions a week. At Christmas all the children in the unit who did not have a family of their own to go to went home with a member of the BG staff from Christmas Eve until Boxing Day and shared much fun together.

There has been difficulty in obtaining news in recent months partly because of staffing changes and restructuring of the ministry, but also because of power inadequacies limiting e-mails. However, we are now back in communication and deep thanks for the continued donations from our church have been expressed. (about £800 last year). 'We couldn't manage without donations - they keep us going' says the director. Your prayers as well as your money are needed.

Rosemary Schofield

Children's Society

There is a nationwide community of 162,000 boxholders and this group of faithful fundraisers contributes over £2 million to the Society's funds.

The fifty three boxholders in this parish made a substantial contribution to this total of £2million in 2009 by raising another record amount of £1,938. This sum was boosted above the usual total by a very generous donation from a regular boxholder.

The Society funds support more than sixty projects for children who are excluded, isolated, and abandoned and for children who live in a vicious circle of fear and harm.

A huge 'thank you' from me and the Society is given to all boxholders for their generosity and regular giving. This parish is held in high regard by the regional organiser.

If anyone would like to become a boxholder please contact me - telephone number 472748.

David Callow (Parish Representative)

Thursday Group

An average of 20 members attended the monthly meetings of the Thursday Group, with a few welcome visitors joining us at meetings where the subject was of particular interest. During the year we have extended our

knowledge of Pickering, discovered what is involved in the work of National Park Rangers and First Responders, and learnt about ways of inducing relaxation to bring calm to our busy lives.

We prepared for the festivals of Christmas and Easter as we joined in a time of meditation with friends in the Mothers' Union and the Men's Society. We also enjoyed being able to visit Orchard Close in December for an evening of readings, carols and cakes which was much appreciated by all.

The annual dinner at Crossways Hotel in January was enjoyed by all who managed to brave the weather; there was no outing this year but we were invited to join the M.U. trip to Ripon.

Donations have been made to speakers where requested, and to the work of our own church. Flowers were provided for Mothering Sunday.

The group continues to provide a relaxed and open evening where all are welcome, and there is time to get to know each other better.

Christina Hampshire

Pickering Branch Mothers' Union

Last year we had a number of interesting speakers to our meetings, including a talk about The Scout Jamboree by Chris Knowles and Simon Percy and a slide show of a visit to Egypt by Brian Stockley. We also had a lunch party at Crossways and an outing to Ripon Cathedral. A number of our members attended the Lady Day service at York Minster, our Deanery Festival service at Hutton Buscel, the Archdeaconry Festival at Whitby and the Africa Day at Stokesley. We currently have 33 members. Our branch provided coffee and lunch for the Deanery marriage preparation day, we entertained a branch from Leeds with a service and tea, we took part in the Deanery Social Care Fund coffee morning and had a stall at the church fair in November. We held two Open House days to raise money and we gave away £763.28 to Mothers' Union funds. Our members knitted woolly hats for seamen, woolly hats for premature babies in Africa and India, and baby clothes and blankets for premature babies at South Tees Hospital. Members play a full part in the life of Pickering and Middleton churches.

Liz Clark (Branch Leader)

Pickering Men's Society

This has been another successful year for the Society. Membership remains relatively stable and stands at 26. An average of 19 has attended our programme of interesting talks covering a range of subjects - Life in the Occupied Territories by Revd. Brian Shackleton, My Experiences in India from Mrs Jill Simpson, an Evening with Pickering Bell Ringers with hands on experience, (most enjoyable with our highest attendance at any meeting to date - 23), John Steele's practical talk called Hammer & Tongs and 'Where there's a Will from local solicitor David Fitzgerald.

We have shared a number of occasions with the Mothers Union and Thursday Group such as Lenten, Easter and Christmas meditations. At the Lenten Meditation the Men's Society read the full version of St Marks Gospel in Church.

Our Annual Dinner at Crossways was well attended in June, and a number of ladies joined us for a very enjoyable visit to The Black Sheep Brewery in July.

Donations were made to Pickering Scouts £30, Wycare Int. £60 and The Church Army £30. The Society meets on the third Monday of the month from September to May and there are often other activities arranged. New members are always welcome.

Brian Stockley - Secretary

Bookstall

Sales of Bookstall items for 2009 have shown a marked fall which is in line with retail sales in the country. A number of good quality secondhand books have also been sold from the Bookstall this year and, as they were not taken into stock, the monies from such sales show as some Guide Book sales. Overall Guide Book sales of 2383 are split between the Bookstall and the Boxes.

Our supplier of Christian books etc. Is now firmly in the hands of the Barbican Bookshop in York, a store which is run by the Wesley Owen group. However Wesley Owen have recently sold out to a family run Christian booksellers in Australia and we have been assured that the Barbican Bookshop will continue trading; this is something of a relief coming after the debacle with SPCK Bookshop.

Postcard sales numbers are a little disappointing at 1,506 but still provide a healthy profit of £273. Overall profit has increased by £460 in spite of a downturn in sales.

The transfers to the PCC of £575 comprises Sunday School prize books, 4 Gift Certificates of £25 each for our young servers who have gone to University and two six-panel display boards for use in the Church when time and space allow.

After trialling the sale of cards, a wider range is now available and has proved successful, so look out for suitable Christmas and Easter cards as well as Bereavement, Get Well and note cards etc.

A sum of £3,000 was transferred from the Bookstall account to the PCC Current account to help plug the deficit in the 2009 Budget.

This is the 40th year of the Bookstall which began in June 1969 and I wouldn't care to count the number of Christian books and postcards etc. that have been sold in that time. I think we should have a special celebration when we reach 50 and I hope I am around when that happens. Thank you for your support.

Charles Taplin, Bookstall Manager

Parish Hall

Bookings were slightly up on last year due to an increase in 'one off' lettings and parties, with regular customers providing the bulk of the income in a diverse range of activities.

The Chesterfield Choir returned again to their regular break at Easter, with other bookings for weekends from the Ryedale Festival and a Tank Regiment.

A weeks booking has already been received for a visit by Woodhall Spa Guides in August of this year.

A major repair had to be undertaken to dry rot at 24 Hallgarth earlier in the year, but the invoice for £1232 did not arrive until January of this year, so will now appear in next year's accounts.

The hall is a valuable and useful resource not only for the Church but for the whole community and beyond; we have also been able to respond to emergencies by letting the hall out to Pickering Beavers when their Scout hut floor collapsed, but were unable to assist another scout group when their camp site was flooded. It is vitally

important that we keep the facility in pristine condition in order to provide the quality of service our customers expect.

The Social committee have donated a new microwave and 100 new wine glasses available for all users.

May I remind everyone who wishes to arrange activities etc. at the hall; they should first consult the booking secretary before declaring their events.

Brian Stockley - Booking Secretary

Deanery Synod Matters

Deanery Synod Organisation

2009 has been the year that Pickering Deanery breathed its last. Already one of a very few small Deaneries in the York Diocese, it is now joined with the old Helmsley Deanery and renamed as the Deanery of Northern Ryedale.

Our Rural Dean, Paul Mothersdale, is now Rural Dean of the combined Deaneries and has worked (and is working) very hard to bring about the blending of the two Deaneries and give us all a vision for the future. The Synod will work with two Lay Chairmen for the time being, the Helmsley Secretary will be Secretary of the new synod and the Pickering Treasurer will be the Treasurer of the new Synod. The legal matters were concluded by November 2009 and our first meeting as a combined Synod took place in Helmsley on February 3. We shall in all probability use Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering as venues in the future as the new Deanery is spread quite widely and these stand out as focal points of the Deanery.

Deanery Synod Functions

Parish Share - the Diocese allocates Parish Share by Deanery on a provisional basis of 1/3 based on Incumbent Posts, 1/3 based on non-restricted income and 1/3 based on attendance. This is then allocated to the Benefices after the Deanery Finance Group (with a representative from each Benefice) has recommended and the Synod has agreed to the allocation. From there, each Benefice will decide how that is to be split between their Parishes.

Pastoral Reorganisation - a group will be set up to examine, consult and recommend any reorganisation of the Benefices to the Diocese, so the Diocese will have due consideration to local needs.

Communication - a group will be set up to look at how we advance with such matters as the Deanery Magazine, Parish Magazines, Magazine inserts and Parish/Deanery websites etc.

Outreach - to be ecumenical where possible and all ages in spectrum.

Training - to consider and offer when suitable the many courses available from the Diocese etc.

Deanery Synod Matters

Yes the Deanery Synod does matter and it is up to you and your representatives to make this structure, and more, to work for the benefit of the church in this place.

Charles Taplin, Deanery Synod Representative, Pickering Benefice