

The Parish Church
of
St. Simon and St. Jude

Bolton-le-Moors
Centenary
1901-2001

Foreword

As a Church grows old and especially when it reaches its centenary its congregation and neighbourhood can look back with pride at the development and work that has been carried out over the years. This journal tries to put on record the history and progress of the Church in an entertaining way. We hope it will inspire the modern congregation to go forward into the second century and work to help keep the Christian Religion in the forefront of modern thinking and practice.

We pray that our efforts in the future may be blessed as they have been in the past.

"O ALMIGHTY GOD,
WHO HAST BUILT THY CHURCH UPON THE FOUNDATION
OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS,
JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE HEAD CORNER STONE,
GRANT US SO TO BE JOINED TOGETHER IN UNITY OF SPIRIT BY THEIR
DOCTRINE THAT WE BE MADE AN HOLY TEMPLE ACCEPTABLE UNTO THEE;
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."
AMEN"

(The collect for St. Simon and St. Jude's Day)

INTRODUCTION

The Parish of St. Simon and St. Jude, Bolton was formed in 1900 out of the existing Parishes of St. Michael, Great Lever and St. Bartholomew, Bolton. The estimated population of the new Parish was three thousand souls. At this time much of the Parish was open countryside and this remained essentially true until after the Second World War

Then rapid changes took place with the building of a vast new housing estate, the first part consisting of temporary buildings (Prefabs). Many of the new householders were families displaced by the slum clearance in Bolton. The prefabs have long since been replaced by permanent houses and housing development is still taking place.

This booklet is to commemorate the Centenary of the Church which is on 5th. November 2001.

GREAT LEVER AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The industrial years of the nineteenth century with its building of mills, workshops and houses had placed a searing mark on Bolton and on Great Lever in particular, but towards the end of the century there was a pause. A large part of Great Lever had been spared and remained beautiful countryside. The new electric tramway had reached Rishton Lane but it was a country terminus.

The site of the church and school was on the east side of Rishton lane just beyond the existing terraced houses and it reached to Back Arlington Street. The South of the site was limited by Forester Street which went eastwards from Rishton Lane to Arlington Street and then continued as a lane between a large clay pit, part of the Parkfield brickworks, and the back of a garden belonging to a large house "Oakleigh" which was accessed from Green Lane and stood in 5 acres of land. There were also one or two smaller houses with access from Forester Street (renamed Forester Hill Ave. c. 1930). It continued as a footpath which reached Bradford Road alongside the grounds of "Lever Grange" another large house in 2 acres of land facing Bradford Road. Above Forester Street on the east side of Rishton lane was "The Nightingales" which provided two abodes and the west side was built up to the top where it joined Lever Edge Lane and Green Lane. On the South of the junction were a farm and a policeman's cottage/Police station and away over the fields, lonely and rather

foreboding, stood the Bolton Union Workhouse and Hospital, with the Cottage Homes and Plodder Lane in the distance.

Lever Edge Lane crossed the railway and had a few houses before New Barn Farm which later became the clubhouse for Great Lever golf club. Beyond this the lane passed through countryside which rose up to Top o'th Heights. This was a walk often advocated by local doctors as the air was so bracing and pure with an ozone content on the west wind straight from the western seaboard.

Between railway and Rishton Lane were Ash Street(now Deal St.), Osborne St.(Meredith St.),Beech St.(Beechwood St.),Elm St.(Alder St.), Bridge St.(Settle St.) and Boundary St.(Division St.). Bridge St. crossed the railway to give access to Great Lever Spinning Mill, a few houses and Bradley's brickworks.

Green Lane contained other large Victorian houses:-"The Grange", "Brooklyn", "Rossllyn", "Rishtons", "Crooks" and "Southfield House". The latter was the home of Thomas Walker of the family which owned Walkers' Tannery. Later it became the Walker Institute and now it is "Southfields" hotel.

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH AND PARISH.

"Daisyfield" was the name of the piece of land upon which the Church and Schools were built. It was generously given by the Earl of Bradford, the Right Hon. Orlando George Charles Bridgeman, P.C., D.L., J.P., and the Church was built as a result of the great generosity of the Rev. Thomas Loxham, M.A.

Thomas Loxham was born in 1819. Educated at University College, Durham, he received his B.A. degree in 1845 and M.A. in 1848. Deeply interested in the work of the Ministry, he entered Holy Orders and was Curate of Bolton from 1845 until 1851 when, under & patronage of the Earl of Bradford, he was appointed the first Rector of St. Michael's, Great Lever. He remained there until his death in 1899.

Any reference to this remarkable man would be incomplete without reference to his equally remarkable brother, Richard Loxham, M.A. who was also a Clerk in Holy Orders.

The two bachelor brothers lived at Lever Hall, which became the Rectory for St. Michael's. Lever Hall was a historical home. Formerly Darcy Lever of Alkington resided there. Later it became the family seat of the Levers and Asshetons until it passed into the hands of the Bridgeman family. Bishop Bridgeman rebuilt the Hall as a residence for himself in this part of his extensive Diocese. The Diocese of

Manchester was not formed out of Chester until 1847. The Hall continued to be the Rectory for St. Michael's until the first quarter of this century.

Many and varied are the stories of the two Loxham brothers, but of their mutual love of the Church of England and their desire to spread its influence there can be no doubts.

Though an interest of both, Campanology was the principal interest of Richard, and for many years the two bells of St. Michael's were known as "Dick and Tom."

Richard, who gave the bells of St. Bartholomew's, fully intended that St. Simon's should have a peal. He died, however, whilst his brother Thomas was still formulating his plans for the Church.

Thomas Loxham had the Missionary spirit and in addition to his plans for St. Simon and St. Jude's Church he founded St. George's Mission in Plodder Lane and Gladys Street Mission, Moses Gate.

The idea of building a Church on "Daisyfield" was conceived jointly by the Earl of Bradford and Thomas Loxham. Deep regrets were felt by everyone in the district when, after completing their plans, neither lived to see them mature.

The Earl of Bradford died on March 9th, 1898, and Thomas Loxham on April 20th, 1899, the latter aged 80 years, after having been Rector of St. Michael's for forty-eight years.

The bachelor brothers are interred in St. Michael's Churchyard, under the East window of the Church.

In 1850, the district of Great Lever was outside the confines of the civic boundaries of Bolton, and was known as the Parish of Middleton detached, extending from Raikes Clough in the east, it followed a line to Burnden Park, Lever Street, High Street, fringed Daubhill and Morris Green and followed again an irregular line west to east that included part of Moses Gate.

In 1851 St. Michael's served the whole of the Parish of Middleton detached. In 1871, St. Mark's was consecrated, quickly followed by St. Bartholomew's in 1879, with a further revision of Parish boundaries. At the close of the century, to the extreme west. St. Philip's first Church appeared.

REV. C. H. SAUNDERS, B.A., B.D. 1901 - 1928

Born in 1863, Charles H. Saunders was a Devonshire man. Taking his B.A. degree at London University in 1886 he became a Grammar School master. Later he entered St. John's College, Cambridge and in 1904 he was ordained and appointed Curate at St. George's Church, Bolton. In January 1901 he became the first Vicar of this Parish. In 1904 he took a degree of B.D. and in 1927 an Honorary Canonry was conferred on him. An unfortunate accident caused his retirement on October 1st 1928.

He died in 1946 at his home "St. Simon's" and was cremated, his ashes being interred in the Sanctuary of our Church.

An intellectual leader, firm friend and mentor, he well and truly laid the spiritual and moral foundation of the Parish.

GENESIS

- c.1890 Ideas to build a new Church and School were formulated.
- 1895 August 12th. The Rt. Hon. Orlando Charles, Earl of Bradford gave a piece of land "Daisyfield" for the building of a Church and School. One of the trustees was the Rev. Thomas Loxham, M.A., Rector of Great Lever, "being desirous of erecting at his own cost a Church and School to uphold the doctrines and principles of the Church of England.
- 1896 April 19th. A Mission was formed in Bridge St. to nurture a congregation for the new Church.
- 1898 The Parish of Middleton (detached) (Great Lever) was taken into Bolton Borough. It was after this that many streets changed name.
March 10th. The Earl of Bradford died
- 1899 April 20th. Rev Thomas Loxham died.
July 12th. Foundation Corner Stone of the Church was laid at 3.0p.m. and can be seen to the left of the south door. It is inscribed:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY
OF THE LATE REV. THOMAS LOXHAM, M.A.
THIS CORNER STONE WAS LAID BY
THE RIGHT REVD. JAMES MOORHOUSE D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF MANCHESTER. JULY 12TH A.D. 1899

The trowel, of silver with an ivory handle given to the Bishop, was later returned to the Church. Choir and Clergy from St. Bartholomew's' Church attended and assisted with the service.

1901 January. Canon C.H. Saunders was appointed first Vicar.

April 29th. The School opened with 101 scholars.

1901 November 5th. The Church of St. Simon and St. Jude was consecrated
Report in the Bolton Chronicle:- "Notwithstanding the inclement weather, there was a crowded congregation to participate in the Consecration Ceremony. The handsome appearance of the interior and the new sanctuary was much commented upon. The service was conducted by the Bishop of Manchester (Dr. Moorhouse) who was accompanied by the Bishop of Burnley and by the registrar of the Diocese.

Many gifts were made to help start up the new Church. Among these were a lectern carved from oak in the shape of an eagle and an Altar Cross of engraved brass, both in memory of Thomas Loxham, a solid silver Communion Service donated by Arthur T. Holden, Lectern Bible given by Charles Ainsworth, Font of Runcorn Red-Stone and a Pulpit of carved oak.

1902 A club for men was started and nightly meetings were held in a room of the school where dominoes and draughts were played and later a small billiard table was bought.

1905 Church House built at a cost of £700 which was subscribed by the Parishioners. The ground floor was a well-appointed room for meetings and small parochial events with an adjoining kitchen. The upper floor, one large room, adequately met the social needs of members of the Men's Club where later two large billiard tables were added.

1907 Seating in the Loxham Chapel was installed in memory of J.E. Scowcroft, M.D.,J.P. donated by his wife.

BUILDING AND EQUIPPING

Mr. R.Knill Freeman, F.R.I.B.A., architect of Bolton and Manchester, designed the Church. He also designed Christ Church, Heaton, Bolton (very similar to ours) and an Anglican Church in Moscow.

The contractor for building of the Church and fitting the woodwork was Mr. William Townson. The cost was c.£8000 which in those days would have paid 40 skilled workers for a year

The dimensions of the Church are:

Total internal length	120ft.
Length of the Nave	88ft
Breadth of Nave	43ft.
Breadth of Nave and Transepts	75ft.
Length of Chancel	32ft.
Breadth of Chancel	26ft.
Height of Nave.	37ft.
Height of Tower	83ft.

Built of red brick, at a cost of about £8000, the Church has a lofty Nave with pillars and arcading of Bath stone in the late decorated Gothic style. There are Transepts, a side Chapel (The Loxham Chapel), Vestries and a large Chancel which is well raised so that the congregation can see and hear the whole of the service. The Tower stands at the south-west corner and forms a conspicuous landmark.

The woodwork was the finest unvarnished pitch pine with the exception of the Pulpit, Communion Table, Lectern and Reredos which are unpolished oak. Permanent seating was provided for 500 worshippers

The organ, erected by Young and Sons of Manchester for £500, was placed in the Church ready for the opening service and was considered a fine instrument. It was a two manual tracker organ with twenty stops and foot pedals and the spotted metal Diapason pipes in the two organ screens were a most interesting feature.

The Church bell weighed 2cwts. 3qtrs. 24lbs.(c.151kg) and was tuned to "F" sharp and is inscribed A.M.G.D.1901. It was hung in a temporary fitting as it was intended later to fit a peal of eight bells.

Early Years

1907 Right Honorable Geo. Cecil Orlando, Earl of Bradford, gave land on the corner of Green Lane and Wash Lane for the building of a vicarage.

1910 May the vicarage was built.

1925 July 26th. The magnificent Reredos beneath the east window in the Sanctuary and the Credence table were given as a Memorial to those of the Church and

Parish who gave their lives in the Great War and as a thanks offering for those who safely returned and also to mark the 25th, anniversary of the Church

- 1928 October 1st. Canon C.H.Saunders retired after an accident. He went to live in Cleveleys and died in 1946 aged 84 years.
November 1st. Rev.C.M.S. Clarke was inducted as the second Vicar
- 1929 Electric lighting installed in the Church, School and Church House at a total cost of £360 to replace the gas. Completed in June the lighting was first used in the Church on Sunday evening June 16th.
Changes to the Parish boundaries - A part of the Parish bounded by Morrison Street and Lever Edge Lane was given to St. Philips'.
Parish magazine first published.
- 1930 June. Improvements to the organ. Electric blowing was installed (£95)
- 1932 Reredos, Communion Table and Credence Table for the Loxham Chapel were donated in memory of Edmund Charnley who was a warden of this Church for 25 years.
- 1935 September - Rev. C.M.S. Clarke resigned. He went to St. Mary's, Crumpsall and progressed via several parishes to become a Dean.
December 18th. Rev.C.G.F. Justin Wenter was inducted as third Vicar
- 1936 August Magazine (Priced 2d.) had a long letter by Rev. Wenter on the consequences of three cotton mills closing in Weston Street.

World War Two

- 1939 Sunday September 3rd. Morning Service was shortened so that members of the congregation might listen to the Prime Minister's announcement that the Second World War had started.
Consequent upon lighting restrictions, Evensong was brought forward to 3p.m. every Sunday. Social events were suspended until "black-out" material could be fitted in the schools and Air Raid shelters were provided in the school yard. The Police took over the lower rooms of the Church House as an auxiliary Police Station.
- 1942 November 2nd. Rev. Justin Wenter vacated the living to move on to further Parishes

- November 28th. Rev. William Lancelot Ackroyd was inducted as fourth Vicar.
- 1944 September- A recorded peel of bells was experimentally broadcast from the tower but most people did not like the effect.
- 1945 8th.May, V.E.DAY - end of the war in Europe.
15th.August V.J.DAY - end of war in Japan.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN GRATEFUL REMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO
GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE TWO WORLD WARS 1914 – 1918, 1939 - 1945
GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN

- 1945 P.C.C. records:-"that as money falls in value larger individual amounts are required and the old threepenny bit should be replaced by sixpence or a shilling in the Church collections."
Rev. Ackroyd left for other ecclesiastical work.
- 1946 Rev. Eric Stopford was inducted as fifth Vicar.
- 1947 May - Ashes of Canon C.H. Saunders interred under floor on South side of Sanctuary.
- 1948 October 2nd.Rev. E. Stopford left.
- 1949 January 20th. Rev. Roland Hill was inducted as sixth Vicar.
Ground floor of Church House was used by school due to overcrowding and a Horsa Hut was erected by Bolton Corporation on Church land. The trustees agreed in retrospect and received a rent.
- 1951 Following an Organ Appeal £2,160 was used to rebuild the organ. This was completed in 1953.
October 28th. The Columbarium was dedicated by Rev. Roland Hill.
- 1955 The school became a primary only, The children over 11 going to a new senior school at the top of Lever Edge Lane
- 1958 November. Church bought Horsa Hut known as the PREFAB from council £200 for use as a Church hall.
- 1959 25th, March. A stained glass window was fitted at the east end of the Church.
This was given by Marion St.Leger Robinson in memory of her mother, Catherine Harbourne, and her husband, Richard Heyes Robinson.

- 1963 September 19th Rev. Jack Jermy ordained at Manchester Cathedral and became Curate to this Parish until April 1974 when he was appointed to the Rivington Parish
- 1966/67 New School building was completed in Newport Road
- 1968 15th. June, official Opening and Dedication of the new School.
- 1970 About this time Jack Birch set up a small printing press in the Tower Room. B&H Belfry Press produced tickets and notelets for the Church and others. Rev Roland Hill became unwell with a progressive illness and could not always take the services.
- 1972 March 1st. Rev. Roland Hill retired and he died in February 1973.
- 1972 29th. Sept. Rev. Peter Brightman was inducted as seventh Vicar.
December 10th. Sunday Club (Youth Club) met for first time in the vicarage organized by Mrs. Brightman.
Conveyance of old school back to Church to be sold later.
- 1973 February - After a number faults it was decided it was not worth overhauling the organ but it would still be used when possible, instead of piano music.
- 1976 October Mens' Club closed.
Choir Children to be paid 10p per service if they attended choir practice.
- 1977 April. Rev. Brightman left to become Rector of St. Saviours, Bath.
July. Church House sold to the Anglers for £2,700.
December. Rev. Norman Lewis, B.A., S.R.N. was inducted as eighth vicar.
- 1978 February. Cecilia Street Gas Disaster when some people were made homeless and some injured. The Church raised money to help.
August. Sink was fitted in the vestry so that coffee could be brewed after Sunday service.
December. The organ ceased to be used.
- 1979 February 28th. Allen Digital Computer Organ was purchased (£5,550) with pedal board and bench plus 3 external speakers. The console stood near to the lectern.
- 1980 August, A large Flower Festival entitled "Our Church" was staged throughout the Church. Organised by Mrs Edith Moorhouse, it opened for three days and was a huge success.

- 1981 A new Metal Cross was mounted on the main Altar and two "gas" candlesticks were added.
1982. Big Pigeon Dirt clearance in Tower. Wire mesh used to keep Pigeons out.
- 1983 About this time it was finally realized that the old vicarage was too large, too rotten and too difficult to heat and that a new one was necessary. This was built on plot 4 of the Lever Grange development at the bottom of Lowick Ave. The P.C.C. also decided it would make more sense to adapt the Church building for social purposes than to repair the Prefab, which was already well beyond its expected life, and the Church, which would seat 500, was only ever partly filled. A schedule of proposed works needed to update the Church and to provide a meeting place for the congregation and the local community was produced. A Faculty to carry out the work was obtained on January 31st 1984. The total cost was estimated between £40,000 and £50,000.

The Schedule (abridged)

- A. Remove all Louvres in the Tower and brick up.
- B. Remove front two rows of pews and fit an Altar platform with a Communion Rail in front of the existing Chancel together with a moveable Altar. Move the electronic organ console to the north side of the Chancel.
- C. Move Font and remove pews at west end of Church. Build walls, doorways and ceiling to make ground floor hall with kitchen and toilets. Make a ramp at the north door to provide access for disabled people.
- D. Complete the construction of the upper hall.
- E.. Remove pipe organ retaining existing pipes to view and in space behind construct lower and upper new rooms.

1984 May 25th. New vicarage in Lowick Avenue was occupied. Church windows were vandal protected.

Oct. A young Curate joined. Dr.Philip C. Atkinson, B.A.,Ph.D. had been a well-liked teacher in a Catholic school.

1985 March. The Church exterior was cleaned and repaired with a grant of £12,000 from the Council and £7,000 of our own.

Easter Sunday. It became the custom to give every child an Easter Egg and each lady a bunch of daffodils.

May - Old parsonage was sold to Mr. & Mrs. Singham S. Collin and was made into "Greenlands" Nursing Home which was officially opened in September.

Community Rooms

1985 June. The Parish Hall and Community Centre Scheme came into being as part of the Urban Plan for Bolton and the Urban Aid Scheme made a grant of £20,000 towards materials. It was approved by the Community Task Force (C.T.F.) and the Manpower Services Commission (M.S.C.) as a scheme to help the local community visually and practically by making rooms available. In July the plans were adopted as a national scheme for the rehabilitation of the long term unemployed and the M.S.C. agreed to meet labour costs up to £34,000. A restoration fund started by the Church had grown to £25,000 but some of this was spent on other alterations.

Operation Clean-up also took place where we were helped to clean and replant some of the Church grounds and the columbarium. This was also part of the Urban Plan for Bolton. Overall the Church was faced with a shortfall of about £10,000.

August. Rose Queen Tracy Gee won first prize in Regional Gala competition at Wigan.

September Philip Atkinson was ordained at Manchester Cathedral.

October. The louvres in the tower were made up and the bell removed because the supports had become weak. The scrap value of the bell was only £250 and so the bell was retained in Church.

December. Organ moved to rear of choir stalls.

1986 January 5th. The Church was broken into causing damage.

January 11th. Another forced entry and some organ pipes were stolen and others damaged. The keeping of the pipes insitu became impossible. Hence the rest were eventually sold and screens fitted in the spaces. The electronic organ was moved over to this side of the Chancel in the rear choir pew. The new Altar platform was constructed and the movable Altar. ..

March 15th. Visit from Kenneth Clarke, Q.C., M.P., Paymaster General to see the new Community Rooms accompanied by TV crew.

Rev. N. Lewis took a holiday and came back to light duties due to ill-health.

October 24th.- 27th. To celebrate the opening of the Community Rooms Mrs. Moorhouse organised a Flower Festival "Flowers in Praise" in the rooms and on the 26th. the new rooms were dedicated.

The Community rooms were soon in regular use by Women's' Fellowship on Tuesday, the Pop-In on Wednesday and so on.

Women's Fellowship bought ten tables for use in the rooms.

November. Arson attack on the prefab caused a lot of damage. An insurance claim paid for demolition and the site was sold.

1987 27th. March. First meal for the Luncheon Club which met one day a week on a Friday (65p + tea 12p). This continued till 1999 when it closed due to lack of customers.

Lower Community room used for voting on election days.

Rev. Philip Atkinson left to become Chaplain of the Royal Wolverhampton School. His time here was much appreciated.

The Church had a stall at the Victorian Market held in the Civic Centre which became an annual event.

1988 October - Church toilet blown up by firework.

1989 October 29th. Rev. N. Lewis preached his last Sermon as he had decided to retire due to ill-health.

1990 January. Canon J.Whittaker took over as Minister temporarily.

February. Rev. N. Lewis left the vicarage.

April 16th. Official start of interregnum.

1990 August. The lower organ room was converted to a new Vicar's vestry.

September. Rev. Gerald Downing was inducted as ninth Vicar. 1991 January. Christingle Service held for first time.

February. 9-14 club for children 9 to 14 years old was started by Rev.

Downing and his wife with some adult helpers to give some children something to do on a Friday night. It eventually closed because there were not enough helpers.

The Teresa Harper School of Dance was opened and eventually used the upper hall Wednesday and Friday evenings. The school moved early in 2000 to a separate building in Fletcher Street.

A Craft Fair was held in the community rooms called "Treasures and Trifles".

This was a success and another was held in 1992.

1992. A play group was started and modifications to the lower community room were carried out – thermostatic controlled radiators and warm water on tap but not hot enough to scald children. An outdoor play area with lawn was made on the north side of the Church. The play group continued until 1998.
- 1993 The Church was rewired to modern standards.
- 1996 February. Boundary Fence and brick work made good.
September. Dry rot was found in the transept and was treated.
1997. March. Lightening conductor replaced.
A sound reinforcement system with induction loop was fitted in the Church.
1998. March. Bolton Male Voice Choir performed in the Church.
- 1999 June. Rev. M. Hills was made Priest in charge.
Rev. Glenda Bush was appointed Curate with special responsibilities for worship and pastoral care of the Church.
Services in the cold days of winter were held in the lower community room due to failure of part of the main Church heating.
- 2000 Rev. Hills left the district for a Parish in Northampton.
A small lectern and candle holder were made by Mr. George Bush.
- 2001 Mothering Sunday. Each lady was given a bunch of daffodils.
- 2001 November 5th. Centenary

Mothers Union

Early in October 1943 a branch of the Mothers Union was formed and the first admission service was held in Church on October 24th. As part of a wider fellowship the Mother's organisation entered this greater field of service.

Representatives were sent to a Deanery Festival in the Parish Church for the first time in October 1944. A banner was dedicated. Meetings were held in the Church House and later in the Prefab. Each week on Wednesday afternoons and this continued until 1978

Organists and Choirmasters

The services of Organist and Choirmaster are very trying and very trying and we are most grateful for the devoted work of :-

J.R. Allen, A.R.C.O	1901 - 1918
J.H.Moss, L.T.C.L., A.Mus., T.C.L.	1918 - 1930
George Leather	1930 - 1936
Harry Leyland, A.R.C.O.	1936 - 1940*
W.H.Cooper,	1940 - 1943
George Leather and John Maxwell	1943 - 1946
Harry Leyland, A.R.C.O.	1946 - 1974(June)
Leslie Iddon	1974(July) - 1978(October)
Ian Birmingham	1979(January- June)
Mrs. Miriam Lewis	1979(July) - 1980(April)
Ronald Croft	1980(April) - 1998
Clare Buckley	1999 - 2000
Donna Platt	2000 (April - November)
Nicola Dagnall	2000

* Harry Leyland served in a paratroop brigade in North Africa, Greece, Italy and France during the war and returned in 1946.

Keith Bond, a local boy, showed great promise as a musician and during 1941, aged 12 he gave recitals and several times played for Church services. In 1943 Keith was appointed Organist and Choirmaster at Christ Church, Heaton.

The Choir

Despite two world wars which resulted in a serious depletion of personnel for long periods, we have always received the loyal service of choristers. It is recognised that membership of the choir entails practices at least once a week and regular attendance at Sunday services. These are voluntary and not lightly undertaken in view of the many other demands of the times. The Choir have never failed us and the Church owes much of its success to their willing efforts. To all we extend our thanks.

Men and boys formed the major part of the first choir but from 1908 the boys were gradually replaced by young women but were reintroduced in 1931 by Mr. Leather.

Soon after, the dress of the male members was augmented by the introduction of cassocks.

Extracts from a detailed history of the Choir written by Stephen Leyland, who has been in the Choir since 1958 follow :

After the war under Harry Leyland the Choir recovered its strength in numbers and built up a formidable repertoire of over 60 anthems which were performed

After the war under Harry Leyland the Choir recovered its strength in numbers and built up a formidable repertoire of over 60 anthems which were performed throughout the year. On ordinary Sundays, morning and evening services were held but Communion was only once a month. Morning service was at 10-30a.m. until 1971 when it became 10-00a.m. There were up to 15 choirboys at this time but young girls (12 – 15yrs.) were not admitted till late 1960's.

Until 1965 free picnics for adults (early Summer) and boys (August) went to Matlock, Fountains Abbey, North Wales, Lake District and many other places. They mostly went smoothly but a few amusing incidents occurred over the years like having to get out and walk up the hill at Blubberhouses and the wet socks that flew out of the window of the train coming back from Morecambe. It was not so amusing when a boy (Stephen Leyland) was left behind in Scarborough and another boy was knocked down in Bettys-y-Coed. The choir boys were also rewarded annually for "loyal service" with a hardback boys' adventure book. Discipline was not severe and some boys were caught playing noughts and crosses etc. during the sermons. The boys received 2s 6d (12.5p) for attending a wedding.

1974 brought a decision to buy an electronic organ which caused Mr. Leyland to resign after 38 years. Eventually Mr. Leslie Iddon came and he did a recruitment campaign at the school to obtain some new young trebles. However the older members thought the music was uninteresting and Mr. Iddon was followed for a short time by a flamboyant organist Mr. Ian Birmingham. The vicars wife, Miriam Lewis, played for services about nine months until Mr. Ronald Croft was appointed and the Choir revived somewhat. The annual Carol Service became the most important singing event and after the Carol Service of 1998 Mr. Croft retired. After a little while we had the services of a most accomplished young lady, Miss Clare Buckley, who did all that was possible with the , by now, very small Choir. She with her friends have put on Musical evenings which have been very much enjoyed. Recently we have had Miss Donna Platt and Miss Nicola Dagnall.

Sermons' Sunday

On Sermons' Sunday three services were held and a procession walked around the Parish led by a Brass Band closely followed by the 'Little Singers', the Choir and the current Rose Queen with retinue in full dress. The Clergy and many ordinary Church members also joined to make a long procession. The procession stopped a number of times for a mini-service. Soaring costs and fewer people made the walking more difficult and in 1994 and 1995 we joined with Rose Hill Congregational. We have not since walked round the Parish.

Rose Queen

The appointment of a Rose Queen and retinue was a big event for the ladies and girls of the Church. It started in 1938 but was suspended because of the war and later because of rationing. The next was in 1951 after which it became an annual event. The Rose Queen was crowned at a Gala in July which took place at the school and there were many stalls for entertainment and to provide Church funds. For the Rose Queen and retinue this was a "dressy" event and many parents and others spent many hours sewing and making dresses. Later in the year of reign the Rose Queen would hold an "At Home" and would attend other Churches in town that had their own Queens. Rose Queen competitions were also held.

Young Wives' Association

On December 18th. 1947 the Mothers Union invited a number of younger mothers of the Parish to a social evening. As a result the Young Wives' Association was formed under the leadership of Mrs. Stopford and had about 30 members. After the Rev. Stopford left, Mrs. Pilling became leader until Mrs. Hill became presiding member. In the 1960's Mrs. Jenny Collier succeeded her. The association met weekly in the school or prefab and later in the new community rooms and had activities including talks, country dancing, visits to works e.g. Cadbury and Wedgwood and a three day visit to London.

However the membership reduced due to modern life styles, such as young women going to work, and reached a low of 12 and so in the Rev. Brightman's time a new organisation was started with less stringent entry conditions.

Women's Fellowship

This was and is open to any lady, married or single. The activities are similar to above and the Fellowship has continued throughout the years as a strong unit of the Church in worship, finance and friendship and although the changing nature of the area and lifestyle generally has meant a smaller unit these basics still remain and as always we offer a welcome to anyone to come along and join us. The present leader is Mrs. Joan Mason and much of the above is taken from the writings of Mrs. Jenny Collier.

Starting in 1930 a bazaar took place in the school building on the last Friday and Saturday in November every year and was a big event as well as a money raiser. All Church groups had stalls. The Women's Fellowship's was a fancy goods/gift stall. There was a bedding stall by Mrs.Hart and friends and hardware run by the Choir. The scouts, cubs, guides and brownies had game stalls, soft drinks, hot dogs and bran tubs while the school sold tinned goods. Mrs. Moorhouse and Mrs. Thompson did dried flower arrangements , cards etc. and other stalls sold cakes, bric-a-brac and toys and there was a tombola and a raffle. The Women's Fellowship ran the cafe, selling potato pie and peas on the Friday and salad teas, jelly, cakes and sandwiches on the Saturday.

We cannot do this today and we have a mini bazaar in the community room with Mrs. Joan Mason in charge and she provided these notes.

The School

Headmasters

Mr. Alfred Ainscough	1901-1929
Mr. Harold Pilling	1929-1962
Rev.. Jack Jermy	1962 – Aug. 1980
Mr. Jim Ainscough	1981-1990
Mr. Terence Wheelan	1990 - today

In 1895 the Earl of Bradford gave land for the building of a school to be erected by the Rev. Thomas Loxham at his own cost. The familiar buildings behind the Church were the result. Built for weekday instruction, the school was completed in 1901. It showed a marked improvement in design as compared with earlier Church schools. Accommodation was available for 450 scholars. The structure of red bricks and terracotta with a green slate roof was, by the standards of the day, first class.

The school was opened in April 1901, when 101 scholars enrolled. The first head was Mr. Alfred Ainscough with a staff of four lady teachers in two departments, the mixed and the infants. In 1903 the management of the school was transferred to the Incumbent of the Church and his two wardens with powers to co-opt three others, being members of the Church of England and subscribers of not less than one pound annually to the school. The mixed department was quite full by 1909 and by 1920 the school was overcrowded and remained so for many years.

After 1945 the school used a room in the Church House and later a prefab was built near to Forester Hill Ave., which was used until 1955 when the school became a primary only. Mr. Harold Pilling retired in 1962 after a record 34 years as head master.

From Rishton Lane to Newport Road by David Crank – a parent governor.

St. Simon and St. Jude's Primary school had served its Parish well and yet by the early 1960's it was becoming increasingly obvious that the old buildings were inadequate for the modern educational needs of a growing population and also to meet the Health and Safety regulations. Local government funding became available and by 1964 planning permission had been approved for a new building on land adjacent to Newport Road. Not everyone liked this change of site and concern was shown about the move by members of the congregation. The school and Church had been so geographically linked for over 60 years that to split them was deemed somewhat harsh. The more practical approach upset many, even though the Church was to maintain a strong connection.

The foundation stone was laid in September 1965 by one of the Church benefactors, Mrs. Marion St. Leger Robinson. The modern design was a single storey building with large windows, spacious classrooms and internal flexibility enabling the school to increase its intake to cope with new housing in the area. From the Church, the Rev. Roland Hill, Harry Hardman and Eddie Roberts were particularly concerned and the Dramatic society lobbied long and hard to get a proper stage with modern lights and storage space for the use in plays, pantomimes and social gatherings. In the end the stage was built, but not as high as requested.

Rev. J. Jermy was headmaster at this time and the school moved into the building in early 1967 and has thrived ever since, having a good reputation in educational circles. The pupils have green fields to play on and the school has been upgraded from time to time, with new classrooms, a refurbished library and classroom

furniture. The school is now much larger but the building will need more years yet to have a social history to match that of its predecessor. Meanwhile it can admire its multi-ethnic curriculum and Key-Stage its way into this new century.

The Scouts and Cubs.

A troop of Scouts associated with the Church was first formed in 1909. The Parish has until lately been fortunate in having the willing service of a Scout Master and whilst the fortunes of the Troop have ebbed and flowed, its existence has been almost continuous. It used to meet in the upper rooms of the old school but after the war a fund was started, which raised enough money to buy and build a new Scout Hut on a site in Ainsdale Road. This was opened in 1963. After this time it was extensively used and part of it was used to store waste paper collected from the Parish area until it could be sold. In the end this was its undoing as an arsonist set the paper alight and the hut burned down. The meetings then took place in the Church Pefab. until 1987 the Troop closed due to a shortage of Leaders.

As long as the Scout Troop existed a Troop of Cubs formed an active body as a feeder to the main Troop. It expanded to two groups but later settled back to one , which in 1987 transferred to Rose Hill which still had a Scout Troop.

Pop-In

Come on down and you just might
Meet someone just your style
Who'll help you with your problems
And chat with you a while.
There's a really friendly atmosphere
For all who care to come
Some good advice, a listening ear
Now, don't you feel at home?
There's hints and tips and happy falls
Who'll share a recipe
So come on down, come on Pop – In
For a natter and a coffee or tea.
(Anon from about fourteen years ago)

Pop – In is still in existence and meets Wednesdays at 2 – OOp-m All are welcome to join this social club to share in the companionship and refreshments and play games such as Bingo, Dominoes and Whist.

Girl Guides and Brownies

A troop of Girl Guides was started during the war in 1942 and continued on and off till 1970. In 1973 they restarted and met in the Church House and when this was sold they shared the Scout Hut and later the Prefab. till November 1986 when they transferred to the new school building.

The Guide Leader, Miss Wall, became anxious to create a Brownie Pack and Mrs. Pam Fielding started one in 1960. She kept it going, with a number of assistants, until she left the district in 1968 when Gaynelle Collier took over until 1988. The numbers increased and a second pack was started with Janet Woods as Brown Owl. The Guides and Brownies had strong links with the Church at Church Parades, Bazaars, Rose Queen Galas etc.

The Girl Guides and Brownies are still thriving today under the leadership of Mrs. Susan Walsh.

Sunday School

A Sunday school has been in existence within the Church since 1901. Recently the present Sunday School has made a new banner, which is aptly displayed near the Font hopefully reminding parents and godparents that the Sunday School can help their children to become caring adults within the Church.

Dramatic Society

Wherever Church organizations exist, there are to be found some who are interested in amateur theatricals. A Dramatic Society was formed in 1909 and they produced "The Cricket on the Hearth" followed by "East Lynn". Amusing though such titles now appear to the reader they were produced with all the interest and vigour to be found in a growing Parish life. Under the direction of the Rev. Justin Wenter, interest in dramatic work was revived and a new stage and fittings were added to the school. Many successful productions resulted to assist in raising funds for the Church and also in support of national appeals. During the later days of the war, however, it was impossible to continue. But in 1949 and 1950 the society took on a new lease of life;

first with a most successful three day presentation of a Passion play and later with other attractions.

The story is taken up by Stella Crank :

A change of venue was incurred when the new school buildings were opened in 1967. The society made good use of this opportunity and transferred all its properties to set up the stage area and increase its audience capacity to 180 with extra seating in the hall. The chairmen of the dramatic society were the Rev. Roland Hill (1966 – 1972), Albert Rushton (1973 – 1984), Chris Irish (1984 – 1990) and Stephen Leyland (1990 – today).

The production of a pantomime continued as an annual event. These went from strength to strength under a series of producers such as the Rev, Roland Hill, Albert Rushton and Zonis Marsh. Over the years all the traditional pantomimes such as "Aladdin" and "Cinderella" have been performed and also unconventional ones like "Hickory Dickory Dock" and Puss in Boots'. In 1981 the society commissioned Mr. F. Worsley to write "The Dancing Princesses". Recently Chris Irish has produced, using more technical equipment and drawing cast members from other societies with a lavish presentation of "Queen of Hearts" at Christmas 2000.

The society also diversified with a series of variety shows ably produced by Mrs. Mary Mulraney, several one-act plays in the upper community room and visits out into the community.

Membership has continued to thrive especially in our younger section. Many of these juniors have stayed whilst others have joined other adult societies and some even making acting a career.

The Church Today

My thanks go to Eric Rawlinson for this overview of the history of St. Simon and St. Jude's Church. We do have huge problems with the building due partly to neglect and also to its age. The congregation became quite despondent about the future of the Church which led us to explore the possibility of using the hall of St. Simon and St. Jude's for Sunday morning worship, should that become necessary.

'However, in recent months there has been an increase in those attending worship. It has been very encouraging to see more young families coming to Church. At this present time there is a definite air of optimism and a good sense of fellowship which is enabling us to put our trust in God as we move forward into the future.

Glenda Bush (Curate)

25th July -2001.