

A L L S A I N T S C H U R C H
Boyne Hill, Maidenhead

ANNUAL REPORT



2007

Overview Of The Year

Three people from All Saints congregation approached me following the Easter Vigil service. They were obviously pleased about something (the fact that I do not preach at this particular service I thought) and told me about the day they had spent together. They said that the idea of the church sharing more closely as a community and using one another's gifts to support and encourage each other had led to them enjoying their day. They had all faced the prospect of the day alone but one person had got on the phone and organised the day. The three shared a meal, conversation and then decided to go the service together. This may seem a simple story but it filled me with a sense of joy on a night filled with Resurrection hope. The three people had lived in a simple way the model of the church we have been following for the last couple of years.

As we began last year we were attempting to celebrate our 150th year of Christian witness in the Boyne Hill area. We had thought about the early church and how they had 'remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.' (Acts 2) The missionary task to those early disciples was to enable others to see the mutual love and support of the Christian community. As a result others were drawn to it. Hopefully the implications of living in communion with God and each other would be shown more clearly in the way we supported each other in becoming a Missionary congregation.

To help us in our task we had arranged as part of our 150th a series of speakers specially selected to celebrate the past but also to challenge us for the future. Alongside this we had organised a mission weekend based on Bishop Stephen's book 'From the Abundance of the Heart' which focussed on the Road to Emmaus story. In other words we spent time listening to the needs of others, offering nurture and growing as disciples. The main focus as you will all know came through the schools desire to think about issues of ecology and you can read about their thoughts in Bridget Mcleod's report. The third dimension was to offer a celebration of music thanks to Brian, Relf, our choir and other choirs. Finally though Brian Hole, Silvia and Reg Denison and others we were able to keep the church open and provide cream teas through the year.

Outcomes

The speakers

Archdeacon Norman Russell challenged us to find answers to the secular society we live in and I like to think we have tried to continue using courses from Godly play through to Alpha and Emmaus to encourage people to learn more about the Christian faith..

Stephen Croft challenged us to think about Fresh Expressions of Church and through 'Messy Church' we are seeing the first attempt at this new style as explained by Lynn May in this report.

Jenny Hyson in a most moving service highlighted the value of Godly Play and this has enabled Young Saints to continue to flourish. We have also benefited by using Godly Play for baptism preparation. Gemma Simmonds from Heythrop College posed the question 'How do we as individuals see ourselves as active members of the Body of Christ?' The number of people involved in ministry, and the number continues to grow underlines the number of people taking this question seriously.

Matthew Read from Christian Aid challenged us to think about working in partnership with schools for an overseas project to run alongside OAK. This will hopefully bear fruit in the coming year. Other speakers enabled us to celebrate our rich Anglo-Catholic heritage such as Fr Norman and Fr Jonathan Baker of Pusey House.

Sister Anne Verena gave us a series of wonderfully spiritual talks through Holy Week.

The concerts were all of a very high quality but perhaps the highlights were the CD made by All Saints Choir including a few extras and the Old Time Music Hall evening, which was simply brilliant fun. Matt Firth and myself acting has led others to believe they will take part in future. Read into this what you will!



The Mission weekend included celebration services, an Earth Balloon which had 400 people plus go through it, a Confirmation service and celebration meal for 150 thanks again to Silvia and Reg. Special thanks too go to Robert Deal without whom we would not have managed to get the balloon into the church. Finally, we were blessed, by the presence of a Bishop who spent the weekend sharing his love of God with others. The weekend has helped us develop the relationship we have with our schools.

I cannot leave the year without making mention of the spire restoration work. Ken Smith, John Ainslie, Barbara Bannister and Mike Moss have shown outstanding skill and commitment to get us to the position where shortly we will begin work on a project that was daunting.

I have mentioned names in this report which on one level is foolish as the main reason this church is I believe growing as a Missionary congregation is due to everyone playing a part, just looking at the number of reports in this document highlights this.

In the everyday running of the church may I express my thanks to the choir and servers, our director of music, all who help with the pew sheet, rotas, service booklets, and those who clean the church and prepare the flowers. Other vital roles are the ministry of the wardens, the verger, the sacristan, the treasurer and those who act as sidespeople and those who give valuable support running the office.

Finally Philip North while congratulating us on our year challenged us to see it as merely a beginning. That mean's continuing much of what we have begun but also praying about and looking for new opportunities.

Some new ideas which may bear fruit in the future are Open the Book from St Peter's church which seeks to share the bible with schools, setting up a monthly meal, developing the shared project with schools, marriage preparation with Cox Green, film club as part of our use of the arts and Youth Emmaus.

Thank you to you all for allowing us to share the Christian pilgrimage with you,

Love and prayers,

Jeremy and Carys

Churchwarden's Fabric Report

Ken Smith

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991.

It is a requirement of this measure that a report should be presented to the Annual Church Meeting on the 'fabric, goods and ornaments' of the church. This report encompasses the requirement and has been seen by the PCC.

Goods and Ornaments

These are in good order, including the linen, silver, candles and brassware. An Inventory is available.

Fabric

The church building has been carefully monitored throughout the year and attention paid both to major and less significant issues. This report highlights a number of those items and looks to some issues for the future.

Tower and Spire

The in-principle grant by English Heritage for the repairs to the tower was the largest ever given to a parish church by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This fact was celebrated by All Saints being used by English Heritage as one of the two venues in the country from which to announce the national awards.

During the year our architect spent a considerable amount of time in fleshing out the work to be done, engaging other professionals, and preparing tenders for the work. Much local publicity was given at the time to the presence of a cherry picker on site for close inspection of the masonry. The view from the top of the spire is spectacular! Tenders were received from four companies and the work has been let to St. Blaise of Dorset, a choice that has been endorsed by English Heritage. As the contract price is less than that in our original submission to English Heritage the latter have now given us a confirmed offer of £649,000. This, together with the donations from other trust bodies, personal donations and the very welcome and energetic fund-raising by the congregation mean we can proceed with the work, which may have commenced by the time of the APCM this year. The work will take about twelve months.

During this period we have also applied for, and been granted, a Faculty for the work.

It should be noted that we have had to commit to three things in particular as a result of the EH grant, all of which are to be welcomed.

1. The church will be open at least once a week for visitors, on Tuesday mornings.
2. It will be necessary to put into place a formal system of carrying out maintenance, including professional assistance, particularly for inspecting the rainwater goods.
3. We need to improve accessibility in some areas, including removing the threshold to the parish centre and erecting more signage. All these will involve expenditure.

Heating

The new heating system has provided us with a significantly new level of warmth and an enhanced degree of flexibility, with much reduced cost. Some teething troubles are still being sorted out behind the scenes and we are aware that attention will need to be paid to painting the radiators and pipes.

Carpet

Following a period of years during which money was assiduously garnered and put aside for the purpose of replacing the worn-out carpet, partly by the Mothers' Union and the Tuesday Club, but primarily from a few individuals we were able to do so during the year in time for our celebratory Mission Weekend. The result is plain to see. Again, a Faculty was granted for the replacement.

The arch

Following the dislodgement of a brick from the arch by a van temporary repairs have been carried out but the arch is rather fragile anyway through eroded pointing and distorted buttresses. Pending full repairs to the arch (not thought to be a priority) we have pretty much stopped vehicles using the quad.

The hole

After a particularly severe downpour a hole opened up in the Birinus garden. Although thinking it might have been caused by a collapsed drain we are also mindful of swallow holes in the area. The situation is still under review by the Ecclesiastical Insurance group.

DIY

A DIY day was held and much valuable work carried out by a band of volunteers including removing a large amount of pea shingle from the north wall of the church which was thought to be contributing to internal damp; clearing a large amount of weeds and vegetation from the quadrangle, particularly in front of the Red House (old vicarage); removing debris from the car park; clearing the creepers from the arch and no.4; improving the memorial garden and around the north porch; and starting work on the benches in the churchyard. Oh, and providing refreshments!

The Gresley Silver

We currently have on loan to the museum at Christchurch, Oxford, silver plate thought to have been designed by GE. Street for All Saints, namely a flagon, chalice and paten. The Goldsmiths Company have requested that this be included in an exhibition in Goldsmiths Hall, London. The PCC have given permission and a faculty has been applied for.

Future work on the church

For many years Don Young has very regularly (weekly) wound the clock. We feel it prudent to ease this task so during the period that the work is being carried out on the tower we are considering the replacement of the manual winding system by an electrical one. This will be subject to due approval by the PCC and a Faculty.

Although we have no immediate plans for further major works, in a building complex such as we have one needs to be aware of issues that might arise and so be prepared. For example, some of the important stained glass windows are bowed, we are still watching the cracks in the south-west corner, the parish centre desperately needs better flooring and a new kitchen, the floor tiles in the church need repairing. There are also of course the items already mentioned in above paragraphs.

Quinquennial Inspection

A formal inspection of the church building is carried out every five years by the Diocesan Architect (this time Roderick MacLennan, the architect we are using for the tower repair). The function of the inspection is to define what work needs immediate attention, what needs doing in a short time, and what is to be noted for the future. Our next inspection is due in December 2008.

P.C.C. Report

John Ainslie

Meetings

The PCC has met on 7 occasions in the year following last year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, of which one was a short meeting to elect the PCC Officers and Standing Committee.

Issues

Planning of Mission activities centred on the 150th Celebration events, and especially planning and implementing the Mission Weekend held at All Saints-tide. The Mission Weekend began with a Patronal Festival Eucharist with the Bishop of Reading, included visits to schools, the Earth Day event in church (which was very well attended throughout the day, particularly by children and families, and enjoyed by all), the Confirmation Service on Sunday morning, and a Festal Evensong with Revd Canon Norman Brown as Preacher.

In parallel with these events, the alpha and Emmaus courses continued, and Messy Church events were held at a local school. The informal Youth Club met regularly during the year.

The PCC reviewed the outcome of the 150th Celebration events, and one area highlighted for continuing emphasis in our church life was that of links with our local schools, and Bridget Macleod attended a discussion by the PCC of these links. The PCC appointed Michael Broad and George Hutchinson as the PCC's Governors at All Saints C of E School.

On a more practical note, the PCC obtained a faculty for a new carpet in church and arranged its installation, and the PCC has begun an in-depth consideration of fire and health and safety matters. Hannah Wilson has been appointed the church's Child Protection Officer.

The Tower & Spire

The necessary repair work to the tower and spire was a key concern during the year. A detailed specification was prepared and tenders solicited for the work, a Faculty obtained for the repair work, and the English Heritage Stage 2 funding secured. Details of the Spire restoration work are covered in detail in the Fabric Report.

Fundraising for the Spire and Restoration Fund included concerts and local fundraising events. Donations, large and small, were gratefully received from well-wishers in our church and congregation, amounting to a substantial sum. Grant awards from Trusts have been received as follows: Historic Churches Preservation Trust (£20,000), Louis Baylis (Maidenhead Advertiser) Trust (£10,000), Garfield Weston Foundation (£10,000), Royal County of Berkshire Churches Trust (£14,000), Council for the Care of Churches (£4,000) and the Prince Philip Trust Fund (£800).

Regular Giving

Regarding regular giving, the PCC considered a report from the Treasurer on regular giving, which highlighted in particular that 33% of the regular giving is coming from just 7 donors, and that the average level of giving (£460 p.a.) would need to increase if we are to keep on top of increases in routine running costs of the church.

Young Saints

Lucy Cowdery

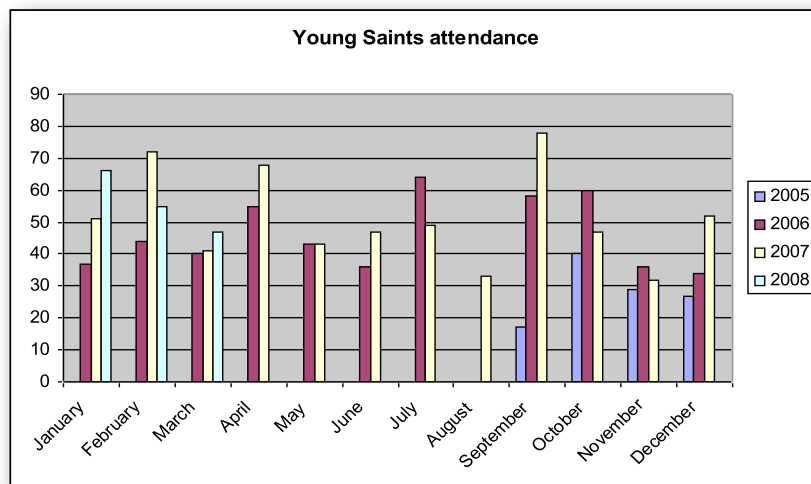


Members of the group

Members of the group : Sirpa Arovaara, Bethany Cowdery, Lucy Cowdery, Christine Dunford, Father Jeremy Harris, Tanya Howarth, Leigh Hutchinson-May, Michelle Symonds, Margaret Phillips, Anne Smith, Ami Webb-Morris, Jill Webb-Morris, Hannah Wilson.

Attendance

Our numbers are continuing to grow in terms of the children and teachers so we must be doing something right! The chart below gives an example of our attendance records over the last few years.



Teachers

We are fortunate in that some of the mums in our congregation have joined us as teachers as well as some of the older children who are now ready to take that next step in their journey of faith – a transition from student to helper. We give a big thank you to Deborah Firth, for all her work, who has now retired from Young Saints.

Godly Play

Godly Play is going from strength to strength with more teachers attending the courses. Our resources are building up but there are still lots of stories to collect. This year we added 'The Faces of Easter' kit to our collection and Ray Philips made a 'desert box' which will be used for many of the stories. Our first trial with it is the story of 'The Ten Best Ways' which will open the childrens imaginations up to the Ten Commandments. We have nearly finished 'The Creation' kit.

All age worship

We hold about 3 all age worship services a term but, recently we have not had the time to prepare anything with the children. Michelle Symonds was keen to tackle this so is now researching the themes and working with the children the week before each all age worship. Father Jeremy then performs an activity with them during the service and some of the children read the prayers.

Confirmation

This last year saw some of our children attend Confirmation classes. These concluded with a wonderful service led by Bishop Stephen and some of the children and their families continued their celebrations together in the Parish Centre.

Progression into the Church

We feel that it is very important that we promote the transition for the children into the Church at a time that is comfortable for them. This tends to be around the age of 10 or 11 and we are pleased that a number of those confirmed have made the decision to participate more fully in the 10am Sunday service by joining either the serving teams or the choir.

Events

We have organised a few events which included a Picnic by the river during the summer and a trip to see Peter Pan on Ice at Christmas. The Easter Egg hunt has become a bit of an annual event and many in the congregation now donate chocolate mini eggs that are handed out to the children once they have found their cardboard eggs in the undergrowth.

The future

Our future aspirations have not changed that much from last year. It is a slow but rewarding task to build up the Godly Play resources. Our teachers are doing an excellent job which is reflected in the numbers of children coming through our doors. And this brings us back to the usual question as to how we continue to cater for the increasing numbers.



All Saints, Boyne Hill



Annual Report 2007

The Alpha Course

Elizabeth Bryson

We had two Alpha Courses in 2007: January – March and then an Autumn Alpha. It was great to have people on the Courses wanting to find out what Christians believe. It has been good to have people who have recently started coming to Church and those preparing for Confirmation. In both these Alpha Courses it has been a joy to see people grow in knowledge, understanding and experience of the Lord.

We are grateful to the members of the Congregation who support the ministry of Alpha by praying and by providing suppers. The supper enables us to give a friendly welcome, which is an important start to each session. The DVD Talks followed by discussion enable those on the Courses to find out about Christianity, with an emphasis on knowing God and coming into a relationship with the Lord through faith in Jesus.

It is encouraging to read comments written by people who have come to Alpha. Here are some from our recent Courses, which reflect the spiritual journey that has been experienced:

- Still not sure, although I have made progress on my journey.
- The discussions after can be very helpful.
- My benefits from doing Alpha have been learning and understanding of faith.
- I am very grateful of my new faith.
- I have made a commitment and have a much surer faith.
- Faith strengthened.

As in previous years, some people who have enjoyed Alpha now regularly attend All Saints' Church. Some have been helped by the Emmaus Course with further opportunities for discussion, nurture and growth in faith.

Now in this year following our Celebration Year of 150 years of All Saints Church, we want to become a missionary congregation. I hope that the Alpha Course in the Autumn 2008 will have many guests from outside the Church as well as people from the congregation who would like to join us to grow in their knowledge and understanding about our Christian faith. In previous years the poster outside the Church has drawn guests and the Internet contact of the Alpha and Church websites. There are many people who wonder:

'Is there more to life than this?'

They would welcome the opportunity of finding out about Christianity and experiencing the love of God in their lives. Please will you recommend Alpha to people you know, who you think will be interested and invite them to our introduction to the next Alpha Course on Saturday 13th September, followed by the Alpha Course starting on Wednesday 17th September 2008. The Alpha Course is such a wonderful opportunity to:

- Enjoy a friendly welcome
- Find out what Christians believe
- Ask questions
- Discuss your ideas
- Have a delicious supper

The Emmaus Course

Andrew Stafford

At the start of this three part course, there were 21 participants and four leaders. The membership of the course was very consistent for the first two sections. The third part of the course was attended by 9-12 with three leaders.

One of the most attractive features of this course was the opportunity to read and discuss relatively short Biblical extracts and to use the small group sessions to explore our own responses to them in depth. The presence of a leader in each group was always helpful, as they tended to enable the contributions of others to the exploration. Usually, the “testimony” preceded these discussions and the variety of voices here was appreciated. It was interesting and encouraging to note that within the leadership team, there was a diversity of response, as this allowed the students to articulate their questions, uncertainties and personal issues with relatively little timidity. The wide variety of experience meant that texts were explored in a range of contexts: literary, as revelation; as harmonising with experiences; as clear advice on how life should be lived, and the purpose of the course, to nourish faith, was never forgotten.

It was clear that the course was well planned. The handouts were effective and supported the discussion appropriately. The sessions were planned and some consideration as to timing of each section was evident. The content was sufficiently rich to mean that we only explored a small part of what the texts offered. There was a logical progression in the subject matter. I found the presence of Fr Harris particularly valuable, because he listened very effectively and sympathetically to what was expressed, and was able to draw positive and constructive conclusions. It was very encouraging to hear him say that from the study groups had come ideas and openings which had taken his own understanding forward, and it was good to hear him draw upon some of these new angles in his preaching.

As a long-serving education professional, I would commend the overall planning of each session, with a starter activity, a “teacher-led” session, small group work and a final plenary. I could suggest that more time might be given to the exploration of the text at the centre of the study, rather than allow an anecdotal approach to dominate the explorations. This is a personal view, and I know that the sharing experience was valuable for all of us, and that others on the course would find too literary or scholarly an approach rather off-putting. It is clear that with a diverse membership, the balance will always be tricky to strike.

I am conscious of the enormous amount of time and thought that Fr Jeremy puts into all these courses. The “Christ and the Chocolaterie” course and the recent Sacred Art Lent course were well attended and bear testimony to the many ways, in addition to the excellence of the preaching and conduct of the services, in which Faith has been nurtured in All Saints during the last year.

OAK (Ordinands Appeal in Kenya)

Elizabeth Bryson

We are a missionary congregation because we want to help people to become Christians and grow in their faith in Kenya, as well as here in Maidenhead.

In 2003 - 2006 we gave the money so that Margaret Ndisha Mwasaru and Eunice Kandi Mwarashu could complete their training for ordination in Bishop Samson's Diocese of Taita Taveta in Kenya. They were ordained on November 25th 2007. They are now serving as deacons in villages in the mountains of Kenya. They are very grateful for the financial and prayer support from All Saints' Church. They were thankful for the gift of an All Saints' Choir CD and a large card with a picture of the church, sent by us to celebrate their ordinations.

In 2007 we raised £700 to fund a new ordinand through the first year of his theological training, starting in August 2007. We are now supporting Patrick Mvailago Maza who is training for ordination in Bishop Samson's diocese in Kenya. Please pray for Patrick and give money towards the next £700 for Patrick's second year of training.

The Revd Roy Taylor brings us news of Eunice, Margaret and Patrick after his visits to Kenya. Bishop Samson appreciates our on-going support to pray and financially support Patrick, whom God is calling to be ordained and serve as a priest in the Church in Kenya.

This project is an exciting way that we can contribute to the building of God's kingdom in Africa. When new priests are ordained, Bishop Samson is able to set up new parishes in his diocese. This means better provision of services, pastoral care and evangelism in the villages and towns of Kenya. Please give financially to OAK to support Patrick and continue to pray for Margaret, Eunice and Patrick.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Bryson (OAK Co-ordinator)

Mothers' Union

Ena Jones

What is the Mothers' Union?

The Mothers' Union is a world wide organisation, whose aim is to support family life in every way we can: to be faithful in regular prayer and bible reading, and to share God's love with those we meet on life's journey.

The Mothers' Union at All Saints

Our branch here at All Saints meets in the Parish Centre at 2.30pm on the second Wednesday and in addition to a few husbands, embraces members from St Luke's, St Peter's, and the Church of the Good Shepherd. We also have a linked branch in Australia (St Luke's, Toowoomba) with whom we correspond.

Our meetings and projects

During the year we visit meetings at Boyne Hill Baptist, and Edmond Campion Churches, and they also come to us. We appreciate these ecumenical associations, and feel that they broaden our outlook. Particularly valuable is our friendship with St Luke's, with whom we share some joint activities, and who are this year hosting our Deanery Festival.

Our chief project is supporting "Feed the Children", for which we collect babies' and children's clothing, toiletries etc, making a special offering each Lent. Regular blanket sewing sessions organised by St Luke's are much enjoyed, and we have made 300 blankets since Christmas. Many of these blankets went to Kenya, in which country we have a special interest through our support of O.A.K.

A first for us this year was to host the "Women's World day of Prayer" on March 7th at our own church - All Saints. The W.W.D.P is an ecumenical organisation which prays for women throughout world, and the service this year was planned by the women of Guyana. All Saints Junior School sang for us, St Luke's members danced and made a display about Guyana for us, and our own "Flower Fairies" made flower arrangements for the church and the tea tables. Great all age team work!

Each year, a few of us go on a three day retreat at Cold Ash, organised by the diocese, and this year it is over the weekend of May 9th to 11th, the theme is "Who do you think you are?" It is being taken by Canon Barbara Doubtfire, and like all our activities is not restricted to MU members.

Our Oxford diocese is linked with three Dioceses in the Congo, and each year we have a wave of prayer when each branch in the diocese prays for them over a period of five days - this year it is from June 11th - 15th and our branch will have its own 30 minute slot.

On the home front, apart from our regular meetings, we continue to hold our informal tea parties, outings, coffee mornings etc, and to give prayerful support and care when needed, wherever possible. Family life is very important at all its stages, and the need for help and friendship to those who are left behind when children leave home, partners die, or increasing age narrows the horizon, is something we try to recognise and be aware of.

We have a notice board at the back of the church, on which our current programme, and the work and activities of the Mothers' Union at home and abroad are displayed, and I do hope you will spare a moment from time to time to see what is happening in our branch.

Bell Ringers

John Payne

With our limited number of ringers we have only missed ringing for 5 Sunday morning services, three less than on previous year.

We continue to be particularly grateful to Marcia Dieppe for her continued support and to Robert Lister who also joins us when he can.

Stan Mason who rang at Maidenhead died on his 90 Birthday, 25 October.

Special ringing during the year

Jan 13 - Hosted a Branch Surprise Practice.

May 11 - We had visiting Ringers.

17 Aug - Hosted a Ringing Course - Crowthorne

1 Sept - We had visiting Ringers from Billingshurst

1 Nov - Rang 1/4 peal of Plain Bob Triples for All Saints Day.

19 Nov - Rang 1/4 peal of Plain Bob Major for the Queen's Diamond Wedding

Rung for 8 Weddings.

Problems up the Belfry.

At the top of the stairs, the masonry, (and the joints in the masonry) is still weathering and letting water in. When the rain and wind is in the appropriate direction enough water comes in to run all the way down the stairs and form a puddle at the bottom.

Our emergency lighting up the belfry, has stopped working, and we are awaiting an electrician.

The fire extinguisher has now been replaced.

In the Bell Tower, there are still two problems:-

a) Water getting in the holes in the spire and rusting the bell frame and bell fittings, and this will eventually rot the wooden floor, (ceiling to the ringing chamber),

and

b) The holes in the spire, are letting birds in, both pigeons and smaller birds, who both nest in the bell chamber, and foul the fabric of the church. No change since last year.

Tuesday Club

Jan Moss

Our History

Boyne Hill Tuesday Club originated in the nineteen-sixties as the Young Wives' Group. It provided a forum for young women to listen to speakers who weren't their own much-loved toddlers and enabled them to spend an evening with their contemporaries. Later it became the Ladies' Group but now it is the more inclusive Tuesday Club.

Our Meetings

Meeting on the first and third Tuesdays of the month; in 2006 members spent an energetic evening line-dancing, heard about the work of the local Air Ambulance and then raised money for it at a Bring & Buy Sale. That also incorporated our inaugural Poetry Evening where members brought along a favourite poem to share. We were all brought to shame when one member read her own work to us! We have a speaker at most meetings but also enjoy a meal out at a local restaurant occasionally and have an annual ramble in June to wind up our programme. New members are always welcome; meetings advertised on the church weekly pewsheets.

Deanery Synod Report

David Morgan

The Deanery held four Synods during the year and organised Living Usefulness an event to strengthen the links between Churchwardens and the Deanery. It was held at Windsor Castle in the spring.

Topics at Deanery Synod ranged from raising awareness of needs of deaf people in church, to communion for children. The autumn Deanery Synod was held at All Saints Church. A demonstration of Godly Play was given; we learnt about Messy Church with everyone present taking part in a Messy Church activity – helping to make Joseph’s coat of many colours.

Rt Rev John Prichard, Bishop of Oxford was the main speaker at the December Synod. After a day visiting the Deanery, Bishop John talked to us about the challenges and opportunities facing the church, and outlined ways of growing the quality of a community.

We said farewell to our Area Dean, Canon Theresa Scott at this Synod, and wished her well in her move in the early New Year to Bicester, to become Team Rector.

Parish Centre Users Committee

Stella Harding

Representatives of All Saints Church and the users of the Parish Centre continued to meet every 3 months during 2007, helping to fulfil the aim of fostering communications between the two groups and to increase awareness of the various issues that exist with respect to both the Church and the Parish Centre building. Six user groups are regularly represented on the Committee: Brownies, Rainbows, Mothers & Toddlers, Alzheimers Carers, A.A, and the Courtyard Complimentary Therapy Centre. Sadly, we shared the news at the end of the year that one of our members, Bob Pocock had passed away; Bob played an active part at meetings and will be missed.

Whilst much of the agenda and ensuing discussion continued to focus on general maintenance issues and the refurbishment of the Parish Centre, the Committee also proposed some amendments and updating of the Parish Centre Hire Agreement which are to be presented to the PCC for consideration.

Sylvia Dension, assisted by husband Reg, continues to do a wonderful job in keeping the Parish Centre clean and tidy; both play an important part in the overall presentation of the building.

Work on the fabric of the Parish Centre was limited to essential maintenance and repairs in 2007 as all fund raising efforts focused on the Church spire. It was possible, through the Committee and its meetings, to share news of these efforts and progress made with the user groups.

It has also been possible, through the Committee, to continue to call upon the skills and talents amongst Committee members and their friends / colleagues / associates when more minor repairs or maintenance activity has been required in the kitchen or hall; in particular, Mr Stevens, Beckie the Brownies Leader's father and Reg Denison continued to provide valuable help and support.

The activities of the small sub-committee, formed to consider longer term issues such as refurbishment of the kitchen, were temporarily suspended, pending the successful completion the of the fund raising efforts for the spire. The Committee and the Church remain very keen and fully committed to pursuing the aim of refurbishing the kitchen and the hall floor and are also considering replacing the current heating system.

The Committee continues to provide a valuable means of communication and information sharing with the Parish Centre Users Group and through its meetings it has been possible to more easily address and resolve any issues or areas of concern.

8th Maidenhead Rainbow Guides

Alwyn Kimber

Rainbow Guides are the youngest members of the Girl Guiding UK, age range from 5 – 7 yrs old. All Saints has a thriving unit of 12-14 girls who meet between 4:30pm and 5:30pm every Friday in term-time at the Parish Centre. The leaders are Alwyn Kimber (Duck), Brigitte Ranger (Swan) and Heather Noyce (Hedgehog), ably assisted by Lucy Saxton and Cara Guest.

Activities this year

We have fun playing games, making things, cooking, singing and stories (usually each meeting is based on one theme). Our meetings have included making pancakes, Valentine gifts, jewellery, and a Spanish evening plus much, much more.

In the summer, we held a sponsored mini Olympics and raised £50 towards the Church Spire Fund.

We also opened a restaurant (for 45 mins only). The Rainbows had decorated the invitations & menus and had chosen various jobs such as greeters, waitresses, wine-waiters, plate-clearers, cashiers etc. On the day, 19 parents and friends turned up for a variety of quiches and gateaux expertly served by the girls. Rather a hectic time for the leaders, but this was well rewarded by the reaction of the girls and their parents.

In addition to the normal meetings, last October we celebrated the Rainbows 20th birthday with a big party at Bracknell Leisure Centre.

The highlight of our year was the visit of Bishop Stephen. We visited the Earth Balloon that had been erected in the Church. The Bishop then told some stories and taught us some songs. He was brilliant with the girls, sitting on the floor with them, chatting and playing his guitar. He then came back to the Parish Centre and had tea with us.

Joining Us

If you would like your daughter to join us please contact Alwyn on 01628 670176, but please be quick as we have a long waiting list.

Traidcraft Fair Trade Products

Rachel Andrew

During 2007, the people of All Saints Church have continued to support the Traidcraft stall and our efforts to support producers of products we all use every day. Sales for 2007 were £1,303.34 - the small amount of profit the stall makes because we buy in bulk pays for the fair trade coffee and tea we buy for after church refreshments.

Our “best sellers”

Sometimes I am asked which products we sell the most of, so in preparing this report I took a look at the most ordered items for our stall. I don't think anyone would be surprised that sweets and chocolate feature highly as favourites for young and not so young alike. In 2007 you bought 90 bars of Divine milk chocolate, enjoyed 48 packets of cookies and 34 bags of vanilla fudge. You did however buy 23 boxes of muesli - so at least the day is starting with a healthy breakfast!

The Earth Balloon Day

We ran a stall next to The Earth Balloon and in addition to selling fair trade products, we had lots of information available, talked to people about fair trade and had some different things out to taste. We also ran a raffle of a hamper of fair trade products raising money for church funds. Fair trade fit very well into the theme of the day and everyone we spoke to was interested to hear about the issues involved.

Looking forward

As Traidcraft has become established in church it would be lovely if we could have a stall even on days that I am not able to be in church due to other commitments. If anyone would be interested in helping out by running the stall on occasional Sunday mornings please speak to me.

Why does fair trade matter?

To make a lasting difference to producers and their families, people need to be encouraged and reminded about the benefits of buying fair trade all year round. Many churches see running a Traidcraft stall as part of their Christian response to poverty - and buying products that you will use anyway or as a treat for Sunday teatime is a simple yet really effective way of helping others.

Traidcraft is a Christian-based fair trade organisation, and was formed by a group of people concerned about issues of Christian witness through trade. Christians are called to love the poor – but also to ask questions as to why they are poor.

Fair trade is not about charity, it's about giving people the dignity of working their way out of poverty, providing opportunity and hope for the future. It's about developing a different way of buying things, whether we're choosing coffee or cards, tea or t-shirts.

Thank you for your support of Traidcraft in this past year, it makes heaving heavy boxes out of the car every Sunday morning worthwhile!

Role of School Governor

Brigitte Ranger

In 2006 the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education appointed me a Foundation Governor at Boyne Hill Church of England Infant and Nursery School.

This involves attending monthly meetings of the Main Governing Body. Governors are also required to join one additional committee and I have opted for the Teaching and Learning Committee. My individual governor responsibility is Special Educational Needs and I am hoping to become more involved with this in the future.

I spend two mornings each week helping in a year 2 class (these children will start junior school in September). The school also runs a "Reading Recovery" scheme for children who need extra help with reading and writing to get them to the required level. Margaret Philips and I have each been assigned two children and spend half an hour twice a week with each one. It is wonderful to see how individual attention and encouragement improves their reading and writing skills and, as a result, they really look forward to these sessions. Other people also visit the school to take part in this scheme which the school would like to extend to even more children.

This is just one of the ways members of our congregation can become involved in this Church School. If you are interested and have some time to spare to help in any way please let me know.

Last year both Ofsted and Diocesan Inspections resulted in excellent reports. Since becoming a governor I have learned much about the school and am committed to its ethos and values. It is a very friendly school benefiting from incredibly dedicated and caring staff, headed by an exceptional head teacher.

Messy Church

Lynn May

Messy Church was launched at All Saints to provide a different style of worship that would appeal to families. In essence we aim to provide time where families can have fun, worship together and enjoy fellowship. Much of our initial inspiration came from Lucy Moore's book "Messy Church". Lucy set up the original Messy Church in Portsmouth to provide an alternative church environment for those families who found the traditional Sunday Service difficult. Her book has provided much needed advice regarding the format of Messy Church and also a wealth of ideas for themes and activities.

During 2007, three meetings were held covering the themes of creation, working as a team and story of Joseph. Each session was well received by children and adults alike, and so this year we are running five sessions.

We meet on at Saturday between 4-6pm at All Saints Junior School. The format for each session remains loosely the same, with each session based around a different theme. For the first 45 minutes "messy" activities are offered relating to the theme - during past sessions we have made masks, decorated biscuits, and decorated Joseph's coat. It is a time for everyone to get creative and get stuck in. Following the activities is a short service (approx 30mins). This is simple in style, with the children encouraged to join in and show everyone the things that have been made. Communion is offered and worship is sung, accompanied by the guitar. We finish off by sharing a meal, giving everyone to a chance to sit down and chat - adults and children alike.

We all have great fun planning and running Messy Church and hope that those who attend also have fun. Currently attendance is about 20-30 at each session, consisting of families from within church. However the dates of Messy Church are put in the school newsletter and also given out at baptism preparation, so we hope that as we continue, we will grow to reach those beyond congregation of All Saints.

Flowers

Barbara Bannister

It is a pleasure to report on another successful year when we have had a good display of flowers in church every week, made possible by generous sponsorship from members of the congregation. The flower arranging is entirely self-supporting and does not make any financial demands on the church finances.

During the year we were able to make a donation to the Spire & Restoration Fund from the money earned from our weddings over the last few years. Wedding arrangements are very time-consuming, but we enjoy working together on them and being able to support special appeals from the church as they arise.

Thanks are due to Marian Duncombe, Jean Kelly and Jean Balchin for their hard work throughout the year. We are extremely sad to say goodbye to Jean Kelly who has been doing church flowers for around 25 years and moves to Scotland in early April. We shall miss her exceptional skills and her lovely personality which raised our spirits on so many occasions. We wish her well in her new life.

It is a great joy to welcome Katie Easthill to the rota to take over Jean Kelly's weeks. Katie has joined us on festivals and weddings for some time and has agreed to do flowers on a regular basis. Thank you Katie. In addition Brigitte Ranger has agreed to work on an ad hoc basis initially, with a view to joining the rota in the future.

Brigitte also has helped at festivals and weddings. We very much look forward to other people joining us in this interesting and rewarding task. We are a friendly group and support one another in every way, please do think about coming along and working with one of us to see how you get on. As I have said before many hands make light work and you can always start in a small way and progress to grater things! I look forward to talking to you about this at any time - don't be shy, we need you and can help you to start a new hobby.

All Saints School

Bridget McCleod



When Father Jeremy first asked if we would be interested in helping All Saints Church celebrate their 150th Anniversary it sounded like an opportunity too good to be missed! This could be a chance to develop a true sense of community between the Church and the three local C of E schools; Boyne Hill Infant and Nursery, All Saints Junior and Altwood Secondary.

We agreed that rather than limit our participation to one special service we would like to take part in several activities, all of which would provide opportunities for us to work together and enjoy this special year. Several ideas for themes were discussed, most of which had an historical feel to them, but at one of our early meetings Kathleen Higgins, Headteacher at Altwood School suggested we should not just look back at the past 150 years but also forward to the future and how the children at our schools could look after the world in years to come. We all agreed and in January the project was christened "As it was in the beginning, is now, and every shall be."

A plan of events was organised: Each school would spend the year working towards the national 'Eco-School' award, a process that would make all of us, children, teachers, parents and governors consider the impact mankind has had on our planet and reflect on ways in which we could make a difference in the future. Tim Morton, the Local Authority's consultant on sustainability issues joined us, with his Earth Balloons, and provided several ideas on how we could use the resource both as a starting point and a focal point on the final weekend.

As the sustainability theme gathered pace we began work on our celebration concert. The schools joined together for rehearsals of 'Along Came Man' a cantata considering the complex problems of protecting nature in a simple and direct way. Sue Graves, from All Saints Church, sang the solo part of The Spirit the Earth and each school added their own drama and dance to bring the various animals and settings to life.

The highlight of the celebrations was Bishop Stephen's visit in November. All three schools had managed to achieve the Eco-School Award and Bishop Stephen was able to present certificates during his visit. In keeping with the theme for the year, trees were planted in the grounds of Boyne Hill and All Saints schools, and at Altwood Bishop Stephen chaired an extremely thought provoking debate on the issue of sustainability. With the largest Earth Balloon erected in the Church that Saturday, and activities for young and old alike, we really felt we had achieved the sense of community hoped for at the beginning of the year.

And it doesn't end there! In an effort to build on the work of last year the schools and All Saints Church have joined together to raise funds for WaterAid an international charity which aims to help the poorest people in the world gain access to safe water, sanitation and to learn about hygiene.