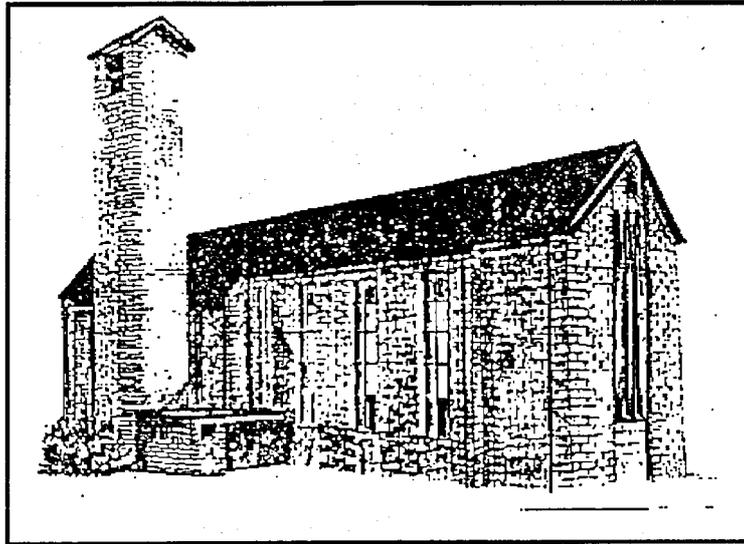


**THE PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. PHILIP
CHADDESSEN**



1955 - 1995

The Parish Church of St. Philip, Chaddesden
A Celebration of Forty Years of Parish Life
1955 - 1995
by Anne Sherwood and Roy Farthing

A New Parish

During the dark days of the Second World War Britain's energies were focussed upon survival. However, as the war came to an end and daily life recovered a sense of normality people became increasingly optimistic about the future. As a response to the optimism and to fulfil the needs of ordinary people for solid security Britain began to build houses. The late 40s and early 50s saw the dawning of the housing estate age. Councils up and down the country encouraged the building of homes to reflect and to promote security and prosperity.

Derby, like other Midland towns and cities, began to set aside large tracts of land for the building of homes and the establishment of whole new communities. These houses were not the austere terraced homes built by the Victorians to satisfy the needs of a rapidly expanding labour market with scant regard paid to the needs and comfort of the occupiers. Most of the houses built during the late 1940s were semi-detached homes with their own gardens front and back and were set on networks of streets and avenues.

It was during this period that plans were made to extend the housing built during the previous - decade along Max Road and its surrounding area. The new housing around Taddington Road was planned to consist of low-cost homes suitable for families. Perched on high ground overlooking the town, the area was given character and identity by naming the streets after Peak District villages and towns and demarcating the property boundaries with low stone walls reminiscent of the dry stone walls of the Peak District.

This new community required amenities including schools and shops. In addition to these utilitarian buildings people also required a place of worship. A new parish was created on the borders of Chaddesden and Breadsall to serve the sprawling estates including the area known as Breadsall Hilltop. Mr. Reg. Hoptroff recalls that, before the church was built the land was open meadow where cattle grazed. Two footpaths crossed the area, one going to the village of Breadsall and the other to the old isolation hospital, Derwent Hospital.

In 1954 a young priest, Jeremy Wootton, moved into a house on Taddington Road to begin his ministry. Bishop Rawlinson, then Bishop of Derby, arranged for a wooden hut to be erected to serve as a meeting place for the faithful. Together with men from the Tenants' Association Fr. Wootton worked hard to decorate the building and get it ready for worship. The first Eucharist was held in 'The Hut' on Sunday 7th November 1954 and six people attended. The text of the sermon was 'What mean you by this service?' Exodus Chapter 12.

A Sunday School was planned and on the first occasion 300 children arrived - a daunting number in the small hut with only 6 teachers!

At first the parishioners met together in The Church Hut on Brailsford Road. Plans were drawn up for a suitable building which would become the new Parish Church. The architect was Mr C Milburn of Sunderland.

Local industries were generous in their response to requests for monies and donated large sums of money. Together with a Diocesan grant the total reached the sum of £25,000. With this money available it was agreed that work could begin and there was great faith that, with prayer and hard work, the remainder of the monies required could be raised as the church was being built. The church and the vicarage (completed in August 1955) was built by the Derby firm of Messrs Gee, Walker and Slater

In February 1954 the Duke of Devonshire was invited to lay the foundation stone of the new church later that year.

The Laying of the Foundation Stone

On Sunday, 21st November 1954 just before 3 o' clock a large crowd gathered on the rising ground around the site of the new church building. A large green canopy supported by four upright poles protected the participants from the biting wind. Choirs from St. Mary's, Chaddesden, St. Mark's, Derby, and All Saints', Breadsall, under the direction of Mr. H.W. Burton the organist and choirmaster of St. Mark's assisted with music for the service.

Bishop Rawlinson, himself a parishioner of the new church, attended the ceremony and watched as The Duke of Devonshire laid the foundation stone.

After the ceremony The Priest-in-Charge, Revd. Wootton, led the congregation back to the hut for refreshments and speeches. Everyone was thrilled when the Duke of Devonshire, in his speech, asked permission to make an endowment to the church from monies at his disposal in order to strengthen his family ties with the area. Now there was less than £2000 to be raised to meet the cost of building the church.

The Consecration of St. Philip's

The Revd. Alfred Conway, then Vicar of St. Edmund's, Allenton was appointed Vicar of the newly-constituted parish of St Philip's Chaddesden

The church was consecrated on Saturday 17th December 1955 at 3pm by the Assistant Bishop of Derby, the Rt. Revd George Sinker. The Duke of Devonshire who had made an endowment to the church when laying the foundation stone was present at the service to see the new church opened.

There were several distinguished guests present the ceremony in addition to the Duke and these included the Sheriff of Derbyshire and the Deputy Mayor of Derby, Coun. Ling and Mrs Ling.

The service was preceded by an outdoor procession of at least 18 robed clergy led by Bishop Sinker and including the Archdeacons of Derby and Chesterfield and the Rural Deans of Derby, Melbourne, and Ilkeston.

When the procession reached the door of the church it halted and the Bishop used his pastoral staff to knock three times upon the outer door. The doors were opened and the keys were presented to the Bishop and then placed upon the altar.

As the procession entered the church it was led by the Bishop first of all to the font and then to the lectern, the pulpit and the aumbry where he blessed each one separately. At last the procession reached the altar and it was consecrated for worship. The bare altar was then vested and the ornaments were placed in position. Finally the Sentence of Consecration was read by the Diocesan Registrar, Mr H.S.Rees.

Many of the choristers who sang at the service came from Fr Conway's previous church, St Edmunds at Allenton.

Mr S. Long and Mr S Adams took office as the very first church wardens. The Church of St Philip's was set to meet the needs of its parishioners for many years to come.

The First Sunday.

The work of St. Philip's Church began on Sunday 18th December with a Parish Eucharist attended by 25 parishioners. There were three other services during the day including two for children. It must have been a very moving occasion for the people who had worked so hard to see their dream fulfilled to be meeting together in their own Parish church to receive the Eucharist from the hands of their own parish priest!

The first marriage at St Philip's took place on Saturday 4th February 1956 between Edward Arnold Thorpe, bachelor, store-keeper of 107 Cowsley Road, Derby and Madelaine Constance Lowe, spinster, general finishing hand of 26 Haydn Road, Chaddesden.

Numbers grew quickly at first and on Sunday 22nd April 1956 the first confirmation service was held in the church. The Bishop of Derby was presented with twenty nine candidates, seven men and twenty two women. Among this first group of candidates was Mr and Mrs Wetton's son, Alan and their daughter, Sybil. Sybil was later to become an evangelist as a member of the Church Army.

The Parish Church of St. Philip, Chaddesden

The parish church of St. Philip, together with its attractive vicarage, was built on a sizeable plot of land bordered by Taddington Road, Ashover Road, Greenwood Avenue and Buxton Road. In keeping with the Peak District theme the church was constructed of blocks and then faced with 'Davis Stone'. This gives the building the appearance of having been built from rocks containing crystals of feldspar and fluorspar which are found high in the Derbyshire hills. In fact the stone is 'synthetic' in that it is made from powdered and reconstituted limestone quarried near Bakewell!

In keeping with its modern setting the church was not built in the traditional cruciform shape of earlier English churches but as a simple rectangular building. Unusually the sanctuary and altar are placed at the west end of the building.

From the outside the building is somewhat austere in appearance and is dominated by a simple rectangular tower built half way along the north side of the church close to the entrance.

The tower is reminiscent of a campanile or bell-tower but was in fact designed to represent a factory or mill chimney and thus to remind people of the value of industry to the local community and God's gift of technology to the World.

The main entrance door of the church opens onto a small vestibule faced entirely with the same Davis stone as the exterior. In this vestibule is the entrance to the tower. Anyone brave (or fool-hardy) enough can climb a vertical ladder and gain a panoramic view of the area. This tower houses the church's single bell which was rescued from Derwent village church submerged beneath Ladybower Reservoir. The bell is chimed before major services and at the consecration of the Elements during the Eucharist.

Double doors lead from the vestibule and into the nave of the church. The interior is light and airy with a high ceiling. The walls are painted white to give a feeling of simplicity and the eyes are drawn upwards to the exposed dark beams of the roof.

Originally the church was designed as a dual-purpose building with a screen which could be folded across to separate the church and sanctuary area from the parish room area. The whole building was originally lit by bulbs mounted upon circular 'cartwheels' suspended from the roof by long chains. These lights, which needed major acrobatic feats every time a bulb needed changing, have long since been replaced by modern lights and 'spot-lights'. The screen has been removed and the building is unequivocally a church.

A local man, Mr. Anthony Knight of Winster Road, was involved in the plastering of the interior of the church prior to its opening. Unlike most plastering jobs where the plasterers are exhorted to produce as smooth as finish as possible, Mr Knight recalls how they were ordered to produce a very rough finish to give the church a feeling of age so that it should not look too modern and new. In effect the plastering emulated the finish found inside many Peak District cottages.

The process of completing the grounds of the church took many years. In 1967-68 Mr Wilf Barson cut out some beds in the lawns and these were planted with rose bushes in memory of departed parishioners. A shrubbery area was planted on the north side of the church close to the tower. The old church hut was dismantled and moved to the scout camp at Drum Hill, the area levelled and plans were made to surface a car park and to provide a play area.

Church Furnishings

Although St Philip's is a relatively new church many of its furnishings are much older. The pews and choir stalls and Bishop's chair originally came from the redundant church of St James, Buxton. The choir stalls are carved with the emblem of St James, a scallop shell, and the initials S.J.

As an encouragement to the choir, one of the stalls bears the text 'God is the King of all the Earth, sing ye praises with understanding' whilst the other declares 'I will sing with the spirit, I will sing with the understanding also.'

The altar is a simple wooden table of beautiful proportions. One of the carpenters who worked on the building of the church, Mr Frank Sugars, was commissioned to make a simple wooden cross and candlesticks to be placed upon the altar.

Above the altar, suspended by chains, hangs a large wooden crucifix dominating the sanctuary. This cross was not original although the sanctuary appears to have been designed for such an ornament. It was given to the church by the sisters from the Convent of The Holy Name in Malvern just before it closed. Fr. Paul Blanch set off in a hired van to collect it together with several statues which now stand in the church.

Erecting the enormous cross was quite a feat. Shunning scaffolding, a long ladder was placed in position and the Crucifix man-handled into position onto its chains. It was one very relieved churchwarden who saw the task completed, the man returned to terra firma and the cross hanging safely from its chains. Unfortunately it was later noticed that, during the tricky operation, the halo surrounding Christ's head had become slightly dislodged. No-one cared to get out the ladder again to effect repairs and, over the years, the halo has slowly slipped slightly further forward. Presumably there will come a day when the halo will need to be restored to its correct position and a member of the maintenance team will have to climb the ladder!

The silver chalice and patten used to celebrate the Eucharist were loaned to St Philip's Church by the Cathedral for an indefinite period.

Just inside the entrance door, on the right, stands the font. Traditionally the font is placed close to the entrance to the church to symbolise entrance: just as worshippers enter the church building so the newly-baptised enter membership of The Church. The font had been painted to match the walls of the church and people would be forgiven in thinking that it was installed as new when the church was built. However, the font came from the church of St Mary, Chaddesden where it was found discarded in the graveyard. It is believed that the font dates back at least to medieval times and may even be Saxon. In its original setting it must have been used for baptising converts when the area around Max Road was meadow and woodland.

Over the years many parishioners and well-wishers have donated furnishings to the church. It would be unfair to single out the gifts of a few when so many have made such generous contributions. Many items in the church bear the names of those who presented the items or the names of loved ones. Times change and the church's requirements alter. Some gifts cease to be used or are replaced with more modern or more efficient items. This is to be expected as the church struggles to remain effective in a modern world. However it does not mean that the gifts of the faithful which may be no longer used or which have been replaced have not been valued. All these, gifts large or small have helped to further and sustain the rich fabric of worship and praise in St Philip's for the past 40 years.

Some items of church furnishing were purchased through parish fund-raising. A novel idea, to collect a mile of pennies, was begun to provide much needed funds. The first item to be purchased was an altar frontal of white Celanese silk with gold and blue orphreys. The fabric was made at the Spondon works and then sent to London to be made up by the firm of Watts of Dacre Street, Westminster. The frontal was dedicated at a Saturday night service led by the Vicar and was attended by Mr D Shaw who represented the British Celanese factory. Thus once again St Philip's celebrated the links between the local Church and Industry uniting the sacred with the secular.

The Visit of Her Majesty, The Queen

On 28th March 1957 the young Queen Elizabeth together with her consort, Prince Philip, visited Repton School. As part of the visit the royal party spent time in Derby and toured several local institutions including the Royal Crown Derby works on Osmaston Road where a presentation was made.

The royal party, together with local dignitaries and clergy, then travelled along Nottingham Road to Chaddesden. Arrangements had been made for Her Majesty to visit the new church of St Philip's and give royal approbation to the work that was being done. In the five days preceding the visit The Vicar estimated that at least one hundred people had worked in the church to prepare for the event. Many people camped out on the recreation ground adjoining the vicarage and waited eagerly for the procession to appear.

The choir, fully robed, waited in a line along the pathway outside the tower of the church. The Queen and the royal party were welcomed to the church by the Vicar and were conducted around the interior. The Queen graciously assented to sign a visitors book and this book which includes photographs of the visit as well as the Royal signature is one on the church's treasured possessions.

The table upon which the book was placed for the signing was covered with a red cloth made especially for the occasion by British Celanese at Spondon. After the visit this cloth was made into a set of red vestments for use during the Eucharist.

The visit of HM the Queen was a day of great excitement and dignity. Although not a tall woman, the Queen commanded admiration and respect wherever she went. The procession, the attendants and the security arrangements all served to heighten the occasion. However there was one small humorous touch. As the Queen sat down at the small table to sign the book she must have thought that her feet were hidden by the folds of red cloth and she took the opportunity to slip off her shoes to rest her feet. One member of the congregation, a churchwarden's wife looking on anxiously to ensure that nothing was lacking, noted the event with a smile and the comment,

'Now I know she is human, her feet hurt in her smart shoes. I know the feeling!'

To commemorate the visit of HM The Queen and Prince Philip, Mrs Rawlinson, wife of the Bishop of Derby, was invited to plant a tree in the church grounds on the following Saturday.

Church Groups and Events

One of the first groups formed to further the work of the church and to provide social meetings was the Young Wives group. Mrs Conway, wife of the Vicar, organised an evening when some of the women in the congregation visited as many local homes as possible to invite lonely or shy housewives to join their group. Meetings were held in the Vicarage and Mrs Conway played the piano and taught members to sing descants to some of the hymns. These descants were often sung at wedding and funerals etc.

The Young Wives group held the more usual fund- raising events including the ubiquitous jumble sales and were also charged with organising parish dances.

Later the group was lead by Florrie Brown and Lily Worthy. In addition to the usual speakers and craft demonstrations the group visited Belper Convent, Denby Pottery, The Co-op Bakery, York and Dovedale. Imagine the consternation of the Group when, on applying to hire a bus for an outing the bus company turned them down on account of an unpaid Church bill!

The Young Wives group thrived until, as Mrs Barson put it, "We became too old for the title and it was changed to Ladies' Group." A number of women joined the newly-formed Mothers' Union at St Philip's and began to support the church in its work and worship.

Not to be outdone by the ladies, some of the men in the congregation formed a Men's Group. Some of their time was spent in maintenance work and in making tables for the church hall. However, they were obviously a multi-talented group. On Shrove Tuesday, 1958, they invited the Ladies Group to a celebration. First they provided an excellent meal for the ladies to enjoy and then entertained them with a show.

Records show that the Men's Group, in addition to regular speakers, visited the Loco Works, Spondon Power Station and several pubs!

The Youth Group

Father Conway was well aware that, if the church was to grow and thrive it had to meet the needs of the teenage members of the congregation. From the very earliest days he tried to ensure that they were given opportunities to share the fellowship.

One Easter Monday, despite a taxing week of preparing and conducting the services of Holy Week and Easter, Fr Conway and about twenty young people from the congregation boarded the 'Hikers Special' train to Rowsley. Together they tramped over Stanton Moor to Birchover and then on to Robin Hood's Stride for lunch. They returned via Bonsall Moor to Cromford where they caught the train home.

Many of the families who had moved into the Parish had young children and they were steadily growing up. It was felt that youth work should be a priority during the early 60s. A Church Army Captain, Ron Bussell, arrived at St Philip's to develop a Youth Club. I wonder how many respectable members of the congregation remember attending a Beatnik Ball when a disreputable-looking group of people met together to raise money and to enjoy themselves.

Ron Bussell and Mrs Conway also took about a dozen teenagers on a week's visit to Austria - not your usual Youth Club outing!

In 1961 a Carnival was held in the church grounds. Spondon Carnival Band provided music for the procession. The Carnival Queen, Miss Jean Hunt, sat on the leading float and the uniformed organisations followed in parade. Stall and games provided amusement and everyone seemed to enjoy the event. In the evening a fancy dress dance was held in the church hall to music provided by

'Ken Barker and The Jets'. Where are they now? At the end of the day, more than £70 had been raised towards the building of the Youth Centre.

The carnival, with its Carnival Queen seems to have been quite a grand occasion each year. One of the early Queens was Julie Barson who was an enthusiastic member of the Youth Club. She was just sixteen when she was crowned Carnival Queen and had her photograph taken with the Mayor of Derby who was present at the event.

As the Youth Club flourished and Uniformed Organisations were formed new premises were required. The hut was fitted out with a bar and modern decor although a larger more permanent building was planned.

Many people volunteered to help with the building of a new hall. It was designed with two wings, one to be used as a general meeting and function room and the other as hobbies and special activities room. A small room at one end of the hobbies room was designated a workshop area for woodwork and metalwork. The area between the two wings was surfaced to provide suitable space for netball, tennis and 5-a-side football.

The Evergreens Club providing social occasions for the elderly used the building during the afternoon and during the evening the Centre was used by 100-120 children on most nights of the week. On Saturday mornings a play club was organised for the benefit of the younger children and this was extended to meet the needs of older children during the school holidays.

The new Youth Centre was opened on Tuesday 12th July 1966 by the Bishop of Derby (Rt Revd Geoffrey Allen) after a service in church. One could say the occasion went with a bang - as the refreshments were being prepared there was an explosion in the kitchen! No-one was hurt but no doubt it added interest to the occasion and ensured that it was unlikely to be forgotten in a hurry.

The Thespians or Much Ado about Nothing

Several members of the congregation including Sid Brown and Percy Raynor were very interested in acting. Members of the Men's Group were encouraged to build a stage at the east end of the church and rehearsals began. For a number of successive years the theatre group played to a packed house.

One pantomime very nearly led to the painful demise of a curate. It was during a performance of the pantomime 'Cinderella'. David Pickering, the curate at the time was playing the role of Buttons. One act required Buttons to be sprayed with crazy foam by another member of the cast. Unfortunately the squirting was done with such exuberance that Fr. Pickering was unable to breathe and began to gasp for air and then to choke.

Luckily two trained nurses were in the cast and immediate medical attention averted a tragedy. However, poor Cinderella stood on stage wondering what would happen when Buttons was supposed to make his entrance. There was no question of Fr. Pickering continuing who else was available?

Buttons' cue came..... and onto the stage bounded Syd Brown, old enough to be Buttons' father and considerably taller. The bell-boy cap just about fitted but the jacket was several sizes too small and refused to fasten. The audience, who were unaware of the life-of-death drama being enacted backstage, were stunned, as was Cinderella! Undaunted Buttons cheerily shouted his catch phrase 'Hello Kids' as usual. Unusually he was met with silence. 'Hello Kids,' he shouted again. 'Hello, Mr Brown,' came the reply. Thankfully Fr. Pickering recovered enough to resume his performance but was troubled by a cough for several weeks afterwards.

The drama group did not only perform pantomimes. During Fr Lovegroves time they were responsible for performing a very serious play for Good Friday. Sid Brown, hero of the pantomimes, was one of

the cast. Sid was a talented producer and director. He could encourage his cast to deliver their lines with expression and to act their parts convincingly. However, as an actor he had a very serious problem, he could never remember his own lines!

Fr. Lovegrove was a very enthusiastic thespian and took a part in the Good Friday Drama. Unfortunately he was habitually humorous and a certain member of the cast found it impossible to deliver one particular speech with a straight face. In rehearsal the lines invariably caused embarrassed confusion. What would happen at the performance? It was unthinkable that such a solemn occasion should be interrupted by unseemly and uncalled for hilarity. Whether it was the support of the cast or the solemnity of the occasion the drama was enacted with due reverence (much to the relief of the offender) and the group were invited to perform a repeat performance.

Tragedy and Romance

When Father Reynolds became Parish priest he allowed his curates to live at the vicarage. One of the curates was David Pickering who came to the parish from Kelham Theological College. Sadly David's mother died just before he was ordained leaving David with the task of being responsible for his younger sister. A vicarage with two men did not seem a suitable environment for a young girl and Carol, who was still at boarding school, spent her holidays with Mr and Mrs Barson. When Carol married she made her own wedding dress on Mrs Barsons' sewing machine and the reception was held in the Youth Centre.

Another of Fr Reynolds' curates was Fr. John Marshall. As Fr. John was a bachelor he also moved into the vicarage. Fr Reynolds was the chaplain of the Derwent Hospital and was regularly 'on call'. Fr Marshall frequently assisted with the services held at the hospital and became attracted to one of the nursing sisters and the couple were eventually married. They stayed in the parish until Fr Marshall became Vicar of Swinderby in Lincolnshire.

Music

In the early days the Church Hut was furnished with a piano. One item which was considered a necessity prior to the opening of the church was an organ. Unfortunately funds did not run to the purchase of a new model and the church managed to obtain an old pipe organ which was installed facing the congregation and just outside the Gents' Toilet! This organ was purchased from the Alvaston Organ Company although it seems very likely that they had merely done some remedial renovation work upon it.

An all-male choir was formed to lead the singing at Sunday morning and afternoon services. Mr Syd Long acted as choirmaster and about eight men and fifteen boys sang each Sunday. In fact there were so many boys in the choir that it was always a struggle to fit everyone in and one member recalls that the last person into the choir stall frequently had no place to sit and had to squirm and wriggle to get his bottom onto the seat.

Then, as now, there was a lack of tenor voices and choir members were always on the look-out for men who could join the tenor section. David Long joined the choir as a ten year old and remained there for many years. One day the inevitable happened and his voice began to change. His father, the choirmaster, insisted that he should become a tenor as the choir lacked tenor voices. Luckily nature agreed with the choirmaster's decision and David remained a tenor in the choir until he left the area. Choir practice was held twice each week and each practice began with the unpopular solo singing of scales. All choristers were expected to sing for the Sunday morning service and then to reappear for Evensong. Some choristers were even expected to attend Sunday School during the afternoon although this sometimes resulted in spirited argument and even refusal.

The old organ did not last long and another organ was purchased, possibly from the St Mary's Mission Church in Alvaston. This organ was designed to be pumped manually but progress demanded that an electric pump be installed. Unfortunately the pump was too powerful for the organ and was in danger of damaging the instrument. Ingenuity won the day and huge rocks were placed on top of the bellows to restrict the amount of inflation.

The novelty of the early days of the church began to wear off and fewer boys came forward to join the choir. The decision was made to invite women and girls into the choir and this tradition has continued to the present day. The first three girls to be admitted to the choir were Elsie Hesketh, her sister, and Fr. Conway's daughter.

One Sunday morning preparations were made for the Eucharist as usual but no organist appeared. The service began and still there was no sign of the organist and hymns were sung unaccompanied. Half way through the service the door opened and the organist entered the church, slipped onto the organ stool and confidently began to play, seemingly unaware of the interest his tardiness had generated. There was great relief that the organist had not met with an accident on his way to church. With amusement after the service the congregation learnt that it was the weekend for changing the clocks and the organist had forgotten to put his clock forward.

Organs seem to have always been something of a problem at St Philip's. The 'new' organ was discovered to have woodworm and, on inspection, the baffle boxes were completely eaten away. It was decided that the organ would have to go to prevent other woodwork in the church being infested. There was no money available to buy another organ so it seemed that worship would again be led by a piano. However, an ex-curate of St Philip's offered an alternative. The church he had moved to, in Whittington in North Derbyshire, was a relatively affluent church. It had an electronic organ which was surplus to requirements and which could become available for the sum of £50 (buyer to collect!). It was agreed that this was the church's only hope of getting an organ to tide them over until funds could be raised to purchase a new model.

Once again the intrepid churchwardens, aided and abetted by the curate, hired a transit van and set off for the North confident that within a few hours they would be carrying back to St Philip's another organ at a bargain price. They should have known better.

On arrival they parked the van and went into the church. The organ was no-where to be seen. Instead they were led down a flight of stone steps into the crypt of the church where they saw the organ, still fully assembled and covered in mildew!

Somewhat demoralised they set about dismantling the organ and carrying it up the steps and into the church. Although not a big organ it was very heavy, certainly too cumbersome to man-handle to the church gateway. The van was measured and found to just fit under the old lych gate at the bottom of the church path. Carefully it was reversed through the gateway knocking back both wing mirrors as it went.

The van was driven somewhat disrespectfully through the graveyard and reversed all the way up a flight of stone steps. Once the van was in place the organ was crammed inside the back of the van ready for the journey to Derby. Two people climbed into the front seats... where were the other two to sit? They eventually managed to squeeze themselves on top of and alongside the organ for a rough journey home.

Once back in Chaddesden the organ was unloaded and its casing stripped and polished. Some old stereo speakers were taken from the church hail and connected to the organ and the £50 was found to have been money well spent.

This organ remained at St Philip's until plans were made to purchase a new electronic organ, the first new organ the church had ever owned. Many hours were spent on detailing requirements and considering suitable models. Eventually the present organ was decided upon and an order placed

with the Norwich Organ Company. Again the congregation acted with faith, the order was placed long before the £16,000 was raised to pay for it.

As soon as the decision was made to purchase the new organ a committee was set up to raise money. Many members of the church worked very hard collecting money and organising fund-raising events. A traditional benefactor, The Duke of Devonshire, was approached and responded with a generous donation which, together with the efforts of the fund-raisers, congregation and well-wishers allowed the debt to be cleared. The organ was installed, speakers erected and for the first time in its history St Philip's had an organ to suit its needs rather than a redundant cast-off.

Memories

St Philips may have benefited in the early days from its close association with the Bishop who was one of its parishioners; perhaps that was one reason why the Queen visited the church? However, the idea of a visit from 'the Boss' must have been a little daunting for the clergy. The Bishop would occasionally turn up at Evensong without informing the Vicar and take a place in the congregation.

One Sunday evening the service was almost ready to begin when in strolled the Bishop and sat down. Fr Marshall was due to preach and there was no time to alter or 'improve' his sermon. Various members of the congregation were highly amused at his predicament but Fr Marshall seemed quite at ease. He climbed the pulpit steps, paused and then preached a very well-prepared and apt sermon. The Bishop shocked some members of the congregation by fidgeting all through the service and by not kneeling for prayers. With hindsight these problems were probably the result of old age and infirmity rather than irreverence!

After the Bishop had left the church at the end of the service several members of the congregation congratulated Fr Marshall on his sermon and wondered at his preparation. He laughed and told them that he knew the Bishop was likely to appear from time to time so kept one special sermon in note form inside the pulpit so that it could be produced as required.

St Philip's Church in 1995

The parish of St Philip's has become an area of high-density housing. However, most of the houses built continue to be suitable for families with children. The new housing development at Oakwood, reportedly the biggest housing estate in Europe, has necessitated the building of a new church and the formation of a new parish. The house in Oakwood which was bought as a curate's residence has now been sold as it is unlikely that there will be a curate in the parish in the near future and in many ways it seems as if the golden years of church development are in the past. However, a living church does not stand still and changes are, on the whole, welcomed for the new opportunities they bring.

The old Youth Centre has finally been demolished, the land on the south side of the church and the bottom of the vicarage garden sold and plans passed for the erection of starter homes. These homes will belong to the Walbrook Housing Association and will hopefully become homes for future members of St Philip's congregation. A new church hall has been built on the land between the church and the vicarage. This is a single-roomed building which will be used by all the organisations for their meetings.

The area at the back of the church, formerly the site of the stage, has now been turned into two interconnected meeting rooms. One of these is used during the Eucharist as a creche so that parents of young children are able to retreat from the service if necessary and yet still remain part of the congregation.

The uniformed organisations still meet weekly and the Evergreen Club meets the needs of the elderly. A somewhat older Ladies Group meets weekly and The Mothers' Union is still active. A

Mother and Toddler Club thrives and parishioners continue to bring their babies to the church for Baptism and older children are encouraged to join The Sunday Club which meets during the beginning of the Eucharist Service and then joins the rest of the congregation in time to share Communion with them.

The Parish Eucharist is firmly established as the principal service with Evensong and Benediction being a quiet and reflective service with opportunities to listen to the Word of God and to consider its meaning.

The choir still serves the church at all its sung services. Unlike the early choirs, the balance has now tilted in the opposite direction and the majority of the choir are female with, at present, two men and two boys. Within the last two years three members of the choir have gained the Provost's Award and the Head Chorister has since gone on to achieve a Bishop's Award.

Within the last three years the choir has travelled to Durham to visit the parish of a previous curate. The churchwarden with a record of hiring transit vans was persuaded to hire a mini-bus and transport organist and choir on the long slow journey up the motorway to the North. (Does he have a secret hankering to be a lorry driver?)

During the weekend the choir enjoyed the hospitality of members of the congregation of Hunwick. Saturday morning was spent rehearsing for the evening concert and then everyone piled into the minibus again for the visit to Durham.

Coincidentally Durham cathedral was holding a 'meet the bell-ringers' day and the public was invited to climb the tower to see the ringing chamber and to view the bells. Several members of the choir found themselves in the chamber at the same time and listened intently as the tower master explained how the bells worked and a little of their history. Everything was calm and peaceful, the ringing chamber relaxed and casual.

The tower master invited people to look up the trap door and see the bells at close quarters. Several members of the public made their way to the steps including one young member of the choir who, as he passed a hanging bell rope, calmly took hold of it to move it out of the way. Instantly the tower came to life as several members of the ringing team and the adult members of the choir rushed to ensure that the bell rope was not pulled and the chorister hurtled into the heavens before his time!

The following day the choir sang at the Parish Eucharist at Hunwick. As soon as the service was finished the entire choir, fully robed, rushed from the church, through the newly-fallen snow and into the ubiquitous minibus for a three mile journey to another church where, together with the vicar, they repeated the act of worship. Unfortunately in the haste to get into the minibus feet became entangled with robes and one senior member of the choir spent much of the service trying to disguise the fact that her usually pristine surplice was emblazoned with a large wet footprint

Many of the members of the original congregation are no longer with us. Some of the items they worked so hard to buy or the organisations they spent so much time building up have been replaced by those more suited to present day needs. However their contributions are not forgotten but have become a part of the short history of the church.

Several of the large engineering works which offered employment to the area have now closed down or have drastically cut their work force. Many people in the parish now face long-term unemployment and once again it is difficult to raise money. Vandalism is a problem which eats away at funds but thankfully the vandalism is minor, more irritating than dangerous.

Over the years the interior of the church has been rearranged to meet the needs of the congregation but now the church is once again arranged as it was at the beginning. Modern technology has enabled a sound system to be installed which allows members of the congregation who have difficulty in hearing an opportunity to use a hearing link.

Within the past two years an illuminated cross has been erected on the top of the tower. The cross was the gift of one of the older parishioners and will ensure that the people of the parish are constantly reminded of the church in their midst and of the presence of God.

The last forty years have not been easy but they have been filled with a sense of purpose. Although there have been many worries and much hard work the memories of most of the congregation have been good - humoured and with a sense of fellowship. With God's blessing we look forward to the next forty years as we attempt to follow His plan into the 21st Century.

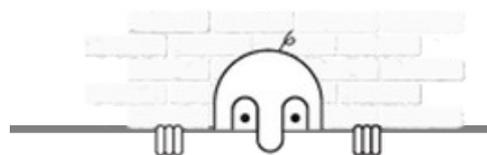
Past Vicars of St. Philip's, Chaddesden (updated to 2018)

1955 - 1963 A.S. Conway
1964 - 1970 S.K. Reynolds
1970 - 1972 J. Featherstone
1972 - 1974 W. Lovegrove
1975 - 1983 J. Young
1984 - 1988 J. Hipkins
1989 - 1992 P. Need
1992 - 2001 G. Reilly
2002 - 2010 J.M. Page
2011 - 2018 R. Shrisunder

The authors wish to express their thanks to the many different people who shared their information and their memories. Over the years memories fade and facts become forgotten. If incidents or events are not as you remember them we apologise.

Some of the material for the book came from archives and libraries. The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance given by Derby Local Studies Library and the Derby Evening Telegraph.

© Anne Sherwood 2020



[Click to return to Home Page](#)