

S T P A U L ' S

SCOTFORTH

A brief history of St Paul's to celebrate
its 125th birthday in 2001

by

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FOREWORD

The first hundred years of the life of the parish of St Paul's, Scotforth, saw remarkable developments, which were outlined by Wilfrid Wolfendale in 'Providence their Guide'. That is now out of print, so, by kind permission of his widow, Muriel Wolfendale, Chapter One of this little book is based on it.

Our family joined St Paul's in 1969 after I was appointed to S Martin's College. 'St Paul's, Scotforth, 125' continues the story into the Millennium, indicating how the parish worked hard to cope with a significant growth in population and a rapidly changing church and society.

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Naming some individuals inevitably risks disappointing others, but the risk was unavoidable and I can only ask for charitable understanding.

'St Paul's, Scotforth, 125' is offered as a small tribute to all who have contributed to the work and worship of St Paul's over 125 years

'to the greater glory of God'.

All Saints Day 2000

PSG

Chapter 1 - The First Hundred Years (1876-1976)

a) A new church is built

‘Scozforde’ is mentioned before the Norman Conquest and, when the mid-nineteenth century saw Lancaster growing in population, Scotforth was a village around a square (where the ‘Boot and Shoe’ is now). A small school (for 20-30 pupils) was in existence before 1826. In 1845 a new building (one room with space for 80-90 pupils) had been financed in Scotforth Square with help from the National Society and the Duke of Hamilton. Curates from Lancaster Priory held services there on Sunday mornings with Sunday School in the afternoon. Houses were steadily being built south of Lancaster along the line of the A6 road. Rural south Lancaster was becoming more urbanised.

Queen Victoria’s reign was a great age of church building for all denominations and in 1870 a committee of concerned men began an appeal for a new Anglican church in Scotforth. Progress was slow, but funds were eventually raised to build the church and create an endowment fund for the Vicar’s modest stipend.

The Building Committee was chaired by an elderly local architect and businessman, Edmund Sharpe. His early interest in Italian Romanesque architecture caused the church to be built with round arches, in Pevsner’s words ‘an anachronism almost beyond belief’ as this style had been generally superseded by pointed ‘Gothic’ arches for a generation. To save money Sharpe returned to his earlier experimental use of terracotta instead of carved stone. As

so often with experimental materials this caused problems externally later in the tower. The total cost was £3490.

Deep controversy was wracking the Church of England over ritual. The 'Oxford Movement' encouraged greater use of colour and ceremonial. St Paul's committee was evangelical! So, to prevent 'pompous processions', there was a narrow door out of the vestry and no central aisle – to the hindrance of brides (and coffins) to this day.

Eventually, after delays caused by a masons' strike and the Bishop's illness, St Paul's was consecrated on February 18, 1876, by Bishop Fraser of Manchester, since that Diocese had been carved out of Chester Diocese in 1847.

The five Trustees, against the wishes of the 'High Church' Vicar of Lancaster, Canon Allen, selected a 'Low Church' Vicar. He was the curate of St John's, Lancaster, William Armitage, who was destined to serve St Paul's until 1914 when he retired at the age of 81.

The parsonage house was provided by Mrs Julia Ripley, as yet another gift to Lancaster. By April 1876 when the first Vestry Meeting was held to elect the two churchwardens the parish boundaries were legally confirmed separating St Paul's from St Mary's, the Parish Church of Lancaster. The population continued to grow, from 1663 in 1871 to 3615 in 1891 (including several hundred patients in the Royal Albert Hospital which had been opened in 1870), but the death of some of the original benefactors, including Edmund Sharpe (1877) and Mrs Ripley (1881) caused more financial problems.

However a small organ was bought in 1885 and the church was extended in 1891 to its present size when Paley and Austin built two more arches and the west transepts to provide seating for 440. Stained glass windows were inserted later in memory of Mr Roper, Mrs Ripley and Mrs Armitage.

b) Church life under Mr Armitage (1876-1914)

Evidence for church life is scarce, but the account book shows that Mattins and Evening Prayer were the principal services on Sundays. A recorded speech by the Vicar suggests that he stressed participation in services, fresh sermons and visiting homes. Alcohol abuse was a Victorian problem too and Mr Armitage was a leader in the local Church of England Temperance Society. He had visited the old Scotforth School from November 1875, and supported moves (after adverse comments from Her Majesty's Inspector) to provide the present Victorian building which opened in November 1879. Pupil numbers rose rapidly to 350, organised in two departments, infants and 'mixed'. The Vicar taught the pupils weekly and developed a well-organised Sunday School for 150 children on Sunday afternoons. No doubt in that age the 'Occasional Offices' of baptisms, weddings and funerals kept him busy too. Years later an old man recalled how Mr Armitage used to walk round the parish with shillings in his pocket to help anyone in need.

Lay leadership was confined to a few gentlemen in those days, some with long service like Richard Willis who was

churchwarden from 1884 to 1908 and died aged 92 in 1924. Sidesmen began to be appointed from 1893, and the first curate was appointed in 1902, when the Vicar was 69, at a salary of £136. The Annual Vestry Meetings were held literally in the tiny Vestry until 1909 when they moved to the school. But the population continued to grow, doubling to 7225 by 1911. The Lancaster School Board opened Greaves School in 1907, causing Scotforth School numbers to be reduced to 96 infants and 164 in the Upper School. There were enough Methodists for Greaves Chapel to be built in 1909.

The parish became more urbanised as more people moved out of over-crowded central Lancaster and factories like Williamson's and Storey's drew more into the town. Church finances changed as regular collections replaced the old system of paying rents for pews and holding special collections.

c) *Mr Griffiths, the Church Council and the Parish Hall (1914-1930)*

Mr Armitage retired in 1914, aged 81, to be succeeded by his curate, Fredrick Griffiths. Soon afterwards the First World War broke out, and there were no more curates until 1934. Unusually the church has no memorial to those who served or were killed.

The war intensified the drive towards more genuinely democratic institutions nationally. Women got the vote, and the Church of England reformed its organisation in 1919 to involve parishioners much more. Each parish now

had to draw up its Electoral Roll of baptised members who had the power to elect a Parochial Church Council (PCC) to control the parish. The Vicar would be Chairman, but the Vice-chairman would be a layperson who was not a churchwarden. There would be a small Standing Committee, and the only function of the Vestry Meeting would now be the election of the two church wardens. Above this were Ruri-Decanal and Diocesan Conferences and a National Assembly.

The first Scotforth PCC was formed in 1920 with 25 elected members and powers to co-opt a further five. For the first time women were involved, eight on this occasion, of whom one was a representative at conferences. Mr A Macdonald was the first Vice-Chairman.

Scotforth School had a new headmaster in 1918. Mr Parker left after 38 years' service, being requested to reopen Dallas Road School, and retired in 1919. Paul Proctor, who had been a pupil and pupil teacher at Scotforth, was then Headmaster for 25 years. In 1922 he reported regularly teaching a class of fifty children. A few years later local education was reorganised to provide better education for 11+ pupils. Building standards improved, leading to the closure of some local church school buildings. Scotforth survived but lost its older pupils to Greaves, now designated a 'Central' school, and became what it is now, a school for children up to the age of 11. The first two scholarships to the Grammar Schools were gained in 1919. Cricket was started in 1925 with the opening of Barton Road playing fields. Overcrowding was solved by a

benefactor paying for two new classrooms in 1928 and the Managers financed other improvements. HMI reports in 1932 and 1937 were excellent.

As the Diocese of Manchester had become unwieldy, under Bishop William Temple's leadership the Diocese of Blackburn was created in 1926 with Dr Herbert as first bishop. St Paul's soon used the conference system to express its support for the proposed Revised Prayer Book in 1928. When this was rejected by Parliament the parish exercised its right to make some of the proposed changes to the communion service, which are still in use at the 8 o'clock service on Sunday.

Housing steadily grew in south Lancaster as standards rose and the population increased. Social expectations were rising and the congregation became less socially divided. No longer was the morning congregation dominated by 'carriage folk' while their servants cooked the lunch.

As early as 1908 the idea of a Bowerham Mission had been mooted but nothing came of it. After the war the Church of England emphasised its mission as being social as well as religious. Nursery gardens east of Scotforth Road were being developed in the 1920's for 'homes for heroes'. The parishioners had started a Parish Room Fund in 1918 and the new PCC in 1921 set in motion plans for a Parish Hall on land at the end of the new road now called Palatine Avenue. By 1922 £2000 had been raised but financial constraints led the original plans to be scaled down from £5000 to £4350 before it was felt safe to proceed. So four

foundation stones were laid in 1923 and the building as we know it was opened, after a protest to the contractor about delays, in October 1924. The Girls Friendly Society gave a piano; the Mothers' Meeting gave a clock, desk and spoons. Typically a Parish Hall Committee was formed to run the hall as a separate Trust for over forty years. But the 1920's were a time of national financial difficulties, culminating in the world financial crisis of 1930. Paying off the debt proved hard until in 1929 a Grand Bazaar, lasting three days, raised the final £995. The hall proved invaluable, and was loyally maintained by such people as Dennis Haworth.

Within three months a tragedy occurred. Mr Griffiths, who had won the heart of his parishioners, not least by his successful monthly Sunday afternoon men's services, died on February 24th, 1930, aged only fifty. (His daughter, Margaret, was still attending St Paul's seventy years later.) This was compounded by the death of Mr A Macdonald, one of the first two sidesmen in 1893 and Vice-Chairman since the PCC started in 1920, and the inability to find a new Vicar until 1931, David Birnie.

d) David Birnie and greater lay leadership (1931-1956)

David Birnie is summed up by Wilfrid Wolfendale thus:

“He was not a hearty mixer or man of the world like his predecessors. His strength lay rather in his preaching, his ordering of the services and his fervent faith in the power of prayer.” In June 1931 he was invited to preach to King George the Fifth at Buckingham Palace.

St Paul's was still a very plain, unadorned church but parishioners were now influenced by trends towards

enriching buildings and forms of worship. The Vicar with the PCC agreed a programme of modernisation which produced the east end familiar for the next seventy years. The sanctuary was panelled and given a communion rail and a new altar table, on which later an altar cross appeared. Choir stalls were introduced after removing the front pews and moving forward the pulpit and the clergy desk. The large choir, 30-40 strong, were now robed. There were some initial problems. The ladies felt they should robe separately, so the Vicar offered his study. The cross disappeared – to be found buried in rubbish at the back of the church!

St Paul's prospered in the years up to the war. Scouting revived locally in 1930 and the 16th Lancaster (St Paul's) Scout Group was founded in 1931. Brownies, Guides and Rangers were also started. Mr Whittle led a flourishing Sunday School. Mr Ratcliffe came as curate in 1934 and his successor, Mr Baverstock, restarted regular Scripture teaching in Scotforth School by the clergy.

Then Mr Birnie's wife died in 1935 and, though he married again in 1939, his health began to break down and congregations declined. No curate could be found when Mr Slater became an army chaplain in 1943. Mr Birnie offered to resign in 1945 but with a shortage of clergy he had to continue until 1956 by which time he was 75.

However lay people continued to take on greater responsibilities with growing involvement of women, though during the war younger adults, women as well as

men, were away on war service. A group of long serving workers led the social side of the church and raised necessary money, with special efforts and a 'Free Will Offering Scheme' (under which individuals promised to pay weekly sixpence (2½p)). These included Will Osliffe (Vice-Chairman for 13 years until 1959) and Fred Wilkinson (Treasurer for 22 years until 1960).

In 1944 the school had a new Headteacher, another Lancaster man and one of the original Scouts in 1909, Lawrence Todd. Under his firm leadership the school achieved a high reputation with a good record of 'scholarships' to the Grammar Schools. He had to cope with the results of the 1944 Education Act. 'Secondary education for all' led to Greaves becoming a 'Secondary' school, under Mr Sutton who worshipped at St Paul's for over forty years. Pupil numbers at Scotforth School rose to 380 as Greaves lost its younger pupils and were normally over 300. The extra pupils had to be taught in the parish hall (for thirteen years) involving dangerous crossings of the increasingly busy A6 (no M6 then). Among the staff were Dorothy Tooth (1928-1964) and Millicent Osliffe, who started in 1941 and retired as Deputy Head after 40 years in the school.

The 1950's saw financial problems in the church, aggravated by inflation and falling membership (the Electoral Roll fell to 384 by 1956). Dry rot in the cellar and a collapsing heating system required major expenditure. But work with young people continued to flourish. This included a youth club and SPARC (the

St Paul's Associated Recreational Club) which put on a series of entertainments written and produced by Betty and Tom Hodgson.

e) Donald Smart and Stewardship (1956-1968)

A new Vicar brings in new developments, and Donald Smart, inducted in 1956, was no exception. He knew the area, having been based in Lancaster as Church Missionary Society Secretary and his wife was well known as a Guide Commissioner. He set out to regenerate the parish spiritually by introducing more special services, such as a Church Missionary Society Anniversary and the Birthday and Christmas Carol Services, but the Churchmanship remained 'low'. He reorganised the social activities, forming a Women's Fellowship and Men's Society (in 1959) and drawing up a schedule of events. A new generation of lay folk came forward, including Ted Corless, John Pattinson, Gordon Robinson and Max Walmsley. But now responsible posts were less of a 'life sentence', which produced a larger group of experienced and committed people. Christmas communicants in 1961 totalled 376 with 426 at Easter. There were 140 in Sunday school and 300 were said to attend church on an average Sunday.

A very significant innovation in the Church of England which influenced the diocese was the movement to change church members' understanding of Christian giving. This was essential as the church could no longer rely so much on past investments to finance present activities and great concern was shown about paying the clergy a decent salary

and full expenses of office. Christian Stewardship set out to teach members that an individual's time, talents and money belonged to God and were to be used in his service. So the individual was called to promise to give back a proportion to God's work through the church regularly and not merely on impulse. A 'Planned Giving Campaign' as St Paul's in 1961 led by Mr England raised income significantly, but the 1964 Stewardship Campaign, led by John Pattinson, proved to be a landmark. The wider aims of promising to give to God one's time, talents and money – in that order – were stressed, and the increased commitment was accompanied for thirty years by the increased income which enabled St Paul's to meet its needs at a time of rising expenses, aggravated by inflation.

Work on the church deferred for up to thirty years was now undertaken. Church fabric was attended to, a new heating system and organ were installed (with Dennis Beetham becoming organist in 1964 – Mr H. Thompson had retired in 1962 after over forty years service). Extra new building (of both 'council' and 'owner-occupied' houses) had been going on in the Hala area since the 1950's so a mortgage was taken out to buy a bungalow in Lawnswood Avenue for the new curate, Tom Barnes. The parish population had by now grown to 17,000 so an area to the north was transferred to St Thomas' parish. But parish boundaries did not mean a lot; the Priory and St Thomas' attracted people from all over Lancaster.

Time and talents were used more. Street Wardens were set up to report cases of illness or need. An 'Over 60's' group started in 1965 by Muriel Wolfendale, with

Cynthia Rogers, Jean Jeffreys and Mary Smith, rapidly attracted up to 200, requiring a satellite club for a while nearby under Jean Pattinson. The flourishing Scout Group built its own HQ in Dorrington Road. Greater support was given to the Church Missionary Society, strengthened by a series of Link Missionaries in Uganda.

Scotforth School continued to cause concern with its overcrowded Victorian buildings and the need to use the Parish Hall across the busy A6 road. In fact a building fund had been started as early as 1946 and the 1944 Education Act had introduced grant aid of half the cost of new building in church 'Voluntary Aided' schools. After adverse comments by Her Majesty's Inspector in 1954 plans were drawn up for extensions and a reorganised Ripley Trust promised help. But money was also needed for the parish so in 1958 Mr Smart and Mr Todd led the formation of the Friends of Scotforth School (FOSSY) which began a long history of fundraising and other support to the school.

The first phase of extensions began in October. The foundation stone was laid by John Welch, who used the same trowel that his father had used at a similar ceremony in 1878. The building was opened by Canon Moss (as Bishop Baddeley was ill) in the following September.

A second phase, including a hall, was allowed in 1966, and in January 1968 Bishop Hoskyns-Abrahall (of Lancaster) opened that, stressing the importance of church schools for those who believed in Christian values. Having led the

school through such a difficult and significant 24 years, Mr Todd retired in July, being succeeded by Gordon Bullivant, and Mrs Whitehead also left after 24 years.

The 1960's saw greater co-operation between churches of all denominations, well illustrated by the publication in 1961 of the ecumenical New English Bible and the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council (which began in 1962). But the failure (in 1971/2) of the proposals for Anglican-Methodist Union caused disappointment. St Paul's helped to form the Lancaster Council of Churches in 1962. This introduced a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Christian Aid Week. An Ecumenical Centre, with a useful coffee bar, developed at Sulyard Street Methodist Church in 1969 through its active Minister, Donald Parsons. The decline of manufacturing industries locally, including the old firms Storey's of Lancaster and Williamson's, and the foundation of the University of Lancaster and S Martin's College of Education foreshadowed a fundamental change to Lancaster.

The 1960's became known as 'the Swinging Sixties', and the 'Permissive Society' presented a serious challenge to the churches nationally with increasing scepticism, greater affluence and mobility, a stronger 'youth culture', emphasis on personal choice, decline in traditional morality, and more obvious doctrinal uncertainty, famously illustrated by Bishop John Robinson's little book, 'Honest to God'. Bishop Claxton regularly wrote in 'The See' to express strong concerns about issues such as easier divorce. He held well-attended men's rallies in Blackburn and once led

a large procession with the Chief Constable to protest against moral decline (to the great irritation of 'militant' students). The taking of drugs for pleasure was already becoming 'a serious menace' according to an article in 'The See' in 1970 by a policeman.

'Secularisation' is a common term to sum up these trends. Relentlessly falling numbers attending churches became one obvious symptom of problems. Bishop Martineau noted a 2% fall in attendances on Sunday mornings and a significant 30% on Sunday evenings across the diocese in the period 1968-1974. St Paul's reflected these trends though one or two special evening services each term attracted more people.

St Paul's congregation was changing. It had consisted largely of what sociologists called professional, managerial and skilled working class people, a large proportion of whom were local. The development of higher education institutions and later the Heysham Power stations added to this range, creating an interesting 'mix' of people on the PCC. But the expansion of higher education had an adverse effect on the parish as able young people usually left the area to attend university, never to return, whereas up to the 1950's many Grammar School pupils had taken jobs locally and provided leaders for local organisations. The parish now relied more on 'off-comers', and links with churches became increasingly alien to young people. A good example of this 'emigration' was Caroline Rogers. Her father, Charles, was a pupil at LRGS who worked in the financial department of the Health Authority. He

succeeded Gordon Robinson as churchwarden in 1966. Caroline, a dynamic Sunday school teacher and Ranger Guide, went off to study History at St Andrew's and became a teacher in Oxford.

The parish acquired its first Reader when George Phythian came to Lancaster as the first Headmaster of the new Ripley St Thomas Secondary School, formed from two existing small church schools. It soon established a good reputation and most Scotforth School pupils moved on to it at the age of 11+ if they did not go to the Grammar schools.

A new curate, Tom Green, joined the staff in 1967 and for the first time an ordination, by Bishop Claxton, was held at St Paul's. Luckily Tom was a 'mature' ordinand as he soon had very heavy responsibilities to bear.

Within weeks Mr Smart died unexpectedly, to be followed three weeks later by Mr W. R. S. Clark, who had held every lay office since becoming a sidesman in 1919. In October 1968 ground north of the church was dedicated for burying cremated remains. A Book of Remembrance was given by Mrs Smart and her family, placed on a table given by Mrs Clark, whose husband had been churchwarden for many years.

f) Gordon Bellinger: continued growth and liturgical changes (1968-1976)

The choice of a new vicar remained in the control of five Trustees but now bishops more generally sought advice from the PCC. Under John Pattinson as acting Chairman,

the PCC set out the pastoral needs of the parish. These proved to be happily met in the new vicar, Gordon Bellinger, supported loyally by his wife, Sheila. He was inducted in July 1968 (to serve for 25 years) – and typically faced immediate crises: the church needed redecorating after twenty years, the parish hall was wearing out, the tower was failing and needed £3400 on top of the £2600 to renovate the vicarage. But – equally typically – the money was found.

Gordon's incumbency was marked by a regular series of Stewardship Renewal campaigns every three or four years, inspired by John Pattinson (now Vice-Chairman of the PCC) and backed up by termly visits of members carried out by forty-fifty visitors. Financial security resulted and targets were met, in spite of a series of demanding projects and significant inflation (particularly in the early 1970's, aggravated by decimalisation). The tax advantages of covenanting subscriptions was used to boost the annual income, eventually by several thousand pounds. Pledged income more than doubled in 1969 (from £30/week to £68 plus tax rebates) and virtually reached £100 in the 1972 campaign.

But other results were more important. A team, led by Mrs Gedge, was formed to visit the sick. Communicants at Christmas 1970 totalled 428 with 449 at Easter 1971. The Electoral Roll rose from 590 in 1968 to 700 in 1972, though some were rather nominal members. The magazine circulation increased to over 400 (the cost rising from 6d/2½p to 3p in 1972). Ten per cent of income was

regularly given to charities besides the usual parish collections for the Children's Society and Christian Aid. This illustrated the way the parish maintained a strong sense of outreach.

Guides and Scouts continued to flourish with over two hundred members. To support the youth groups a "Parade Service" (simplified mattins) was introduced which filled the church most months with parents and young people. 290 children were on the books of the Sunday School (which regularly achieved good results in the Diocesan examinations) and Confirmation School. This started in 1972, and provided six classes for those aged 11-14. Youth clubs were held in Ripley School and the Parish Hall, helped by Roger Hamblin who came as curate in 1970. Phyllis Burgess ran a lively Discoverers group to keep contact with CMS and the church overseas. These efforts kept young people in contact with the church longer. But it cannot be said that many were retained in the church after confirmation. The pull of youth culture and jobs was too often too strong, and the confirmation of adults became more significant in the church nationally.

The other adult organisations remained active. Some new house groups started. SPARC celebrated its 25th Reunion in 1971, still led by Betty Hodgson and Tom, who was manager of the Parish Hall and organised a Sponsored Walk to contribute to the cost of its refurbishment.

Greater efforts had been made in the 1960's to produce services in the Church of England which were more easily

understood by the people, not least children, and the liturgy was becoming more flexible and modern with greater participation by lay people. A 'series' of experimental services was authorised whose language caused controversy, e.g. over daring to address God as 'you'. This coincided with a significant innovation at St Paul's.

Since the 1930's the 'Parish and People' movement had been advocating the wider use of weekly 'Parish Communion' for all-age congregations and this trend was affecting the diocese. A group of families, mostly living in new housing in the south of the parish and brought to Lancaster by S Martin's College or the University, asked for such a service and offered to support it. They included Valerie Fox (who became Vicar's Secretary in 1978), Peter Gedge (a Reader and organist) and Tony Guénault (who was training to be a Reader). Gordon Bellinger was sympathetic so in May 1969 a Family Communion with hymns was inserted at 9.15. Among the earliest attenders were his wife, Sheila, and baby Alison. After a slow start (24 communicants) it grew to an average of 80-90 communicants (plus children). It brought into the church additional committed families with ideas and leadership potential. It also proved an ideal place for experimenting with new services, i.e. 'Series 2' in 1969 and 'Series 3' in 1972. These began to influence the 10.30 congregation and prepared the way for ready acceptance of the agreed translations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer published in the 1970's and the Alternative Services Book (in 1980).

John Watson succeeded John Pattinson as churchwarden and in 1970 Peter Gedge followed Charles Rogers. Humphrey Prideaux joined the staff of S Martin's and was a useful additional priest at the 9.15. Joan Yardley retired after eight years as PCC Secretary and Mrs Doris Grant after forty years work with Brownies. She and Kathleen Cope ran the new District Scout and Guide Shop. Harry Rawes received the Bishop's Gold Award after more than fifty years in church choirs. A strong link with the past was broken when 'Ja' (for Jabez) Scarfe died, having been Verger since 1919 when his salary was £5 per quarter. Bishop Claxton had come specially to make Ja's Golden Jubilee presentation in 1969.

Bishop Claxton retired in 1971 (to be succeeded by Bishop Martineau). As Bishop Hoskyns—Abrahall said, "Much of his energy was engaged in the endeavour to engender a family spirit in the Diocese. He infused new life into the development of stewardship .. and showed "an active concern with the moral problems of society." As Chairman of the Church of England Board of Education (as were two of his successors) he was concerned about church schools of which Blackburn had more than any other diocese. He was instrumental in bringing S Martin's College to Lancaster and in establishing the famous university Chaplaincy Centre. "He never tired of telling us about evangelism".

A significant attempt at evangelism occurred in 1972/3, encouraged by Archbishop Donald Coggan, the 'Call to the North'. Ecumenical study groups prepared over the winter

and 5,000, largely church members, attended meetings in the Ashton Hall in Holy Week. In Scotforth good relationships with Greaves Methodists continued, shown by joint study groups and services.

Tony Guénault became churchwarden next and soon afterwards completed his training as a Reader. He was also among those who started a branch of the Samaritans locally and later his wife, Joan, contributed nationally as a trainer. Two other Readers joined St Paul's, John Fidler and Lawrence Walker, who soon became involved in Sunday School. Arton Medd began his long period as organiser of Christian Aid fund-raising and Peter Hewitt started a similar length of service as Chairman first of the 16th Lancaster Scout Group and then of the District. Another distinguished Scout, Frank Hayton, followed John Watson as churchwarden in 1974. That year saw a record number of young people confirmed, 45, with forty confirmed next year by Bishop Dennis Page who had just succeeded Bishop Hoskyns-Abrahall. Another significant innovation was the start of a playgroup in the parish hall, helped by Ian Fraser, a church member who was a City Councillor.

Synodical government was introduced in the 1970's and there was more open discussion about the role of women in the church. Ordination of women in the Church of England would take over ten years to win a majority, but the first women Readers were licensed in 1971. They were not always readily accepted, as Jan Ainsworth found when she came to the parish in 1975 with her husband, Michael. He replaced Roger Hamblin as curate, but only after an

eighteen month gap through a shortage of clergy. Jan was able: she taught RE at Greaves School, became Schools Officer in the Manchester Diocese and in 1999 was appointed its Diocesan Director of Education.

Scotforth School had a new Headteacher, Colin Hartley, in September 1975 and new buildings were dedicated. These had been made possible by the fundraising efforts of FOSSY and help from the Ripley Trust. Parish organisations remained active and the round of services continues, including such special events as the usual well-attended Harvest and Christmas festivals. But thoughts began to turn to the Centenary, starting with the publication of Wilfrid Wolfendale's history, 'Providence their Guide', from which most of this chapter's material has been taken.

Chapter 2 – Centenary Year (1976)

a) Centenary Celebrations

The Centenary of St Paul's (in 1976) was specifically celebrated by two separate weeks of special events with others in September. The first week was in mid-February since the church had been consecrated on February 18, 1876. Tom Green, a former curate, came back for the Parade Service; in the evening Michael Ainsworth, the curate, organised a 'son et lumière' version (as was then fashionable) of the story of St Paul's. Ian Hare from the University organised a concert. The dynamic Provost of Blackburn, Lawrence Jackson, spoke at a reunion of those baptised/confirmed/married in the church. A buffet dance

was held at the Midland Hotel in Morecambe. On the following Sunday Bishop Martineau preached at a service attended by the Mayor and Mayoress, and in the evening Greaves Methodist church members joined in a Songs of Praise. The church was floodlit for the week.

A “Fellowship Week” of celebration was held in June. The Bishop of Chester, Victor Whitsey (who had married the Vicar’s sister) preached on June 20 and dedicated the new Board listing incumbents. This was designed by Wearing Pennington, whose drawing of the church adorned the magazine cover, and donated by Joe Sutton, retired Head of Greaves School. Unusually the century was covered by only five Vicars. Cuthbert Bardsley (son of a former Vicar of Lancaster who had just retired as Bishop of Coventry) preached powerfully at evensong.

John Illingworth, a University librarian, put together an interesting exhibition which included Sharpe’s original drawings. There was another concert and a Poetry and Music Evening. A Ugandan priest, Kupliano Kibuka, preached at the Deanery CMS Service, Scotforth School held its Annual Fete in the grounds of the Royal Albert Hospital as usual and the week ended with a service at Greaves when the preacher was Lesslie Newbigin, who had been a famous bishop of the Church of South India.

A BBC ‘Songs of Praise’ was recorded in July. The Producer was Stewart Cross, a Lancaster lad whose mother attended St Paul’s. He had just been consecrated Bishop of Doncaster and was destined only a few years later to be Bishop of Blackburn.

A group attended the ordination as priest of Michael Ainsworth, who celebrated his first eucharist at a combined 10.30 service the next day. Summer social events included the usual Strawberry Tea on the vicarage lawn, a barn dance, a young people's campfire at Stodday, and a three-day Flower Festival led by Kathleen Cope with Muriel Wolfendale organising the catering.

b) *An active worshipping community*

The range of activities carried out at this time is worth describing as it was typical for the next twenty five years.

The pattern of services balancing Book of Common Prayer with modern liturgies continued. On Sundays the traditional BCP services were held at 8.00 (said Holy Communion), 10.30 (Mattins, with 'Series 3' Communion on the first Sunday), and 6.30 Evening Prayer (both supported by a faithful choir). A modern version of the eucharist was celebrated at the 9.15 Family Communion and an adaptation of Mattins was held monthly for the well-attended Parade Service for Guides and Scouts. A Communion service on Thursday at 9.15 with tea afterwards was helpful, particularly for older people.

(Mrs Bell presented a new paten and chalice which was easier to use than the old Victorian chalices.) In addition there were various special services such as Bible Sunday evening, Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival afternoons for children and parents, Maundy Thursday eucharist shared with Greaves Methodists, a Good Friday service of readings and music; an Easter Eve Paschal Fire

service was introduced in 1976, an example of Michael Ainsworth's interest in liturgy. This provision of a good range of services helped to keep up reasonable support for the church, as Leslie Francis' later research confirmed.

There were 460 communicants at Christmas 1975 (with 550 in church), and 430 at the following Easter. Occasional Offices met parishioners' needs with over 200 baptisms, weddings and funerals in 1975. This offered valuable opportunities for pastoral contact and in 1976 regular meetings began for parents seeking baptism for their children. Sick communions continued and for some years a house communion was held on the Hala Carr estate for elderly folk.

Worship underpinned the work of the parish. Efforts were made to be welcoming at services. Gordon Bellinger set a good example in learning faces even if, given an Electoral Roll of 710, names sometimes escaped him. The difficulty of getting to know the congregations was a constant anxiety for him. Inevitably too as society was becoming more mobile, and some parents were exploiting the church to gain entry for their children at Scotforth School or Ripley St Thomas School, there was some turnover in attenders.

Work with children remained important. Nearly 300 were on the register of the Sunday School (still led by Mrs Doggett) or the confirmation classes in 1976. Others belonged to the active Guide and Scout units associated with the church, led by such people as Mrs Barnfield, Mrs

Dent, Dr. Hamilton, Mrs Lomax and Charlie Hill. The Scouts had their own HQ in Dorrington Road but most of the others used the invaluable Parish Hall which, like the church, was not cheap to heat and maintain. Other regular users of the Hall included the Parochial Church Council and such organisations as the Youth Club, Discoverers, Women's Fellowship, Mother's Union and Over-60's (still with 200 members). It was also useful for such occasional events as Harvest Suppers, Barn Dances and Jumble Sales!

Contact was kept with parishioners through delivering 450 magazines and (at Christmas and Easter) cards. Those belonging to the Stewardship envelope scheme, normally well over 300, were visited termly by a team of 40-50 visitors which was kept together between campaigns and amounted to a 'men's meeting' as they themselves met termly.

The community was served in other ways too. The PNP (People Need People) group visited approximately 40 elderly or sick persons monthly and church members were active in all sorts of city organisations such as Scouts, Christian Aid, charity shops, Samaritans, Council of Churches, and the courts.

There were two or three study groups, and CMS and 16+ Discoverers groups existed for a time, but such explicit educational activities were not as strong as might have been expected.

Fundraising went on but, because of the regular stewardship giving, rarely for the church itself except in a crisis like major repairs to the tower. Policy was to give away 10% (Later 15%) of income to charitable causes, and organisations held events to raise cash for special good causes (e.g. the 'Third World' or the Hospice) besides the ongoing work for CMS, Children's Society and Christian Aid.

c) Stewardship Renewal Campaign

All this depended on members' commitment and the Centenary Year was an obvious occasion to call for this commitment to be renewed. So, led again by John Pattinson, another party was organised in September in the University Great Hall attended by 400. The Brochure outlined what the parish was achieving – and the rapidly increasing costs due to inflation. Since 1971 the cost of living had doubled and costs of running the church had almost trebled: heating and lighting the church had more than doubled in price; contributions to the Vicar's stipend had gone up fourfold; nearly £5000 had been spent on capital expenditure over 1972-5. The cost of running the parish in 1976 was estimated at £8050.

The parishioners' response was interesting. The value of the work and the financial needs must have been clear because 300 families doubled the income and pledged £214 per week (£11,000 per annum). Such responses were typical of these campaigns over thirty years.

Chapter 3 – Consolidation (1976-1980)

The Centenary Year had its quota of changes.

Humphrey Prideaux moved to Caton so George Maitland resigned as Treasurer as he moved with him. David Urwin, a lecturer at S Martin's College and a teacher in the Confirmation school, succeeded John Illingworth as PCC Secretary. Eric Sharpe, an Honorary Reader, moved to Sydney University as Professor of Religious Studies.

British Rail only moved Tom Cragg to Accrington but the church lost an effective young Sunday school teacher and youth worker. Doreen Lund retired after ten years as Guide District Commissioner and Kathleen Forster gave up after a similar period as Recorder of the Stewardship scheme. The Vicar took on another job, Chairman of the Lancaster and District Council of Churches, and Roger Hamblin, a former curate, moved to his first incumbency, Cockerham, where he was to stay for a quarter of a century.

The Diocese celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its formation out of Manchester in 1926. A special plaque with the motto 'Christ our Light' was dedicated by Bishop Page, after spending a day in the parish, and was placed by the vestry door. In June 1977 a great service was held in the Preston North End football ground and later the cathedral was finally dedicated. 1977 also saw the Queen's Silver Jubilee, and commemorative medals were awarded to Mr Wolfendale and Chief Inspector Peill.

David Green became churchwarden, Michael Ainsworth continued his liturgical activities. A new service for

commissioning sidesmen was devised, another example of the special evening services held occasionally as attempts to keep up support for Sunday evening worship. Nationally this was significantly declining (as St Paul's illustrated) except in some evangelical parishes, such as St Thomas' which had developed a special ministry to students. An Advent Carol Service was put on and a Carol Service for Guides and Scouts.

Besides the perennial organisations there were other signs of an active parish. Another house communion started – in Bailrigg village; Sunday school again put up 'house full' signs; the Scout Group became one of the two largest in the District with over one hundred members; 1500 Christmas cards were distributed to people believed to have a connection with the church; magazine production increased to 500; 782 claimed membership via the Electoral Roll. There were lively Lent Groups and discussions after evensong. Mothering Sunday saw a 'Ploughman's Lunch' to give some mothers a rest! A youth choir contributed to the Parade Service.

A helpful addition to the church building was opened in April 1978, a kitchen and a toilet entered through the existing west door. A circulating space was created by removing pews from the west end. To match the church building Norman Lowe used stone from the demolished Skerton Methodist church. Bishop Martineau came, and a well-kept secret was revealed to the vicar when, to celebrate the silver jubilee of his ordination, he received his first television set.

Mervyn Bonnett (Regional Health Authority) became Treasurer at the 1978 AGM. Michael and Jan Ainsworth moved to S Martin's where Michael had been appointed chaplain and Arthur Ranson, with his wife Janet, came from St Christopher's Bare. Among older church members who moved into the background were Ted Corless, Tom Hodgson (who had run the Parish Hall for 23 years), Andy Thomson and Joan Yardley. Dick Nicholson, JP, succeeded Frank Hayton as churchwarden in 1979.

This year saw some well-supported, interesting evening 'invitation services: the 103rd birthday service, carol services at Easter and Advent, sidesmen's rededication, thanksgiving for marriage – and, of course, Harvest. Another entirely new venture was an attempt to take the church into the parish. The June Parade Service took the form of a procession, led by the Salvation Army band, to Hala Square where four hundred attended an Open Air service. This became an annual event.

Greaves Methodists joined in, and joint services with their church continued, such as Songs of Praise, the Maundy Thursday eucharist and the Christmas Toy Service. These reflected the national moves towards greater practical co-operation between Christian churches, including Roman Catholics. This was also illustrated by the increasing recognition by churches of each others' baptism as one baptism into Christ and by the growing practice of admitting to communion in non-Roman Catholic churches those who were full members of a church.

Inflation made another Stewardship Campaign advisable in September 1979. Since 1976 the Retail Price Index had risen by 40% and church expenses had risen by 50% to £12,000, not least as attempts were being made nationally to improve clergy stipends and payment of expenses. Members responded well, promising £280 per week.

Church-based youth activities had an especially interesting year in 1980, alongside the still flourishing uniformed organisations (whose success was marked by the award to the Group Scout Leader, Charlie Hill, of a Silver Acorn.) Building on foundations laid by Roger and Michael, Arthur Ranson took a group to Marrick Priory; a Scotforth Wanderers team played regular matches; members went on a Deanery youth adventure weekend in the Lake District and an all-night celebration in the cathedral; week by week there was a club in the hall; on Sunday evenings a group wrestled with controversial issues; monthly there was a youth eucharist. Arthur also found time to attend the Scout Summer camp as chaplain!

Robert Runcie was enthroned in March 1980 as Archbishop of Canterbury, succeeding Donald Coggan, and the Church of England continued to try to work out Christian responses to moral issues, not least the revolution in sexual behaviour. Whether divorced people should be able to remarry in church remained controversial. Topics of Lent sermons at St Paul's well illustrate the climate of the times: gambling, dishonesty, marriage and the family, political muscle (i.e. whether to strike or not!), TV and the press,

and violence. Eight study groups were meeting besides these.

Also typical of the church at large was St Paul's continued commitment to a wide range of charities. In 1980 over £3000 was given away, including £1000 to support a Ugandan priest, Amos Kasibante, who was studying at Cambridge. Christian Aid received its usual faithful support. Great concern was expressed in the magazine when 665 jobs were lost at Lansil's, a local factory – another example of the decline of local industry alongside the fall of Storey's and Williamson's.

The church was enriched by a beautiful set of green embroideries made by Mrs Elizabeth Heald in memory of Bill Heald, a former Chief Reporter of the Lancaster Guardian. To help those hard of hearing an improved loudspeaker system was installed. After fifteen years of liturgical revision the Church of England had its first fully authorised service book since the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) – the Alternative Service Book (ASB). This caused no problems at St Paul's as new services had been in use for over ten years and two or three BCP services were still celebrated every Sunday as was permissible.

Ken Gibbons ('the Ven Ken') succeeded Geoffrey Gower-Jones as Archdeacon, but Canon Pratt left St John's Sandylands after 23 years. Great sadness was felt when Frank Hayton died in August after some months' illness. Loyal supported by Phyllis he had been a very successful team builder in church and Scouts, and his Group, 13th

Lancaster, joined in a Parade Service held to celebrate Frank's life and work.

Numerically the church still appeared quite successful. There was a lively social programme, including this year a Dinner Dance at the Midland Hotel in Morecambe and a Parish Picnic at Littledale to which over fifty people walked. Sunday school was full again (with Ruth Borrowdale joining as a teacher); prizes were awarded to 117 infants; 138 old or sick folks received harvest gifts; 140 Over Sixties descended on the Lyth Valley to buy damsons; magazine production rose to 575; there were 500 communicants at Christmas, 300 at midnight.

Chapter 4 – Building for the Future (1981-1986)

a) Stephen Pye and Philip Regan

A lively curate arrived in 1981 – Stephen Pye, with his wife, Julia. Brought up in Galgate he had attended Ripley School and read Theology at Lampeter and Westcott House. Names like Wittgenstein would drop from his lips in sermons and the works of Karl Barth ran across one shelf in his study which impressed the visitor. His sermons were lively, often illustrated by his latest disaster in the new ASDA supermarket. His appeal was wide, especially to young people, and one Christmas they put on 'Snow White and the seven dwarfs'.

The church was most successful in terms of attendance overall in this period, another significant factor being the addition of the parish's only 'Non-Stipendiary Minister' (NSM), Phil Regan. 'NSMs' were becoming a distinctive element within the clergy. The term indicated men who felt called to be priests while continuing their secular jobs. The Church valued such people as one way of dealing with the growing problem of shortage of clergy. Phil was a university lecturer at Bailrigg who was ordained deacon in 1983 and offered his services to work solely at the new St Paul's Hala centre.

Another influence on teenagers had been Michael Wheeler, a lively university English lecturer. In one group was Mark Ellison who tragically died in March 1984 of leukaemia. This inspired his parents, Muriel and Frank to start a memorial fund which eventually raised over £20,000 for the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. Typically Stephen raised over £1,000 of this by a Sponsored Parachute Jump. Equally typically he was so interested in the view as he descended that he failed to notice that the parachute had not opened properly!

b) Activities @1982

CMS sent some interesting visitors at this time. One was the Ugandan priest, Amos Kasibante, whom the parish was helping to support at Cambridge University. Later he became a tutor at St Michael's College, Llandaff, and Principal of the Simon of Cyrene Institute in London. Two visitors came from Tokyo, Paul Uechi and his wife, perhaps remembered most for their skill in origami!

Kevin Ward spoke about his difficulties in Uganda and Sunday School pupils supported children orphaned by the fighting there.

The parish also supported the Council of Churches' plan, inspired by Rev John Mullineaux (who had recently retired from Brookhouse), to set up a centre for the unemployed as a local contribution to the serious national problem of 3½ million out of work. 'Prospect House' opened in June 1982 and John Gedge soon after became secretary of the management committee. The World Disarmament Campaign was another interest; nuclear weapons were still a threat.

A major decision was made. For some years Peter Gedge, a Reader was made aware, by walking his dog, of the new housing extending further south beyond the Hala area. He felt the parish needed a centre there for worship and community work because the City had failed to provide a centre for the council estate, or financial help for a centre later. Now, however, an opportunity arose from the proposed building of a block of sheltered housing in Hala Square, Beck View. The City Architect, Charles Wilson (who attended the Priory) was consulted and agreed to oversee the design and construction of a hall (with "praying space for 90") attached to the housing on a site provided by the City.

To finance this the PCC agreed to find £35,000 from the reserves carefully built up by the Treasurer, Mervyn Bonnett, out of legacies and Stewardship income.

The Diocese approved and the project was set in train. Unfortunately soon afterwards the church tower caused problems again as water started leaking in. Repairs eventually cost £25,000.

New features in church life were a series of parish walks, led by Lawrence Walker, and trips by train (as long as a train could be booked) to cathedral cities, beginning with York. The church was beautified by kneelers designed by the famous Guy Barton (featuring the arms of the dioceses of York, Chester, Manchester and Blackburn), and a striking new banner to commemorate fifty years of the Mothers Union. Mrs Smart came to the dedication service. The choir had a remarkable increase in numbers through Harris Johnson and a new arrival, Len Leman. They maintained for a time a mixed junior choir of twenty, requiring sixteen new cassocks!

Three external events deserve note. The Pope's official visit to Canterbury Cathedral where he and Archbishop Runcie prayed together was a positive step in ecumenical relations, but General Synod rejected the proposed Covenant for Church Unity. The unexpected little war over the Falklands Islands proved to be controversial, even if Britain won.

c) 1982 Stewardship Campaign

The value of money continued to fall. The Easter collection may have been £500 but for the first time a

quarterly electricity bill exceeded £1,000! In three years since 1979 the cost of living had risen by 50%, even if the Average Earnings Index went up by 54%. Church costs were now over £500 per week. Another Stewardship Campaign (the seventh) seemed prudent.

‘Building for the Future’ was an apt slogan in view of the Hala project. 82 hostesses persuaded 350 to come to a social event, at St Martin’s College this time. Again the parish rose to the challenge. The work was supported as usual, now with a Mother and Baby Club (led by Valerie Fox) and a Gardening Team as well (led by Mary Thomas). Pledged giving went up by 60%. 352 families promised £450 per week, and the tax rebate due to covenanting went up from £4,500 to £8,000. Again 15% of the income was given to charities. To encourage others these results were noted in the diocesan magazine, ‘The See’, and reached the Church Times as one example of ‘The Responding Church’.

That autumn there were some noteworthy services. Bishop Martineau came for the Diocesan Readers’ Conference and Admission service just before he retired (to be succeeded by Bishop Cross whose mother was still attending St Paul’s). Mrs Kelly, a deaf member who had won the Lip-Reading Finals in London was Chair of the Hard of Hearing Clubs, so they held a service. Two stained glass windows by the door commemorating the Golden Jubilee of Guides and Scouts in the parish were dedicated by Bishop Dennis Page of Lancaster. Again over thirty were confirmed in November. There was a United Songs

of Praise at Greaves Methodist Church and on Bible Sunday four spoke about their favourite passages. Just before Christmas the well-known Lancaster Singers under Ian Hare gave another Carol Recital. Three church choir members received an award for forty years service, Phyllis Burgess, Jean Pattinson and Lilian Prosser. There were about 500 communicants at Christmas as there had been at Easter.

d) 1983-1985

The Vicar's experience was recognised by his being appointed Rural Dean early in 1983. Bishop Cross celebrated the eucharist at which Gordon was licensed, and the parish, to mark his fifteen years as Vicar, bought him a copy of that invaluable source of interest, Crockford's Clerical Directory which gives details of all Anglican clergy.

To make the concern of the church better known a group started a scheme (for which Peter Croxall took responsibility) for delivering week by week a leaflet to every house in the parish, linked with praying for streets in turn. Parish life continued to be hectic, e.g. in January to March 1982 there had been 38 funerals, in 1982-3 41 weddings. But nationally marriage was causing increasing concern, as one in three were breaking down, and the Church of England went on discussing the issue of remarrying divorced people in church. Pat Illingworth drew up an interesting service in July 'In praise of marriage'.

Another notable feature across the denominations was the development of the 'charismatic' movement, illustrated locally by some worship at St Thomas's under the leadership of Rev Cyril Ashton and the formation of independent 'Pentecostal' Christian groups which appealed particularly to younger adults and students. Another attempt by the Church of England to understand the growing alienation of teenagers was a valuable little report 'Young People and the Church'. To try to help young people St Paul's introduced 'Mission Praise', which included many modern hymns and songs of worship.

One of St Paul's younger members died heroically in January. Angela Bradley had been a Guide and a communicant at the 9.15. She then joined the Police, serving in Blackpool. An elderly man got into difficulties on a stormy day trying to save his dog. The Police rescued the man, but three Police died, of whom Angela was one. Later a room was named in her memory at Hutton Police HQ.

Two ecumenical services illustrated a change in Roman Catholic policy. The Cathedral was used for a United Service on Good Friday. For the first time St Bernadette's joined in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In 1984 it hosted the event itself and came to St Paul's for the first time on Palm Sunday evening for a service about the work of the Corrymeela Community which was trying to reconcile Catholics with Protestants in the bitter divisions of Northern Ireland. The Diocese saw the start of its first

Local Ecumenical Project involving five 'Protestant' churches in Lytham.

Numerically the parish seemed to be thriving in 1984. The number of communicants had doubled to 10,000 in ten years, largely through the Family Communion. Over 600 magazines were being distributed (now including drawings). The Electoral Roll contained 780 names. £500 collections were not exceptional on a Sunday and £6,000 was given out of income to charities besides the £800 raised for the Children's Society under the leadership of Jean Pattinson and Lilian Prosser. Over 700 came to church on Palm Sunday and the supply of crosses ran out. Easter communicants exceeded 500 and there were nearly 600 at Christmas (at which £500 was raised for Christian Aid). 200 children were on the Sunday School registers and the uniformed groups continued to achieve top awards and support the Parade Services.

There were some changes in personnel. Tony Pilling, who worked for the County and ran the Venture Scouts, undertook to act as church architect. After fifteen years Mrs Scott passed responsibility for church linen to Mrs Railton, while Mrs Madge Dowthwaite passed on the responsibility for flower-arranging in church to Mrs Elsie Stackhouse after over nine years. It was a sign of the times that Dr Muriel Hamilton and Dr Margaret Ives were the first ladies to be elected as sidespersons at St Paul's. The Diocesan Synod narrowly accepted the ordination of women as Deacons (as distinct from Deaconesses). Notable deaths, besides the Anglican poet-laureate John

Betjemann, included Stephen Jeffreys (Secretary to the University and a valued occasional preacher), and Mrs Creighton. Mrs Creighton, aged 94, had lived locally all her life, could recall the first Vicar and worshippers coming in four-horse carriages, and had lost both her sons within weeks in the RAF in World War Two.

A storm damaged the tower's copper roof on Friday February 13th. Copper sheeting was blown off and the police closed the A6 road. That the damage was not worse was due to the courageous running repairs made by Norman Lowe, a builder from the congregation.

A major event was the dedication of the St Paul's Hala Centre by Bishop Cross in November. Stephen Pye had worked hard on furnishings and fabrics. The 'praying space for 90' was fully used. St Paul's found most of the £45,000 cost but the (Methodist) Pye Trust gave a donation and various gifts were made, including an elegant cross carved by Harold Nowell and a clock (facing the preacher!) from St Bernadette's. Father Tully (St Bernadette's) and Rev Rosemary Richter (the first female Methodist Minister at Greaves) participated in the service of dedication.

Bishop Cross had started a Diocesan Opportunities Fund and Peter Gedge appeared (with his dog) on the promotional video which illustrated projects, explaining how the Centre had come about and its hopes for the future. The weekly children's clinic and Mother and Baby Club and the availability of a large room for community activities were valuable, but the failure to find leaders for

Brownies and Cubs was disappointing. Phil Regan's providential appearance as a Non-Stipendiary Priest and his decision to focus solely on the Centre meant that the Sunday services there continued to develop; 88 came to the Christmas Eve communion service. David and Grace Green rapidly emerged as the lay folk who would provide essential continuity of leadership over the years.

A major project elsewhere in the city was the conversion by St Thomas' of the old buildings of the girls' school into a 'Renewal Centre' and plans to build a Hospice in Lancaster were coming to fruition.

1985 began with an unwelcome demand. In spite of expensive work on the tower done less than twenty years before, £25,000 was needed for further repairs. So a special appeal was undertaken which raised £19,000 over the year.

Among changes in personnel was the retirement of Bishop Dennis Page of Lancaster who was succeeded by Ian Harland. David Otley, Professor in Accounting, succeeded Neal Stackhouse as Churchwarden for a time before becoming Treasurer and serving on the Diocesan Board of Finance. Stephen Pye's term as curate came to an end and a presentation was made to him, Julia, and now a baby, as they moved to Oswaldtwistle. The Youth Club would "not forget many of Stephen's more interesting exploits and near disasters."

Stephen Brian, formerly a teacher, was ordained Deacon in July to become curate instead, with his wife Liz. His professional experience proved useful in school and youth club; Liz became a Guider. The parish was shocked by the unexpected death of the former curate, Tom Green, in his early fifties when Vicar of Pilling.

The year ended with a record number of Christmas communicants, 634, of whom (through Phil Regan's efforts with his wife, Carol-Ann) 94 went to St Paul's Hala Centre. And the Vicar's valuable work was recognised by his being made an Honorary Canon.

e) *Caring, Congregation, Commitment (1986)*

This slogan appeared on the 1986 magazines with Mr Pennington's new drawing of the church. The caring certainly continued through the usual organisations which kept going as leaders came and went: Marjorie Pye gave up Brownies after eleven years, Jean Hardy replaced Kathleen Fairfield as Guider, Jim Holland became Group Scout Leader of the 16th. Organising the Children's Society fund-raising passed to Stephanie Hewitt, whose husband Peter was chairman not only of the Scout Group but now of the whole Lonsdale District.

Special efforts occurred such as the usual house-to-house collections for the Children's Society and Christian Aid. The proposed run-down of the Royal Albert Hospital in favour of a policy of 'Care in the community' led the Vicar to express some anxiety. Life in Uganda was still difficult, as Kevin Ward reported; Sunday school children continued

to support two orphans there, the parish welcomed a Ugandan priest and his wife on vacation from Cambridge and later the church gave £1,500 to help a clinic run by Dr Sarah Kasibante, Amos' wife.

Congregations seemed healthy, with over 450 adults and children attending church or Sunday school on an average Sunday and 786 on the Electoral Roll. Philip Oglethorpe, the solicitor, had taken over as Churchwarden from Professor Otley, who succeeded Mervyn Bonnett as Treasurer. A remarkable feature of the parish was the high quality of professionals prepared to take on jobs. There were special services for the 110th Birthday, when Bishop Ian paid his first visit, 'Thinking Day, attended by 150 Guides, and (among 21 services between Palm Sunday and Easter Day) an Easter Carol Service. Easter communicants totalled 445.

Commitment remained high, but winter continued to exact its toll on the elderly, such as Andy Thomson who had worked so hard for the church, especially its fabric, and social changes accelerated.

International issues could not be ignored. Concern about world peace remained as President Reagan and Mr Gorbachev went on disagreeing about nuclear disarmament (Who could foresee then how quickly Communism would collapse?). The disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Russia illustrated the dangers of nuclear fission, affecting even Cumbrian hill-farmers. A significant ecumenical development was the

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) which sought common ground on such crucial theological issues as authority, baptism, eucharist and ministry.

Chapter 5 - Go For Growth

1986 marked the 25th anniversary of 'Stewardship' at St Paul's. John Pattinson was still the driving force and the momentum continued. An increase in costs up to £50,000 was foreseen and, as always, there were a lot of jobs to do around the parish. So, once again, a 'party' was organised at St Martin's College to review the past and set out future needs.

'Go for growth' was the slogan, and once more the financial target was achieved. 442 made promises, raising the annual stewardship income from £23,000 to more than £33,000 plus £11,400 in tax rebates.

'Time and talents' continued to be offered. A Beaver Scout Colony was started by Irene Harper, a system was introduced whereby newcomers were invited to fill in a green card (in the first year 24 were visited by a Welcoming Team); a crèche began in the Parish Hall to help parents at the Family Communion. The St Paul's Hala Centre continued to develop well under Phil. The Mothers Union had Betty Seddon as Enrolling Member, succeeding Valerie Fox. The PNP group was now visiting over ninety people.

The Diocese celebrated its Diamond Jubilee, with the Archbishop of York preaching in the cathedral. Bishop Cross was busily going round the Diocese getting to know people, often with his friendly wife Mary. Ten young people from St Paul's were stewards at a great Jubilee Service held in Preston Guild Hall at which the Archbishop of Canterbury (Robert Runcie) preached and the Houghton Weavers Folk Group performed.

Women's ordained ministry continued to exercise the Church of England nationally. The first women Deacons, as distinct from Deaconesses, were ordained in 1987. At St Paul's Margaret Wallis (former Vice-Principal at S Martin's) and Margaret Ives (Senior Lecturer in the University) were among nine lay people licensed to administer the chalice.

Ecumenical activities continued with the Unity Week service held at St Bernadette's, an Open Air service in Holy Week in Market Square, and a Council of Churches service in the Priory, which also housed an exhibition on 'Celebrating the Faith'. This was organised by three St Paul's members, John Illingworth, George Burnett and his wife Diana, Bishop Page's daughter. A new information sheet on churches in South Lancaster was designed as an attempt at outreach.

In St Paul's SPARC began the year with a happy reunion. The usual services continued, with Easter Sunday still having a communion service at 7 a.m. (though the pre war

6 a.m. service had long been abandoned). Ascension Day was marked by an evening ascent to Clougha. To enliven the 9.15 eucharist a monthly music group started to widen the range of hymns and attempt to involve more young people. The Confirmation School, still including Pauline Croxall, George Phythian and Peter Gedge, renamed itself 'Pathfinders' and shortened the course to two years, but retaining many after confirmation remained an apparently insuperable problem. Yet over a year there had been about 200 baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Money had to be spent on renewing plaster at the east end because of damp, but charitable giving remained important. Over £10,000 was donated, including £1250 to Bishop Cross' Diocesan Opportunities Fund and £2500 on an overseas project (e.g. training an African priest). In addition there were special efforts such as a 'Global Care' evening for Ugandan children, One World Week activities, the Christmas Ethiopia Appeal and support for the new Christmas Shelter project at Our Lady's High School.

A Renewal Day in February 1988 attracted 800 over the day to hear Fr Edmund Wheat SSM at church and the lively chaplain at St Martin's, Graham Pollitt, at Hala. This now had a lively Over-60s Club with Audrey Reeder as Chairman (for fourteen years up to 1999 eventually). Its programme included a visit to the famous 'Coronation Street' studios.

Sunday schools saw great changes in personnel over this period. Alan McCartney, a young teacher at Ripley, with

Myrtle and Peter Morgan, took over the Pathfinders, affiliating them to the national organisation. In 1989 he organised the first Youth Vigil in February and in July a successful Parish Funday at Ripley (with Philip Simpson as 'Postman Pat'). A new curate, Nick Garrard, succeeded Steve Brian (now Vicar of Freckleton) and with his wife, Helen, worked hard to retain teenagers. Familiar faces left the Sunday school too. Elsie Doggett (who had first started coming to St Paul's as a girl of four in 1925 and started a morning Sunday school in 1960 with twelve children) retired as leader. Marjorie Robinson, Joyce Raby, Lawrence Walker and Kath Fairfield (Treasurer for over 20 years) also felt it time to hand over to younger people so Ruth Borrowdale took over the Junior Department. Sunday School jumble sales had to end because of difficulties with rag merchants!

Gordon Bellinger had now served twenty years in Scotforth. In this era he had involved more and more people and organisations. Gordon was very conscientious in pastoral work and services (e.g. over thirty received communion at home) and he had a good reputation as a trainer of curates. The parish gave him a camera lens, with a toaster for his wife, Sheila (who did so much in the background) to make their breakfast.

The parish continued to look wide. The 1988 Lambeth Conference had reminded members of the world-wide Anglican Communion. The guest at the Harvest Supper was the Link Missionary, Kevin Ward, with more encouraging news of Uganda under President Museveni.

But the world's problems remained: famines in Sudan, Bangladesh and Ethiopia were responded to, a Nigerian, Solomon Amusan, was helped to study at Birmingham, the Diocesan Opportunities Fund was supported again. For the first time the Children's Society collection exceeded £1000. Christian Aid Week in Lancaster raised a record £7650.

Sadly Stewart Cross' health broke down through cancer and he had to retire in October. He was not well enough to attend the farewell Cathedral eucharist and died in April 1989. His funeral was held in Lancaster Priory where he had been a chorister. As Paul Warren said: "he loved God and he loved people". He and his wife, Mary, were greatly missed in the Diocese.

His successor, Alan Chesters, was announced in March. He had experience in schools and later became Chairman of the Church of England Board for Education. Bishop Ian who had run the Diocese during Stewart Cross' illness was soon after 'translated' to be Bishop of Carlisle where he served for eleven years.

Pressures on the Vicar should have lessened in 1989. His responsibilities as Rural Dean passed to Anthony Clegg after his term of office and his staff was increased by the commissioning as Pastoral Auxiliary of Harry Midgley, a retired nursing officer from the Royal Albert Hospital, and by the licensing as Readers of Margaret Ives and Margaret Wallis.

However Phil Regan decided to become a stipendiary priest so he and Carol-Ann, now with a son, Tom, moved to Somerset. Their united work had been very important in continuing Stephen Pye's work at the St Paul's Hala Centre. There was a sound regular congregation, the hall was proving to be useful, the Centre was paying its way, even supporting St Paul's itself. The congregation had taken them to its hearts and a tradition developed of a group going to the coast in October for a week to renew the friendship with Phil and Carol-Ann.

As Gordon had foreseen, staffing the Centre was of crucial importance, and, though lay folk worked hard, stipendiary clergy were (because of their range of work) rarely able to give the same commitment afterwards and progress in the Centre and Hala estate was less than had been hoped.

Echoing an unmistakable trend which had become clearer in the 1980s not only in the Church of England but also in other denominations, attendances at St Paul's began to decline slowly overall, especially at Christmas and Easter as fewer 'fringe' members came. How far this indicated a loss of commitment was debatable but the nature of commitment was changing and did not involve the level of church attendance assumed by the older generation.

The causes of this change in British culture were complex. Greater car ownership meant more travel on Sunday. Family breakdown meant more children visiting a parent at weekends. Sunday trading laws were relaxed and Good Friday steadily became less 'special'. Other symptoms

were alcohol and drug abuse, crime and vandalism (even the east window was damaged by stone-throwing and the lamp over the main door was stolen), a steady rise in the number of divorces, abortions, births outside wedlock. AIDS was beginning to cause concern internationally.

The secularism of the inner city had worried thoughtful Christians for years and the Church of England published an important report, 'Faith in the City'. Though Conservative politicians chose to brand it 'Marxist', it actually was a well-reasoned Report. It led to churches nationwide being asked to contribute to a 'Church Urban Fund' for work in 'Urban Priority Areas (e.g. parts of Blackburn) and fund-raising for this was a focus of Deanery activity for some years.

St Paul's was not complacent. The PCC put 'St Paul's under review' (SPUR) and tested the opinions of the congregations by questionnaires. Thoughtful suggestions were made - mostly focusing on aspects of outreach – and the need for the wide range of services was understood. Silver Jubilees were celebrated by Dennis Beetham the organist (1989) and the over-60s, still under the guidance of such faithfuls as Muriel Wolfendale, Edith Bell, Mary Smith and Jean Pattinson. (There was a Jubilee Service in 1990 and in July Muriel Wolfendale felt it appropriate to pass on the leadership to Betty Seddon.)

Mrs Noreen Cunliffe succeeded Colin Hartley as Head of Scotforth School when he retired through ill-health, Mrs Anne Randell was Deputy Head and continued her

effective work as teacher of the top class, including some interesting work in Religious Education.

Rod Harper succeeded Philip Oglethorpe (now Chairman of the Rotary Club) as Churchwarden at the 1989 AGM and a significant addition to the PCC was the local tax Inspector, Ken Fawcett. He soon became Treasurer and had a valuable gift for clarifying accounts by computer graphics. Financial skills remained essential: e.g. the church had to be repainted after nineteen years. The year end brought its usual toll, twenty one funerals in four weeks, of whom nineteen were in the 68-94 age-range. These on top of the usual Christmas workload (e.g. 475 communicants over Christmas Day) may well have been the 'straw that broke the camel's back'. The Vicar had to have his gall-bladder removed which, as he put it, "taught him to appreciate hospital," but he never recovered his full strength.

There were some interesting social events in 1990: a Car Treasure Hunt, a barbecue after church at Hala at Whitsun, a Scotforth Treasure Hunt and barbecue in the Vicarage garden, a trip to Chatsworth (no trains were available nowadays, another Funday – and one of the last Strawberry Teas in the vicarage garden.

Jack Nicholls came in April from Manchester Cathedral to be Bishop of Lancaster. He was a real 'Lancashire Lad' with a broad accent and a fund of stories which may have seemed light-hearted but usually concealed a punch! His wife Judith (whom he had first met when he was a curate

unwillingly putting on his first parish show and needed a choreographer) took to St Paul's and attended whenever she could (with her daughters until teenage pressures affected them). Jack occasionally turned up too – incognito – and suddenly a Reader struggling with a sermon about the Trinity might catch a glint of spectacles at the back and realise to whom he was preaching. Cyril Ashton, Diocesan Director of Training in the 1990s, used to play a similar trick, sitting in the south aisle. Judith and Jack maintained this link until Jack was called to be Bishop of Sheffield in 1998. Typically he and Judith went (with their grandson) to the Enthronement by tram!

But, as usual, there were matters outside the parish to take note of. The Deanery had observed with concern the growth of housing between Lancaster and Morecambe and eventually a Church/Community Centre was built at Westgate to which the parish gave £500. Besides the usual Christian Aid Week collection the appeal for Eritrea called for a response. So did Cancercare, reinforced by the recent death of Joan Yardley who had been a faithful PCC Secretary and was known to many as Secretary at Lancaster Girls Grammar School.

The Church of England went on agonising about whether women should be ordained priests in face of opposition from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches – and a vocal element within the Church of England itself. George Carey became Archbishop of Canterbury in place of Robert Runcie (in whose offices Alison Bellinger had worked for a time) and the churches were summoned to a

‘Decade of Evangelism’. As one feature of this Bishop Alan asked parishes for a Parish Audit (on which Nick Garrard and others worked hard) and started a programme of episcopal visits to see situations on the ground.

Chapter 6 - Reaching Out : Gordon Bellinger’s Final Years (1990-3)

The time for another stewardship campaign was drawing near. Here too the ‘old guard’ had begun to hand over responsibilities: Charles Rogers passed on registering covenants to Brian Threlfall; the founder, John Pattinson, passed on the chairmanship to Tony Guénault. Jim Quainoo continued in the background as Recorder.

The parish had needed £49,000 to pay its way in 1989 and £12,000 for charities. A major new factor was the rapidly increasing charge on parishes for clergy stipends and pensions, principally because the Church Commissioners had to devote more of their resources to pensions. Church buildings required more too; one immediate task was renewing the painting of the apse ceiling when a suitable painter was found and the result made it a beautiful feature again. The parish hall (1924) was showing its age. Windows had been renewed; then dry rot was found. A loop system in church was fitted for the hard of hearing. There was optimistic talk of a paid youth worker. But even to pay its way the Treasurer, Ken Fawcett, estimated a need

for a 33% increase in planned giving, from £32,000 to £43,000.

Under the slogan 'Reaching Out' the well-oiled system when into action and @400 (re)joined. The target was exceeded; £45,000 was promised (plus £13,000 tax rebates).

Christmas again produced a desperate crisis-this time a 'Crisis in Africa' appeal for Liberia, Ethiopia and the Sudan. Charities this year included the Church Urban Fund and helping a South African from a black township escape from apartheid to train at Cambridge (though Nelson Mandela's release from prison was a great step towards the end of white domination). In addition children were busily fundraising for the BBC TV 'Blue Peter' appeal for Rumania as the Communist Empire had unexpectedly collapsed and that country was in extreme poverty after gross mismanagement by the dictator Ceaucescu.

The formation of 'South Lancaster Churches Together' was a significant development, i.e. St Paul's with Greaves Methodist church, the Bowerham United Reformed Church and St Bernadette's R C Church. Representatives of these joined in an Ascension Day walk to Williamson Park.

As one response to the Decade of Evangelism and to the Bishop's injunction for Parish 'Audits' an Outreach Committee was set up. It concentrated on those on the fringe of parish life. Parents of those recently baptised or

of recent entrants to Scotforth School were visited. Of the 720 baptisms recorded in the period 1978-88 70% of the parents had no connection with the church in 1991, e.g. through moving away. Efforts continued to be made to retain church members of secondary school age, a national problem.

The 'Gulf Crisis' provoked by the belligerence of Saddam Hussein of Iraq disturbed church people, like many across the nation. The Council of Churches organised prayers in the Priory and local church leaders sent greetings to local Muslims, an expression of what Stewart Cross had called for, signs of reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

The 115th Birthday service had Bishop Jack as preacher with a special orchestra to boost the organ. The limitations of this instrument were being noticed and talk began about replacing it with something more effective.

Dick Nicholson, replacing Ken Williams, again became Churchwarden. He was a JP (the congregation usually included two or three) and was a very conscientious chairman of the Fabric Committee. Margaret Ives became PCC Secretary. Edith Bell retired after sixteen years on the PCC: it should be noted that this consistently had a reasonable turnover of members and a good cross-section of 'locals' as distinct from 'offcomers', and was not dominated by old folk! Mrs Olive Whittle and Mrs Wilcock received certificates for fifty years'

membership of the Mothers Union. Harry Woodhouse retired as Treasurer of the Hala Over 60s.

George Phythian retired, with a firework display, from being first Headmaster of Ripley St Thomas Secondary School. In his 25 years he had seen the school grow to be a very significant comprehensive school in the county with a solid sixth form, a good sports record and a strong Christian ethos. To occupy some of his time he served on General Synod for ten years, and spoke occasionally. Some Readers went in this Summer Term to Birmingham to join in celebrating 125 years of Reader ministry.

The Scouts had a Family Camp for their 60th birthday. Pathfinders enjoyed a Diocesan celebration in the Cathedral and held another Vigil to raise fees for Ugandan orphans. Sunday school flourished and had a waiting list through a shortage of teachers. The 9.15 family communion continued to attract 80-90 communicants with children as well, and as they insisted on friendly conversation after the service, the 10.30 service was moved forward to 10.45. Another contemporary hymnbook was introduced to help young people in church – and school – ‘Junior Praise’.

Clergy changed. Nick Garrard moved with his wife to Norwich and for a while there was no curate. Retired clergy such as Hugh Seal were useful. Hugh had moved into the parish in 1978 (after being Rector of Morecambe) and in retirement remained very active in the Deanery, taking services at St Paul’s on a regular basis until 2004. The Readers’ team was made even larger when John

Whitaker and his wife came to be near their daughter, Jean Harrison, the faithful assistant organist, and her two children. John had been Secretary of Readers for the Manchester Diocese and soon succeeded Peter Gedge as Secretary of the local Readers group. Marion took on responsibility for church linen.

From Manchester soon came, thanks to Bishop Jack, the first woman Deacon to serve in the Deanery, Janet Heil. With teaching and parochial experience Janet soon established herself as a very effective witness for ordained women's ministry.

Then surprisingly the parish was offered another experienced minister at no cost. David Jackson had been running a Church of the Nazarene in Heysham for some years. He felt called to be an Anglican priest and Bishop Alan felt that St Paul's would give him the necessary Anglican experience, so he was ordained Deacon in St Paul's on December 22. He and Janet formed a good partnership under Gordon (and David's wife, Mary, was a useful resource too).

This was lucky since Gordon was finding it harder to cope with the demands of the parish, not least the problem of getting to know people.

In the autumn £3,000 was needed to strengthen the apse besides, unexpectedly, £10,000 for the Parish Hall. Brian Wood took over the distribution of over 600 magazines from Len Berryman who had done it for 25

years. Mrs Doggett finally retired from the infant Sunday school and Ann and Geoff West ended 27 years as caretakers of Scotforth School. The Pathfinders held another Vigil to finance Ugandan children. The problem of retaining young people continued to exercise the church. It was said that since 1950 the proportion of young people having some connection with a Christian church had fallen from 85% to 15%. The Anglican Report 'All God's Children' aroused wide interest in seeking to address this issue.

Janet and David soon started to make their mark. In February 1992 they began 'Exploring the Faith' courses. A 'CYFA' group was started for older teenagers and a youth Songs of Praise was held one Sunday to sing their 'top ten' hymns. Then 'Hala Praise' was introduced monthly with its special music group. At Christmas Janet introduced 'Carols and a Cuppa' at Hala.

The PCC decided not to buy a new organ; typically it would take another five years to fulfil this project. Stewart Corrie, who had been started on the organ by Dennis Beetham, came fifth in a 'Young Organist of the Year' competition at Liverpool and went on to read music in London.

A major change occurred at the 1992 Annual Parish Meeting: after 33 years as Vice-Chairman John Pattinson felt it right to retire. His dynamic leadership had been very effective over the years. In June a trip went to Carlisle and then on to Hayton to which Stephen Pye had been

appointed by the Bishop of Carlisle, partly to help the Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute as a Tutor. Elsie Stackhouse organised another Flower Festival on 'the Song of Creation'. The Scotforth Singers, which had for some time sung a monthly motet at the family communion, sang evensong; the Saturday concert included solos by Stewart Corrie –and Bishop Jack; there was a Songs of Praise on Sunday.

Marriage nationally may have been less respected as co-habitation became more accepted, but on one Sunday in June the banns read totalled fourteen!

The church fabric proved even more expensive than feared. The apse had been successfully repainted, a space was created for music groups, and the pews were renovated to stop coats sticking to the old varnish. But the parish hall almost literally became a bottomless pit as vast quantities of cement disappeared in the attempts to cure dry rot. Also the fire escape, dating back to the wartime use of the hall by the school, needed to be removed. Over £30,000 was spent altogether. Another appeal was felt to be justified; a further £10,000 a year was promised.

The controversy over ordaining women as priests came to a climax. The 'Movement Against the Ordination of Women' felt that the Church of England had no authority by itself to break away from a two thousand year old theological tradition. But Free Churches had demonstrated the gifts of women ministers and other Anglican churches already even had women bishops. Synod held a 'courteous

debate' and the verdict narrowly in favour "led to rejoicing and bitterness...as well as a desire for harmony and reconciliation." The necessary legislation was completed by February 1994. St Paul's had held an Open meeting on the subject. Most people, probably encouraged by experience of Janet and other women in the parish, accepted it – but not all. Various strategies were adopted by those who refused to accept it.

This year's Christmas charities comprised further work locally for Homeless Action (including a new centre in Edward St: again St Paul's people were among the organisers), recurring problems in Africa (Somalia, Mozambique, Angola) and now South East Europe (Bosnia and Albania). Christian Aid was helped as usual.

Parish costs had reached £85,400 by 1992. Of this £26,000 helped to pay for clergy and £12,800 had gone on properties. But £14,400 had been given away. St Paul's attempted to devise interesting services. General Synod accepted a useful little paper 'Service of the Word' to ensure that 'family services' contained the essential elements of Anglican worship. By that yardstick the Parade Service did.

Lancaster celebrated its 800th birthday in 1993. Inspired by Peter Ballard, the dynamic Vicar of Christ Church, the Council of Churches put on an ambitious Pageant – 'The Way of the Cross'. It started in Market Square and processed through central Lancaster with various 'Stations', ending with a 'Resurrection' in the Cathedral.

Both Bishops of Lancaster took part, along with @3000 people. Unfortunately it rained heavily, but it remained a memorable act of witness.

Underlying these special events was the ongoing ministry in the parish – pastoral, teaching and liturgical. The responsibilities were shared out widely, but Gordon was finding that (as the old prayer put it) “the burden is intolerable”. On medical advice he retired on May 30th after almost forty years in the ordained ministry. As he was quoted in ‘The See’, his first love was the life of a parish priest which was “exhausting but exciting”.

All sorts of gifts were given to him, culminating in a farewell Evensong with further presentations. Sheila’s quiet contributions in the background were symbolically recognised by an ornamental vase of flowers for their garden in Garstang.

At Gordon’s ordination the bishop had prayed that those ordained should be helped by God so “that both by word and good example they may faithfully serve (Thee) in this office as priests, to the glory of thy name and the edification of thy church.” This prayer was undoubtedly answered in the forty years ministry of Gordon Bellinger, long supported by his wife, Sheila.

Chapter 7 – Interregnum (1993)

An 'Interregnum' followed, as usual, while the five Trustees, guided by Bishop Jack, found someone who might meet the hopes expressed by the PCC in its Statement to the Bishop. Fortunately the parish had two experienced curates and a new Vicar came within seven months.

So parish life continued much as before. Edith Bell felt it right to retire after leading her study group for twenty years. John Illingworth succeeded Rod Harper as Churchwarden. Betty Seddon had to move to be near her son so Mr Melling was the first man to lead the Scotforth Over 60s whose numbers had now dropped significantly. Jean and John Pattinson celebrated their Golden Wedding. They had met through the church before the war and had proved to be a very fruitful partnership for Scotforth. David Jackson was ordained priest in September; Janet had to wait until the legal processes had been completed.

The St Paul's Hala Centre was going through a specially useful phase, helped by Janet. The Sunday morning service averaged 40-50. There was also a varied monthly 'Hala Praise' and the Crib Service was popular. The NHS clinic, 'Weightwatchers' and Hala Over 60s continued. There was now a playgroup on four mornings a week. Other community uses included the monthly meeting of the Hala Residents Association and 'surgeries' of the Liberal Democrat councillors. To see if other use could be made of

the building, links were made with the local authority Barton Road Community Centre.

Though inflation was now under control, money was still losing value. Three Sunday collections in September exceeded £1,000. The Friends of Scotforth School raised £2,500 towards alterations to the old Victorian building which were dedicated by Bishop Jack. The Diocesan Budget (excluding clergy stipends) exceeded one million pounds. But the bishop was right to stress that the Church of England had “a spiritual crisis, not just a financial crisis.” St Paul’s was not unaffected by this trend. The caring was going on but congregations were not increasing. Communicants at Christmas and Easter were two thirds of what they had been in 1984/5 and the 10.45 on Sunday was not attracting younger adults except for the Parade Service. Yet many people were involved in many aspects of parish life. Perhaps the notion of commitment was changing.

Chapter 8 - Go The Extra Mile (1994-1997)

a) Andrew Clitherow’s Induction

Andrew Clitherow, the new Vicar (formerly Chaplain of Rossall School), was inducted by Bishop Alan at Epiphany 1994. “What a superb Induction service it was,” Andrew wrote, “It was such a joy to be amongst so many committed and dedicated people.” David Jackson had written in the January magazine, “a new dawn in the church does not mean an end to the old and familiar; it means building on the foundations that are there.” And so it proved.

Charitable fundraising continued for a wide variety of causes. Uganda school fees (Pathfinders and Sunday school); Children's Society house-to-house collections; Scout UNITE project for Uganda; Greaves Park Nursery (Brownies); clothes and blankets for OXFAM (Cub Scouts); Simon Walker collected £618 for muscular dystrophy by running in the London Marathon; money was given to the new projects Cancercare at Slynedales, Homeless Action and the North Lancashire Victim Support Group. All this well illustrated Robin Gill's research finding that church people were involved in charitable work more than their numbers would suggest.

Scotforth School raised money for UNICEF and Action for Children. Mrs Cunliffe decided to move to head the new school nearer home at Westgate. The Governors released her early so Mrs Randell ran the school before Brian Wood, who worshipped with his family in the parish, took over. The church provided copies of 'Junior Praise' in an attempt to link school with church more closely in the music sung.

At last the legal hurdles in the way of ordaining women as priests all fell so Janet Heil was one of five women ordained priest in Lancaster Priory by Bishop Jack. One example of the cost of such ordinations was that the priest looking after Over Wyresdale joined the Greek Orthodox church and St Paul's was given responsibility for this parish which added to the Vicar's burdens. Services were further modernised. Mattins was now monthly. The Parade Service had been simplified and a monthly Family service was introduced at 10.45.

b) *‘Go the extra mile’*

The last Stewardship Renewal had been in 1990; a new campaign seemed essential. The newness of the Vicar was turned to advantage – it would help him learn faces more quickly! Income might total £75,000 but in 1993 the costs were £79,000 and expenses were expected to rise to £90,000. A Diocesan report ‘Faith, finance and the future’ explained the increased financial needs and a revised system for assessing each parish’s ‘share’. St Paul’s needed to pay in 1995 £30,000 for clergy and £14,000 as the Diocesan ‘quota’ or ‘share’. One third of the current St Paul’s subscribers were giving £1 or less each week (providing 7% of the income) whereas only 7% of the givers (28) by giving £7 a week or more produced one third of the income. So Tony Guénault led his team into action, with Neal Stackhouse again co-ordinating visitors.

But a ‘new look’ was adopted. To reinforce the slogan ‘Go the extra mile for God’ the Vicar hiked forty miles with some Venture Scouts. Simon Pritchard, an art teacher training to be a Reader, designed the brochure. Instead of the usual formal Parish Gathering a Stewardship Weekend was held, with a male voice concert, Songs of Praise, and an exhibition on ‘Scotforth Past and Present’ (mounted by John Illingworth and John Gedge). Existing members were encouraged to come to make their promises. Sixty visitors, including women for the first time, called on others. The results were financially good. Pledged giving went up from £61,000 to £70,000.

The 1994 accounts made interesting comparisons with 1984. Increases included inflation (60%), stipend and parsonage assessments (400%) and Diocesan 'Quota' (480%). The total budget for running the Diocese and contributing to central Church needs was now approaching one and a quarter million pounds. In response Stewardship and cash collections had slightly more than doubled. A surplus was expected for 1995 (but not 1996!)

A useful by-product was a parish computerised record system. Ken and John Fawcett set it up. Roy and Mary Edwards led the team which maintained it. The Electoral Roll had 614 names.

John Pattinson was given a presentation at the Stewardship concert in recognition of all he had done for the church over so many years. All were shocked when a month later he died of heart failure, aged 74. St Paul's had lost a loyal and devoted servant of Christ, whose leadership had been inspirational and had firmly established St Paul's as a 'Stewardship' parish.

Liz Dick succeeded Julie Fosdick as leader of the infant Sunday School, and Alison Wilson, a teacher, received the Gold Award of the Duke of Edinburgh's Scheme. A bishop augmented the staff resources when Michael Vickers retired from being Bishop of Colchester and moved into the parish with his wife, Janet. Dennis Beetham celebrated forty years as an organist, thirty at St Paul's.

Lancaster Priory celebrated its 900th birthday; St Paul's Hala Centre made much of its tenth. Bishop Jack came with Judith and cut the usual birthday cake. There were special events including an Open Night held by the Brownies who now met there as Local Management of Schools had made Moorside School too expensive. They also had a monthly Parade Service. These were useful additions to Centre-based activities.

Bishop Alan paid a day-long Pastoral Visit in January 1995 and was said to have been impressed by the work, commitment and Christian life of the parish.

Brian Wood, the new headteacher, found Scotforth St Paul's School a busy place, quite apart from meeting the rigorous, and ever-changing, requirements of the Department for Education and Employment (as it was now called), not least the new controversial SATs (Standard Assessment Tasks). There was a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as the Schools Musical Festival, the successful 'B' football team, reaching the Finals of the Home Safety Quiz, taking Y6 (as the top class was now called) to Lakeside. The school also collected shoes for the children in the Ukraine and raised money for Guide Dogs, Help the Aged, Comic Relief and the Children's Society, while some pupils supported the BBC 'Blue Peter' 'Well Water' appeal – over £1,000 in total!

An unfortunate accident occurred to Elizabeth Wilden who was knocked down while crossing the A6 outside the

school. Parents started a campaign for a 'Pelican' crossing which took three years to achieve the desired result.

c) 1995-1996

The Church of England had decided to develop fellowship with German Protestants (leading to the Meissen Declaration over inter-communion in 1997) so Janet went to Braunschweig in a Diocesan group. George Phythian led a group on the new Diocesan 'God our Rock' training course. There was another Good Friday procession followed by a vigil to the dawn Easter Sunday service in Williamson Park in 1995 and this became an annual event. Arton Medd, who had led Christian Aid locally since 1973, went to Westminster Abbey for a Jubilee service attended by the Queen.

Various changes in personnel occurred. David and Mary Jackson moved to Banbury. They were missed particularly because of their hard work in teaching and visiting. Neal Stackhouse (again) and Beryl Fawcett became church wardens, Beryl being the first woman so elected at St Paul's. John and Pat Illingworth took on the magazine, making good use of the new printing facilities. Dick Nicholson remained a very conscientious Chairman of the Fabric Committee, with Bob Carter still Secretary. Jill Novell succeeded John Gedge who had been PCC Secretary for eight years. Maureen Curwen took on the Children's Society work from Stephanie Hewitt. Maureen Leach had given up the Wednesday Guides and it was symptomatic of the problems of finding Leaders for uniformed groups that eventually Jean Hardy had to take on

that unit permanently as well as the Monday Guides as both were thriving. The Scouts were luckier: Chief Inspector Thomson was succeeded by Geoff Rice as Chairman and Jim Holland continued to maintain a strong team of Leaders, including a series of students. The three Pathfinder leaders resigned after seven years and Krystyna Inston succeeded. Then Janet Heil was appointed to her first parish, St Bartholomew's, Great Harwood, as one of the first two women incumbents in the Diocese.

Readers had to work harder as there was no curate for some months. George Phythian and John Whitaker completed forty years as Readers; George was also re-elected onto General Synod.

John organised another Diocesan Readers Conference at St Paul's. Bishop Jack preached one of his typical sermons – and the hearty singing drowned the organ. This prompted Peter Gedge (9.15 organist) to return to the idea of replacing the thirty year old instrument. Now he had the Treasurer's support and this time the project began quietly to go forward with a renewed appeal. Significant gifts were made to the church. Jean Jeffreys gave a useful table font and a processional cross in memory of Stephen; Mrs Pattinson and the family in memory of John gave two chalices whose shape was more helpful than the old tall Victorian ones.

Two other interesting projects were set up by the Vicar. A chance meeting with Dick Cartmell prompted the idea of 'twinning' St Paul's with St James, Lower Darwen, a lively

parish working amid great social problems, e.g. through a 'drop in' centre called 'Mustard-seed House'. The Over Wyresdale vicarage was empty so a Committee was set up to manage it as a 'Retreat and Renewal Centre'. Lower Darwen parishioners were among the first who benefited from the extremely peaceful environment with splendid views of the Bowland Fells. "God's peace all around" was one teenager's comment. Both these projects were mentioned in the Parish's response to the Bishop's Call for an update to the 1991 Audit. Another achievement recorded was the formation of a team of visitors to follow up baptisms.

Through links with Beatrice Thoms, MBE, money was sent to buy a church site in Gaborone, Botswana. In gratitude they sent the pottery lavabo bowl kept by the altar. Another good cause supported was a hospice in Romania. The Mothers Union members who had knitted 190 blankets for Save the Children Fund now began knitting squares for Rumania.

1996 was enlivened by the Vicar's taking on a cocker spaniel called George, and his magazine letters recounted the tribulations of bringing up this refractory puppy! Youth policy was a major preoccupation. The Church of England had published a report, 'Youth a part', and because 'Child Protection' had become a national concern the Diocese produced complex guidelines. Liz Dick, as Youth Co-ordinator, formed a committee to co-ordinate work with three hundred young people. Another thirty two youngsters

were confirmed in February, some of whom actually said they like St Paul's because it was friendly.

The Electoral Roll had to be completely revised for the AGM: 543 'signed up'. Kevin Parkinson (accountant on a local NHS Trust) succeeded Ken Fawcett who had been an excellent Treasurer for seven years. He had recently secured a legacy from John Cooke which caused £75,000 to be invested for maintaining the church building, but it remained important to keep up income. Diocesan demands on the parish became more controversial as now £50,000 went directly to the Diocese. Two church improvements needed money too: converting the heating to gas to save money and a new public address system. This had radio microphones which occasionally at first picked up sermons from Greaves church!

d) Rosemary Priestley

Attempts to improve services continued. A simpler liturgy was introduced at the monthly "youth" 9.15 eucharist, the Family Service was simplified, as was the Brownies Service at Hala. A weekly notices sheet was introduced. These innovations were helped by improved parish printing facilities – and by the latest curate, Rosemary Priestley, who had trained part-time on the Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute (CBDTI). She came from an impeccable ecclesiastical pedigree: her father, John, was a lively parish priest, a Chaplain to the Queen, and in charge of Post-Ordination Training. Rosemary in her short time in the parish proved to be another very effective witness for women's ordained ministry.

There were other interesting services. Lower Darwen members came for a Songs of Praise, Iain Forbes led an 'Iona' style evening worship (Celtic spirituality was popular), Archdeacon Ken Gibbons held a Visitation in St Paul's for the first time, 'Old Catholic' students attended evensong under the auspices of Margaret Ives, the Preston District of Oddfellows had a service as John Blacktop was Provincial Grand Master, Scouts and Guides held the first of a series of Christingle services.

Because the fifth abbot of Whalley seemed to have claimed that the church in Blackburn had been founded in 596, Whalley Abbey had been founded in 1296 and the Diocese was now seventy years old, there were official celebrations and church members went to the cathedral to hear both archbishops.

e) *"Live out the good news of God's Love in Christ"*
Mission Statements were fashionable; the Diocese formulated one and urged parishes to do the same. St Paul's aimed "to proclaim and live out the good news of God's love in Christ". Church schools had also been helped to define theirs: St Paul's school said it aimed "to be a joyful worshipping community actively seeking to follow the example and teaching of Christ."

Unemployment remained an anxiety (with a Church of England report in 1997) so there was an ecumenical service in the cathedral on 'Unemployment Sunday'. The Vicar preached a moving sermon on an encounter with a

homeless man with no socks, and found himself in the shortlist of thirty for 'The Times' 'Preacher of the Year' competition. Rev John Mullineaux was continuing to inspire work for the socially deprived in the area (for which in 1999 he had a block of apartments named after him and was awarded the MBE). St Paul's members like Arton Medd and Tony Guénault had been involved in this for some time. Arton with his wife, Heather Watson, toured Uganda to see Christian Aid projects and they both then gave talks locally. They also led local support for the 'Fair Trade' Campaign. Helen Morgan, a young trainee architect from the parish, wrote a vivid article on living in basic conditions in Burkina Faso in West Africa as she helped Africans develop basic building technology. Proposed building development on the site of the Royal Albert Hospital and in south Lancaster led the PCC to stake a claim for the provision of community/worship facilities in that area.

Kathleen Walker, who had originally worshipped at St John's, took over the care of this 'redundant' church with Lawrence from Julia Beck, MBE. Joyce Robinson, a long-standing member died and her sister, Marjorie, gave a beautiful wooden stand for notices in her memory. SPARC held a 50th Birthday reunion attended by 76 who presented the founders, Betty and Tom Hodgson, with a silver plate inscribed 'from the SPARC family'.

In Lent the Vicar continued attempts to develop spirituality: Robert and Christine Coleman (of Over Wyresdale) ran a 'Painting, Poetry and Prayer Day', Bishop Michael gave

three addresses in Holy Week, Maundy Thursday saw an ecumenical Passover Meal at Hala and a Youth Vigil; David Lavelle described how his children were “entirely swept up in the force of the Easter Fire service”. Easter communicants totalled 375. One result of more interesting services was the start of discussion about re-ordering the chancel and removing the choir stalls.

Ken Clayson, a police sergeant, succeeded Neal Stackhouse as church warden at the 1997 APM. Margaret Wallis retired from the PCC along with Valerie Fox. Over half the PCC were under fifty, the youngest being a student at Lancaster University, Charlie Hill, who was accepted for ordination in 2000. The Treasurer and Vice-Chairman strove hard to meet the complex requirements of the Charities Act in presenting reports. Two losses were Chris Heydon who resigned after sixteen years as Brown Owl and Beryl Pakenham-Walsh, a choir member whose approach to death from cancer proved to be inspirational.

Hala had some interesting developments. Saturday coffee mornings were held as an attempt at outreach, Barbara Jones, who was to start ordination training on CBDTI in September, ran a series of lunch-time prayers, and Andrea Bennett began a visiting team to work on the estate. St Paul's took a leading role in local celebrations at the last stage of a 'Pilgrims' Way' when pilgrims walked from Canterbury to Heysham to mark the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba and the arrival of St Augustine.

Rosemary was ordained priest in June, along with Lars Simpson who was destined to succeed her as curate in 1999. Her father's sermon began by 'pulling the leg' of the ordaining bishop. In 'The See' Bishop Jack had just written on 'the value of staying put' when the announcement came that he was moving to be the Bishop of Sheffield!

Rosemary's estimate of St Paul's after one year's work was significant. "When the faith, love and vision of so many people come together in acts of worship and service as they do here, the presence of God is tangible, and I wish those who scoff (at the Church of England) could experience it." Bishop Jack's wife, Judith, echoed this in a letter after moving when she wrote that St Paul's had been her 'spiritual base' for seven years. (She had attended the family communion on many Sundays). "Part of the reason for missing Lancaster is the welcome I received and the friendships I have made through my connections with St Paul's".

Happy summer events included another Abbeystead Fun Day, a Flower Festival at Ripley School, and the complete installation within five days of a 32 stop electronic organ which included a pedal trombone and a brilliant trumpet stop to keep the hymn singing up to speed! Well over half the cost was donated. The church garden continued to be admired thanks to the efforts of Mary Thomas and her team. Harold Nowell (who had been keeping the Electoral Roll for years) and his wife Mary celebrated their Golden Wedding.

An event very early on Sunday morning, August 31, “triggered a week of unprecedented events. The British nation was united in mourning and the cities were covered in flowers. The sorrow was felt worldwide. A spiritual earthquake was felt... but the spirituality was not of an orthodox Christian kind.” So wrote an experienced journalist, Tom Harrison. The cause was the death in Paris in a horrific car crash at the age of 36 of Diana, Princess of Wales. Archbishop Carey said: “It was clear up and down the country that many people wanted to participate in rituals such as the lighting of candles...and silent prayer, through which they could express their longings, their supplications, on their own terms, in their own way.”

Interestingly even many who did not normally go to church looked to the churches. Diana’s funeral at Westminster Abbey aroused worldwide interest. St Paul’s, like many churches, made a Book of Remembrance and candles available, and held a Service of Commendation to which two hundred came.

Harvest celebrations attracted good congregations and again most of the food went to Social Services while fresh produce was sold to benefit Christian Aid. Other money was given for the Bishop’s Harvest Appeal (for the USPG ‘Give a goat’ project in India). Earlier in the year the Kingfisher Patrol of the Monday Guides had raised £57 to help buy oxen for Uganda. Cheryl Hardy, a young Guider, had worked in a Rumanian children’s hospital and Guides bought equipment for it.

A significant development was Mandy Seddon starting a pre-Sunday School to help parents who regularly attended the Family Communion. Over the next year through the enthusiasm of Emma Sidebottom a team developed to cover the 2½ -11 age-range, complementing the continuing strong 10.45 Sunday school. A 16+ group formed and Pathfinders held another Vigil in One World Week. But “the gap between church culture and youth culture” in the ‘Youth a part’ Report remained a problem.

250-300 children and young people were in church organisations; @ 350 attended church or Sunday school on a normal Sunday. In the previous twelve months sixty had been baptised and fifty confirmed (including as usual a group of adults); there had been thirty weddings and a hundred funerals. Communicants at Christmas totalled 408 and at Easter 341. The Electoral Roll had 539 names. Numerically St Paul’s regular membership was reasonably flourishing, but it was not unaffected by the national trend which showed Church of England weekly attendance falling by 20% in ten years. And now even the Roman Catholic Church was being affected too.

The Ministry Team was strengthened when Simon Pritchard was licensed as a Reader, but soon he felt called to be a priest and went with his family to Cranmer Hall, becoming Curate of Heysham in 2000. The pattern of readings (and sermons) established by the ASB in 1980 was changed by the introduction of an ecumenical Revised Common Lectionary, a foretaste of what was to come in

2000/1 when the new Common Worship services were to be used.

Suddenly disaster struck! The Vicar had long had a back problem and on October 27th he suffered a dangerous and painful slipped disc which made an emergency spine operation necessary. He was out of action until the following summer. So Rosemary came back from holiday to find herself effectively 'priest-in-charge' having been ordained a priest for only four months. That she proved so effective bore witness to her qualities.

Scotforth School remained full, and teaching classes of 38 at what was now called Key Stage Two (i.e. 7-11 year olds) in small classrooms with an ever-changing National Curriculum remained stressful. 'Information technology' was becoming more important. So FOSSY raised £11,500 towards the cost of adding a small library-computer room to the building. The national system of school inspections became more rigorous under the new 'Office for Standards in Education' (OFSTED), a very revealing title. The school was inspected and, though overall the report was positive, it highlighted some weaknesses and the school had to cope with a difficult period.

The school's nativity services were a highlight and well over 1500 attended St Paul's over Christmas. New ideas for the season included a visit to Hala by Father Christmas on a Saturday morning, a booklet of ideas on 'Putting Christ back into Christmas' – and Rosemary appearing at the Christmas Day Family Communion as a 'Teletubby'

from children's TV. She risked spending the whole service in this headgear but managed to make her escape. The service was made even more interesting by power cuts. The last ended just in time to start the second verse of 'Hark the Herald Angels sing'. The congregation came in at exactly the right pitch!

Chapter 9 – Into The Millennium (1998-2000)

At the 1998 Birthday Service Valerie Fox received a presentation after 20 years as Vicar's Secretary. Gordon Bellinger came back to speak, paying tribute to her efficiency, love of people and quiet sense of humour. The church had been filled twice just before for two funerals, of Margaret Higton, who died very unexpectedly, and soon afterwards her husband, Brian. He was a popular and respected GP with a fine voice heard in the Lancaster Singers (and the Scotforth Singers which sang monthly at the 9.15 family communion).

Stephen Pedley was consecrated Bishop of Lancaster in March. His first duty was to address the annual Good Friday procession on the day the Northern Ireland Peace Accord was signed. Paula Higgin became PCC Secretary, Maureen Leach joined the Standing Committee, and David Fox took on organising the distribution of 600 magazines a month. Bill Harrison, whose wife, Jean, was assistant organist, received his Fire Brigade Long Service medal. Jim Holland's sterling work for Scouting was recognised by a Medal of Merit. This was presented at a

Parade Service which greatly impressed the Scout County Commissioner.

A series of magazine articles illustrated how parishioners tried to live out their faith in their work or public service, like Jean Jeffreys, a JP for over twenty years, and a Samaritan (anonymous, of course). Another regular communicant was Sheila Denwood, the Councillor for Scotforth West, and Deputy Mayor in 2000/1.

As the Church of England prepared for the new Common Worship book, St Paul's was among parishes asked to try out experimental eucharistic prayers. Four more were licensed to administer the chalice. An Easter Bunny drew numbers of children (and parents) into the Hala Centre. After Easter, Andrew was fit enough to begin to take up the reins again.

The Sudan crisis helped Christian Aid Week raise £1630 in south Lancaster, and Arton Medd took a group to join the great Human Chain demonstration to bring home to a world governmental conference in Birmingham the problem of Third World Debt. A Traidcraft stall began to appear monthly. A Fun Day planned for July on Hala was forced by rain to move to the Barton Road Centre; another of Rosemary's skills turned out to be mono-cycling!

The new Publicity Officer, Ian Martin, put St Paul's onto the developing 'Internet' and drew responses from around the world. From around the world also came 750 bishops to the Lambeth Conference, which unfortunately was

mainly publicised for its debates on homosexuality. This was another example of Anglicans wrestling with a contemporary moral issue when interpreting biblical texts aroused great controversy.

An alien intruder arose on the Chorley skyline – a massive Mormon temple to remind viewers that this sect had begun in England near Preston.

Another Stewardship Renewal Campaign was due – but now it focussed on ‘Christian Responsibility’ with Philip Holland as leader. It began with a Harvest Festival weekend. A concert included a folk singer, Sam Hill, and Jeremy Truslove demonstrated the potential of the new organ. The increased mobility of parishioners was shown by fact that the lapsed were not fully replaced by new members so income remained about the same.

Hugh and Janet Seal celebrated their Diamond Wedding, a telegram from the Queen arriving just as they were leaving for the thanksgiving eucharist. A group went to see Canon Stephen Pye instituted to the Hawkshead Group of parishes – with five sets of church-wardens to cope with! The Royal Lancaster Infirmary at last gained a chapel.

Unexpectedly Rosemary left after just over two years – but for a distinguished parish: St Martin-in-the Fields, London. She had said earlier, “I love the opportunity to relate to different people of all ages and backgrounds, sharing where they are on their faith journey.” St Martin’s would give her even more scope for that than St Paul’s. Andrew was right:

“She has earned the appreciation and respect of us all - as a capable and effective priest.” Parishioners demonstrated this by a well-attended farewell presentation.

A programme of opportunities to explore life's journey together was offered in the autumn, entitled 'Journey of Faith'. Margaret Ives, a Reader, had two books published on spiritual themes. She also worked hard as the parish's main link with Over Wyresdale. The new ecumenical Revised Common Lectionary was fully introduced at Advent. When it was proposed to put in the pews copies of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as the latest accurate translation, well over a hundred copies were donated by individuals. Christmas saw the usual round of services and events. The Diocesan Secretary, after reading the 1998 Report, wrote to say “how impressed I am, not just with the Report, but by the comprehensive nature of your church's work.”

A father and son were among the thirty confirmed in February 1999, Gareth Lewis, a server, and his father Graham, who put his business skills to good use in the autumn 'mini' Stewardship campaign which brought in more members and kept up the level of 'planned giving'. The Bishop of Lancaster returned in March to licence a new curate, Lars Simpson, who had been a dynamic modern languages student at Lancaster University and a curate in Blackpool.

The Director of Christian Aid came to speak in Lancaster. Dr Daleep Mukerji had been a fellow student at Vellore

with a parishioner, Dr George Mathen, whose daughter was married at St Paul's at an interesting joint Anglican/Mar Thoma service. Her golden sari was stunning, as were other saris worn by family and friends. Arton Medd raised over £2000 for Christian Aid by running in the London Marathon and the parish responded to problems around Kosovo by providing money and useful goods in co-operation with Lower Darwen.

Dr David Longden replaced Beryl Fawcett as churchwarden; his wife Judith was now established as parish secretary. Beryl took on the Electoral Roll from Harold Nowell, and Kim Wain became leader of the active Baptism Visitors team which Pauline Swarbrick had run for some years. The tradition of two minute talks by representatives of organisations at the AGM was replaced by the written reports required by the Charities Act.

Easter had its usual range of services and activities, with a new ecumenical card. Hugh Seal, now 88 and having been a priest for forty years, retired from work outside the parish. Over Wyresdale marked this by presenting him and Janet with a delightful picture of the church after he had held his last Easter eucharist there. The 9.15 Family Communion celebrated its thirtieth birthday in May. It continued to provide a valuable element in the programme of services and numbers of communicants now normally exceeded those at 10.45, but the average remained at 80-90. Evensong was attracting fewer, though faithfully supported by the choir – and Kathleen Rankin who made tea afterwards.

A significant innovation was a second Sunday school – at 9.15. Building on Mandy Seddon's work, Emma Sidebottom (and later Pam Marshall) gathered a team of parents and over forty children (up to the age of eleven) were on the register, making a welcome addition to the congregation on the first Sunday to build a proper link between Sunday School and church worship. Kyra Physick began a Youth Supplement to the magazine.

The various church organisations remained active and generally successful, though the Wednesday Guides finally had to close in November as no-one had come forward to run the unit and Mrs Hardy could no longer do it on her own. Inspired by Linda Hilton and her team of leaders Rainbows and Brownies raised £420 for the District Nurses Fund. In the magazine a lad described the Cub Scout camp at St Anne's as 'brilliant' and Helen Englefield wrote an amusing article on the delights of leaving her family to train to be a Leader in the pouring rain at Waddecar Campsite! Beaver Scouts had their first 'sleepover' and Irene Harper's experience led to her becoming acting Assistant District Commissioner for that Section.

Peter Hewitt, a sidesman, who had been Lonsdale Scout District Chairman since 1980, became only the third local man to receive the highest Scout award, the Silver Wolf. Jenny Rees completed her Queen's Scout award, and Cheryl Hardy her Queen's Guide. Clare Fawcett went to Prague as a Guide Young Leader to teach English, earning the fare by selling delectable chocolate cakes. Clare also went, with Hayley Beagley, to 'the Time of our lives', a

national event for Anglican young people in London, where they hob-nobbed with Archbishop Carey and old friends like Rosemary Priestley and Bishop Jack.

Carolyn Webb, a choirgirl, won her class at the Morecambe Music Festival. Mrs Joan Porter received a Gold Award for her services to the Royal British Legion.

Catherine Walker went to Namibia for two years on Voluntary Service Overseas to teach Food Technology; her Scouting experience helped her cope with some of the problems. Margaret Ives continued to keep up parish interest in the Missions to Seamen and took a group to Liverpool. Two special services for women of the area were held in St Paul's, the Women's World Day of Prayer, and the Deanery Mothers Union Festival, organised by Joan Anderson.

Notably retirements in the autumn were Phyllis Burgess, succeeded after twenty years as Chair of the Women's Fellowship by Kathy Carpenter, and Max Walmsley. His wife Muriel had been baptised at St Paul's and both had been heavily involved in parish life since the end of the war. Max now felt that after thirty years he should give up his last job – putting together the magazine (still over 600 copies a month). Audrey Reeder ceased organising the Hala Over 60's; Kathleen Cope became the leader with Gwen Gedge responsible for the varied programme.

Links with the County Barton Road Community Centre went on. They helped Emma to start a small youth club for teenagers at Hala, other developments there being a

monthly Sunday school, reopening a Rainbow Pack and some events on Saturday mornings.

Christmas was enlivened by a popular Italian meal in the parish hall and a national newspaper reported the controversial poster attached to the church by the vicar proclaiming 'Christmas Bookings now being taken'. Besides the usual special services there were four hundred communicants, but for the first time there were more at 10.00 on Christmas Day than at the Midnight service, another sign of changing patterns of worship.

The new Millennium inevitably provoked worldwide interest and forebodings. But computers did not crash and aircraft did not fall out of the sky! There were plenty of celebrations, secular and sacred. Churches joined in. Some distributed candles. St Paul's held special services and sent up rockets at midnight from the vicarage garden to add to the local firework display and the lighting of a beacon outside the Priory.

Cyril Ashton, the Diocesan Director of Training who lived in the parish, attended a family communion with his wife just before being consecrated Bishop of Doncaster (suffragan to Bishop Jack) and was warmly applauded. Cyril was the second Diocesan official to be appointed a bishop in 1999. Robert Ladds, Archdeacon of Lancaster, had recently been consecrated Bishop of Whitby.

A great surprise was Andrew's announcing in January 2000 that he had been appointed Diocesan Director of Training

and Canon Residentiary of Blackburn (after a mere six years in the parish as vicar). His unceasing concern for spirituality was shown by his leading the young people's confirmation group himself that year and by another enterprising programme for Lent and Easter. Unseen by the congregation he maintained a demanding ministry to individuals in personal crises.

Andrew had enjoyed his contacts with Scotforth school, especially taking assemblies and services, and worked hard as Chairman of Governors, loyally supported by Miss Wallis as Vice-Chairman. Michael Barnes had become Headteacher in May (after Len Guest had been seconded as Head for a year) but unfortunately two senior staff, Miss Simpson and Mrs Shaw, suffered ill health and had to leave. This did not make it any easier to cope with the flood of demands from the Department of Education and Employment as they delegated increasing administrative responsibilities and exercised a tighter control of the curriculum with a series of special emphases – Literacy, Numeracy and then 'Information and Communications Technology'. The Instrument and Articles were changed yet again. The Governors decided to increase their number to eighteen, which led to the appointment of several enthusiastic parents including Howard Roberts, who was active in FOSSY, and succeeded Andrew as acting Chair.

George Phythian remained as Chairman of the Buildings Committee, forcefully chasing dilatory bureaucrats and contractors. At last the old wall was taken down to create a

more pushchair-friendly ‘ginnel’ down the side of the Victorian building, but even George could not hurry up the construction of a safer playground. He decided not to stand again for General Synod, whose proceedings he had faithfully reported to the PCC.

At his last PCC meeting Andrew commented that it was a ‘God-centred group, remarkably free from division’. At the AGM Kim Brown succeeded Paula Higgin as Secretary and six new members were elected onto the PCC, continuing to bring in ‘new blood’. The usual wide range of groups presented reports and members were reminded of the continual burden of maintaining church ‘plant’, this year’s major projects being improvements to the vestry and the hall (to support applying for a Public Entertainments Licence). John and Pat Illingworth passed editing the magazine on to a team after five very successful years of creating an interesting production in co-operation with Maureen Leach.

Well over four hundred attended Andrew’s last services on Easter Sunday morning and a reception was held in the hall. Neal Stackhouse, as Vice-Chairman of the PCC, thanked him for his leadership, guidance and inspiration. Among the presentations were a cheque and a Book of Memories with messages from church members. Andrew said it had been a great privilege to serve St Paul’s for six years and thanked parishioners for their help and friendship. He was delighted when a strong contingent from St Paul’s and Over Wyresdale went to the Cathedral to see him installed as a Canon, dressed in a “magnificent

cope”; Bishop Alan preached a “challenging” sermon; it was a “wonderful and inspiring afternoon”, reported one parishioner. The May ‘Stewardship’ letter said: “Many, many people will have been touched by (Andrew’s) praying presence, pastoral care and leadership as he has shared his vision of the Kingdom with us.”

Chapter 10 - The 125TH Year (2000)

The Interregnum put greater responsibilities onto Neal Stackhouse, Vice-Chairman of the PCC, the churchwardens and Lars Simpson. Five new Trustees of the Living had been appointed: the Bishop of Lancaster, Canon Peter Cavanagh as the Vicar of Lancaster, Beryl Fawcett and Ken Clayson, then churchwardens, and John Gedge. Efforts to find a new Vicar took longer than hoped, but ‘the show was kept on the road’. The usual range of services was offered under Lars’ leadership and lay folk maintained the activities of the organisations. The garden remained full of bright flowers!

A Children’s Society coffee evening raised £500. Scotforth School for a change put on a Medieval Fayre with suitable costumes and sideshows. ‘FOSSY’ continued its invaluable support for the school, not least by fundraising. Pathfinders had a sponsored cycle-ride to pay for bibles for the school, the final event organised by Krystyna Inston as leader. Maureen Leach produced interesting magazines for the rota of editors, now joined by Professor Stan Hussey.

A Badge of Honour was presented to Mrs Carol Powell by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Shuttleworth, to mark thirty years' devoted service to the British Red Cross.

Mrs Powell had started as a VAD [Voluntary Aid Detachment] in the Second World War, and had contributed much to the parish as a Guider and Sunday School teacher.

Diocesan events drew people from St Paul's. 'That's the spirit' was a lively ecumenical service attended by 14,000 at Deepdale football ground. PCC members were challenged by 'The Promise', an interesting evening led by the 'Springboard' team which was touring the country. The Petertide ordination at the Cathedral included two from St Paul's. Barbara Jones, having completed the CBDTI Course, was ordained deacon to serve at Bolton-le-Sands as a Non-Stipendiary Minister. Simon Pritchard, after two years at Cranmer Hall, moved with Linda and the two boys to Heysham where he was to be curate at St Peter's. That evening Kathryn Jones was ordained priest at Morecambe Parish Church alongside David Buck, the man who became her husband a week later. The preacher at the ordination was none other than the Diocesan Director of Training, Canon Andrew Clitherow! In September Kathryn was licensed as curate of St Paul's – the parish's first married female priest – while her husband served at Holy Trinity Morecambe.

The two previous Archbishops of Canterbury died during the summer. Donald Coggan had visited Lancaster when Archbishop of York and made a great contribution as an

Old Testament scholar to the New English Bible and its later version, the Revised English Bible. He died at the great age of ninety. Within weeks Robert Runcie, who had succeeded him in 1980, died of cancer. The son of a lapsed Presbyterian he was awarded the Military Cross in 1945 as a Guards tank commander. The Times said he had “held together the Church of England and the Anglican Communion in the face of strong theological, geographical and political forces which would have defeated many of his predecessors...He deployed his personal gifts of charm, patience and charity to maintain a sense of Anglican coherence and cohesiveness in England and abroad.”

The new ‘Gift Aid’ system for reclaiming tax provided another incentive for a ‘mini’ Stewardship campaign in September which brought in new members – and new visitors. Scotforth School began the year with 264 pupils – and four new young teachers. The government continued to place great emphasis on achieving ‘levels of attainment’; results showed that staff and pupils had risen to the challenges very successfully while maintaining a good range of ‘out-of-school’ activities. A new pattern of services would bring pupils into church more often, and the provision of tea afterwards helped parents and church members to socialise. Doreen and Bob Garth, who had done so much for the musical life of the church over the years, celebrated their Golden Wedding.

The Worship Committee made plans to introduce the new ‘Common Worship’ eucharist from Advent Sunday while retaining Book of Common Prayer services familiar from

1876. Pam Marshall and Kyra Physick took a group of young people to 'Celebration' at the Cathedral. Ideas for re-ordering the east end of the church received official Diocesan approval, including improving access for the disabled. New housing proposals for the south of the parish continued to exercise the PCC. The Diocesan Strategic Planning Group, including both Archdeacons, made a special visit to the Vicarage to meet parish representatives, and welcomed the Parish's making a request (with support from South Lancaster Churches Together) to the City for a site from 'community/worship facilities' in the Whinney Carr area.

An interesting addition to the contents of St Paul's was made on October 15th. Through the good offices of Joan Porter, church member and County President, the Women's Section of the Royal British Legion laid up the old North and East Lancashire County Standard in the church and Lars Simpson dedicated a new one. Two weeks later it was announced that Lars was to be the next incumbent.

125th Birthday Celebrations were planned for the exact anniversary Sunday, February 18th, 2001, by a committee benefiting from the keenness of new younger PCC members. The Vicar of Lancaster, Canon Cavanagh, would preach at 9.15 as St Paul's had been originally carved out of the parish of St Mary's, Lancaster. A leading Guider, Mrs Pat Jackson, former Regional Chief Commissioner, would speak at the Parade Service. The Bishop of Blackburn, Rt Rev Alan Chesters, would preach at a Festival Service in the evening. Guests were expected

to include Mrs Smart (widow of Donald Smart), clergy who had served in the parish, the local MP, Hilton Dawson, and – very appropriately as she was a regular member of the congregation – the Deputy Mayor of Lancaster, Sheila Denwood.

As the parish looks back over 125 years of change and development, and forward with a new incumbent to new challenges, these famous words come to mind:

For what has been, thanks!

For what will be, yes!

VICARS

William Armytage: 1876-1914

Left on retirement

Frederick Griffiths: 1914-1930

Died in office

David Birney: 1931-1956

Left on retirement

Donald Smart: 1956-1967

Died in office

Denys Gordon Bellinger: 1968-1993

Rural Dean 1982-1989; Hon Canon of Blackburn 1986.

Left on retirement.

Andrew Clitherow: 1994-2000

Left to be Director of Training and Residentiary Canon of Blackburn.

CURATES AND ASSISTANT PRIESTS (from 1934)

Sydney Ratcliffe: 1934-1936

Thomas Baverstock: 1936-1938

Harry Hardman: 1938-1940

Ronald Slater: 1941-1943

Tom Barnes: 1962-1966

Tom Green: 1967-1969

Roger Noel Hamblin: 1970-1973

Michael Ainsworth: 1975-1978

Arthur Ranson: 1978-1981

Stephen Pye: 1981-1985

Philip Regan: Non-Stipendiary Minister at Hala 1983-1989

Steve Brian: 1985-1988

Nick Garrard: 1988-1991

Janet Heil: 1991-1995 First female Deacon in Lancaster Deanery.

David Jackson: 1991-1995

Rosemary Priestley: 1996-1998

Lars Henrik Simpson: 1999-2001

LAY READERS / READERS

[The dates refer to their service in this parish]

George Phythian: 1966-[still in 2001]

Peter Stanley Gedge: 1969-2001 (died in office)

Lawrence Walker: 1973-[still in 2001]

Tony Guénault: 1974-[still in 2001]

John Fidler: 1975-[still in 2001]

Margaret Ives: 1989-[still in 2001]

Margaret Wallis: 1989-[still in 2001]

John Whitaker: 1991-[still in 2001]

Simon Pritchard: 1997-1998 (left to train for the priesthood).

PASTORAL AUXILIARY

Harry Midgley: 1988-[still in 2001]

CHURCHWARDENS:

Gordon Robinson: 19..-1966

John Pattinson: 19..-1969

Charles S Rogers: 1966-1970

John Watson: 1969-1974

Peter Stanley Gedge: 1970-1973

Tony Guénault: 1973-1976

Frank Hayton: 1974-1979

David Green: 1976-1981

Dick Nicholson: 1979-1983

Neal Stackhouse: 1981-1985

Lewis Curzon: 1983-1987

David Otley: 1985-1986

Philip Oglethorpe: 1986-1989

Ken Williams: 1987-1991

Rod Harper: 1989-1993

Dick Nicholson: 1991-1995

John Illingworth: 1993-1995

Neal Stackhouse: 1995-1997

Beryl Fawcett: 1995-1999

Ken Clayson: 1997-[still in 2001]

David Longden: 1999-[still in 2001]

PCC VICE CHAIRMAN

John Pattinson: [in 1967]-1992

Peter Stanley Gedge: 1992-1994

Neal Stackhouse: 1994-[still in 2001]

PCC SECRETARY

Joan Yardley: 1962-1973

John Illingworth: 1973-1976

David Strutt Urwin: 1976-1979

Jill Horder: 1979-1980

Margaret Ives: 1981-1987

John Denny Gedge: 1987-1995

Jill Novell [nee Horder]: 1995-1998

Paula Higgin: 1998-2000

Kim Brown: 2000-[still in 2001]

PCC TREASURER

Ian Fraser: 196.-1972

George H Maitland: 1972-1976

Ken Clarke: 1976-1978

Mervyn Bonnett: 1978-1986

David Otley: 1986-1989

Ken Fawcett: 1989-1996

Kevin Parkinson: 1996-[still in 2001]

ORGANIST

Dennis Beetham: 1964-[still in 2001]

USEFUL BOOKS

Wilfrid Wolfendale: *Providence their Guide* (1975)

(the history of Saint Paul's church and school, Scotforth, published for the parish's centenary, and the source of most of the first chapter)

Geoffrey A Williams: *Viewed from the Water Tank* (1993)

(a history of the Diocese of Blackburn)

A. Hastings: *A History of English Christianity* 1920-1990 (1991)

Note: this history was published to coincide with the celebrations on 18th February 2001 which marked the parish's 125th birthday and took place as anticipated.

The author contracted pneumonia about a week after publication, and died on 1st March 2001.

John Denny Gedge
(son of Peter Stanley Gedge)