

St Mary's Parish Church
with the Seckford Chapel
Woodbridge



ANNUAL REPORT
2012 - 2013

St Mary's Parochial Church Council 2012-2013

Chairman		The Revd Canon K S McCormack
Vice Chairman		Miss V Howe (Churchwarden)
Churchwarden		Mr S W Workman
Assistant Priest		The Revd Canon P J Brown
Reader	<i>Ex Officio</i>	Mr M S Booth
Diocesan Synod Representative through the Deanery Synod		Mrs M Hare
Deanery Synod Representatives		Mrs P Bird Mrs M Hare Mrs L Sheepshanks
Churches Together in Woodbridge and Melton		Mrs P Bird
Honorary Treasurer		Mr D Sharples
Honorary Secretary		Mrs C Eaden
Elected Lay Members	To 2013	Mr A Hester Mr J Wright
	To 2014	Mrs J Garfath-Cox Mr D Sharples Mr G Spray
	To 2015	Mrs C Eaden Mrs K Pickthorn Mrs B Stear
Co-opted Member	To 2013	Dr W McKee
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OFFICERS NOT ON THE PCC		
Honorary Assistant Treasurer (Covenants/Gift Aid)		Mr C Birkbeck
Churches Together in Woodbridge and Melton		Mrs B Bown
With Permission to Officiate		The Revd Dr John Hare Mr Peter Prior

**Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held at St. Mary's Church Centre
on Tuesday 24 April 2012 at 7.30pm.**

1. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 5 April 2011

These were approved by those present and signed by the Rector.

The agreement that the Minutes were correct was Proposed by Mrs Penny Bird
Seconded by Mrs Anne Wright
ALL IN FAVOUR

2. Churchwardens' Accounts

Copies of the accounts, examined by Mr Anthony Hubbard, were circulated to those present.

The Rector asked the people present to sign the Accounts Book, where the accounts had been entered for the year.

The Rector thanked the Churchwardens for the work and commitment over the past year, and Mr Hubbard for checking the accounts. The Rector asked everyone to inform the Churchwardens at Christmastime of those who might benefit from the Churchwardens' charity.

The adoption of the accounts was Proposed by Mrs Margie Stagg
Seconded by Mr Michael Booth
ALL IN FAVOUR

3. Election of Churchwardens.

The Rector reported that Mrs Barbara Bown was standing down as Churchwarden after three years. He wished to record the heartfelt thanks of everyone to Barbara for her service, which has been outstanding.

Miss Veronica Howe was Proposed by Mrs Margaret Lowe
Seconded by Mrs Heather Marshall

Mr Stanley Workman was proposed by Mrs Myrtle Howe
Seconded by Mr Robert Peggall

There being no other nominations, the Rector proposed that Miss Howe and Mr Workman should serve for the year, and he thanked them for their service which is much appreciated.

There being no further business, the meeting ended.

**St Mary's Church, Woodbridge
Churchwardens Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2011**

SAYERS CHARITY 1637 AND SAYERS GIFT 1638

	£	£
Balance at 31 st December 2010		1,016.53
Receipts		
Sayers Charity	145.65	
Sayers Gift	156.08	
Bank interest	<u>.57</u>	
	302.30	<u>302.30</u>
		1,318.83
Payments		
Grants paid out for Christmas 2011		250.00
Balance at 31 December 2011		<u>£1,068.83</u>

BLOXSOMES LEGACY 1936

	£	£
Balance at 31 st December 2010		320.99
Receipts		
Bank interest	<u>.12</u>	
	.12	<u>.12</u>
Balance at 31st December 2011		<u>£ 321.11</u>

Carlow bread was NOT distributed in 2011.

Signed Barbara J. Bown B.J. Bown, Churchwarden

Signed Veronica A. Howe V.A. Howe, Churchwarden

Signed Kevan S. McCormack K.S. McCormack, Rector
Revd.

The accounts have been examined and found to be correct.

Signed A.J. Hubbard
A.J. Hubbard. *2nd March* 2012.

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
held at St. Mary's Church Centre on Tuesday 24 April 2012 at 7.45pm.**

The Rector opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Council held on 5 April 2011.

These were approved by those present and signed by the Rector.

The agreement that the Minutes were correct was

Proposed by Mrs Penny Bird.

Seconded by Mrs Anne Wright

ALL IN FAVOUR.

2. PCC Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2011.

Mr David Sharples presented these accounts and gave his report :

What a difference a year makes! Our operating deficit has been reduced quite significantly, and our tower roof, block-work, and flush-work are now repaired. This reflects just how many people have felt spiritually inspired and moved by our need, to become so passionate about giving their time and money to support St Marys – and for this I would like to say “God Bless You and Thank You”.

The keynotes are that:

- Our operating or housekeeping deficit for the year 2011 is £19,109. This is a significant step-change from our deficit of £65,568 in 2010.
- We have expended over £70,000 on our building, with £66,000 raised from charitable donations and voluntary giving. We have £46,000 of our designated fund for fabric repairs remaining to help finance the next phase of quinquennial repairs – which we still hope to offset with further donations and grant applications.

Reviewing the accounts in more detail, a number of items stand-out. Our income situation has improved predominantly due to a near doubling of the collections at our services. Other income sources have also marginally improved; and people having now updated their Gift Aid forms are improving the Income Tax Recovery position, up by 32% on last year. The return from our shop has also improved by 16%, and reflects the hard work and time given by many in supporting this valuable asset. Considering our expenditure, prudence with wider repairs, maintenance and the refresh of essential items, reductions in our parish share, the reduced expenses of our clergy, and a 39% reduction in the costs of heating and lighting the church, reflect the effort and encouragement, particularly by our Rector, in significantly reducing our total expenditure by nearly 19% to underpin our challenge. Our Fabric Project Manager has also guided proactive repairs and maintenance of items both as part of the Tower works, as well as on St. Marys House, which will deliver long term savings.

Sadly, investment performance continues to be extremely poor, with a paltry £326 returned on our general funds. This is further reduced from last year due to us not as frequently receiving monthly interest on our credit balance.

Many people have worked so hard, and given so much to allow us to achieve these results. Many others have supported me both in front of church, and back of church, to collect process and manage our monies, pay our bills, and generally look after our buildings, bookings and assets. Please accept my sincere thanks.

Looking forward to 2012, our challenge is to continue this positive trajectory, building on our efforts and the support shown by our community in 2011, and even work towards finding some some additional funds to allow the repair or replacement of some our moveable and consumable fabrics and assets in the Church, and perhaps aim at having a small surplus that would enable us to more strongly support key projects in our local community.

Finally, I would like to formally thank my predecessor, Andrew Sleath, for being there to support and mentor me in the early days of my taking on this role, for continuing to sign most of our cheques on a weekly basis, and for providing advice and guidance when required.

Mr Sharples was thanked for all his work during the year.

The adoption of these accounts was

Proposed by Dr James Harper
Seconded by Mr. Greg Spray
ALL IN FAVOUR.

3. Appointment of Account Examiners

Mr Sharples expressed his confidence in, and support for Ensors as Account Examiners.

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Their appointment was

Proposed by Mr. David Sharples
Seconded by Mr Peter Prior
ALL IN FAVOUR.

4. Election of three lay members to the Parochial Church Council.

The Rector reported that Mrs Barbara Cole was retiring early from the PCC and that Mrs Penelope Bird, Mr Derek Cole and Mr Nick Cottam had come to the end of their term on the PCC. He thanked all of them for their commitment, for attending meetings, and for their support of him and the Church Council. Four people had been nominated and they were elected as follows:

For 1 year, replacing Mrs Barbara Cole:

Mr Andrew Hester

Proposed by Ms Rita James
Seconded by Miss Veronica Howe

For 3 years:

Mrs Catherine Eaden

Proposed by Mrs Heather Marshall
Seconded by Mr Derek Bown

Mrs Katherine Pickthorn

Proposed by Miss Veronica Howe
Seconded by Mrs Barbara Bown

Mrs Barbara Stear

Proposed by Mrs Gill Hawes
Seconded by Miss Veronica Howe.

5. Sidesmen & Sideswomen

The Rector reported that Mr Geoff Land, our Head Sidesman, was retiring, having been a sidesman for nearly 40 years. He had written to Mr Land, thanking him formally on behalf of everyone for his commitment, but wished to record publically our most grateful thanks to Geoff for making sure there are sidespeople at all services, and wished him well. The Churchwardens are writing to all Sidesmen and women to see if anyone wishes to take on this job.

The list of sidespeople was

Proposed by Miss Veronica Howe
Seconded by Mr Michael Stagg
ALL IN FAVOUR

6. Report on the Electoral Roll.

Mrs Susan Hubbard reported that there are now 243 members on the Electoral Roll – 13 more than last year.

She thanked Mrs Heather Marshall for her work on the computer. Next year we are required to have a total Revision of the Electoral Roll when new application forms have to be completed by everyone.

The Rector thanked Mrs Hubbard for keeping the list up-to-date.

7. Report from the PCC

Mrs Cole's written report:

The year began with some anxiety about the state of our finances, as we had to find a considerable amount of money to repair the tower, as well as our Parish Share. However, things began to look better as the year progressed.

Phase 1 of the work on the tower is now complete; the next phase should start when the weather improves.

We have received several Grants and some generous gifts - The Rector explained our financial position to the Congregation, as a result of which many people reviewed their giving.

The work on the tower and other building works has exceeded the estimate, and there was more damage to the stonework than previously thought.

There have been several fund-raising events during the year in aid of the tower – There was a hugely successful fund-raising event on Easter Monday, which was arranged by Mary Parker, Veronica Howe and their group of helpers. The Rector held a very successful cheese & wine party, and John and Mary Hare hosted a tea party at the Q Tower, one of our 2011 Brides raised £500 by completing the Brighton Marathon and Dennis Finbow raised over £1,000 by completing the Jersey marathon,

there is also a monthly Bring & Buy stall after morning service, and various other events during the year.

In view of our present financial situation it was suggested that we form a 'Friends of St Mary's' to reach out to the wider community. Thanks to Nick Cottam and his Group this is now ready to be launched.

There is to be a huge fundraising Flower Festival to be held over the Sea Sunday week-end of 27th, 28th, 29th July 2012. It was agreed by the PCC that the Flower Ladies have made some stunning arrangements this year, and we look forward to the Festival.

The 400th anniversary of the King James Bible was marked by a travelling exhibition, which came to St. Mary's from 25th August to 6th September and was marked by readings and people bringing special Bibles to show others.

There was a Parish Pilgrimage on July 9th to the Church of St Peter-on-the-wall at Bradwell, Essex, the oldest church in the Country still in regular use – the day involved a walk, Eucharist and a picnic, and was well attended.

We now have an excellent Guide Book with help from Mr Roy Tricker and photographs by Dr James Harper, this is selling very well.

Bishop Nigel officiated at a wonderful service on 8th January 2012 to dedicate the Epiphany Chapel and the Rupert Corbould painting of the Epiphany, which is on permanent loan from the Friends of Friendless Churches. There was a lunch afterwards and a concert in the afternoon.

I have completed three years as PCC Secretary, and owing to health issues will be retiring in March. I have enjoyed my term of office and wish my successor well.

The Rector thanked Mrs Cole (in her absence) for her excellent report, and for her work during the past few year.

8. Report on the fabric and ornaments of the Church

Mr John Wright gave his report:

The main activity this year has been the repair work on the tower. In accordance with the recommendations of the last Quinquennial Review, the roof has been re-leaded, the weather vanes have been refurbished, and some weather-damaged masonry on the parapets and string courses has been replaced. The project started with the erection of the scaffolding in July 2011 and was expected to finish by the end of November. Resourcing problems with the builders and the need to carry out extra, unforeseen, work resulted in a final completion in February 2012 at a cost of £120K.

The Quinquennial Review also identified work to be done on the main building. This includes repairs to and conservation of masonry, stained-glass windows, rainwater goods and doors and surrounds. The estimated cost for this work is £46K and we expect it to start April/May 2012.

St. Mary's Church Centre has also received attention during the year. The wooden frames and cills of the two sash windows of the shop were found to be badly decayed and were skilfully repaired by carpenter Jim Brindley thus saving us the expense of having them replaced. The roof, which suffered a major water leak into the main hall, has had lead flashing, tiles and guttering repaired.

In the churchyard, the gate pillars and retaining wall at the bottom of the main drive have been repaired by Suffolk Coastal District Council which is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard. The original plan to re-hang the iron gates was abandoned because of the degree of lean of the pillars.

On-going issues include:

- The provision of a plaque in the floor of the choir to commemorate the Hellyer bequest (faculty in progress).
- Repair and/or improvement of the altar rails which have been damaged by constantly being removed and replaced (proposals under consideration).
- In the longer term: the repair and re-surfacing of the driveway around the church; the provision of disabled toilets in the churchyard and major restoration of the flint flushwork at the top of the tower.

The work done on the tower was made possible by the generosity of individuals and charitable organisations for which we are truly grateful. To help raise funds for current and future work, the Friends of St. Marys Church has been formed and we wish them every success.

Mr Wright was thanked for all his work during the year.

9. Chairman's Report

The Rector gave his report:

Episode 3 of *Titanic, with Len Goodman* was shown on Sunday 15th April 2012. It ended with this comment, and I quote 'the story is not about the ship – it's about the people. The ship makes us ask 'who would I be on Titanic', and, as she sank, 'what would I do?'

To those familiar with meditative exercise, Len Goodman, perhaps unwittingly, mirrors a classic approach to prayer; and that is to pray through the desire to enter into the stories surrounding Jesus' life in order to have a deeper understanding of their significance.

Thomas Merton, a twentieth-century Catholic monk, writer, and scholar of comparative religion, characterized the goal of Christian meditation as follows: 'The

true end of Christian meditation is practically the same as the end of liturgical prayer and the reception of the sacraments: a deeper union by grace and charity with the Incarnate Word, who is the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.’ The phrase, by grace and charity, presupposes that meditative exercise is primarily a response of the heart and mind as they pursue a deeper relationship with God. St. Francis de Sales, earlier, in the sixteenth century, took this further by suggesting that mediation resolves in action. So, as Christian people, in Jesus’ name we pour our lives out into the community of which we are a part, so that we can communicate to others the love we believe God has for us, and so them. St. Francis de Sales suggests a four part approach in meditation:

- Preparation
 - Consideration
 - Affections and resolutions
 - Conclusions
-
- Preparation: We prepare with our time and place.
 - Consideration: We read the story and place ourselves at the scene
 - Affections and resolutions: we focus on our feelings in response to the story and decide to commit to some kind of action in our own life
 - Conclusions: we thank God for revealing himself to us through our prayer and seek the courage and strength to keep our resolutions.

I quote again ‘the story is not about the ship – it’s about the people. The ship makes us ask ‘who would I be on Titanic?’, and, as she sank, ‘what would I do?’

It is this meditative approach into which I want to invite you tonight. It is very easy for me to look back through the year, to thank the contributors to the report, to thank those of you have helped me sustain our life, looked after the building, fulfilled distinctive roles; created and stimulated the space for intellectual and spiritual life to grow. I can say thank you, and mean it, and I sincerely do so. But it might help to understand the depth of commitment, given by so many of you, if I were to look at the report, pick on just one contribution, and try to enter into that specific commitment as though it was my own. I am not going to, but I invite you to take the document away and do it. Someone, who hasn’t written a report, comes to mind. When I do, with the person I have in mind, what I have invited you to do, I realise the effort taken, just to get to church. I become mindful of re-adjustments to domestic tasks, of fitting in with work, of loss of leisure time or precious time with family and friends. When I put myself into someone else’s shoes then I realise just how much some of you give to St. Mary’s, and I am very grateful.

The confrontation between Mary and Jesus, outside the tomb, in Saint John’s Resurrection account, brings us, through the meditative process of St. Francis de Sale, to see that Mary absorbed the power of the Resurrection and made it her own. It wasn’t just an experience. It was an acknowledgement that her relationship with Jesus was powerfully changed, different, transformed into something, which she had to share. She runs to tell. All the post-Resurrection stories are about touching the

world of the impossible, living with disbelief, sanctifying doubt, yet knowing, through and because of the love of the man they had walked with, and loved in return, there was a future for everyman that was eternal. We as Christians, walk with others, love as he loved, and declare the impossible to be true. Doing all the work you all do means that that statement is made in action. This is the theology of outreach and mission.

We cannot take the analogy of the ship too far. Sadly the Titanic sank, iconic for so many reasons, yet a reminder of the need to remember that we are not gods, and such disasters, and such challenges, on whatever scale, plunge us into the dark uncertainty of the human condition, and the need to find the justification for life and death in more than that which is material, transient and perishable. We now have safer ships.

Our church as a building is important to us. Inconvenient though the scaffolding was around the tower, the work has been necessary. Maintaining the building as a working and living place costs money. We are privileged custodians in our generation. Creating the Friends is a brilliant idea. In time it will secure foundation finance for on-going maintenance and project, and most especially it will provide a fund for those who want to contribute towards its care and upkeep, without giving money towards supporting our life and work which, for whatever reason, they feel unable to support. Raising money in the present economic climate is hard, and I am amazed and grateful at the wonderful response made by so many so far. We haven't finished the work and we need to find more money. It may be that we shall have to launch an appeal to complete the task.

It is, of course, only a building, however important in historical value and irreplaceable within the context of our prayer and worship. So, we have a responsibility to make sure that it continues to reflect the Christian search for truth, maintaining the integrity of those who have worshipped before us.

Annual General Meetings must be held before the end of April and traditionally we have done so towards the end of the month. In 2011, because of the date of Easter, the meeting was at the beginning of April and therefore before Easter. The Deben Scouts Annual St. George's Day Parade took place on Palm Sunday in 2011 and some 303 people took communion at 0800 and 1000 on Easter Day. This year there were 340 communicants with people standing at the back of church. All the deanery churches had bigger congregations this year.

We hosted the Civic Service in May 2011 and have done so again this year a few weeks ago. The church was full. The 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) Drum Head service took place on the Market Hill on 19th May 2011 following their parade through the town. We mourned the loss of Acting Corporal David Barnsdale killed in action in October 2010, and his parents subsequently visited St. Mary's to see the regimental candle and his photograph on the altar. We hosted the Abbey weekly and Woodbridge School termly services and welcomed St. Mary's School, as usual for

their twice termly school Eucharist, their end of term and Christmas Services. As usual, we hosted the annual Remembrance Day Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial and service on the Market Hill, said goodbye to Padre Andy Earl and welcomed Padre Colin Macleod. We conducted 50 funeral services, 36 baptisms and 22 weddings. I continue to be available for Ipswich Town Football Club, to be available as Officiating Chaplain to the Forces and from June onwards, Provincial Grand Chaplain for masons in Suffolk. As a canon of the Cathedral, I am invited to preside at the mid-day celebrations of Holy Communion about three times a year, and I shall be doing so a week today for SS Philip and James.

Because we are an Anglican parish of some 6,500 people, because we are seen as the civic church in the community, and because we attract so many into church through rites of passage, we have a roll that is quite different to others churches in the town. This is a marvellous opportunity for people to get to know us, to have a feel for our worship and the spiritual nuance of the building. This is an opportunity for declaring what we believe to be true about our understanding of God. By serving the community in this way we make a statement about belief, faith, and the catalytic nature of religion. This is outreach: this is mission.

If I were asked the question ‘what is the way ahead?’ or ‘what might be our vision?’, then I would say that we must define our outreach and define our mission. In part, that is what I hope the Think Tank will begin to do. But essentially we define our outreach and our mission by the way in which as individuals, and as a Christian community, we impact upon the wider community. The opportunities naturally given to do that, as I have outlined, are significant. ‘What do we do with these opportunities?’ is the question that I put before you as one which we must address.

This brings me back to the beginning of this report, and I quote again ‘the story is not about the ship – it’s about the people. The ship makes us ask ‘who would I be on Titanic?’, and, as she sank, ‘what would I do?’ Our story is not about our Church as a building. It is about the church as people. For example, it is about the people who have written the reports, the people that are here, the people that worship with us and the people that rarely do. It is about the people that visit the church, place their petitions in the book in our newly dedicated chapel, the people that come to the wedding, the baptism, the funeral, the civic service. It is about the people both you and I meet in the pub; in the street; the soldiers and their families; the football players and supporters. It’s about engaging with those marginalised or on the fringe. It is about putting ourselves into their shoes for a moment. What is it like for non-church goers when they come to St. Mary’s for their friend’s baptism or wedding or funeral? This is the meditative exercise into which I invite you to enter and about which I spoke at the start. What would you expect to see or hear or feel or be able to do if you were interested in pursuing your muddled and clouded and perhaps radical ideas about belief or faith or God? What would you feel like if you had decided not to marry, but just to live with your partner, whatever sexual orientation. What would you hope to see or hear or feel or be able to do if you began to wonder if perhaps coming to church might not be such a bad idea after all? Are we inclusive, open, welcoming and non-judgemental? Have we the mechanisms in place to take

hold of all these opportunities which I know exist, but which I am unable, by myself, to address. What resolutions can we make?

Together we serve the wider community in extra-ordinary ways. Some of you pray and care and work in secret. Unseen, unnoticed and often unrewarded there are some in our congregation, who unstintingly devote themselves both to building and people: thank you.

Bishop Richard Harries told me last year to let go of the things that other people are perfectly capable of doing and want to do, to delegate properly, which will free up time, and concentrate on those aspects of ministry that are unique to priesthood and priestly function. That is my resolution; what is yours?

Miss Veronica Howe thanked the Rector for his report, and asked everyone present to join in saying a huge thank you to him for all he does.

The Rector closed the meeting with a prayer.

REPORTS FOR 2012-2013

REPORT FROM THE PCC SECRETARY

This year has had two major themes. Firstly the issues raised in the Quinquennial Review were addressed. Secondly we started the year with continued concerns about the deficit. At the end of the year the deficit has been reduced markedly. Hopefully by the end of 2013 forward planning can be considered with a positive bank balance.

The Parish Share was paid to the Diocese and a certificate of thanks signed by the Bishop was received.

The Quinquennial Review highlighted many building and fabric issues. The 'Friends of St Mary's' group was set up to support the funding of building work. They kindly raised sufficient funds to contribute significantly. This support is greatly appreciated. Examples of recent church repairs may be viewed on the website.

The Flower Festival took place in July and the Flower Ladies worked incredibly hard and produced stunning arrangements that were enjoyed by all who visited.

On the 25th November 2012 Revd Canon Penny Brown was licenced by the Bishop Nigel as Assistant Priest. She has been warmly welcomed by the congregation and her contribution greatly appreciated.

This is my first year as PCC secretary and I would like to thank the committee and Parish Secretary for the kind patience and support as I learnt this new role.

*Catherine Eaden
PCC Secretary*

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild continues to clean the silver each week and wash the linen used at the Altar and also clean the Sanctuary and the Chapel for private prayer.

We are grateful to the members and thank them for the work they have done.

(Report produced in Mary's Clay absence)

BELLRINGERS

Since May 2012, when we were once again permitted to ring following the restoration work on the tower, the bells have been rung for all the 10:00am Sunday services, and for all the weddings where bells had been requested. In addition the bells were rung in June to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. As is the nationwide custom, the bells were rung half muffled prior to the service on Remembrance Sunday, and, as is our custom at Woodbridge, we rang half muffled throughout Lent. We rang for most of the services over the Christmas period, including the Carol Service during which our handbell team also performed, and we took part in the age old custom of ringing the Old Year Out and the New Year In.

*Bruce Wakefield
Ringing Master*

CHARITIES

The previous cycle of charitable giving ended and St. Mary's supported Sea Sunday as a source of aid for the Mission to Seafarers. Thereafter, it was decided to focus during 2013, on Woodbridge Salvation Army's food parcel ministry. Food and other necessities were requested to launch the giving and thereafter money has been sought.

Veronica Howe

CHOIR REPORT 2012- 13

The Choir continues to enjoy producing music to support the worship here at St. Mary's.

We regularly sing an anthem Sunday by Sunday and an Evensong Setting at Choral Evensong on the first Sunday in the month and, of course, at Festivals.

The Christmas Carol Service, Midnight Mass and Easter Day were, as always, the high musical points of the year; at these times the Choir is augmented with past choristers and friends to make each of these occasions rather grander than a 'normal' Sunday and we are grateful for the help that we receive.

We were particularly pleased to welcome back Anna Power (ex Head Chorister) to the Christmas Carol Service in which she excelled with her performance of a solo in a new Spanish Carol, "Esta Noche".

Sadly, this year, we have been hit quite badly by health problems. Dear old Malcolm, our organist, suffered a series of strokes from May until November and is still struggling to regain his former prowess at the organ; his left hand is still causing him particular difficulty. It has meant putting up with Bob's limited repertoire and the choir will testify to the difficulties of singing to some of his 'original' accompaniments!! Fortunately, Andrew G-C has been along to assist occasionally and John Penny kindly stood in for playing at the Carol Service. John Stafford

transformed the choir's performance by accompanying on Easter Day and we are all very grateful to him.

Poor Mary Clay suffered a stroke on Easter Monday and we are missing her greatly. Thankfully, she seems to be making a good recovery and will hopefully soon be back to sort out the mess that Bob has made with the music library!!

Mike Robinson has had a number of bothers causing him to be hospitalised, but his spirit is indomitable and he is always 'back in the ranks' as soon as he can walk!!

In the last couple of years, we have seen several new members join the choir – most recently Liz and Geoff Charrot and Ruthie Munnings, who have each made a significant contribution and shortly before, Keith Beckley, an extremely loyal member.

Our aim, however, continues to be to strive for greater numbers in the choir and to constantly improve the standard of music that we produce.

We all enjoy the support and encouragement that we receive from members of the congregation; it is very helpful and we are grateful for their kind remarks.

Bob Peggall

CHURCH CLEANING

There is a loyal band of cleaners who dust and sweep, some also clean brasses; some also are involved with the Altar Guild.

We urgently need THREE more people to help with hovering the floors. Your turn would be on a 5-weekly rota and would take 1-1½ hours. We do most of the cleaning on Friday morning but you could work independently if this is not a suitable time.

*Heather Paxman
383038*

CHURCH SHOP

In spite of economic hard times the shop sales for 2012 were very similar to the previous year. Cards still remain our best seller, along with children's books and Fair Trade goods.

Volunteers to serve in the shop are essential to keep the shop open. This is a major problem. In spite of six new people joining us in the past year we have still lost more than we have gained. We desperately need more help.

Our aim is to continue to stock good quality cards at reasonable prices, children's books and gifts with a Christian emphasis suitable for Baptisms and Confirmation, also souvenirs of the church and town to attract visitors. A good selection of CDs are available featuring sacred music and popular classics. A wide variety of Traidcraft goods are always available.

Please support our shop. We do not want to lost the approximate annual £4000+ profit which helps towards the upkeep of St Mary's Church Centre.

Many thanks to our current volunteers and customers and a warm welcome to anybody who might think of joining us.

Sue Bowen

CONCERTS

During the year we have continued to encourage use of the church as a venue for events with the twin objectives of raising money from hire fees ,and, perhaps more importantly , to maximize communal involvement in the life of the Church.

There have been fifteen bookings over the period. Twelve from “established” concert givers including the three Woodbridge Chamber Concerts, three from Kingfisher Sinfonietta, two from Prometheus Orchestra, two from the Slatter/Voigt Quartet and one each from Woodbridge Choral and NSPCC. These supporters have been the backbone of our activities.

The other three events were the tremendously successful “Raise the Roof” Prom concert organised by Friends of St Mary’s ,and the interesting play “Wolsey” written by local playwright Suzanne Hawkes. We were lately delighted to welcome OK Chorale who delighted concert goers with a splendid programme of a capella harmony in international folk and ecclesiastical music.

Both Woodbridge and Farlingaye Schools have continued to use St Mary’s for both concerts and services; their contribution to the FoSM Prom was outstanding in both the work put in by pupils and staff and for the quality of music that made the event.

Thanks to all these splendid artists, to audiences that seem to be increasing as we progress, and to the clergy and Churchwardens for their support.

Andrew Hester

ELDERS

The elders selected from the congregation and commissioned by the Bishop are licensed to administer the chalice at communion, lead prayers and Compline, provide extended communion to care homes and sheltered flats in the town,(6 in all), pastoral visiting, home communions and any other work that the Rector asks of us. Retired elders also play an important role and we are expecting new elders to be appointed soon.

We have a monthly communion followed by a meeting to complete the next month’s rota of duties. The fellowship we enjoy in our regular meetings helps us to stay purposeful, and reminds us of the great privilege it is to serve the parish in this special way.

Beryl Linsey

EMMAUS

We have had 2 groups which ran on Wednesday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Attendance was fairly steady with about a 10-15 in the mornings and up to 9 in the evenings. We are all called by Jesus to journey with Him on the way. We are not compelled but invited. All of us are equal. There are no special favours, special relationships or special knowledge. We are equally worthy of God’s attention. This BRF description of Christian discipleship aptly defines an Emmaus Group. Leaders are mere facilitators and the Emmaus material affords excellent opportunities for sharing and learning from each other. Trust grows within a group to the point of sharing doubts and disagreements in love.

Emmaus material is cleverly designed to suit new Christians, even enquirers, as well as the more mature.

Tony Waller

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER (FCP)

Prayer is ... fellowship with God. Life exists only in relationship. We enter into a relationship with nature, with each other – most assuredly with God ! We commune with nature and are inspired by the curlew's plaintive call, the sound of the wind in the trees, and, in order to know people better, we listen to what they have to say. It is the same with God. We simply listen. In contemplative prayer that is exactly what we do. In a small group, in stillness, and silence, in the Light of God and His love, knowing that Christ fulfils His promise ... "I AM with you always .." We sit. We listen. And, sometimes, we say a prayer. This we have done – each month. And will continue to do so.

Michael Stagg

FLOWER GROUP

The highlight of our year was unquestionably St Mary's Church Flower Festival, held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday 27-29 July 2012. Faultlessly masterminded, planned and organised in minute detail by Peggy Albertini and Jenny Harris, the theme of the festival was *Woodbridge Through Flowers*, with displays describing over forty aspects of Woodbridge such as the Shire Hall, the Tide Mill, the River Deben, etc. It brought together people from all parts of the St Mary's Church family and the wider Woodbridge community. We are grateful for everyone's support, especially our talented friends from Woodbridge Flower Club.

A flowery rowing dinghy complete with sailor, an arc of the Tide Mill wheel with cascading blue sprays, a popped wheatsheaf with running brown bread mice, and neat flowery kneelers, every part of St Mary's Church was overflowing with flower arrangements describing aspects of Woodbridge.

The Festival opened with a Thursday evening reception in church and was opened to the public on Friday until Sunday evening. A carboy was set out for any donations. We would like to thank all the many arrangers and helpers for their hard work, both from the Flower Club and the Church Flower Group. Thank you also for the great monetary support that was given to raise funds for the flowers and to the other helpers in staging and providing music and refreshments and clearing away.

The year continued with pleasure in providing flower arrangements appropriate for the Church calendar and for weddings and funerals when required.

Sue Leslie

FOCUS

St Mary's Focus closed during the year and this is a report of their last meeting.

Anna Ashton welcomed everyone to the final meeting of The Focus Group. Although everyone was a little sad at the end of an era, the Group would still meet on occasion but in a less structured way. Members were asked to diarise 20th March 2013 to meet at Crown Place for afternoon tea. Roy Tricker would be asked to lead the Church Crawl as usual in June next year, possibly visiting the Cathedral at Bury St. Edmunds. Anna reminded those present of the success and enjoyment members had experienced over 33 years since 1979. A few members present at the meeting had also been present at the very first Focus Group meeting which had been instigated when the Young Wives group had ended.

Shirley Cocker, Treasurer, presented an account of all the charities that had benefitted from our surplus funds over the years and is attached to these notes. At the closure of the Focus Group and after all expenses had been paid, £45.83 remained. After discussion, Margaret Lowe proposed and Lindis Slater seconded, that this remaining money should be donated to St Mary's Church Fund. Carried unanimously.

Margaret and Lindis then lead the discussion on "Our own experiences of friendship", the concluding meeting on our programme theme of "Friendship." They both spoke of their friendship when they first arrived in Woodbridge and moved into new build houses at Hillyfields. They then split those present into two groups with pointers for discussion, i.e. the welcome we first received at church, have we welcomed others to St Mary's, etc.

Michael Booth then spoke on his happy memories of The Focus Group and on behalf of the clergy thanked the Group for the part it has played in parish life. He read from Focus programmes from years gone by and was amazed at the variety of speakers who had contributed to our annual themes. He finished with prayer.

Anna as leader, presented Margaret Lowe, Shirley Cocker and Pat Fenn with thank you gifts in recognition of the help they had given her in the organisation of the Focus Group. In turn, she was presented with a voucher as a thank you for the part she had played as the figurehead of the Focus Group.

Delicious cakes and tea were then served while members enjoyed socialising.

Pat Fenn

GUIDES, BROWNIES AND RAINBOWS

2ND WOODBRIDGE (ST MARY'S) GUIDES

2012 marked ninety years of continuous Guiding at St Mary's.

A wide range of activities continued, with Division Camp, District Thinking Day event, Wet Weekend (of water activities!), Thorpeness Mere Day and attendance at Remembrance Day Parade amongst others. Guides continued Patrol activities throughout and had a lot of fun with those taking part outside; they also helped at a number of church events, enjoying particularly the making of posies for Mothering Sunday. Having been invited to carry collecting buckets at Woodbridge Regatta with other members of Girlguiding Seckford District, a small team was delighted to be able to gain a second place in the high-profile raft race.

Individuals all made pleasing progress, but the most noteworthy was that of Megan Wells and Rachel Crawford, who each gained their Baden-Powell Challenges, the highest awards in the Guide Section. A beach party was held to celebrate their achievement.

The culmination of the special year was marked by a sleepover early in December, which included a visit to Woodbridge Museum to find out about the town particularly during the lifetime of the Unit and, at the end of the service on Sunday morning, a Promise ceremony was held in the sanctuary.

The Unit remains grateful for the support it receives.

Veronica Howe

3RD WOODBRIDGE (ST MARY'S) BROWNIES.

This past year has been eventful and fulfilling for the Brownies Unit. The Brownies have undertaken numerous activities, within these have included Craft activities for mother's day, sewing owl needle cases and father's day making cards using sponges.. Despite disappointing weather in the summer the spirit of guiding was not dampened and the Brownies enjoyed activities including archery, crabbing and tent pitching.

During the autumn term an appeal was made in the Local Press for new leaders to join the Brownies to help with the running of the unit as Alison Banham aka Fluffy Owl was moving out of the area. During this term Nicky Harrow (Snowy Owl) and Suzanne Tillett (Brown Owl) answered the appeal and joined a fun packed term where the Brownies worked and achieved their Friends to Animals badge, incorporating a visit to Woodbridge Library for research and the making of over 100 paper whales/dolphins to raise the awareness of their threat and need for protection.

Within the wider community the Brownies had a stall at the church fair in November to Guess the Name of the Lamb and at Christmas they entertained the residents at Deben View with an evening of Carols, Music and Poems.

January saw the Brownies celebrate Christmas with a belated Christmas party and saying a fond farewell to Fluffy Owl how had been leader of the Unit for 14 years, she was presented with a garden voucher, plant and photo of the brownies, along with a book of messages from the Brownies. We wish Alison well and thank her for all her dedicated work to Brownies and Guiding.

A new chapter in the 3rd Woodbridge St Marys Brownies has begun. So far the brownies have enjoyed and embraced completing their World Guiding Badge, learning about Brownies from other countries, the world centres, and Thinking day cards were sent to Brownies in Ipswich. The Badge coincided with the division Thinking day Celebrations when we took part in activities from different parts of the British Isles.

The Unit flourishes, and as new leaders we are looking forward to the challenges and adventures ahead of us, (with the support of 2 unit helpers and two young leaders) this includes the Brownie centenary celebrations in 2014 and we will begin preparation to celebrate 50 years of 3rd Woodbridge (St Marys) Brownies , also in 2014.

We always welcome new Brownies, volunteers and parent helpers to get involved or register an interest - go to www.girlguiding.org.uk and follow the *get involved* link.

Report prepared by

*Suzanne Tillett Brown Owl
Ann Wade Unit Helper*

2ND WOODBRIDGE (ST MARY'S) RAINBOW GUIDES

The objective of the Rainbow Guides programme is to support four jigsaw areas – LOOK, LEARN, LAUGH, and LOVE.

A sports sponsorship evening raised sufficient funds to support the training of a Hearing Dog for the Deaf.

An invitation was accepted to contribute origami dolphins for the Whales and Dolphins Conservation Society presentation in Brussels.

Rainbows have been trying to put the words of their promise into effect being 'kind and helpful' to raise money for 'Possibilities', a local charity, supporting children in Uganda.

Fun has been had celebrating the Queen's Jubilee on Market Hill with the Brownies and Guides and also at the annual Thinking Day celebrations at the Community Hall. Rainbows have attended Church Parades throughout the year and supported the Girlguiding District collection at last summer's regatta.

June Kenyon - Rainbow Guider

THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP

A small group meet every two weeks at the Rectory for about an hour to bring into the presence of God parishioners who are unwell or generally in need of support through prayer. The meeting starts with a short prayer then a list is prepared and updated at each meeting for members of the group to take home to use in individual prayer. Those parishioners thought to be in greatest need are included on a daily list to be prayed for every day: others are prayed for on a particular day of the week. Each day a local residential or nursing home is remembered too. The meeting ends with another short prayer. The list is confidential so individuals on the list, their circumstances or illnesses, are not discussed outside the meeting at the Rectory. New members are welcome to join us.

Gillian Wakefield

ST MARY'S MOTHERS' UNION 2012/13

Our monthly meetings have been well attended and enjoyed, including two extra discussions – 'Definition of Domestic Violence' and 'Same Sex Marriage'. We also discussed 'Help us to Grow', a Mothers' Union Leaflet, and this resulted in us serving refreshments to parents after the Thursday Communion when St. Mary's School joined the Service. We have enjoyed this and received positive feedback Mr. Leese, the Head Teacher, proved to be a popular speaker earlier in the year.

We continue to support the work of the Worldwide Mothers' Union, the Umbrella Trust, and the Womens' Refuge. The proceeds of our stalls at the Autumn Fair were given to St. Mary's.

Sadly, three members have died – Eileen Withyman, Wendy Pemberton and Vera Burwell. We miss them and give thanks for their support over many years.

Margaret Lowe

NETWORK OF CARE

The Network of Care was originally set up to encourage the networking of the congregation throughout the Parish, in order to help people to get to know others in friendly and informal circumstances, and to create a means of welcoming newcomers to the church. It continues to be an evolving project and is under review at present - including a possible change of name to better describe its functions. Monthly Parish lunches continue to be held to which anyone in the community is welcome, and this year again a free and open festive Christmas Day lunch was held, funded entirely by

donations from the congregation and local people. The Network is an expression of our dedication to becoming a friendly and outward looking Christian community.

Margie Stagg

PRAYER WALKS

Over the last few years we have walked many miles, through the Suffolk landscape, though good and bad weather - more recently, the latter! Walks are advertised widely in the community and we are joined by members of other churches, and also non-church attenders. Prayer walks emulate our path through life – praising God and praying to Him, in a loving and warm relationship with fellow walkers, in the midst of His glorious and amazing creation. We walk in all seasons, about every six weeks, sometimes for a Festival or with a theme. We can walk in silence, or engage in conversation and listen to someone's Story. We stop for prayers and Bible and inspirational readings. Prayer walks create friendships, bind communities, promote awareness of the wonders of nature – and allow us to walk with God.

Michael Stagg

PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT FOR PCC AGM 2013

The repair works resulting from the last Quinquennial Review are now almost completed. The only major item outstanding from the original report is the repair of three stained glass windows in the south aisle. We are pursuing the possibility of additional grant aid to offset the cost of this element of the project. We do not know yet what the final bill will be but the latest estimates indicate that the project overall will be completed within budget.

During the restoration of the north porch, it became apparent that the condition of the small pillars (pilasters) surrounding the niches in which the three statues of saints are situated is far worse than was previously thought. The stonework has been made safe but further work is required to replace the pilasters. Because these will have to be hand-carved it is estimated that this will cost around £20k.

A new Quinquennial Review is in preparation. A preview of the results suggests that, over the next 5 years, we will have to find approximately £10k per annum for repair and maintenance of the church building.

Apart from repair and maintenance, we need to carry out some improvements to the buildings and grounds, for example: improved access and toilets for the elderly and disabled, better facilities for catering at concerts, better utilisation of the church centre, etc. An informal Building Strategy Working Group has been formed to look into the requirements, planning and funding for these projects.

John Wright

ST. MARY'S CHURCH CENTRE

Organisations and private individuals continue to use the Church Centre for regular and one-off bookings, while it houses ever more parish functions, some of which have provided much-needed funds. The usage and condition of the Church Centre, complementing the church, is being studied by a newly-established working party, so that the benefits of both are maximised for the future.

Myrtle Howe

SERVERS REPORT

The number of servers continues to be fairly steady with some children moving up from 'boat' to acolyte. We have been delighted to welcome two new 'boats'.

Our main task is to assist at the Sunday services but we also take on duties at funerals and special services when requested. Servers take part when St. Mary's School join the Thursday Eucharist twice a term and on these occasions the servers are each shadowed by a pupil from Year 6 – part of including the children in the service; recently children have performed the acolyte duties on their own.

We are always happy to add to our numbers as this gives us more flexibility in covering duties. Please speak to one of the team if you are interested in joining us or would like a trial run or 'shadow' before making a decision.

Anne Wright

SIDESMEN/SIDESWOMEN

Since taking over the job as head of the Sidesmen's team at church I feel we have managed quite well in our jobs. Everyone knows exactly what is needed of them and does it.

I have only had a problem on the public holidays when often sidespeople want to be with their families, but I have always managed so far to get substitutes, so even this is rarely a problem, except Christmas.

Peggy Frost

April 2013

Beryl Alexander

Brenda Assing

Carol Black

Derek Bown

Nettie Collins

Rosemary Cooper

Nick Cottam

Heather Deere

Geoff English

Peggy Frost

Andrew Hester

Janet Laight

Gillian Leigh-Pollitt

Tony Leigh-Pollitt

Sue Leslie

Anthea Lloyd-Jarvis

Sheila Mayston

John Moorby

Heather Paxman

Andrew Pickthorn

Katherine Pickthorn

Deana Richards

Sandra Schur

Tony Schur

Marion Sleath

Michael Stagg

Percy Wells

John White

James Woolmer

Violet Woolmer

Reserves:

Stephen Cole

Steve Saunders

SOCIAL EVENTS

While the brief has always been to provide opportunities to meet socially, money made along the way continues to be a distinct bonus.

A mix of occasional and regular events took place. Refreshments for two afternoon concerts, a PCC informal meeting and the reception after the All Souls' Service were provided. There was afternoon tea at the Q Tower (courtesy of Revd. Dr. John and

Mrs. Mary Hare), a cheese and wine party at the Rectory, Harvest Lunch, the Autumn Fair and a lunch to welcome Mr. Peter and Revd. Canon Penny Brown to the parish. 'Coffee after Church' on a Sunday morning is attended by at least 50-60 people and several 'Third Sunday' bring and buy stalls have boosted funds, as has coffee shop and book/bric-a-brac/cake stalls, held to accompany the seasonal markets run on the Market Hill. 'Second Tuesday' Coffee Mornings have continued to be successful and 'Fourth Thursday' Lunches have flourished.

Thanks are due to all, who help these things happen. Suggestions of future events and offers of help are always welcome.

Veronica Howe

SUNDAY SCHOOL

St Mary's Sunday School continues to run during services in term time, the leaders being Maddie Pilkington and Katherine Pickthorn. The children range between 2 and 11 and are a happy mix of boys and girls. Many activities take place such as games, role-plays and craft, all used to explore the day's Gospel. There are usually two adults or more present at every session but we are still on the lookout for more helpers. The Easter activities and service were a great success.

M Pilkington

A TIME TO HEAL

The pattern of *Time to Heal* evenings has continued during the year - with meetings held on a Friday evening every 3 months. This year we have experimented with holding these meetings in the informal setting of St Mary's House. The evening includes fellowship and refreshments, and centres around a simple Eucharist, with the laying on of hands and anointing with holy oil. These are comforting and inspiring evenings. There is a growing understanding in those who attend that healing is about refreshing and renewing faith and hope, and wholeness in life's trials, rather than seeking physical health or recovery from illness.

Margie Stagg

WEBMASTER'S REPORT for PCC AGM 2013

The St. Mary's website at <http://stmaryswoodbridge.org> continues to be enhanced. The latest development is the facility for editing web pages on-line without the use of specialist website development tools. It still requires some IT skill and a little training but it is no longer a job for an expert. My thanks go to Geoff English who has pioneered the approach and has volunteered to take over the weekly updates of the site.

A new 'cloud' based IT infrastructure has been provided for the Clergy and Parish Office. This will facilitate collaborative team-working and information management. A particularly important feature is centralised diary management which will make it easy for people to find out when the church building is available, for example. A subset of this information will be integrated into the website for public viewing. My thanks go to Russell Eaden who is taking the lead on this activity.

John Wright

For further information please visit our website:

www.stmaryswoodbridge.org

or contact:

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