

# St. Michael's Church Shotwick



Newsletter November 2011

*Welcoming and active at the heart of the Parish*

# Church Officials

**Vicar:**

The Revd. Cathy Helm  
The Vicarage, Burton CH64 5TJ  
0151 353 0453  
[chelm@shotwick.org.uk](mailto:chelm@shotwick.org.uk)

**Church Wardens:**

Mrs. Joan Norman  
0151 336 2954  
[jopn5@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jopn5@yahoo.co.uk)

Dr. Jenny Sneddon  
01244 881493  
[jcsned@gmail.com](mailto:jcsned@gmail.com)

**PCC Secretary:**

Mrs. Alison Allen  
01244 880165

**PCC Treasurer:**

Mr. George Makin  
0151 336 5126

**Bell Tower Captain:**

Mr. Frank Parry  
01244 881731

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# A Message from Our Vicar

On the international scene it has been a momentous week. We have seen graphic pictures of what has been unfolding in countries in the Middle east and surely it makes us mindful of how blessed we are with the freedoms we enjoy. One good news story which has shone through is the recognition being given to the town of Royal Wootton Bassett for their continued respectful acknowledgement of the many young soldiers who have paid the greatest price for their country.



The people of that town have clearly shown that there is much for us to remember and be thankful for. As we approach the end of another year, we are given that opportunity to take time to reflect, remember and be thankful for all those who have and still do, risk so much for our freedoms.

At St. Michael's we will also be having an act of Remembrance during our service at 10.50am on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November, the Sunday closest to Armistice day. Whatever our political feelings are, our compassion, support and prayers are needed for those who have lost those they love.

Part of the process of remembering is surely to also be thankful for the good things, the good memories. We will also be having our annual service of Thanksgiving on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> at 11.30am to thank God for all his blessings and gifts in the past year and to reflect upon how we can best use the resources he has given us. It's a good time to have this service, a time of year when we think about giving and receiving and we can be purposeful in what we can give back to Him. In thanking Him for the blessing we have received we also commit our plans to Him for the future.

So as we prepare to enter the season of 'peace on earth and goodwill to all' in all our preparations let's seek to begin the season

with Christ very much at the centre of it and to remember that God offers to us the gift we *cannot* do without.

It's the time when we remember the greatest gift we could ever receive, that of God's own son, Immanuel, God with us. God's own son was a scrunched up newborn baby, born in an animal shed. He came to live amongst us so that we can know the love of the Father, forgiveness for our wrong choices and receive the gift of eternal life. It's a very special time.

Cathy Helm

## Church Services

All at 11.30am

1st Sunday (in the month)	All age Worship (Family Service)
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion (Book of Common Worship)
3rd Sunday	Morning Prayer (1662 Prayer Book)
4th Sunday	Holy Communion (1662 Prayer Book)
5th Sunday	Holy Communion (1662 Prayer Book)

At the Harvest Festival Supper, the final Shotwick Cook Book, signed by Bishop Keith and Cathy, was auctioned. The 250 books have raised over £1000 and our thanks go to all who contributed recipes and purchased a copy.

# Visit of Professor Lord David Alton



On 9<sup>th</sup> September the Church hosted a talk by Professor Lord David Alton where he spoke about “Active citizenship – our duty to play our part”. David started his working life as a teacher, and then was elected to Liverpool City Council and later to the House of Commons to rep-

resent a Liverpool constituency as a Liberal. In 1997 he stood down from party politics and was nominated to the House of Lords as an Independent Life Peer. He is also a Professor of Citizenship at Liverpool John Moores University.

David based his talk on the Summer of Discontent in August 2011, when riots took place in many cities. The condition of England is not good: there has been a wave of scandals, the country is suffering from a lack of economic stability and communities have lost clear spiritual leadership. David is particularly concerned that three quarters of a million British children have no contact with their fathers due to breakdown of relationships, and he believes that we all need to ask ourselves some searching questions about the country we have made and the country we want it to be.

David believes that in modern society too much emphasis is placed on selfishness and materialism, when in fact the emphasis should be placed on the common good. To achieve this it is important to educate people to be good citizens, so he has established the hugely successful Roscoe Foundation for Citizenship. The Foundation has staged over one hundred public lectures and set up a good citizen award scheme operating in many schools which makes awards to young people for personal acts of courage and fund raising for good causes.

To see a fundamental change in society and avoid a repetition of the events of this August it is the duty of each of us to play our part – we can change our society if we all participate.



Steve Fletcher thanked David for coming to talk to us and presented him with a cheque for £100 for the Epiphany Trust, a charity that David is involved in.

The evening concluded with refreshments kindly provided by the catering committee and a question and answer session.

SEC

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## What's Happening – Current Events

Sunday 13th November	Remembrance Day. Congregate at Church 10.50 am prior to a short ceremony by the war memorial. Normal service follows.
Saturday 26th November	10am - Christmas Craft Morning in the Church. See later for details.
Sunday 4th December	Thanksgiving Sunday
Sunday 18th December.	Carol Service at 8 pm. No 11.30 am service on that day.
Sunday 25th December.	Christmas Day. 11.30 am service.
Sunday 8th January 2012.	Today is Plough Sunday. Celebrate the beginning of the agricultural year with prayers for the blessing of the land, followed by a ploughman's lunch in Church

## Unveiling of the Commandment Boards

All four of the Commandment Boards have now been repaired and restored. We are currently going through the formal process to get permission to move them to a new location on the north wall. We plan to put two boards either side of Devil's Door and the other two further down nearer to the organ.

The PCC would like to thank all those who have donated to their restoration and to mark the event we plan to unveil them on Thanksgiving Sunday on the 4<sup>th</sup> December.

# Bell Matters

Bell ringers are a very mixed bunch of people.

They range from very young to very old (or what used to be very old!) In fact, the leaflets encouraging people to take up bell ringing say suitable for all ages 8-80.



I personally know ringers well in their 80's and still ringing, As well as the age spectrum they also do a wide variety of jobs from high powered ones to those of us who earn or who have earned a living doing very humble things.

I often think that one of the joys of ringing is mixing with all the different characters, both male and female. Talking about females, it is only in the last 50 years or so that women have started ringing in any significant numbers. Now without ladies, ringing (which used to be purely a male occupation) would be in a very sorry state.

We rang a quarter peal on the Shotwick Bells for Harvest Festival service. This was in memory of Henry Norman, who was a bell ringer for most of his adult life and tower captain at Neston for quite a number of years. As most of you know Henry was until recently a very hard worker for St Michael's and will be sadly missed by all of us.

FP

Bell ringing practice every Friday evening. Contact Frank Parry for more details.

# Deanery Synod Report

A well attended meeting took place on 13th October at Saughall which was Chaired by the new Rural Dean, Rev'd David Fisher.

Following general business there was a fascinating and detailed presentation entitled 'The Authorised Version of the Bible - is it relevant today?' given by John Isherwood. John is an acknowledged expert on the history of the Bible and his illustrated talk considered the Bible's development from the earliest Greek texts, via ancient Hebrew texts together with noted historical and key dates along the way. Naturally the importance of the King James Bible was underlined and John brought a personal copy of a very early Geneva Bible for the audience to admire. John's half hour talk was warmly applauded and a short Q&A session ensued.

The Rural Dean then invited Rev Brian Harris to give the host parish report. Brian examined in depth the opportunities, challenges and issues that affected Saughall and he suspects, many other churches in the diocese. He reminded us that until 1921 Saughall had been a 'sub-office' of Shotwick. It now serves a population of 3000 but attendances have now dwindled to about 30 for the most popular 10.30 Sunday Service. Close relationships with the local Methodist church and St Bartholomew's nearby mean that collectively they are doing what they can to bolster interest and attendance. GAP targets help to focus the mind.

Brian indicated the severe financial strain that existed - £70000 required for the roof and a burdensome Parish share. In fact default on Parish share was inevitable on probably 2 forthcoming occasions. Brian then advised the audience that he and his wife were to move nearer Northwich as she has been appointed as Vicar at Tiverton (currently she is Curate at Neston). Brian stated that she would be starting in January and for the time being he would commute but he stated that he would have to look for another position nearer Northwich. Clearly Brian and his wife will be much missed after 7 years in Saughall and the Synod expressed their thanks.

# Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festival took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October and the first thing to say is how beautiful the Church looked, dressed in thanksgiving for the produce and flowers and for the talent of those who put it all together.



Our guest preacher was Bishop Keith and he began by reminding us that it was Salt Sunday and Cheshire is the County for salt. He chose as his text Matthew 5: 13-16. Jesus talking to his disciples by Lake Galilee. As the Bishop said, they had not

been chosen from the rich and powerful and He told these ordinary everyday men 'You are the salt of the earth. You are the Light of the World'.



Our day finished as usual with a Harvest Ploughman's supper followed by home made apple and blackberry crumble. We extend many thanks to Dorothy and Martin Coar, our hosts at Shotwick Hall, along with the many helpers who made the event a success. This was a fund raising

effort for the Church which realised £500.

## Car Parking

The PCC are very aware that car parking in the village is a continual challenge and are in the process of discussing with Denton Clark as to how we can best come to an agreement to solve the problem.

Many thanks for your patience.

## **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November**

Christmas craft session in Church 10 am 12 noon

Come along and enjoy Christmas card making, festive table decorations and felt making.



Suitable for children and adults.

**Please bring your own scissors.**

Refreshments will be provided.

## **Christmas Carol Service**



Our Christmas Carol Service will be held at 8.00 pm on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Refreshments will be served after the service.

Please note that there is no 11.30 am service that day.

## **World Wide Shotwick!**

Our website has had visitors from around the world, including (in order of popularity) – UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Germany, Russia, Netherlands, Spain, France, New Zealand, India, South Africa and another 28 countries!