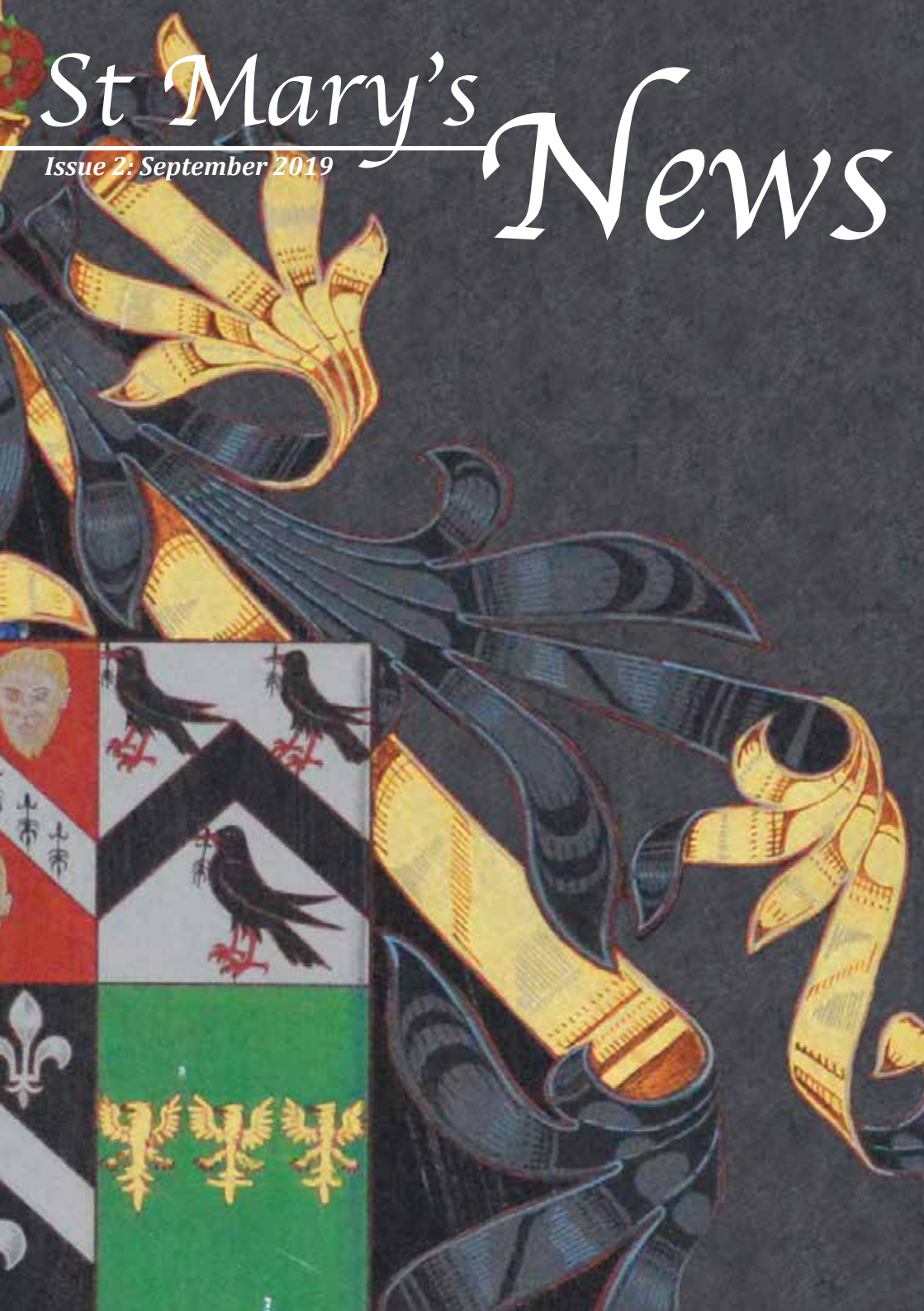


# St Mary's News

Issue 2: September 2019



# Welcome to St Mary's News

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Welcome to the second edition of St Mary's News.

In this edition Jonathan Pickering focuses on our major plans to modernise the church building. Those of you who attend services will be pleased to hear how we plan to feed and water you, keep you warm and comfortable, and able to read the hymn books and service sheets easily even in the dead of winter.

The Church is not just a building. We hope that plans to re-build the Sacristy will give us scope to be more flexible in our spiritual life by including a room for meetings and other activities.



Come to 'drinks and nibbles' on Saturday 7 September and learn more. See page 5.

Not on quite the same scale, we concede, but to reassure you what we can achieve when we put our minds to it, Linda Bulpitt remembers the re-birth of bellringing in 1992 and the heroic efforts to re-furbish the belfry, the bells and their fitments. It makes fitting out a kitchen look like child's play!

We hope you enjoy this issue of St Mary's News. Let us have your feedback. We've put the correct email address inside the back cover this time!

Lastly, we would like to say once again how much we appreciate your support. Thank you. So many people involved, so much energy and, yes, so much money.

*Front cover image:  
Detail of one of the hatchments in St Mary's Church*

# Reordering of the Church

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**It is December 2021 and it is turning out to be a very cold winter. But here in the church I am warm, the seats are comfortable and the church is light and welcoming. And there is coffee to come. That kitchen we put into the Vestry a couple of years ago is really good. And then there is the Sacristy...**

Am I just dreaming? No, we really are soon to be underway. St Mary's is an historic and beautiful church but it has some limitations, in terms of the facilities and comfort which it offers. Increasingly churches everywhere are improving their buildings to provide more comfort and convenience, as well as opportunities for wider community use – generally referred to as “reordering”.

At St Mary's we have several problems. We need a proper kitchen; when catering, we struggle with kettles blowing fuses, mugs hidden in heavy boxes and no hot water for washing up. Lighting and heating are inadequate. Some of the seating is uncomfortable. And the Sacristy is not really fit for purpose, either simply to house our collection of vestments, or to be put to any other use.

We were almost grateful, therefore, that a normal inspection of the lighting wiring recently revealed that it was no longer safe. This forced us to take seriously the need to replace it, and therefore presented the opportunity to improve the lighting. This coincided with some other opportunities we had been exploring.

Earlier we had been working up some ideas for the conversion of the Vestry, at the base of the tower, into a kitchen, so it would be our pleasure to provide food and drink both at services and the many other events we hold in St Mary's.

Some time ago we had also received a very generous offer to underwrite half the cost of replacing the seating, but had not taken it further, as we wanted to integrate the new seating into any other reordering which we might do. Do not panic. By ‘seating’ we mean the freestanding chairs, not the pews!

We are now moving forward on these first two phases, the *kitchen* and *lighting*.

## **Vestry kitchen**

The plan is to convert the Vestry into a basic kitchen, which will provide facilities for storing, cooking, heating and serving food, and washing up. There will also be better provision for our flower arrangers



## *Reordering of the Church (continued)*

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and their material, and better storage arrangements. At the APCM in April we showed the plans for the kitchen, and we have discussed them with the church authorities (the 'DAC') and our architect. The plans are on the notice board at the back of the church and a sample mini-cupboard has been installed in the Vestry to test materials. We hope to progress to the next stage early next year.

### **Lighting**

Following the report on the state of our lighting we were introduced to CES Engineers, a lighting and electrical firm specialising in churches and other heritage buildings. CES has produced a design for replacing and improving the lighting throughout the Church.

We will be able to see and read our service sheets and hymn books, those leading our services will be properly lit, the lovely features of our church highlighted, the choir will be able to read its music and the church brightened up. This will be achieved much more efficiently and will be easy to control. We are, of course, making sure our plans are in keeping with the architecture and mood of the church. We've also discussed the plans with the DAC adviser and our architect, and are now working through the details of the design. (In the meantime, anxious readers will be pleased to know that the current lighting system has been made safe and should remain so until any new system is installed).



*The Vestry at present...*

We hope to get this project underway early next year, running at the same time as the Vestry kitchen project.

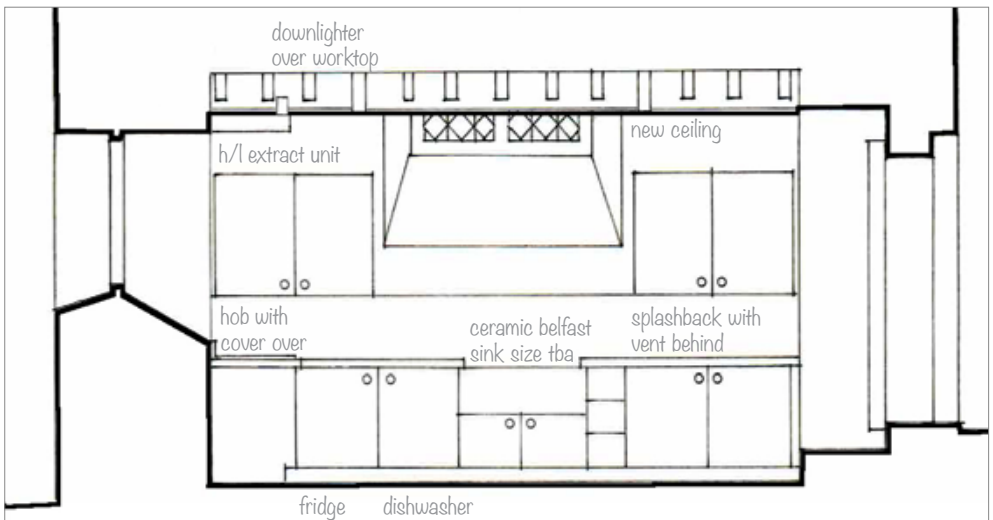
### **Funding and fund-raising**

As we've been looking at these ideas we've been aware of their likely cost and so have also been thinking about how to pay for them. Our initial view was that we should see what would be best for us, and then work out how to pay for it, rather than have a budget and try to fit the works to it. As it turned out this was the better view. We've been surprised, for instance, by how expensive our preferred option for the lighting system is likely to be but we've already been overwhelmed by the generosity of the

first few people we've spoken to, who have offered far more than we might have expected or hoped for – and so this puts us in a position not only to proceed with the lighting and Vestry kitchen next year, but also to address the heating and seating, and even the Sacristy, in the relatively near future.

### **Future plans: phases 3, 4 and 5**

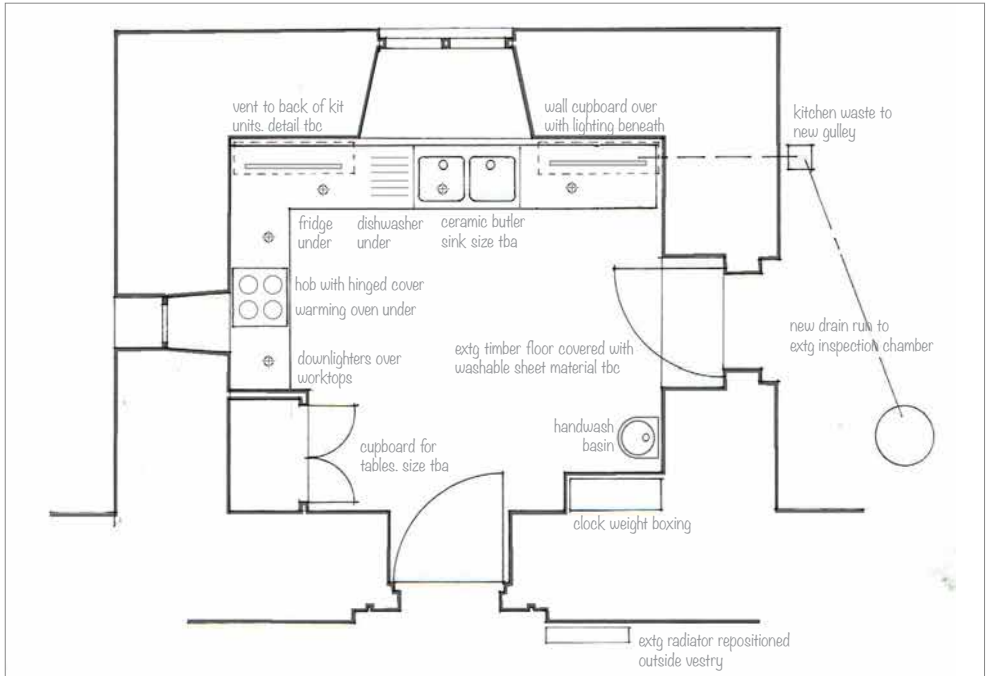
Many of you will know that the current heating system is not very quick or effective. Unlike certain beers, it does not reach those parts that other heating systems reach. We cannot heat up all the parts of the church where people are: the old cast-iron radiators get very hot, but all that heat goes up to the ceiling and only



*...and how it will be.*



## Reordering of the Church (continued)



*Plans as proposed*

slowly does the church warm up. We need to explore more effective and efficient ways of providing enough comfort and warmth so that people who might want to come to church aren't put off by the cold. In principle the same applies to the seating: if the seats are too uncomfortable people won't come; and a lack of heat and comfort also makes it more difficult to use the church for community activities. The pledges of money which we've had already mean that we should be able to investigate improvement or replacement of both

heating and seating quite soon.

Finally we have the Sacristy to deal with. Structurally it's not in very good condition; it's damp, which isn't good for the vestment collection; and partly as a result of that and partly because it's quite small, we don't get the best use out of it. From the discussions we've had already it's clear that the best solution will be to knock it down and replace it with a bigger structure, extending north out from the church and further into the churchyard. This will be quite a significant project,

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not only as a matter of construction but also because it will involve encroaching into the churchyard and disturbing some old graves: but the result should be a space which can be used for a wide range of church and also other village activities.

We envisage an 'office' space, secure storage for the collection of vestments, storage space for chairs and a room for meetings or, perhaps, a future Sunday School space. It will involve significant expenditure, and probable disruption, and require time and effort to get it done.

**What does all this mean for you?**

These are exciting times in terms of the fabric of the building: we plan to have a new kitchen and lighting early in 2020;

and to start planning for new heating and seating; as well as to explore opportunities offered by the re-building of the Sacristy. But none of this will come without effort: we're very keen to hear from anyone who is interested in helping, whether with ideas, practical skills or time to help us realise our vision of a church which will be equipped to cater for the needs of its 21st century congregation and community. If you'd like to help in any way, please contact any member of the PCC.

As to the money needed .... don't worry we'll make sure you have plenty of opportunities to donate and to support our fundraising activities.

*SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER AT ST MARY'S*

*Come and hear more about  
St Mary's modernisation plans*

*Wine and nibbles served from 5.30pm*

*6.00pm Presentation on our plans and progress  
and an opportunity for you to comment*



## *The Bells of St Mary's*

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**They were silent. They had been silent for some years. Then in 1992 the bellringers at Binsted Church offered to teach any Froyle volunteers to ring. Eventually, enough did learn to form a Froyle 'band' and we started to ring regularly for Sunday services.**

But we had to get the bells working again. This involved clearing out years of pigeon detritus and generously oiling the old, plain bearings. Everything worked, just about, but we asked a bellfounder to come and make sure everything was ok up in the belfry. Although nothing was in a dangerous condition (or so he thought) we were told that the 'cast-in' crown staples should be taken out as soon as was feasibly possible, and at the same time have the bells rehung on modern fittings, ie ball bearings instead of plain bearings and wheels etc without woodworm rather than with.



*How things were...*

So we started raising the necessary funds and a couple of years later we set about re-furbishing the bells and the fittings. To keep costs down we decided to carry out as much of the work as possible ourselves; with considerable help from others within our bellringing District. First we had to cut a trapdoor in the Vestry ceiling so we would be able to lower the bells right down to the ground level, through the clock chamber and the ringing chamber.

We removed all the fittings we could and used pallets to build staging at strategic places on the Vestry floor knowing the bells would have to rest there for 72 hours before going to Whitechapel, the bellfounders. We took delivery of a 13 foot RSJ, 4 steel props and two lots of block and tackle. These were all hauled up into the belfry and the RSJ slung between two beams in the roof. Not easy. The block and tackle was set up and attached to the biggest bell, the 10 cwt tenor bell.

Then followed 15 minutes of pulling on the block and tackle and guiding the bell on its downward journey to its pallet bed on the ground floor. Then we 'dropped' the other five bells. A lorry arrived, provided free of charge by a local firm, which would take the bells up to Whitechapel to be re-tuned. Two of our friends from the village, one with a fork lift truck, came to help with the next step. Each bell had to be raised from





*On the move out of the vestry onto the lorry*

its pallet resting place, put on a truck, wheeled out of the Vestry (having removed the door as there was only 1/2 “ difference between the width of the door frame and the diameter of the tenor bell) and lifted up onto the waiting lorry.

Then we started to refurbish the wooden frame. We scraped away all the rotted wood and revealed the next problem. Where the ends of the main supporting beam were embedded in the walls we realised that our 15” square beam was in fact a 2” square shell for nearly 4 feet and had practically nothing going into the wall at all! The death watch beetle had been at work.

We called in the Constructional Engineers and our Architect. We needed 2 Universal Beams. Would this be allowed by the DAC and could a Faculty be obtained in time – the bells were due back in five weeks.

The beams were specially made, the DAC came up trumps and the work was completed on time. The bells arrived and were placed back on their pallets. They sat in the Vestry while the Whitechapel bellhanger and we let new bearing plates into the frame, cleaned and painted the metal work and put the tackle back into position in preparation for the bells’ return journey. Then all six bells undertook their original journey in reverse, back into the belfry.

Wheels and ropes were all fitted and bolts tightened and on Sunday 12 March 1995 the bells were rung for Sunday service, just nine weeks after they had become silent.



*Back in position and chiming...*

25 years on... the bells are chiming splendidly and five of the original band are still ringing them! If you’d like to see what goes on in the bell tower, come and join us on a Friday practice night - email [nigel.bulpitt@btconnect.com](mailto:nigel.bulpitt@btconnect.com)



# St Mary's Christmas Fair



**We shall be holding our annual Christmas Fair on Saturday 23 November from 11am to 2pm. Come and enjoy coffee and a soup lunch.**

The Fair has become a great showcase for the talents of Froyle residents – baking, firing, threading, drawing and photography, there is a wealth of wonderful things to admire and buy for Christmas.

This year there will be more edible wreaths, Louisa's pots, Philippa's jewellery, Michelle's cards, Anna's drawings, Jan's creations and presents for pets. Plus gifts, fudge, Christmas puddings, cakes and a children's Tombola Tree.

All those who contribute are extremely generous with their talents and time, so do come and discover what's new this year...



Here are some examples of what you might find



**at the Christmas Fair on Saturday 23 November  
from 11am to 2pm**



## And finally

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The PCC wishes to thank all those who have helped in the production of our second issue of SMN (St Mary's News).

We welcome your feedback and look forward to receiving your comments by email to [media@benbinfro.org](mailto:media@benbinfro.org)

Credits go to:  
Jonathan Pickering  
Linda Bulpitt  
Chris Booth (photography)  
Yvonne Irvine (graphics)

and a working party including:  
Nigel Bulpitt  
Jane Macnabb  
William Knowles

*By the way, this second edition of St Mary's News has been produced at no cost to St Mary's.*



*Illustration by Anna MacInnes*

*Printed by Treloar Print*

