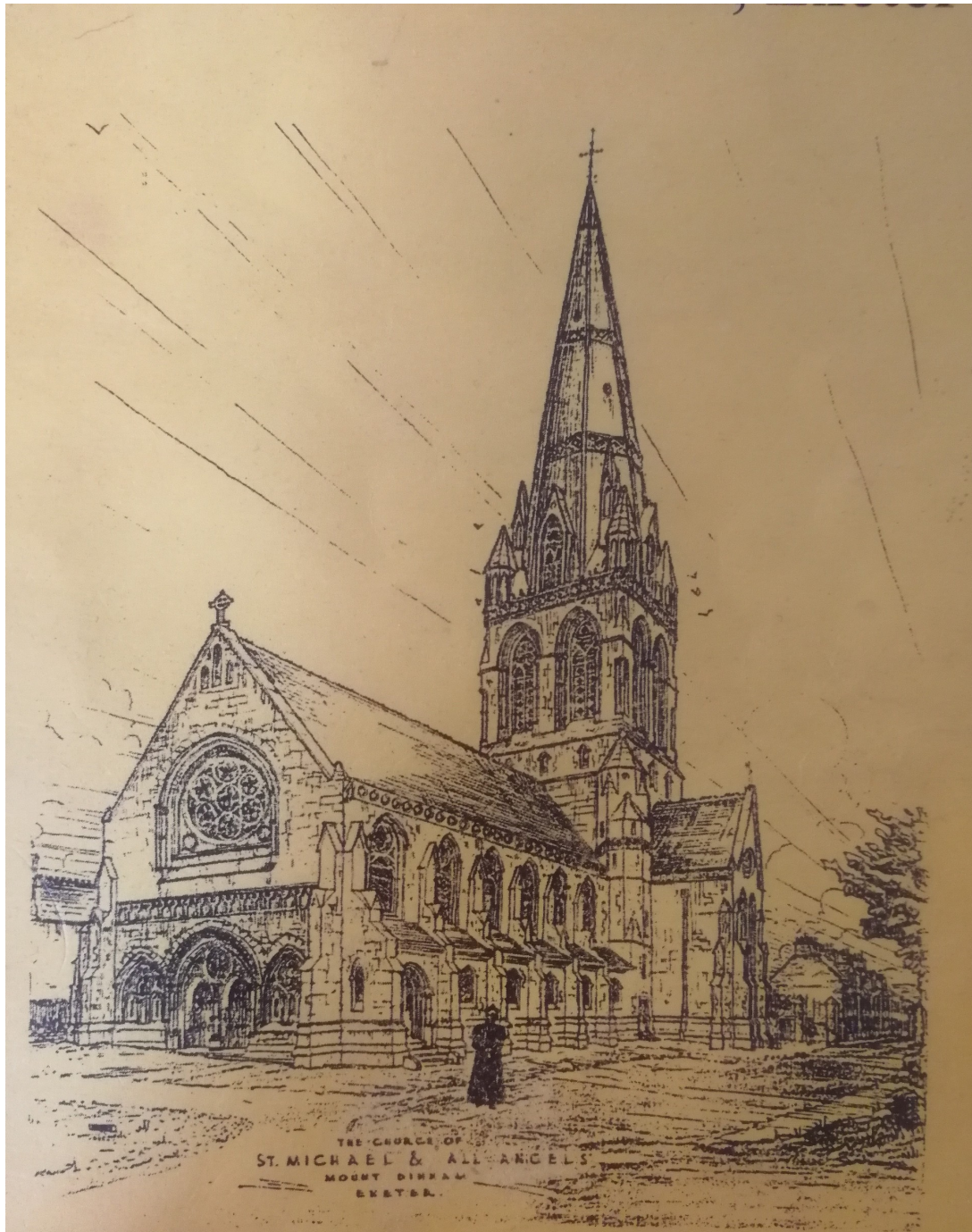


St Michael's Remembered

Articles from the 150th Anniversary of St Michael's, Mount Dinham, Exeter.



September 2019

Donations Welcome

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by Angela Marks

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Foreword.

From an initial contact with Angela Marks on the “Friends of St Michael's” Facebook group, and an email conversation, sprang a series of 9 vivid articles about the life and times, and more importantly the people, of the Church of St Michael & All Angels on Mount Dinham in Exeter, lovingly remembered from the decades leading up to the Centenary in 1968. Angela is the niece of W. G. Hoskins, the well-known Landscape Historian.

I have added a few pieces about the original development of Mount Dinham in the 1860s and the building of our beautiful church to the glory of God.

They have appeared in “New Leaves”, the Parish Magazine, during 2018/9, but it seems good to gather them together at the end of this celebration year.

Richard Barnes.

St Michael's Remembered - A Personal Perspective

1. The 1930s

In this year of St Michael's sesquicentenary, there are very few of us left who were present at the centenary celebrations in 1968. That's rather inevitable, as even fifty years ago St Michael's had an ageing congregation.

Although it's a few years since I've been able to get to St Michael's it will always be in my DNA. Like my father, Michael Hoskins, I am named after the church. I was baptised there, as were two of my children, and I attended the church throughout my childhood and teenage years, and would have married there had that then been permissible.

My own memories date from the 1950s and 1960s, but by calling on the tales told by my father, I can take reminiscences of St Michael's back another twenty years. Our family connections with the parish, however, go back much further. My great great grandparents on my mother's side, Frederick Long and Iset Higerty were married at St David's, in the old 'pepper pot' church in 1835. Iset married Fred in St David's in July, and 132 years later I too married Fred in the same month and the same church, though not of course the same actual building. For the 'pepper pot' church was demolished in 1897 and the present church built on the site.

One of the members of the committee who organised this rebuilding was my great grandfather in my father's side, William George Hoskins. A baker in Smythen St, he moved his business to St David's Hill in 1891 where he became involved with the church. He was a staunch supporter of St David's, and when his third son, Arthur, was killed in the Boer War in 1901, his body was brought back from South Africa and buried in the churchyard. Arthur's colleagues at the Inland Revenue also erected a window in his memory on the south side of the church.

William Hoskins' eldest son, another William George, was also a keen churchman and one of the bell ringers. He married my grandmother, Alice, at St David's in 1906. She came from Silverton and in those days weddings normally took place in the bride's church, it was unusual for it to take place in the groom's. Two years' later their first son, yet another William George was born and to mark the occasion my grandfather and his fellow bell ringers rang a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples. This baby grew up to be the landscape historian W G Hoskins, and to mark the centenary of his birth the same quarter peal was rung again in 2008.

Will and Alice's fourth son, Michael, was born in 1919, and my grandmother, who had been hoping for a girl had not chosen a boy's name. Looking out of her bedroom window in St David's Hill she saw the spire of St Michael's and decided that was the name for him. There was a family joke that it was a good job she wasn't in the back bedroom as then she would have seen St Pancras! Not strictly accurate of course, 'poetic' licence.

Despite being brought up at St David's, young Michael decided that St Michael's was more to his taste, and became a server there in the 1930s, while still in his teens. Father Miller was the priest in charge then and from the stories Dad told, there were some high jinks at the church in his time. At the end of Dinham Road, on the right hand side heading towards the Iron Bridge there was a shop on the corner which Dad called the crab meat shop. I don't remember it, it was bombed. When taking the Sacrament to the sick, Fr Miller always walked and insisted on being accompanied by a server with a lantern, but it always blew out as they turned the corner by the 'crab meat shop'. Actually probably something to do with the air currents from the Iron Bridge,

but the young servers managed to persuade Fr Miller that it was a demon lurking on the corner, and that he should perform a solemn exorcism, which he did. I was never told if it was effective (or indeed if I was having my leg pulled). Another of Fr Miller's innovations was that on Maundy Thursday, when the choir and servers traditionally leave in disarray after the service, the servers were encouraged to vault over the altar rails and run to the sacristy. I was disappointed that such a practice had been discontinued after someone suffered a bad fall.

The 1930s was a period of strong anti-Anglo Catholic feeling, led by a group known as the Kensitites, founded by John Kensit, a Protestant Anglican reformer of the late 19th century. The most notorious example of their behaviour was the attack on St Hilary's Marazion in Cornwall, when statues were smashed and the altar stone torn off with a crowbar. This outrage was still being talked of in shocked tones when I was small, and certainly it sent shivers down the spines of the people of St Michael's, though apparently the worst that happened was that one of the Protestant rioters came to the Sunday Mass, got up and shouted his protests and was firmly removed by the wardens.

John Kensit had died in 1902 from blood poisoning resulting from an injury he received at one of his rallies. In October 1934 his son addressed a meeting in the Civic Hall commemorating his 'martyred' father. My maternal grandmother, who worshipped at St David's and disapproved of the 'high church goings on' at St Michael's attended the meeting, but was horrified when St Michael's was not mentioned at all, and the church most strongly criticised for its 'papisty' was St David's!

Angela Marks – June 2018

2. The 1940s

During the War, because of its architecture, it was possible to use St Michael's for concerts during the blackout, and it was a popular venue. Despite its tall spire, St Michael's missed suffering any real damage in the bombing raids of 1942, although several houses and a shop on the corner of Dinham Road and the Iron Bridge were destroyed. Throughout my childhood this area was a bomb site, a huge crater filled with buddleia.

It was through these concerts that my mother, then Hazel Bowden, started attending St Michael's. Her father was appointed station master at Exeter Central, and the family lived in the stationmaster's house, then called Carlton Cottage. It is still there on the corner of New North Road, having lost its beautiful garden and now called the Station Master's House and completely over-shadowed by adjacent flats and the Exeter College Maths & Science building. In my mother's day (and I can just remember them) there was a rather fine terrace of Georgian houses in Queen St, behind the house, demolished in the 1950s and replaced by the Western National Bus Company building, itself later replaced.

When Mum first went to St Michael's, my father was serving in the Army in Africa, but she knew his family, as a customer of the baker's and sweet shop which my grandmother ran in St David's Hill. In 1942 a dreadful mistake occurred. My Uncle Jack drowned in the River Exe, and the then vicar of St David's, on hearing that Mr & Mrs Hoskins' son had died, for some reason assumed it was Michael, and wrote an obituary for him in the parish magazine. Thus the first my mother heard of her future husband was by reading his obituary. When he actually died 45 years later, Michael presumably (and hopefully) became the only person to have two obituaries published in the parish magazine.

Dad was demobbed in 1946 and came home during Lent, thus it was at Stations of the Cross that my parents first met. In honour of this meeting my sister was named Veronica, Mum claimed to have spotted the young server at this point, cue the family joke that as this is the seventh station, he couldn't have made much of an initial impression!

Michael and Hazel were married in 1947 at St David's. They wanted to be married at St Michael's, but that wasn't possible then. As a chapel of ease, the church was not licensed for marriages, so the parish church it had to be.

I was born a year later, and baptised at St Michael's by Fr Wilfrid Waller, who had been at St Michael's before the war, and had returned after serving in the Army. He had been born in Japan where his parents were missionaries, and spoke fluent Japanese, so he was very useful to the Army as an interpreter after Japan was defeated. He was very proud of the fact that as an army chaplain he held the rank of major.

There was a story that he had gone into Nagasaki after the bomb to minister to the Christians who had survived. A large proportion of them were Roman Catholics, but you don't worry too much about theological niceties when you've had an atom bomb dropped on you. This act of Christian charity and bravery had tragic consequences. Fr Waller died of leukaemia in 1960 aged only 53, not perhaps unconnected with his War service. The present High Altar is a memorial to him.

Like my father, I was named after the church. My parents didn't really care for Michelle, so I was called Angela. At the time the bishop had objected to the statue of Our Lady, so it was removed to the narthex, where it was placed in front of the north door, and a shrine erected around it, so it became even more prominent than if it had remained in the church, and in her honour my second name is Mary.

In 1949 Robert Mortimer became Bishop of Exeter, and he was much more sympathetic. In fact his wife and daughter worshipped at St Michael's whenever they could. In 1952 he agreed to allow the statue to be returned to the church, on condition that its crown was removed. The statue was returned and re-dedicated on the feast of the Assumption 1952. My brother Antony had been born in July of that year, and Fr Waller thought it would be a good idea to combine the statue's restoration with a public Churching of my mother. She didn't think it was a good idea at all, but decided to humour him. Fr Waller also solemnly presented her with the statue's crown, which she kept for years, I inherited it, but it was made of plaster, and very badly chipped. I'm not sure what happened to it, I think it broke in the end.

As a small child I lived in Haldon Road, next door to what was then the School for the Partially Sighted, and St Michael's was clearly visible across the school's playing field from our garden and kitchen window. We ate most our meals at the kitchen table looking at the spire. Some work was done on it in the 1950s, I think a new lightning conductor was fitted, and I remember watching the steeplejacks at work. I also saw the spire struck by lightning, I can see it now, it was terrifying, it seemed to glow with a strange green light.

High Altar c.1950



Our Lady of the Narthex



3. The Clergy - Father Waller

As a Chapel of Ease to St David's, St Michael's did not have a parish of its own, nor an incumbent, but was served by a Priest in Charge, who was technically a curate at St David's. The Priest in Charge was given his own house, St Michael's House, at the Rockside end of Haldon Road and was up to a point autonomous.

The first one I remember was Fr Wilfrid Waller. A bachelor, he was reputed to be an avowed celibate. Few people know that it is possible for Anglican clergy to take a vow of celibacy, the difference from Roman Catholicism being that it is voluntary (except in the case of monks). He was strongly influenced by his Japanese upbringing – he would sit cross-legged on the floor to eat his meals from a bowl - and was something of a mystic. He was given to praying face down on the floor of the sanctuary in the dark, and in his black cassock he was all but invisible. My father, going into the church one night by the choir vestry door, walked across the sanctuary to the switches in the sacristy

and tripped over him. He swore that Fr Waller appeared to have levitated a few inches off the ground. Probably Dad was pulling my leg, but, knowing Fr Waller, it was a story all too easy to believe.

I loved Father Waller, he not only baptised me, he prepared me for confirmation. I and a boy called Christopher, who lived near me in Pennsylvania and was also being prepared, would go to St Michael's House for our instruction. (I was nine at the time, but children had much more freedom then). After I suffered a bout of tonsillitis, Fr Waller said he would come up to Christopher's house and I would go there. I told Father, I didn't like walking home alone up Maryfield Avenue in the dark, so he walked me home, telling me the road was named after Our Lady and she would look after me. I was a pupil at Palace Gate Convent at the time, and while I knew the RC catechism virtually by heart, I didn't know the Anglican one. When I told Fr Waller this, he said; 'Just leave out the bits about the Pope being infallible and you won't go far wrong.'

His premature death was a severe blow to St Michael's. I can see him now, at a Church Fete in the grounds of St Wilfrid's School, in the soutane he always wore, perching on the verandah in front of the sports pavilion, grinning happily and looking as if he didn't have a care in the world. In fact he was dying of leukaemia at the time. He had a sister who came to St Michael's, a Mrs Barker, and her son was also a priest. My brother was fascinated with him and for a time everything he liked was 'Father Barker's car' or whatever.

His funeral at St Michael's was quite something. This was in 1960, in pre-Vatican II days, so it was very rare for Romans to attend Anglican services. Mgr Tobin, the Vicar General not only came, he robed and sat in a priest's stall. He brought all the Roman clergy, (no shortage in those days!) and they all robed and sat in the front pews with the other Anglican clergy. I had only just left Palace Gate then, so knew them all, so it was quite exciting for me to see them in St Michael's.

After his death, we were looked after during the interregnum by Fr Ralph Guild Davison, then Rector of Mamhead. He would load his wife and six children, complete with picnic lunch into an ancient shooting brake and drive like a madman from Mamhead to reach St Michael's in time for the '10.45 Mass', where he would read out parish notes scribbled on the back of soap coupons. Sometimes they were so

hastily scribbled he couldn't read his own writing, and there were some fumbles while he worked out what he wanted to say. Mrs Davison had hair like a bird's nest, and always looked harassed, hardly surprising with all those children: five sons and a daughter called Priscilla. After the service the children (who were all about my age or younger) would perch on the tailgate of the car, munching their sandwiches.

Fr Davison later became rector of Ashcombe, near Dawlish, and then Bagborough, Somerset, where his wife Esme was patron of the living. After she died, he went to live at Posbury as chaplain to the remaining nuns. He had inherited Fr Waller's famous cassock, and every time I saw him he would say: "Look I'm still wearing it!" The last time I saw him was at Posbury in 2002, not long before he died, aged 89. We had been to Mamhead church, where I had taken some photos of the renovations there, and I took them to show him. He was almost moved to tears to think that I'd remembered his being there.

Then in 1961 came 'Father Pappy', the Rev Sir Harold Papworth, and another chapter in the story of St Michael's began.

Fr Wilfrid Waller & Servers



4. The Clergy - Father Papworth

The Rev Sir Harold Papworth had been Professor of English and Vice Chancellor of the University of Travancore in India and had been knighted by George V. He was 73 when he arrived at St Michael's in 1961 and thus his tenure was initially seen as likely to be short-lived and very much as a 'stopgap'. But like his contemporary, Pope John

XXIII, who was similarly viewed, he presided over some of the most significant changes in St Michael's recent history.

His time began with the great debate about the new altar, the memorial to Fr Waller. The old altar (now in the Lady Chapel) was wooden, and the frontals were kept in a large chest in the choir vestry. I used to help 'Binnie', the sacristan, to change them, they were incredibly heavy and had to be carted up the steps and hooked on to the altar. They were in a terrible state, the gold one was held together with Sellotape! Fr Waller had wanted a plain stone altar, what he got was the one that's there now. 'Nuff said.

Then the statue of St Michael was also replaced. The original was the little one, now in what I still think of as the 'vesting chapel'. (One of Fr Papworth's innovations, he didn't like vesting in the sacristy, as there was insufficient room, especially when Alf Yarnley was thurifer and 'stoking up'. According to my father, he was given to swinging the censer round in a full arc to get it going properly.)

Every Michaelmas the 'little statue' was carried in procession round the church, my father, then head server, used to say that in order to do a full Michaelmas procession with lights accompanying the statue, three banners and cross, he needed twenty servers including the boat boy. One year he actually managed to recruit enough servers to do it, although most years the banner bearers had to do without lights. Probably just as well, swinging tassels, young boys and naked lights are not a good mix!

The new statue of St Michael, the present one, was made in St Ives and arrived to a very mixed reception and some irreverent ribaldry. 'Where are his wings?' was the politest comment. 'Please Sir, may I be excused?', was rather less so.

Fr Papworth's time was contemporaneous with the Second Vatican Council, and he was much influenced by its outcomes. One of these took effect one Easter in the early 1960s. Dad had been very secretive about something, Mum and I couldn't quite work out what. His lace cotta had been in need of some repair, and we had spent Holy Saturday getting it ready for him to wear at the Easter vigil. As it turned out, we had been wasting our time, for he didn't wear it. In those days the servers wore plain cottas for the first part of the Easter vigil and changed into lace for the first Mass of Easter. Dad went down to the

vesting chapel, we thought to help with the vesting for the High Mass. He re-emerged at the head of the procession wearing a tunicle and biretta. Fr Papworth has introduced lay sub-deacons at High Mass, and Dad was the first one. My mother, suddenly realising who the sub-deacon was, gasped “Michael!” in a stage whisper which must have been heard all round the church.

Father Papworth also decided that cold water was bad for babies being baptised, warm water should be used. This was obtained from the ancient water heater in the little north east porch which was unfortunately rusty inside, resulting in water which looked like tomato soup. When there was a baptism, Dad would sneak round outside with the can of warm water and fill the font surreptitiously. Fr Papworth also decided against using the font for blessing the water on Easter Eve, preferring to perform the ceremony at the sanctuary steps. The water was placed in a cut glass bowl, duly blessed and carried in procession to the font to be tipped in. One Easter as the procession reached the font, Dad realised to his horror that he’d forgotten to put the plug in, and when the newly blessed water was tipped in, the congregation were treated to a loud gurgling as it disappeared down the plughole.

Another of Fr Papworth’s innovations was the St Cecilia’s Day Mass, with refreshments in St David’s Institute afterwards. St Cecilia’s Day, of course is the 22nd November, and in 1963 we were in the Institute making preparations for the reception when the resident caretaker ran down the stairs to tell us that President Kennedy had been shot. So it was a somewhat subdued ‘celebration’. It was said that everyone knew where they were when Kennedy died, we certainly did – at a St Michael’s festival.

Lady Papworth, Mary, had been an opera singer in her youth, and liked to be called ‘Ladydear’. She was tiny, with bright orange hair and a fondness for writing little notes in green ink. She had been accustomed to having servants in India. At St Michael’s House the Papworths had a housekeeper, but when ‘Darling Pappy’ died, ‘Ladydear’ although in her eighties, took a flat in St David’s Hill and bravely set about looking after herself for the first time in her life. Several of us went round to make sure she was all right, and do odd jobs for her, and I taught her how to peel potatoes, something she really enjoyed doing.

Father Papworth died in 1967, just before I was married. 'Ladydear' came to our wedding, and consoled herself with the thought that 'Darling Pappy' would have married us had he lived long enough.

Fr Sir Harold Papworth



5. The Clergy – The Inbetween Times

Before he died in 1967, Fr Papworth had been ill for some time and forced to retire to Torquay. During the interregnum again, some interesting clergy helped us out.

One such was the Rev Sir Patrick Ferguson Davie bart, one of the bishop's chaplains. He lived at Creedy Park at Sandford near Crediton, a Jacobean-style manor house rebuilt in the early 20th century after a fire. Irreverently known as 'Fergie-Davie', he was more politely known to the nuns of Posbury St Francis as 'Father Pat'.

On one occasion he was due to take Evensong at St Michael's, but failed to turn up. In those days, rapid communication was difficult, even landlines were quite scarce. He phoned my father, who had already left for church, and my mother had no means of passing the message on. Eventually Dad went to one of the houses on Mount Dinham to phone him, and was told he was unable to come as he had been out shooting on his estate that afternoon, and had shot himself in the foot. Literally. So Dad took Evensong.

Then in late 1968 there was a Church Union outing to Sandford, and Father Pat had invited us back to Creedy Park for refreshments after the service. Unfortunately he had neglected to tell Lady Iris, his wife. So fifty-odd people turned up to find nothing had been laid on. The ladies of the party managed to find an urn and sufficient cups in the butler's pantry, so made tea while Father Pat phoned the chippie in Crediton and ordered sufficient portions of fish and chips, which he brought back in the boot of his Armstrong Siddeley. He was worried about the smell getting into the family portraits in the Great Hall, so he asked if we'd mind eating our supper on the terrace. Picture the scene, all these very respectable people, including several priests, some of them with an air of wishing they were elsewhere, eating fish and chips out of newspaper on the terrace of a mansion.

Father Pat sold Creedy Park in 1975 and went to live in Cyprus. He died in 1988. The house is now divided up into several residences.

Another priest who both helped out and worshipped at St Michael's was Fr Edward Pizey, a native of South Australia, who had been a choirboy in Adelaide Cathedral. He travelled to church on a powerful motor bike, wrapped in black leathers. He had an extraordinary life. He

was a personal friend of Pope John XXIII and was involved with the Una Sancta Movement (for Christian unity). He also seemed to belong to some esoteric clerical/Masonic group in Rome – my father said that at Low Mass he prayed for some eminent people in the Roman and Orthodox Churches, seeming to have an extraordinary knowledge of their personal circumstances. He was also a high-ranking Freemason and Knight Templar – one choir member who was a Mason said he had visited his Lodge and had so many ‘jewels’ he could be heard ‘clanking down the corridor’ as he put it.

At various stages in its recent history, St Michael’s has been under threat of closure, something has always come up to save it. One ardent campaigner for its survival, and great friend of St Michael’s, was the Rt Rev Wilfrid Westall, Bishop of Crediton. A former vicar of Shaldon and Archdeacon of Exeter, he was consecrated bishop and appointed to Crediton in 1954. A great raconteur, he was often to be heard on *Any Questions* on BBC Home Service/Radio 4, and after a visit to St Michael’s would often go to the Crown & Sceptre (now the City Gate) where he would effectively hold court. I remember one such occasion when the group surrounding him was in stitches at his stories while the rest of the clientèle of the pub looked on in blank amazement.

He had a habit of referring to the august Bishop of Exeter, Dr Robert Mortimer, as ‘Bob’ and one of his stories concerned a fishing trip. ‘Bob’ had gone on in Brixham with two of his chaplains. The three men, dressed appropriately for their day’s outing, had gone to the early Sunday morning Mass at St Peter’s (now closed) where the verger had taken exception to their appearance, and ordered them out as ‘we don’t want no tramps in ‘ere’. Dr Mortimer, who was every inch a bishop and normally quite unmistakable, was both dismayed at anyone being turned away from a church, and amused by being mistaken for a tramp.

I heard a story, I don’t know if it was true or embellished, that in the 1970s there was a plan afoot to close and demolish St Michael’s, but this was thwarted by the nature of its site. It was decided that as it would be crippling expensive to take the building down, it would have to be blown up, but the proximity of the cottages and the risk of creating a fault in the rock which would send Mount Dinham crashing down into the river frustrated this plan as well. Whatever the actual

story, Bishop Wilfrid got wind of the closure plan, and managed to gain a stay of execution, so that St Michael's lived on.

6. The Clergy - Father Allen

At some stage, I think it was after Fr Papworth had died, a new priest was appointed and at a meeting held in St David's Institute it became appallingly clear that his ideas would not be conducive to St Michael's survival. He was subsequently persuaded not to take the post. Whatever happened, the next appointee was the Rev Kenneth Allen, who arrived with his wife Muriel and became Priest in Charge just before the centenary celebrations in 1968.

At the time, Tyntesfield, the home of William Gibbs at Wraxall in Somerset, was still in private ownership of his great-grandson, Richard Gibbs, 2nd Baron Wraxall, who invited the congregation to visit the private chapel of the house, which was normally closed to the public and many of us joined the coach party for this trip. Although designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield, while St Michael's was designed by Major Rohde Hawkins, the chapel bears a striking resemblance to St Michael's.

Lord Wraxall and his sister were also the guests of honour at the supper held in St David's Institute to celebrate the centenary. Lord Wraxall never married, and after his death in 2001 Tyntesfield was bought by the National Trust, who renovated it and opened it to the public.

A notable feature of the centenary was the sermon preached at the main celebratory Mass by a former St Michael's boat boy, the Rev Canon Gordon Ruming, rector of Calstock in Cornwall. In this sermon, Gordon described the view as it might have been seen by the builders in 1868, referring to the brook which then ran along Exe Street by its original name – Shit Brook. That was certainly a 'waker', the hats shot up as the ladies visibly thought; "what did he just say."

Just over a year before I had married Fred Bovett, a member of the church choir. Like my parents and several other young St Michael's people, we could not marry there, as the Licence was held by the parish church. Working on the principle that St Michael's was the people rather than the building, we all decamped, servers, choir, incense and all, to St David's. The wedding was awash with clergy, the afore

mentioned Gordon Ruming married us, the Rev Frank Rice, former vicar of St David's preached, and the then current vicar of St David's, the Rev Tom Pritchard and the Rev John Allen, curate at Honiton and a family friend also took part. Father Papworth had just died, so there was no priest-in-charge at St Michael's. There was also a nuptial Mass, so with all this, there was only one person to manage it, my father. So he was M.C. while the other M.C., Basil Hibberd, gave me away.

Fr Allen was a lovely man, with a wicked sense of humour. After our marriage Fred and I moved to Frome in Somerset, but we still came back to Exeter for all the major festivals and for some weekends, so we were, up to a point, regular worshippers at St Michael's. When our first two daughters were born we brought them back to Exeter and Fr Allen baptised them on Sunday mornings after the 10.45 Mass. When our second daughter, Tessa was christened, the procession was on its way down to the font, as I turned to lift her from her carry cot I heard the unmistakable sounds of a nappy being filled. It was too late to do anything about it, so she was handed over looking absolutely beautiful and smelling appalling. Having baptised her, Fr Allen handed her back to her godmother with the quip: "well I certainly got the Devil out of that one!"

After we moved to Bath in 1971, Fred and I became very involved with churches there, so our visits to St Michael's became less frequent, and I just heard about what was happening from my parents.

After Fr Allen, there was a Fr Hughes, who was an American, although he preferred the term 'Virginian'. He hadn't really got over the American Civil war, and had a Confederate flag prominently displayed in his study.

I did return to St Michael's occasionally, but as the years passed, especially after my father died in 1987, it became a place full of ghosts. I recall one All Souls' Day Mass when I realised that I actually knew more of the people whose names were on the list of the Departed than I did those who were sitting in the pews. An inevitable part of growing older!

Angela Marks – August 2018

Fr Allen with Clare

(below) 1968 Centenary Congregation



7. The Ladies of St Michael's

By the middle of the 20th century the Church was largely populated by women, particularly ladies of a certain age, and St Michael's was no exception. The men might do all the 'posh jobs' as clergy, servers and choirmen, and run the place, but it was the women who were the essential resource which kept the church going, cleaning it, arranging the flowers, organising fetes and garden parties, raising funds, preparing and serving refreshments and pouring endless cups of tea. My maternal grandmother was one such at St David's. On one occasion the then vicar, while thanking her for her indefatigable service announced that; 'where there's an urn you'll find Mrs Bowden'. He didn't understand the sniggers from the audience who knew my grandfather's name was Ernest.

In those days married women rarely worked outside the home, so they had time for such service, together with their unmarried sisters, of whom there were a large number in the 1950s. They were the unsung heroines of the First World War, who as girls had waved off boyfriends and fiancés to die in the trenches, or victims of the chronic shortage of young men caused by the mass carnage of that war. They had grown up in an age when marriage was the ultimate goal of every young girl, when to be 'left on the shelf', was a mark of failure. An alien concept to a modern woman, but to girls born at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, with a few notable exceptions, there was little opportunity for employment, particularly for middle class girls. It was unthinkable for a single woman to live alone so these girls cared for parents and then lived with an unmarried sibling or took refuge in the house of a married brother. A single woman couldn't open a bank account, start a business or obtain a mortgage without a male guarantor.

Many of these elderly spinsters had been left well provided for, and thus were in a position to support the church financially. One such was my godmother, Wymarke Hyde, daughter of the Rev Henry Barry Hyde, sometime vicar of Bovey Tracey. She was a relation of Anne Hyde, first wife of James II and mother of Queen Mary II and Queen Anne, and her cousin was a lady in waiting to the Queen Mother. Aged 60 at the time of my baptism, she worried that she would not live to see me grow up. In fact 'Auntie Wye' lived to see me married, and after my wedding took my bouquet to place on Fr Waller's grave. When my

eldest daughter was born, I considered naming her after my much-loved godmother, but she begged me not to inflict her name on anyone else. At school she had been teased with 'Wymarke, why not Matthew, Luke or John?'. She died at the age of 90.

Then there was Miss Dorothy French, daughter of the Rev Cyril Valpy French, the vicar of St David's who had been responsible for building the present church in 1900. Also a lady called Penelope, whose surname now escapes me, who invariably wore yellow and rode a moped to church, buzzing down Dinham Road like an angry wasp. I refer to these ladies as 'elderly'. To me, as a child, they were, though in later years when I discovered their ages when they died, I realised that in fact many of them were actually in their fifties and sixties, which somehow doesn't seem quite so old now!

Some of the younger spinsters came to church with their mothers, women such as Shirley Vazey, who taught at Central School, and Dawn Hugo, who was a sister at the R D & E hospital. Dawn's father, Reg, was a gentleman's outfitter, and he and his wife Kathleen were very much fixtures at St Michael's for many years.

There was also Evelyn Holding, the head of the Business Studies department at Exeter College (then the Technical College). She had started coming to St Michael's during the war with Mum, they were best friends for years. She was also great friends with Mollie Macbeth who always sang the *Tantum Ergo* and *O Salutaris* in Latin at Benediction (which was called Devotions then, same service, no monstrance). Mollie eventually went to Rome, but always came back for Benediction as the Romans 'didn't do it properly'.

Two ladies who were 'regulars', but who kept themselves somewhat apart were a nun and her friend who had a beatific face and looked as if the world had not touched her at all. I can't now remember her name, but years later I found out elsewhere that she was the widow of a Malayan planter, and that during the War, on the run from the Japanese, she had given birth to twins in the jungle, later enduring the horrors of a Japanese prison camp.

Occasional visitors were those very remarkable ladies, the nuns of St Wilfrid's Convent, then in Bartholomew St. In their day they had run an orphanage, a mother and baby home, a school and been the general welfare service for the poor of the West Quarter. In my childhood they

still ran the school, and their religious bookshop, St Wilfrid's Depot in Mary Arches St, from where they supplied St Michael's with Communion wafers, incense and candles.

One of the most extraordinary characters in those days was Mrs Marcella Lugard. The widow of a Royal Artillery colonel, she lived in Velwell Road and came to church every Sunday in a limousine taxi. She always arrived just as the service was starting, walking up the South aisle to her accustomed place, wearing a long skirted coat, boa and a toque. Later on I realised that she still dressed in the fashion of the 1910s, forty years before. She spoke to no-one, and left as she had arrived, in her limousine as soon as the service ended.

In the 1950s we actually had a film star in our congregation, a young lady called Vivienne Clinton. Mrs Clinton, her mother, was Jamaican and fostered babies who were usually black. I remember at one time there were twins whom she brought to church in a great twin pram which she parked in the narthex. Vivienne appeared in a film called *Cry the Beloved Country* about apartheid in South Africa. She was a student at London University at the time, and as there were so few black actresses, the film company advertised in Universities where there were black students, and Vivienne got the part. She married a white man and moved away, but when they were visiting Exeter, their sons were servers at St Michael's. Her brother, Lee, also served at St Michael's. He became a well-known lifeguard at the swimming pool; appallingly he was stabbed to death in a street fight.

Then there was Mrs Gregory, who cleaned the church and was a fiend with the polish. She would burnish the sanctuary steps to a skating rink, but had to be dissuaded, especially at Easter when the steps were in much use, with two thurifers walking backwards continually censuring the sacrament as it was taken to the Altar of Repose on Maundy Thursday; and the *Exultat* being intoned from the top of the steps. I helped Mrs Gregory sometimes, my job was cleaning the pulpit. When I went to dust underneath, I found what looked like an ash casket there. Apparently it was the ashes of someone's mother which had been placed under the old wooden altar, but when the new one was installed there was no room, so it was moved under the pulpit. I wasn't sure about this story, however, when the husband of the

daughter concerned died, the casket disappeared, presumably buried with him.

No history of St Michael's would be complete without mention of Mrs Beatrice Binmore, sacristan, Sunday School teacher and general all-round good egg, known to us all as 'Binnie'.

During the early 1960s, the practice of women being required to wear hats to church began to change. I still remember feeling very daring in my early teens going to church bare-headed for the first time. My mother, Hazel Hoskins, hated hats, but as chapel warden she decided that the dignity of her office required one for Easter, so she bought a black shiny straw effort with a wide brim. Not a good idea, for during the procession, the cross on top of the warden's stave became caught in the straw, resulting in a somewhat undignified struggle to release her.



The Laity – 1968.

8. The Servers and Choir

St Michael's in the middle of the 20th century was fortunate in the having a sizeable choir and band of servers who excelled in their respective tasks.

My father, Michael Hoskins, was in charge of the servers, and while he trained the younger ones well, he was fortunate in having the support of several older men who were themselves liturgical experts. Michael was one of the Masters of Ceremonies, the other was Basil Hibberd, who moved so gracefully he appeared to be gliding. Father Waller (who was never short of a merry quip) said he looked as if he was on casters. Father Peter Lee, a later priest at St Michael's, once described my father to me as 'the walking Fortescue'.

This reference to Adrian Fortescue, the liturgiologist, was actually slightly wide of the mark, as Fortescue was an expert on Roman Catholic liturgy. Michael's reference points were Edward C.R.

Lamburn and Henry Cairncross, author and editor of *Ritual Notes* and *Anglican Services*. These worthy tomes are invaluable reference points for servers, containing instructions for every conceivable occasion, including what to do if the priest drops dead at the altar. Fortunately this piece of knowledge was never required.

Michael and Basil also took their turn as thurifer, along with Alfred Yarnley, who came in every Sunday from Bradninch, and who was a master at the craft of censuring. He would stoke up in the sacristy by swinging the thurible through a 360° arc, a practice which drove Father Papworth to decide it was safer to vest in the North chapel. Alf could produce clouds of incense, filling the sanctuary to the point where it was sometimes difficult to see across it.

In those days the thurifer was often accompanied by a boat boy, and it was a proud day for my father when my brother Antony had his first outing alongside him. Tony was then six and Dad had practised with him at home with a gravy boat, which was dropped and broken in the process. Fortunately when it came to the real thing, such a calamity was avoided.

On Maundy Thursday, the procession to the Altar of Repose required a remarkable feat of censuring, usually carried out by Michael or Basil and Alfred. They walked backwards, continually censuring, from the High Altar, down the sanctuary steps and into the side chapel.

There was something of a hierarchy among the servers, with everyone having their own specific task. Percy Lendon for example, always carried the processional cross and Wilfred Dymond always carried the statue of St Michael (the small one of course!) in the Michaelmas procession. Another thurifer was called Manning, I can't now remember his Christian name, but he was always referred to as 'the Cardinal' after Cardinal Henry Manning, sometime Archdeacon of Chichester, and after his conversion to Rome, second Archbishop of Westminster.

Among the other servers (at various times) were David Hallet, David Smith, Richard Jennings, Wilfred Gorman, Michael Payne (son of the organist), Michael Gwynne, his younger brothers, Patrick and Peter, red-headed twins who made a wonderful 'matched pair' of acolytes, Robbie Beckford and of course, John Darch, who is still with us.

Then there was the choir. When I was small the organist was a Mr Payne, affectionately known as 'Daddy' Payne. He was succeeded by Eric Yeo, a wonderful organist who used to give impromptu recitals after Sunday Evensong, a few of us would sit in the choir stalls to listen. I recall one magical evening when Eric played *Finlandia* in a darkened church.

Several of the choir members were policemen in the Devon County Force, (Devon and Exeter were separate Police Forces then) and also sang in the Police Choir. There was Jimmy Green, Dougie Watton and Jock Taylor (I think he was in the police). Jim had a very deep bass voice, Father Waller used to say 'Jim's rumbling in the cellar again'.

Then there was the inimitable Eddie Taylor, a great character whose singing was accompanied by some wonderful flourishes. I was very fond of Eddie, he was my eldest daughter's godfather. I call him 'inimitable', but another choir member, Jim Kelly, could do a very fair impression of him. I worked for the Express & Echo (in Sidwell St then) and I remember Jim coming into the front office and doing his impression of Eddie singing the *Agnus Dei* to the bemusement of my colleagues.

A stalwart of the choir was Walter Daw, sometime Mayor of Exeter, and another was Cecil Morris, who always organised the coach to take us on the Glastonbury Pilgrimage. He did it very well for years, but it always worried him, and all the way there he would walk up and down the coach making sure everyone was all right. It was always said that while we went in the coach, Cecil walked all the way to Glastonbury!

The choir was also something of a family affair. Jimmy Green's sons, Michael and Richard were choirboys, and Jeffery Woodland, another choir member's two sons Alan and Patrick were also choirboys. Some of the choirboys stayed on when they grew up, Tony West was one such, as a boy he had a wonderful voice, and he and a boy called Edward (?) would often sing treble solos.

One choir member in particular was very special – Fred Bovett, whom I married. He had a wonderful baritone voice (he could do a mean Bing Crosby impression) and his rendering of the Reproaches on Good Friday was a deeply spiritual experience – not a dry eye in the house. He also narrated the Passion of Palm Sunday and sang the Great Litany in Lent and the Litany of the Saints on Holy Saturday. Although he

always said he had trouble getting his tongue round 'Holy Cecilia' and 'Holy Anastasia', it always sounded wonderful.

All in all, we were so fortunate to have such a great band of men whose skills and commitment greatly enhanced our striving to 'worship God in the beauty of holiness.'

9. Holy Week & Easter Liturgy

(This article by Angela Marks was originally published in the Bath Chronicle in March 1996.)

After the hurly-burly of Christmas, the other great feast of Christianity, Easter is rather a low-key affair in the secular world. There are still two bank holidays, but most of the shops are open and there are only the Easter eggs to buy. The last lingering reminder of the importance of the feast is that shops which are now allowed to trade legally on Sundays are still required to close on Easter Sunday.

For the church, however, Easter is the most important festival in the calendar, and together with the preceding Holy Week, the longest. For me, Easter recalls images of the church services I used to attend as a child. We were Anglicans, but the rites we used were those found, in a slightly different form, in the Roman Catholic Church. The rituals were pure liturgical theatre, incredibly moving, deeply symbolic and very ancient. They traced the doings of Christ through the last week of his earthly life, his crucifixion and resurrection. As these took place over the feast of Passover, some of the ceremonies are based on the traditions of the Jewish feast.

The week started with Palm Sunday. To remind us of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, at the beginning of the service there was a procession with the priest, altar servers and choir carrying large palm fronds. They went outside the church leaving two choirboys at the back. They sang the first verse of the hymn "All glory, laud and honour" and then this was repeated by the choir outside.

The great west doors were only used on this day, and at the end of the verse the crucifer would bang on the door with the processional cross. Then the doors were thrown open and everyone sang the hymn right through. I used to love that bit, listening to the distant voices, and waiting for the banging on the door and the rumble of the sliding doors.

One year, the crucifer got a bit over-enthusiastic and bent the soft brass of the cross, so after that they stopped the banging and just opened the doors. It was never quite the same after that.

The Gospel was St Matthews' description of Christ's passion, and it was sung by a single narrator, with all the choir joining in for the crowd scenes, a tenor singing Pontius Pilate's words and a bass those of Jesus. We had some good singers, and I wish it had been recorded, I can now only hear it in my head.

On Maundy Thursday, things really started in earnest. For the next four days we seemed to spend all our time in church, either at services or getting ready for the next one. At the end of the service on Maundy Thursday, the Sacrament was carried down to a side chapel, to an altar covered in flowers and candles. On the way, the priest carrying the Sacrament had two servers walking in front of him, carrying censers. These were brass globes which contained burning charcoal over which incense was scattered to produce an aromatic smoke. These censers were usually swung from long chains, but on this occasion the thurifers would hold the chains in both hands and the censer was repeatedly knocked against them. Not only did they have to keep up this rhythmic synchronised clicking for three or four minutes, they had to negotiate a flight of marble steps - and walk backwards. My father was usually one of the two thurifers, and I was immensely proud of the way he performed this feat.

After this, the altar was stripped, the cross and candlesticks taken away, the cloths taken off the altar, even the carpets were taken up, leaving everything completely bare, while we all sang Psalm 22. Then at the end, all the servers and choir, instead of going out in an orderly fashion, just scattered, to remind us how the apostles had fled after Jesus' arrest.

My father told me that when he was a boy they actually ran into the vestries, but they stopped that after somebody fell down. I was always sorry I missed that.

People took it in turns to pray in front of the side altar so there was someone there all night. Later on, in another church, I recall taking part in this watch from 2am-3am. At one stage I was alone in the church, an eerie experience, as the central heating made some rather odd noises.

On Good Friday the service was very simple, with all the statues covered in purple cloth, and nothing on the altar. The priest brought out a simple wooden crucifix under a purple cloth, which he uncovered. The congregation would come up and kiss the feet of the figure on the cross before it was placed on the altar.

During this service a canticle called The Reproaches was sung, a deeply moving and evocative piece which compares all the things which God has done for his people with the tortures inflicted on Christ, with the refrain: 'O my people, what have I done to thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Answer me.' It was so sad I used to sob my heart out.

The next big service was in the middle of the night on Easter Eve. This was a real marathon, starting at 11pm and lasting about two hours. I wasn't allowed to go to this one until I was older

The first part was the blessing of the new fire. A brazier was lit in the porch, and the priest went out there in procession. All the lights were turned out and in complete darkness, we faced the back of the church while the priest blessed the fire and lit the huge Paschal candle from it. Then he carried it back into church and as he went up the aisle we all lit a candle from it. The scene was incredible, like a Rembrandt painting.

There were some long readings and chanting, everything was blessed, and finally the climax came. The priest, having changed into glittering golden robes, sang "Glory be to God on high" and then there was a huge blast on the organ, the church bells were rung (Lord knows what the neighbours thought) and every bell inside the church (Dad again).

After all the misery of Good Friday and the slow build up of the first part of the service, it was an enormous release. My mother used to say she imagined Heaven was that moment going on for ever. Even now, more than thirty years later, it brings a lump to my throat to remember it.

There were two more services on Easter Day itself, which, though they were full of colour and light and beautiful singing, always seemed something of an anti-climax - despite the fact that the secular world intruded slightly, and we children were given little cream-filled Easter eggs.

10. An old Choir Member remembers

I joined St Michael's Choir in about 1992. I had been a church member for many years but in earlier times it was not the thing for ladies to be in the choir. Our choir was small and new members were needed.

I remember a Sunday morning when there were two of us in the choir stalls – myself and Arthur Folland – both altos. Arthur had been a chorister at The Chapel Royal before coming to Exeter and marrying Olive. The once a month Evensong and Benediction usually relied on four, one in each part – Penny, me, Richard P and Tegwin Harris. Tegwin also played the organ.

However during the years 1992 – 2009 we had many very able musicians and the choir grew in number. Many students from the University were attracted to St Michael's by our music and traditional services.

It was during those years that Vespers was introduced as a meditative office. Tony Roberts was responsible for that – preparing the music for the psalms. Tony also gave us Tenebrae and it is still sung now as Tony arranged it. I remember the first time we sang Tenebrae: we had advertised as widely as possible (no website then) but wondered whether anyone would come on a Good Friday evening. We need not have worried: looking down from the gallery into the candle lit church we could see the pews filling up. That first Tenebrae was truly memorable. Many people who came then still come each Good Friday. They are not 'church people' but this is important to them. I remember the first time we sang the Allegri Miserere: university students Emily and Helena were with us then. (I know our organist Nigel felt that it was too glorious and joyful for Good Friday, but I think of it as the anticipation of hope in the light proclaimed on Holy Saturday.)

We called ourselves the 'Philokalia' singers then as I remember.

Another talented member of our choir was Chris Upton. He was a student at Exeter University but not studying Music – Chemistry I think. He very ably directed us and also composed the the setting we

now use in the Good Friday Liturgy – The Reproaches at the Veneration of The Cross.

I remember the choir tour to Wales and Hereford – Steve Martin was our choir director then. It was certainly enjoyable but only three things come to mind. At one church where we were to sing there was no loo! Those in need were taken by car to the vicarage. We sang Mass in Hereford Cathedral on the Feast of The Assumption (?). We assembled for the procession and so processed following the crucifer, but at the top of the nave the altar party turned right! What was going on? St Michael's had no experience of a 'figure of eight' procession so simply went ahead into the choir stalls leaving the altar party to complete the procession. At St Michael's because of the pews we cannot access the side aisles from the front of the church so such a procession is not possible. However, I remember we did once move pews so it was possible. The experiment has never been repeated. The last memory of the tour is Tintern Abbey where we sang Evensong. It was a glorious evening and a fitting end.

These memories are somewhat scattered and random and there may be many things I misremember and have forgotten, but I certainly have enjoyed many years of singing at St Michael's.

Connie Cannon

140th Anniversary
Choir - 2008



11. Life of John Dinham (1788-1864) by Sir Harold Papworth

JOHN DINHAM, the great Philanthropist of Exeter, was born at Kenton on 5th August 1788. His father, Thomas Dinham, was a Farm Bailiff or Steward at Powderham Castle, and his mother, Sarah, kept a small shop in Kenton.

John's education was in a private school at Chudleigh. He left school at the age of fourteen and found work in Exeter where he was apprenticed to Mr Tucker, a grocer in High Street. It is on record that his father firmly believed in withdrawing children from school at an early age, so that they could enter their careers at the bottom rung of the ladder. Only in this way, he held, would they acquire a thorough knowledge of their chosen business in all its branches.

John Dinham's father was a man of deep piety and the mantle of his piety fell fully upon the son. According to our present standards his outlook was perhaps very narrow. He enjoined his son to find not more than one or two friends in Exeter, prove their worth and remain faithful to them, avoiding the other allurements of the city.

Faithfully following his father's advice, John chose as his friends the two sons of Alderman Reuben Phillips, who had a Chemist shop in Fore Street which achieved great notoriety as the first shop in Exeter to be lit by Gas. This startling innovation was at first regarded with suspicion by many as all innovations are, but it brought the Phillips family into prominence; and when a little later the first 'Gas Light Company' was founded, the family acquired a prominent part in its management.

After serving his apprenticeship with Mr Tucker, John Dinham started in business on his own in 1809 as a Jeweller and Silversmith at 84 Fore Street. A little later he got into financial difficulties with jewellery and opened a new Wing in his shop for the sale of groceries and tea. At this time it could not have been foreseen, but it was Tea which was to bring Dinham his fortune. Shortly before, John had married Martha Ford at St Stephen's Church on 27th August 1808. The marriage was not a happy one.

Dinham was a hard and conscientious worker and, as was the general custom in those days, acted as his own commercial traveller, going from place to place with specimens of jewellery. The failure of his jewellery business was not due to neglect on his part, unless it be an unwillingness to press his debtors, but to a couple of fortuitous circumstances, namely, the sale of jewellery and silverware from door to door by itinerant continentals, and fierce competition from German silver.

It is on record that some of these wandering salesmen bought goods from Dinham's shop in Exeter, and after making enough money returned to their homes on the Continent without paying their accounts. The result was Dinham's bankruptcy and the closure of his business. Deeply hurt and embarrassed by this undeserved insolvency, but undaunted in spirit, Dinham began again at the bottom and found work as a Clerk in Messrs Kingdon's paper business in Fore Street.

From this ordinary clerkship Dinham by a stroke of good fortune moved back into Tea. A London Tea Company, having decided in about 1827 to open a branch in Exeter, appointed John Dinham as its Manager; and this was the bottom rung of a new ladder leading to wealth and prosperity.

After a few years the London Tea Company closed its branch in Exeter and John Dinham, joined by a few wealthy friends who had confidence in him, started a new firm and became its Managing Director. This venture proved a great success and Dinham was soon able to pay in full and with interest all the creditors under his bankruptcy. His first wife having died in 1823, he married Susannah Foster in 1831. Unlike his first marriage, this was an exceedingly happy one and lasted for over twenty-seven years until Susannah's death in 1859.

This is an appropriate place to record that John Dinham was a deeply religious man. He was a member of the Church of England with a devout evangelical outlook and a regular worshipper at Bedford Chapel. When good fortune befell him, he became a generous benefactor of many church societies, especially the Church Pastoral Aid Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Church Missionary Society and the Religious Tract Society. He was an

assiduous distributor of religious Tracts and was in the habit of inserting them in Tea caskets despatched to his customers. He was a pioneer in founding Sunday Schools, the first of which he established in Mary Arches Lane.

Being now a rich man John Dinham was able to realise his cherished ambition to help others and become a benefactor and philanthropist. He built an Infant School in Preston Street; was largely instrumental in beginning the Exeter branch of the YMCA; and was a liberal benefactor of charitable institutions for the deaf, dumb and blind and other homes of refuge for persons in need. To these may be added innumerable private and personal acts of generosity, but the most outstanding benefaction and the one by which he is most thankfully remembered is the foundation of the EXETER FREE COTTAGES.

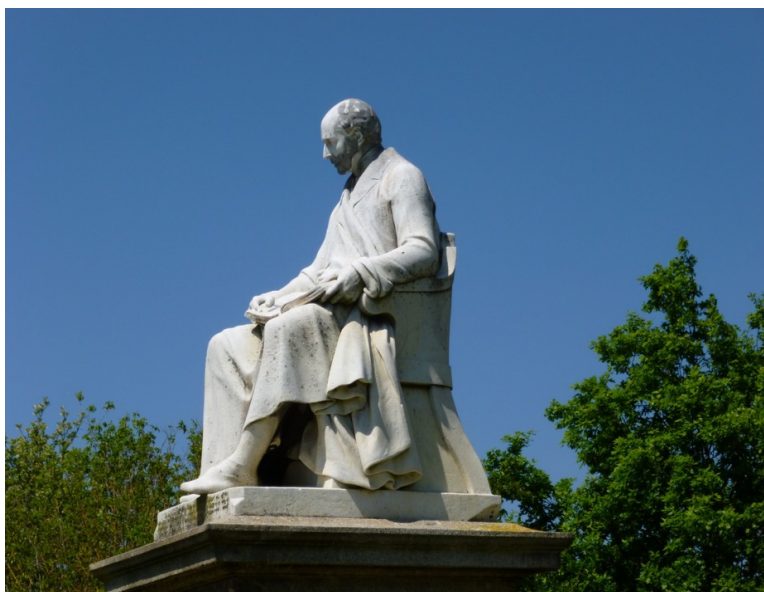
Mount Dinham, as it is now called, was once a large field known as Turners Garden and divided into garden allotments. When these proved unremunerative, it was proposed to sell the site for various kinds of public amusements like fairs, circuses and other travelling shows. This did not appeal to Dinham's puritan mind, and so, enlisting the help of others, he bought the land and, being a trustee of the Exeter Episcopal Charity Schools, he gave a piece of it for the building of a new school. The name of the land was then changed from Turners Garden to 'The Charity Land'.

Then came the first four blocks of sixteen cottages which Dinham built at his own expense, the architect being George Cumming the City Surveyor. The next two blocks of four were built by some of his friends as a 'testimonial' to his philanthropy. The next eight houses were given by John Soames of St Thomas, and the last eight by Dinham, making a total of forty. He also gave the site on which, through the benevolence of William Gibbs of Tyntesfield, the magnificent church of St Michael & All Angels was built in 1868.

This great philanthropist died at Dawlish on 27th June 1864 at the age of 74, having bequeathed his fortune to be divided between fifty to sixty charities, including the four Church Societies of which he had been a life-long supporter.

John Dinham was buried on 2nd July 1864 in Bartholomew Street Cemetery by the Reverend R Lovatt of Bedford Chapel. He was interred in a vault in which his wife, Susannah, had been buried five years before. A statue in white marble was erected to his memory in Northernhay Gardens in 1866. It was sculpted by E B Stephens ARA of London and bears the inscription “Erected by the Citizens of Exeter and others in memory of his piety, integrity and charity 1866”.

- Richard Barnes, May 2018, from an article written in the 1960s by Fr Harold Papworth, Assistant Priest here from 1961. Rev Sir Harold Papworth (1888-1967) had a distinguished career in Education in South India from 1914-50 for which he received a KBE. He died a year before St Michael's Centenary.



12. William Gibbs, Benefactor of St Michael's, Mount Dinham.

William Gibbs (1790-1875) made a fortune in business, in particular importing guano from the Pacific coast of South America. The Agricultural Revolution of the 18th century had shown how farming could feed a growing population, but modern artificial fertilizers were still in the future.

Gibbs took a business risk when in 1842 he began the long-distance importing of bird manure, but it was a risk which benefited many farmers and those who ate their produce. One of his firms also operated Brunel's *SS Great Britain* on the Australian emigrant run.

Gibbs's father had been in the cloth business; among a number of other interests was a cloth mill at Exwick. After his own success in business, William Gibbs bought the estate at Tyntesfield near Bristol, and from 1863 onwards began to rebuild the house, which he also provided with a fine Gothic chapel rather in the style of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. The house is now owned by the National Trust and open to the public.

In the chapel at Tyntesfield, and in other churches founded by the Gibbs family, worship was offered in the Anglo-Catholic tradition renewed in the 1830s and subsequent decades by the Oxford Movement, a school of thought which continues to emphasize the continuity of the modern Church of England's faith and practice with that of the earliest Christians.

The Gibbs family was philanthropic and devout, and founded churches in many parts of the country. William Gibbs personally paid for the grand polychrome brick chapel at Keble College in Oxford, a college founded both to commemorate the priest-poet John Keble, who in 1833 had started the Oxford Movement, and also to help provide a university education to those unable to bear the cost of attending one of the University's older colleges.

William Gibbs died in 1875 and is buried at Wraxall, the parish church of the Tyntesfield estate, but a life-size monument here at St Michael's church was part of the scheme of decoration devised by his family and set up to commemorate a man who was genuinely loved by those who knew him.

Written by Oliver Nicholson for our HLF Display Panel.

Search online for 'william gibbs tyntesfield' for more information.

William Gibbs

His Memorial in St Michael's Church

(below) Centenary Clergy, Choir & Servers



13. Major Rohde Hawkins

The Designer & Architect of St Michael's Church, Mount Dinham.

Major Rohde Hawkins (born 4 February 1821, Nutfield, Surrey; died 19 October 1884, Holmwood, Surrey) was a British architect of the Victorian period. He is best known for the schools and churches that he designed and built.

Note: Both his given names "Major" and "Rohde" frequently cause confusion; he was not an army major, and Rohde (not Rhode) was his mother's maiden name: she was of a German family.

Family life

Hawkins was the third son of numismatist and keeper of antiquities at the British Museum, Edward Hawkins (1780–1867) and Eliza Rohde, who had married on 29 September 1806 (Michaelmas).

Hawkins was educated at Charterhouse School from 1831 to 1837; the school was then still part of the London Charterhouse in Finsbury.

He was engaged by John Greenwood, a Yorkshire mill owner at Swarcliffe, to rebuild Swarcliffe Hall in 1848. Hawkins became close enough to the Greenwood family to marry John Greenwood's granddaughter, Mary Littledale Greenwood of Holmwood, Surrey, on 4 August 1853. Mary was the younger sister of John Greenwood (MP). A friend of the Greenwoods wrote effusively: "Mr Hawkins married our great friend John Greenwood's sister. He is one of the 1st Architects of the day. He is the Government architect for all these schools &c."

Hawkins and his wife Mary lived at Redlands Farm, Holmwood, which he also designed. They are both buried at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Holmwood, where there is a memorial window to him. When the Parish was split in the 1870s, Hawkins designed the new Church of St John the Evangelist in Early English style.

He was gazetted as Captain in the Queen's (Westminster) Rifle Volunteer Corps on 25 February 1860.

Career

Hawkins studied under the wealthy London architect Thomas Cubitt, designer of Queen Victoria's Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. He then worked for the architect Edward Blore, designer of Buckingham Palace. He also explored his father's interest in antiquities, spending time studying in Asia Minor.

Hawkins is known today mainly for schools such as the Châteauesque Royal Victoria Patriotic Building in Wandsworth and Gothic style churches. The Builder described him as "both a skilful artist and a thorough English gentleman". From 1854 to his death he was employed as architect to the Privy Council's Education Department, alongside his private work.

Some of Hawkins' significant Buildings

Swarcliffe Hall, Yorkshire (1848)

Hunt's Hall (Guy's Hospital, London) (1853)

Bodle Street Green, East Sussex (1853)

St Paul's Church, Burdett Row, Bow, London (1858) (destroyed World War II)

Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, Wandsworth, London (1859)

St Michael's Church, Star Street, Paddington, London (1860–1861) – damaged by bombing in World War II, repaired, but demolished in 1969; this church was funded by William Gibbs 'to minister to the Poor of Paddington'.

St Michael and All Angels Church, Mount Dinham, Exeter (1865–1868)

St Antony's Chapel, Cowley, Devon (1867–1868) – also funded by William Gibbs, now deconsecrated.

Fairwarp, East Sussex (1867–1871)

St John the Evangelist's Church, Holmwood, Surrey (1874–1875)

Richard Barnes – from Wikipedia with minor corrections – 22/04/2018

Major Rohde Hawkins (1821-84).



St John the Evangelist, Holmwood.



14. Canadian Connexion – The Consecration of St Michael's.

Another person associated with St Michael's Church was Rt Rev John Medley, Bishop of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. Here are a few more gleanings around the opening of this Church 150 years ago. More can be garnered from the internet, especially the extensive 'Exeter Memories' website.

After the death of local Tea Merchant and generous philanthropist, John Dinham, in June 1865, the great & the good of Exeter met to commission a Statue of him. Unveiled in March 1866 it looks west from Northernhay Gardens to the Free Cottages and Schools he had built on Mt Dinham.

At the same meeting Joseph Theophilus Toye, Vicar of St David's Church, suggested that Dinham's vision of a Chapel for the community there should also be fulfilled. This despite there being no evidence that Dinham had had any connection with St David's Church, other than

buying and developing the land which now bears his name in our Parish.

John Dinham himself was something of a puritan, worshipping from 1832 at the newly built Bedford Chapel, an evangelical Anglican church in the elegant Georgian Bedford Circus (sadly damaged in the 1942 Blitz and subsequently knocked down).

With funding from the guano magnate, William Gibbs of Tyntesfield, architect Major Rohde Hawkins designed a splendid church to outshine the St Michael's they had built 10 years earlier at the other end of the Great Western Railway for the poor of Paddington – the Victorians were great Church-planters, particularly in the teeming inner cities created by the industrial revolution.

Our St Michael's was built by William White of London in blue Westleigh stone, with dressings of Ham Hill stone, in an early French fully cruciform style, with its landmark spire rising to 230ft. The decoration is of the highest quality, with a stunning East window of Biblical angels, beautiful Rose window & angel screen at the West end, and naturalistic foliage sprays inhabited by real and mythical beasts on the pillars.

Rev Toye, like Wm Gibbs, had strong sympathies with the High Church Oxford Movement begun in 1833 by Keble, Pusey & Newman. St Michael's interior was designed with sacramental worship in mind, with a clear view of the High Altar. Its ministry was to be to the artisans and workers of Exe Street as well as the residents of Mt Dinham & St David's Hill.

It was also radical in having free pews for everyone, unlike many churches where box pews were still owned by families, for them and their servants. Initially men were to sit on the North side of the aisle and women on the South side!

By Autumn 1868, the Church of St Michael & All Angels on Mount Dinham was built and ready to be opened. It should by rights have been consecrated by Bishop Henry Phillpotts of Exeter, but he was 90 years old, in declining health, and, though a supporter of most things

conservative, suspicious of the Ritualistic tendency emerging among some Anglo-Catholics.

Here is our Canadian Connexion - the honour passed felicitously to Bishop John Medley of Fredericton, New Brunswick, former Vicar of St Thomas' Exeter, who happened to be visiting England at the time. He consecrated our church on Michaelmas Day 1868, with many leading lights of the Oxford Movement attending.

Bishop Medley would indeed have approved of St Michael's architecture and ethos – as first Bishop of Fredericton he had built his Cathedral around 1850 in the Gothic Revival style, modelled on 14th century St Mary's Snettisham in Norfolk. He had no truck with pew rentals. Fervently Anglo-Catholic himself, he nevertheless fostered coexistence between High and Low Anglicans. He evangelised his vast corner of Canada, visiting settlements, building churches, training priests and confirming the faithful.

We too have a goodly heritage which it is our duty and joy to carry forward in worship, service and outreach. - Richard Barnes

Bishop Medley in 1848 by John Bridges



Episcopal School and St Michael's



15. Thank you for St Michael's.

We're nothing special, we just sing Bass or Tenor
When Altos sing notes, they've probably sung them before
Sopranos have talent, a wonderful thing
'Cause everyone listens when they start to sing
I'm so grateful and proud
All I want is to sing it out loud.

So I say – Thank you for St Michael's, the Hymns we're singing
Thanks for all the joy they're bringing.
Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty
What would Church be?
Without a Mass or Motet what are we?
So I say thank you for St Michael's
For building it for me.

Mother says I could swing incense before I could walk,
Father says I could sing plainsong before I could talk.
And I've often wondered, when did it all start? 1868!
Who found out that nothing can capture a heart
Like Mount Dinham can?
William Gibbs and Rohde Hawkins, I'm your fan.

Et dico – Tibi gratias ago ob cantus quos cantemus

Thanks for Incense, Bells and Candles all around us.
Who can live without them, I ask in our Liturgy
What would Mass be?
Without a Stanford or Byrd what are we?
So I say thank you for the music
For giving it to me.

I've been so lucky, I am the guy with the silver hair
I wanna sing it out to everybody
Tenebrae, Easter Joy, Michaelmas!

Thank you for St Michael's, the Organ's playing
Thanks for all the harmony we're making.
Who can live without it, in our Sesquicentenary
What would Spikes be?
Without Evensong and Vespers what are we?
So I say thank you for St Michael's
For building it for me.

Yes I say thank you for St Michael's
For keeping it for me.

Richard Barnes – August 2018 – inspired by ABBA.

16. St Michael's at 150 – Anniversary Celebrations

150th birthdays are not that common. St Michael's has been spending September 2018 celebrating the anniversary of the church's consecration in 1868.

Proceedings opened with an elaborate observance of the Heritage Open Days, masterminded to excellent effect by Paula Lewis. This year the powers which animate the Heritage Open Days at a national level decreed that they should extend over two weekends rather than the one which has been customary in the past. St Michael's celebrated both weekends, with renewed exhibition panels (prepared by Oliver Nicholson) to inform visitors of the history, function and mission of our Church.

On Saturday, September 8th, we welcomed people taking part in Devon Historic Churches Trust 'Ride & Stride' sponsored event, including a group of cyclists from St Michael's, Alphington. In the afternoon over 70 people came to hear Nick Dixon talk about the peregrine falcons which famously nest in our spire, and which he has been studying for over 20 years.

The following day a good number came to eat cream teas (no stinting on the cream) served by Paula Lewis, Stephanie Aplin and Elizabeth Hughes, with an accompaniment of Victorian parlour songs rendered by 'Tasha and the Boys of the Old Brigade'.

The second weekend was also well-attended, particularly by - *inter alia* - our neighbours on Mount Dinham, by friends from St Leonard's and by several students coming to Exeter to begin the academic year. On the Saturday an audience of 20 was given a guided tour by Richard Parker, not only our Chapel Warden but also a noted architectural historian. The earliest building on the site was a Roman camp.

On the Sunday after Mass Neil Page showed an appreciative group the intricacies of the pipe organ before playing for them (with a particularly splendid registration) Karg-Elert's Greatest Hit. Two of the audience then took a seat at the organ to have a short play themselves.

Preceding all this activity was a genial outing for the choir. The Exeter Historic Buildings Trust has made an agreement with Exeter City Council to rent St Nicholas Priory from the City for an annual payment of one loaf of bread. On the morning of Friday September 7th the Lord Mayor, preceded by the Mace, came to the Priory to inaugurate the arrangement and to receive his first tranche of rent. The Choir was invited to sing rousing Renaissance ditties, which went over extremely well in the former cellar of the Priory.

Nor is this all. On Saturday 22nd we hosted a beautiful Recital by Gillian Wormley (Soprano) and Din Ghani (Lute), Musicke in the Ayre, of songs composed during the lifetime of Devon-born Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) and illustrating his eventful life.

On Wednesday 26th September Richard Parker's Lecture led us on a masterly & entertaining romp through the evolution of church architecture, furnishings and liturgy in the early 19th century, leading to the Oxford Movement ethos on which St Michael's was founded.

To simplify greatly – the “Georgian” church was dormant if not moribund, cosy, establishment, box pews rented for family & servants, baroque monuments to the grey & the good, the poor pushed to the margins, a place to meet like-minded people, sermon & service read by the minister in his pulpit, 6 feet above contradiction. Congregation as 'audience' at a religious theatre.

Whereas “Victorian” church at its best was active, intellectual, radical, reaching out to the poor, open pews free to all, sacred religious objects

for devotion, social classes mingling, liturgy needing participation of servers, choir and congregation, engaging the senses in a religious pageant. This was the vision of St Michael's.

And I was left wondering whether some of our more 'successful' churches have become "Georgian" again in their ethos, and what this might mean for the future of Parish ministry.

Michaelmas Day itself, Saturday 29th September, our Patronal festival started up at St David's Church (an excellent idea, Fr Christopher). After some socialising and prayers (and more Birettas & Maniples than one could swing a Thurible at), the Procession set off down St David's Hill singing 'Thy hand O God has guided', 'The church's one foundation' and 'Bright the vision'.

Arriving at St Michael's we had a 'Station' for photos, sang 'Locus iste' by Bruckner – this place is made by God - and launched into 'The St Michael's Hymn'. It was good to welcome several visitors among Clergy, Servers & Choir. Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Fr Nigel with Fr Christopher as Deacon and Fr Steven Martin as sub-Deacon.

The Mass Setting in C&F and Motet 'And I saw another angel' were heart-warming pieces by CVStanford.

Fr Steven, a former Director of Music at St Mike's, now curate at Tavistock, preached an entertaining & encouraging Sermon which can be found online at https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Michaelmas_Sermon_2018.pdf (paste as one line)

To this Michaelmas service we were privileged to welcome at least 6 people who had been present at the Centenary celebrations 50 years ago - David Smith (server), Fred Bovett (choir), Angela (Hoskins) Marks, Monica and John Darch (server), and Rev Gordon Ruming (who preached the sermon at the centenary).

A buffet supper for more than 70 people was masterminded by Paula Lewis & Connie Cannon, helped by Stephanie Aplin, Elizabeth Hughes & others, and Stephanie also produced some stunning floral arrangements.

On Sunday we marked our Feast of Dedication, with Ven David Gunn-Johnson as Celebrant and guest preacher. See https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Dedication_Sermon_2018.pdf (paste as one line) for another excellent & challenging Sermon.

The Choir gave the world première live performance of a new Anthem by Graham Keitch written especially for the occasion, setting the words of the following prayer as opening fanfare, antiphonal main section and splendid coda (available on YouTube) :-

O glorious prince Saint Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the Divine King and our admirable conductor, you who shine with excellence and superhuman virtue deliver us from all evil, who turn to you with confidence and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day. O glorious prince Saint Michael. Amen.

The Lord Mayor of Exeter and his Consort graciously attended this Service and offered congratulations on our 150th Anniversary over Refreshments.

Here's to the next 150 years ! Richard Barnes & Oliver Nicholson



Birettas & Maniples outside St David's



Procession on St David's Hill



150th Anniversary Choir



Six from the Centenary

