

THE NORTH AISLE PROJECT

1970



As recorded in magazines of
the Parish of St Peter
Hartshorne

February 1970

In March 1969 I wrote a page about the problem of Sunday School Accommodation at the Parish Church. It was an introduction to what is now known as

THE NORTH AISLE PROJECT.

Since that time a lot of water has passed under the bridge! Eventually, it became necessary for a Consistory Court to be held in the Parish Church, and this duly took place on 20th December. Subsequently there were reports in the Press, on the Radio and on Television. The actual Hearing lasted from 11.15 a.m. until almost 4.00p.m. With a one-hour recess for lunch, and Chancellor Bryan T. Buckle concluded the proceedings by giving judgment in a speech lasting twenty minutes. He decreed

"the grant of a Faculty for the purposes aforesaid subject to the proviso that the Church Architects shall be consulted and their approval obtained to the removal and re-siting of the font".

The 'purposes aforesaid' are straightforward:

1. "To partition the North aisle from the nave and chancel by glazed partitions and sliding and folding doors. To provide a water and electrical service and to alter as required the existing heating and lighting. To install a new sink and cupboards.
2. To remove the altar, marble plinth and the Cross and candlesticks from the Lady Chapel.
3. To provide toilet accommodation by the addition of a new building at the East end of the North Aisle.
4. To replace a number of the existing chairs with stacking chairs.
5. To raise and re-site the font in a new position in the nave.
6. To remove the bells from the Church to J. Taylor's foundry at Loughborough for safe keeping."

In giving his judgment, the Chancellor advised the Rector to consult the Charity Commissioners over the question of using Funds raised by various means for a 'Church Hall.' Both this consultation, and the technical question of whether the Font may be safely re-sited, are being dealt with by the respective Authorities stipulated.

For the rest, the mandate is clear and unequivocal. The two main nave arches and the arch between the existing Lady Chapel and North Aisle will have sliding and folding glass doors up to the heads of the pillars, and these will enable the space to be completely open or completely closed. Thus, the Sunday Schools will secure separate teaching areas, and a packed Harvest Festival Service will still have the maximum seating space as now, though improved: for movable chairs will enable us to turn chairs towards the centre of the building, instead of the existing fixed arrangement. The sink will be in a concealed cabinet. The bells will be removed to the foundry temporarily, for it is the intention within three or four years at the most to have them repaired and re-hung where they belong, and where they can again be rung.

The toilet block will not be in a separate building. It will be added on with access from inside. It will be adequate. It will also be a boon.

There then are facts. This space in our Church can become an integral factor in the outreach about which we must be continually concerned. It will have a number of uses in addition to helping the Sunday School and facilitating Family Worship. It will provide facilities and amenities that many other churches would dearly love to have at their disposal.

A last word is necessary to keep the record quite straight. There has never been any intention that once carried out, the North Aisle area would be available for jumble sales or table tennis tournaments. It will not. But it will be an area that can be used to encourage people to meet one another on a Sunday – and at other times – over tea or coffee: an area where there can be interchange, talk-back, growth in fellowship, increased understanding; Some may be sceptical; they may see change of this kind as inevitably 'for the worse'. But we have the Seventies to cope with.

The Church must do or die. Its Lord did – he served and preached and challenged and gave His life: but he rose again. So the time has come for the Church to rise, to come alive: 'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune'.

What a challenge we have. Can we meet' it, and move out, alive and demonstrably concerned about other people? Really, it is a question of 'we must'.

Your sincere Friend and Rector, Trevor Beedell.

CHURCH HALL BOXES

A number of people have boxes labelled

'Hartshorne Parish Church'

Church Hall Fund

Please give generously.

Since the Parochial Church Council has backed North Aisle Project, there is no separate Church Hall envisaged. Subject to the advice of the Charity Commissioners, it is hoped to use resources derived from these boxes for the Project. But until the monetary position has been clarified, it would be best not to continue to make donations in these boxes, unless you make it clear that contents can be used for the project about which the Rector has written at length in his monthly letter.

November 1970

Dear Friends,

THE PARISH CHURCH BUILDING

A few minutes before my institution as Rector of this Parish, a Diocesan Official strongly advised that steps be taken to dispose of woodworm-infected chairs in the church.

Just recently, some four dozen infected chairs have been removed from the church, and in the coming weeks the task will be completed, Meanwhile as an integral part of the North Aisle Project, the P.C.C. have purchased five dozen polypropylene PEL chairs which will stack when not in use; those are handsome, very comfortable, and very tough, and will give us more flexibility in our use of the North Aisle,

I last wrote at length about the North Aisle Project in February, when I reported on the outcome of the Consistory Court held just prior to Christmas 1969. Physical alterations and additions have not yet been implemented, because the Charity Commission must give judicial consideration to some objections they have received from a few parishioners to the establishment of an official 'Scheme', whereby the money originally raised towards erecting a separate Sunday School Room could be used instead to finance the project in the Church, to achieve the same end. However, we have been able to put what used to be the

Lady Chapel to a new use, as the meeting place of the primary department of the Sunday School: this change has enabled the Staff to introduce activities into the Sunday School programme. With the help of scissors, plasticine, cardboard, coloured sticky paper, glue, crayons, and the like, the children are encouraged to express their understanding of the Bible Stories taught.

In the early months of 1970, we had several leakages through the North slope of the main Nave roof, which unhappily impaired the internal decor, It was therefore decided by the

P.C.C. to re-roof that slope with grey Marley interlocking concrete tiles, and to replace the ridge with matching half-round tiles, Other repairs around the roofs have also been done, and from time to time as resources become available, further repairs and renewals will be put in hand.

Actually, I seldom write of the physical building, because so many automatically think of bricks and mortar whenever the church is mentioned. However, we need a Head-Quarters from which to work out the true tasks of the church which is people, and in which to offer our God the praise and worship which is His due. The unanimous concern of the P.C.C. therefore is to make our church plant as flexible and adaptable and well cared-for, as the plant of any other going concern. It is with a view to keeping you in the picture that I have written about your Parish Church.

Yours very sincerely,
TREVOR BEEDELL.

March 1971

THE NORTH AISLE PROJECT was conceived in the first place to provide better facilities for our Sunday Schools. We had to provide areas where the children could learn in an uninhibited way, unrestricted by fixed chairs, and the formality of a large building. We had to think in terms of activities including simple acting, and therefore of the primary need for flexibility.

All this is now in process of being gradually achieved. The twin departments of the Sunday School are growing. Fifty-five regulars are on the registers, and the Sunday afternoon hour is scarcely enough time to fit everything in.

It is not easy to come to grips with the fact that the Primaries of today will be the parents or the late 1980s: and we must be continually linked with their parents to ensure that the homes that are ultimately created are Christian homes, with Christ always welcome there.

This is another way of underlining that the Sunday School of today is part of the Church of today - a Church that will either become healthier as time passes, or weaker because the adult Christians of today fail the potential Christians of tomorrow.

But the North Aisle Project does not only have the Sunday School in mind. It will have its part to play in Family Worship and interchange. It will have its function also as a meeting place for various groups. And when it is completed it will demonstrate that here is a living Church determined to use its Plant as effectively as possible - at a time when vast numbers are looking for God, yet questioning very seriously whether the Church of England can give many if any clues to His whereabouts

