A STUDY OF CHURCHES BUILT FOR THE USE OF CONGREGATIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970 AND OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS TODAY.

Volume Two

Volume 2.
Birmingham Diocese.

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Churches in the diocese of Birmingham.

Birmingham Diocese - introduction to the Diocesan programme of church building after the war.

This section is based primarily on a study of the records of the diocesan committee responsible for promoting the planning and building of new churches, to examine the basis and aims of the programme.

Introduction.

The records of the Birmingham Diocesan Reorganisation Committee and the Ten Year Forward Movement have been lodged in the Birmingham City Archives. This very substantial body of records permits a thorough study of the work of the Diocese in the immediate post-war period. In particular, it makes clear that the question of the building of new churches was only part of a strategy which had to be developed to cope with the varied problems of Birmingham after the War.

The planning of the work of the Church in the Diocese of Birmingham for the years following the ending of the Second World War was led by two principal factors. First, and in common with Manchester Diocese, and to a lesser degree Coventry Diocese, it was necessary to plan for the provision of ministry to the large housing estates which were being planned by the City of Birmingham as soon as building became possible. Secondly, the diocese suffered greatly from bomb damage from enemy aircraft. Although Coventry had a higher profile in the mind of the general public - partly because of the virtual obliteration of the centre of Coventry, and partly because Coventry cathedral was the only Anglican cathedral destroyed in the War - the destruction wrought on Birmingham was far more widespread, and involved a far greater number of church buildings.

Character of Birmingham City Centre

The optimism and drive which were to characterize the church building - and church planting - programme of Birmingham diocese echoed the optimism and drive which characterized the reconstruction of the city in those years. There is a telling description of Birmingham by Geoffrey Moorhouse, in the 1964 Penguin book, "Britain in the Sixties - The Other England". Moorhouse says of the city (p92ff):

> '(Birmingham) acquired a monumentally handsome city centre ... largely through the offices of its great nineteenth century patron Joseph Chamberlain. Birmingham's civic advance really dates from Chamberlain's election to the city council in 1869. He was to become mayor three times and upon his first accession in 1873 declared that "In twelve months, with God's help, this town shall not know itself." He was as good as his word. In 1875 Birmingham spent £1.5 million on slum clearance in the middle of the town. ... This is one of he very few places in England which lives up to its motto - in this case, "Forward". Birmingham is going forward all right. Joe Chamberlain turned it upside down but he should see the old town now.

Nowhere else in England is there more excitement in the air. No other major city has yet identified its problems, tackled them, and made more progress towards solving them than Birmingham. Not even in London is there so much adventure in what is being done. You would, I imagine, have to go to some of the Dutch and German cities to see somewhere changing its shape and its approach to life as dramatically as Birmingham has been doing this past two or three years. ...

Plod on into the Bull Ring, which at the moment is the centre of this transformation, and stand with your back to St. Martin's church. The look up. The sky is cut across by a great horizontal slab of concrete, embellished at one end with a fierce symbolic taurus. This is the new Bull Ring market. Buses go curving up a ramp and disappear under the other end. Behind it and towering above it is a cylindrical office block, the Rotunda, all glass and concrete frame. No one ever thought of making one of those in England before.

(Birmingham) has been moving forward in this fashion since 1957. It is possible that here, as Birmingham likes to think, we are seeing the most extensive programme of rebuilding and redevelopment to take place in a European city. ... Birmingham's forward movement has been impressive enough to attract men like Gropius and Gibberd to produce plans there. In other provincial cities, they tend to have their futures shaped by trusty local architects, whose worthiness is generally equalled only by their lack of imagination.

The danger is that you are seduced by all this central enterprise from looking too closely at Birmingham's unfulfilled needs. ... Life in Sparkbrook or Balsall Heath doesn't look nearly as dandy as it does from the base of the Rotunda. ... Something like 70,000 of its families are in need of new homes and since the war it has been building houses at the rate of no more than 2,500 to 3,000 a year. Even Manchester, which is otherwise a very poor relation indeed, they have been striking 4,000 a year lately. ...

At Ladywood, Lee Bank, Highgate, Newton and Nechells Green 103,000 people lived in 32,000 slums; a pullulating mess spread over 1,000 acres, only 22 acres of which were what passes in this part of the world for open space. More than 10,000 of these slums have gone now. By 1970 just over 50,000 people will live in these areas - and their homes will be set in 220 acres of open ground. The other thousands of people who were formerly there will have gone out into the overspill areas, to Worcester, to Redditch, and other places which are going to be transformed - less pleasantly maybe - in their turn.

The prospect of Birmingham's excess population being deposited in large numbers on the surrounding countryside has not been an attractive one for those who will be on the receiving end of the migration. At the public inquiry ...

the National Farmers' Union declared ... that the farmers were being sacrificed on the altar of Birmingham's overspill. Perhaps they are. But if the farmers had ever had to pass the time of day over a back alley in a Birmingham slum it might occur to them that something has got to give and that if it is to be them they might as well give gracefully.'

In the city centre, even into the immediate pre-war period, the basic street pattern was that of the medieval market town, with the parish church of St. Martin, and the Bull Ring, marking the centre of the old town. Surrounding the city centre to the north, east and south was part of the great spread of housing which was built in the nineteenth century although, even by the beginning of the twentieth century, the population had started to decline as early slum clearance reduced the number of houses available, and the improvement of public transport enabled people to live conveniently in newer suburbs.

The City centre was well supplied with churches. The large scale OS Map of 1902 (revised to 1911) shows the following churches (distances are measured as the crow flies):

About 600 yards to the NW of St. Martin's was St. Philip's, newly made the cathedral.
About 700 yards NW of St. Philip's was, and is, St. Paul's.
About 600 yards NNE of St. Philip's was St. Mary's.
About 650 yards E of St. Philip's, and about the same distance ENE of St. Martin's was St. Bartholomew's.
About 1000 yards NE of St. Bartholomew's, and opposite the then Artillery barracks, was St. James', Ashted.
About 650 yards SE of St. Martin's was St. John's, Deritend.
About 650 yards W of St. Martin's was St. Gabriel's.
About 1000 yards to the SW of St. Martin's was St. Thomas, Bath Row.
About 580 yards SW of St. Martin's, and on the way to St. Thomas's, was St. Jude's.

Housing in Birmingham

A number of studies of the history and development of housing in Birmingham, particularly by the local authority, were carried out in the School of History in the University of Birmingham, under the History of Birmingham Project, and published in a number of Research Papers. Research Paper No. 4, entitled "The Changing Housing Environment of Birmingham - 1931 to 1967", by R.J. Smith, and published in 1968 describes the housing situation in the city, at the end of the Second World War, thus (op. cit. pp1/2):

'In housing matters Birmingham had, at the end of the second world war, much of which to be proud. The 1,560 on the Calthorpe estate, which at points adjoined the very core of the city, preserved a country atmosphere in which the middle and upper classes could live, protected by judicious leasehold control, from the advances of unsympathetic developers. Other delightful estates, of

more diverse social compositions, lay on the outskirts of the city. The best known of these, perhaps the most impressive, was the Bournville Village Trust, which successfully combined co-partnership principles with garden city development.'

In the 1950s and 1960s the Trust was involved with the building of St. David's Church, Shenley, which lay on its land. In developing the Shenley Fields area the city required powers of nomination of a proportion of tenants. As a result, the social mix of that estate in not in accord with the original character of the estate as envisaged by the Trustees. Smith continues:

'Also of note were the municipal estates built during the 1930s at very low densities and whose houses gave "a sense of aesthetic satisfaction and the impression of good workmanship." These and some of the newer private working class estates - the results of the housing boom of the 1930s - stood on the credit side. The extent of the debit was revealed by the Public Health Department's Housing Survey of 1946. In that year 81,000 of the city's houses had no baths; 35,000 had no separate WCs and 29,000 were built back-to-back. Even according to the, not over rigorous, standards agreed in the 1936 Housing Act, at least 6,000 families were overcrowded.

The Public Health Department adopted, rightly, a statistical approach to describe inferior housing. The figures, however, mask many of the real problems; the corollary of deficient amenities. From the figures we learn nothing of the flooded cellars; the leaking roofs; the stench from inadequate drainage systems; the strains imposed upon family life through insufficient bedroom spaces and washing facilities.'

In spite of the improvements, slum clearance, and new estates built during the 1930s, Smith comments that:

'These changes only scratched the surface, so that by 1945, 63,000 houses in the city were ripe for demolition, and indeed should have been condemned as insanitary under the Housing Acts. A further 45,000 needed replacing as soon as the worst property had been demolished. Thus over a third of the housing stock of Birmingham was unsuitable for human habitation. In addition, by 1945, 17,000 families were living in rooms or shared houses and so also required re-housing.'

To solve the housing problem the City looked to the areas on the outer fringe. Smith says of the area which is described as the "outer ring" (op. cit. pp14/15):

'In 1945 the outer ring contained much open land, ripe for development. This land came to Birmingham with the passing of the Greater Birmingham Bill in 1911. During the 1930s much of it was used for building and two very large municipal estates, Weoley Castle and Kingstanding

were erected as well as numerous private estates. The Bournville Village Trust also lay within the outer ring, and indeed was enveloped by the 1911 boundary changes.

Despite the inter-war housing building large tracts of agricultural land remained mainly in Northfield and Bartley Green to the south-west and west of the city centre. This land was, however, soon utilised as the post-war housing drive got underway. Between 1950 and 1962, 36,068 houses were built in the ring and between 1962 and 1966 the figure was 16,292. During the first period 73% of these new houses were municipal and during the second 65%. By 1966 43.3% of all the dwellings in the ring were municipally owned.'

Church planting in the inter-war years

The Bishop of Birmingham, from 1924 to 1953, was E.W. Barnes, a forward-looking man - Ahead of His Age is the title of his biography by his son - with a strong social conscience. Under his patronage, the pattern of church planting followed common principles in both the inter-war and post-war periods, and was strongly influenced by his social conscience, and his carefully cultivated links with the City authorities.

The City was expanding in the inter-war years with the building of new housing estates, and the Bishop responded, in November 1926, with an appeal for £30,000 for what was called 'church extension' - in effect church planting - in the new housing areas. In a year the fund reached £24,000, and eventually reached £28,000. The aim of the appeal was not to build churches but rather church halls which could be used for both worship and other activities. This same pattern was to be followed in the post-war years.

A further appeal came in 1935. John Barnes, in his biography of his father, 'Ahead of His Age' (Collins, 1979) says of this appeal (op. cit. pp335-6):

> 'Between 1921 and 1938 over 94,000 houses were built in Birmingham, of which nearly 83,000 were in the outer suburbs. By 1935, therefore, 300,000 people were living in these areas, with few churches to serve them.'

The appeal was for £105,000 (100,000 guineas),and it was reached by October 1937, as John Barnes says:

> 'Thanks largely to determined leadership by Barnes himself, indefatigable work by J. C. Lucas, an incumbent who was transferred from his parish to be a Canon and full-time secretary of the appeal, and vigorous support from a body of laymen headed by Ernest Canning, who most appropriately became Lord Mayor just as the appeal succeeded.'

John Barnes goes on to describe the Bishop's motivation thus:

> 'Barnes had long thought that Birmingham was over-centralized and growing in a disorderly way and that it

would be better to develop it systematically as a mother-city with daughter-towns grouped around her. To some extent this was happening as the population moved out from the centre to peripheral districts. This, together with education and emancipation of the young, obviously called for new approaches by the Church. If the younger inhabitants of the new areas, in particular, were not to become totally secularized, the services of the Church must be brought to them and in modern forms which they could accept. They could no longer be expected to travel long distances to attend old fashioned ceremonies in traditional buildings. This was the broad philosophy which underlay Barnes's determination to make a success of the appeal. The Church in Birmingham was for him the Church of the poor and must remain so; her resources must be devoted to their service and welfare. His personal enthusiasm for this cause, dogged though he was by illness at the time, soon became known to city and diocese.'

He brought in eminent speakers from outside the diocese in support, and donations came from outside the diocese, and outside the Church. John Barnes continues:

'By such methods success was assured ... In fact fifteen new churches were erected in Birmingham between 1928 and 1939, all but one of them over three miles from the city centre. True to his principles, they were not to be neo-Gothic edifices dedicated to saints, but multi-purpose church halls called after favourite sons of the Birmingham Church, such as Bishop Westcott, Archbishop Benson and Charles Gore. Nor must they slavishly follow conventional forms of worship ... In other words of his, he saw no need to insist on formularies which would be "mumbo-jumbo to the average Church worker in an industrial parish."'.

The Diocese at the beginning of the War

John Barnes goes on to describe the Bishop's actions at the beginning of the War. He says (op. cit. p353):

'Pacifist though he was, the Bishop was quickly into his stride in putting the diocese on a war footing. As early as 6 September, after consulting his Council of canons and rural deans, he issued operational instructions providing, among other things, for services to end early in the black-out, for congregations to stay put during air-raids rather than run to the shelters, for clergy to wear distinctive armlets issued by the Diocesan Office and to take anti-gas courses, and for churches to be used if necessary as casualty centres. The clergy were also advised to study the national instructions on their legal position in wartime and on the pastoral care of the dying and wounded; they were asked to volunteer for work with troops stationed in the Birmingham area. These were all aspects of service to the public in times of danger which even a convinced pacifist could and should support.'

War Damage

The devastation which Birmingham suffered during the war, particularly in the central area, opened the way to the large-scale replanning of the city centre, which involved a great deal of reorganisation of city centre parishes, with the closure of some churches - including those heavily damaged by enemy action, and the amalgamation of parishes. The positive aspect of this was that it made funds available - either from the sale of sites, or from War Damage Commission payments, which could be used for the benefit of the Diocese in general. As the Study shows, War Damage Payments were 'portable'; that is, payments made in respect of a church building in the old city centre, which had been largely destroyed, and was not to be rebuilt, could be transferred for the benefit of the building of a new church building in one of the New Housing Areas. It also forced the diocese to face up to the problems of the over-supply of nineteenth century churches in the inner area at a much earlier stage than other dioceses and cities.

This Study is not concerned with the detail of the reorganisation of the city centre parishes; indeed, this could make a study on its own. However, the fact of war damage, the extent of war damage, its impact on the morale of the clergy as they attempted to continue their work while the city was being bombed and in the aftermath of that bombing, its impact on the thinking of the diocese in planning for the future, and its place in the jigsaw which made up that planning process, are all factors which merit attention.

The extent of the war damage in Birmingham can be glimpsed from the amounts received by the Diocese from the War Damage Commission. The issuing of these funds, of course, lagged a good way behind the inflicting of the damage, and comprised large numbers of - to our eyes today - relatively small sums. In his Foreword to the Booklet promoting the later 'Ten Year Forward Movement', Bishop Barnes comments:

> 'We are fortunate in that we have received from the Government liberal, if not wholly adequate, help for war damage.'

As an example of the type of damage caused, a note recording damage caused during raids on 28th and 30th July (year unknown - 1942?) submitted to the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee records the following:

> 'On July 28th:
> St. Paul, Birmingham. Church. Slight.
> Christ Church, Sparkbrook. Church. Slight.
> St. Chad, Smethwick. Church. Slight.
> St. Matthias, Birmingham. Church. Slight.
> Holy Trinity, Birchfield. Church. Slight, but rather serious as to windows.
> St. James, Ashted. St. Peter's Mission, Belmont Row. Serious, second damage.
> St. Alban, Smethwick. Vicarage. Slight.
> St. Thomas, Birmingham. Rectory. Slight.

On July 30th.

St. Saviour, Hockley.	Church.	Slight.
" "	Church Room, Farm Street,	very serious.
" "	Vicarage.	Slight.
St. Silas, Lozells.	Church.	Slight.
St. Saviour, Saltley.	Church.	Serious.
Handsworth.	Church.	Slight.
"	School.	Slight.
"	Hutton Road Mission Room.	Slight.
"	Rectory.	Shed and cycles.
St. Andrew, Handsworth.	Church.	West window.
St. Chad, Smethwick.	Vicarage.	Slight.
St. Paul, West Smethwick.	Vicarage.	Slight.
Christ Church, Summerfield.	Mission Room, Coplow Street.	Rather serious.

It was reported, at the meeting of the DRC in September 1942, that a total of £4,813/ 8/ 2d had been received from the War Damage Commission in respect of 71 parishes. The sums received varied between £7 and £332. By the end of 1942 £9,549/ 2 /8d. had been received in respect of 100 parishes.

To the end of 1943 the receipts from the War Damage Commission amounted to: £12,911/11/3d.

In 1944 the diocese received:	£ 5,632/ 7/ 2d.
In 1945:	£ 6,067.
In 1946:	£ 8,982/ 2/ 8d.
In 1947:	£12,216.
In 1948:	£24,981/10/ 4d.
In 1949:	£40,784/12/ 6d.
In 1950:	£33,960/15/11d.

As an example of the type of sum received, on 3 Sept. 1947 the sum of £1,191/13/ 8d., was transferred to the Bishop's Appeal Fund, being the amount received for St. Basil's Vicarage, which was to be used for Weoley Castle Vicarage. In addition, there was £85/ 4/ 9d., refund of Income Tax. The records also note a contribution of £1/13/ 6d from a collection taken at a Church Parade of the 4th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry and 209 Anti-tank Battery, RA, stationed at Newton Abbott, on 3rd March 1941.

AREAS REVISED

OS Map 1912

OS Map 1912

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Planning for the Post-War period - City Centre.

Planning for the post-war period began in Birmingham diocese, as in government, while the War was still in progress. This planning was the responsibility of the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee, which was established as a result of the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee Measure, introduced at the Summer Session of the Church Assembly, in June 1941. The Birmingham DRC held its first meeting on 17th October of that year, at which it was agreed that the Administrative Committee of the Bishop's Appeal Fund, and the Union of Benefices Committee, were to transfer their functions, assets and liabilities to the DRC. The main strategy for the post-war era was the subject of a Commission of Enquiry into the Needs of the Diocese, set up in 1945, and whose work was continued, from 1946, by the Ten Year Forward Movement. These I shall discuss below (p208ff).

In tandem with the needs of the new housing areas - where the majority of new churches were to be built - were the problems posed by the changing nature of the inner area. A report by the Archdeacon of Aston, to the DRC, on the parishes of St. Stephen, Newtown Row, and St. Edward and St. Nicholas, made during 1945, gives something of the flavour of the complexity of the problem confronting the Diocese. The Archdeacon had visited the parishes to examine them, spurred on, to a considerable degree, by the publication of a civic development plan for the area. His comments include the following:

> 'ST. STEPHEN, NEWTOWN ROW.
> The Church. This is a fine Bidlake church. The city authorities imagine this church will be left standing, although it will be just in the industrial area. The widening of Newtown Row, which is scheduled to take place, will be on the other side of the road. Damage has been done to the windows, roof and main door. The War Damage Commission have accepted responsibility for this and are prepared to pay for repair.'

The complex also included a Caretaker's house; this had suffered considerable damage, for which the WDC accepted responsibility. There was also a school; this was in a bad state of repair, and suffering from 'old age and a general state of decay'. The War Damage Commission accepted some responsibility. The Vicarage was in good repair. The Archdeacon recommended that repairs to the Church be put in hand, that no action be taken about the caretaker's house and school, and that the question of ownership of he school be clarified.

As to St. Edward's Church, the DRC had already decided that this should not be rebuilt or repaired. The report includes the comment that:

> 'On January 15th 1945 Mr Surman (apparently an architect working for the Diocese) wrote to the Diocesan Office

saying that it was desirable that some further first aid repairs should be carried out to the roof and windows of the Church, as the building had been so long derelict that serious deterioration of the fabric was taking place. In view of this, the Architect feared that the Commission might consider that a large portion of the damage was due to our neglect.'

A claim had already been made to the Board of Trade for £1,828 in respect of destroyed goods and chattels from the Church, and the Archdeacon recommended that claims be made to both the WDC and the Board of Trade, and that money received be paid into a Diocesan War Damage Fund.

As to St. Nicholas' Church, the DRC had previously decided that it should be repaired and put into use. The report comments:

'In view of (a) civic development plan for this area; (b) heavy expenditure involved in repair of St. Nicholas; (c) the continued nuisance of noise from the stamping works next door; it would appear advisable to reconsider this decision.

The city planning authorities are assuming that St. Nicholas, being situated in what will be an industrial area, and being not very far distant from St. Stephen, will not be needed. The lowest estimate obtainable for the simple repair of St. Nicholas is £1,421. In addition the Church would have to undertake exterior pointing ... (and other work) ... amounting to £230. The Diocesan Chaplain who is very co-operative says he would have to raise the money himself. Further, when the work is finished he would have to maintain the building - heating, lighting, etc. - without the prospect of a congregation.

The present position is very unsatisfactory. There is a general feeling of lack of security leading to an increased sense of disappointment and frustration, shared by clergy and workers alike. Further, the sight of derelict churches in such a drab area has a most depressing effect on all. Cannot something be done to improve the present position, and to create a new sense of hope? Is it not possible to draw up a plan for this area which will (i) make for the better pastoral supervision of those who live in the area, and (ii) fit in with the city plans for the future of this district?'

The devastation brought by the war to Birmingham had brought to the fore the problems which are now affecting other industrial cities, as well as towns like Bournemouth, which grew during the nineteenth century with a plethora of churches and which are now surplus to the needs, and hinder the work, of the Church. It is interesting to note that pastoral work was being carried out by a Diocesan Chaplain, and that the Diocese had avoided installing a new incumbent; this was a deliberate attempt to continue pastoral work, while at the

same time allowing for flexibility for the future organisation of the area.

The Archdeacon suggested the following as a plan for the future:

> '1) The Church of St. George which according to the city plan is to remain, shall become the central Church of this area. It is architecturally sound and is situated in what will be attractive grounds.
> 2) St. George's Rectory shall be restored as the residence of the Rector.
> 3) The parish of St. Nicholas with St. Edward shall disappear. The present excellent premises at St. Edward's shall be used as a social centre.
> 4) The Church of St. Matthias, which according to the city plan is scheduled to remain, shall be either merged into the new parish and be used as a church for evangelistic work of varying type, (viz. non-liturgical services of a popular type, religious drama, religious films, music, etc., or retain its present parochial status. If the former plan is adopted, St. Edward's vicarage might house an assistant curate of this area. (If an unmarried man occupies the house it would be possible for students or ordinands to stay here and work in this area during vacation periods - see report on Training for the Ministry.) If St. Matthias retains parochial status, by alteration of boundaries it would be possible to take the whole of St. Edward's buildings including the vicarage into St. Matthias' parish.
>
> By some such plan, possessing a degree of permanence, the whole area would benefit spiritually, much would be done to break down depressing isolation. Material benefit would also accrue in that some of the endowment of St. Edward and St. Nicholas could be redirected to new areas while the sale of St. Matthias' vicarage (a most unsuitable house on account of distance from the parish) would be an additional source of revenue.'

The story of St. Jude's

The plight of a single parish illustrates all too well the complexities of the situation, and it raises questions about the the numerous churches which were planted in industrial cities in the latter half of the nineteenth centre, about the function of the City centre church, about the rôle of the parochial system, and about the rôle of the Christian community, as distinct from the building in which it happens to worship. In 1959 the future of St. Jude's Church, Hill Street, was being considered by the Diocesan Re-organisation Committee, with a view to the closing of the church. Unlike many city centre parishes, to which a Diocesan Chaplain had been appointed, a new incumbent had been appointed in 1944. The church was damaged during the war, but was restored at a cost of £10,000 - a substantial achievement. In the light of the uncertain future in 1959, he prepared a Statement, to be submitted to the annual parochial meeting, held just before

Holy Week. The parish was one of the relatively few Anglo-Catholic parishes in the Diocese. The vicar says, inter alia, in his Statement:

> 'During the past year, the PCC has been much occupied with the material needs of the church. The fabric, now exposed to the gaze of all passers-by, is no advertisement for the Church in the new Birmingham, and obviously needs much attention; the heating system is inadequate, and must be renewed; the Vicarage is due for demolition in 1961, in any case it is not St. Jude's property, and the cost of a site and house is not likely to be much less than £8,000. These are but some of the tangled threads in the problem of St. Jude's future.'

He then points out that the future of the parish is under discussion, and the closing of the Church a real possibility. He sets out an outline of the history of the St. Jude's, thus:

> '(80 years ago) it was then a slum parish with a population of 7,000 or more, with a great task of evangelisation and social work. The Sunday School numbered over 900, and there were clubs and classes of all kinds. the few substantial tradesmen and worshippers from outside the parish boundaries provide much-needed leadership.
>
> Even in 1896 the closing of the church was mooted, but with the coming of the Rev. Adrian Pinchard, a new congregation was attracted by his personality and the enrichment of the services. There was still a large and extremely poor population, and Day schools with 300 children. Non-residents could feel that they were doing service in the Church by supporting a more complete form of worship than would otherwise have been possible.
>
> In the years between the wars the people began to move out into the new suburbs, the Day schools were inevitably closed, and St. Jude's relied more and more upon outside support. But still there were many activities, and there was a manifest place for its work of conversion, and of social and moral witness.
>
> The last War changed the world, and Birmingham. The population of the parish dwindled to hundreds; but again we were able to build up a new congregation and to restore the church, after bombing, at the cost of over £10,000. A small Sunday School was possible, and other midweek social activities.
>
> Now there are under 300 people. The Sunday School has disappeared, the parish is largely an open space to be occupied by the Ring Road. Although numbers have not fallen greatly, regular worshippers have moved further and further afield; some who, 30 or 40 years ago, lived in or near the parish, have gone, sometimes by stages beyond the City boundaries.'

The Vicar goes on to describe life in the parish in 1959. He says:

> 'We still keep a programme of services almost as full as two generations ago. Then, there were three priests; there is today one, with some Sunday help. When I took charge in 1944, I attempted the sort of visiting one would expect in a well-run residential parish; transport was comparatively easy; the congregation was not large; Birmingham was much the same size as in 1939. Today, members are many more, and are much more widely scattered; transport is increasingly difficult in the City centre, and I spend much of my time, and more of my nervous energy immobile in the Birmingham traffic. It becomes hardly possible to keep in touch with those in need of spiritual help and ministrations. To work the Church on normal parish lines would require two priests, and no one in these days could consider that a right use of manpower.
>
> On your side, too, there are difficulties. Everywhere there is a tendency to fewer church attendances; our people have the added problem of transport to add to, and multiply, those of weather, slackness or illness. Those who came twice or three times on a Sunday when they lived within a few minutes walk of the church, may now be five or ten miles away and come once, or not at all. Any midweek activity seems increasingly difficult, and we are in danger of losing that family spirit, which is the best part of St. Jude's tradition. Further, there is no outlet for our service of others; this can be a most unhealthy state, and unless we are careful, the church will become virtually a private chapel for those with particular tastes in worship. I am astonished at the zeal and energy many of you show in coming at all under such conditions and I am grateful for it; but I have still felt it necessary to warn you repeatedly that St. Jude's can only survive if it receives a greater support than that which might pass muster in an ordinary parish.'

He turns to the question of the needs of the New Housing Areas thus:

> 'Here is a population of several thousands, teeming with young life, but with little community spirit as yet, and its character unformed, with lonely people, and people cut adrift from their old ways and friends, with children growing up without religious instruction beyond that of the day schools, with no priest, and no place for worship. With those needs unanswered, can we justify the existence of St. Jude's; can the Bishop, with all his responsibilities for a Diocese of two million people, think and act otherwise than he has? I have given much thought to all this over the last few years, and I have been driven nearer and nearer to the same conclusion.'

He concludes:

'Now, I know that much can be said on the other side. We still have a congregation, which, I am told, compares favourably with many in parishes with several thousand people; we have a living fellowship of a kind which is not easily created nor to be lightly destroyed; so far our finances are adequate, and you can point to an income of some £1,300 a year obtained solely from collections in church. Again, a new vicar might draw a new and larger congregation; in the Birmingham of the future, there may be unsuspected opportunities for a central church; liturgical experiment might be possible; perhaps the parish could be taken over by a religious order, and run as a centre of instruction and counsel. ... But we must get some order into our thinking. Before we become enmeshed in endless details we must face the one prior moral question, which I now put squarely before you. Can we, in view of all I have said, justify, in our conscience, before God, the continued existence of St. Jude's? Can we ask for so much for ourselves?'

By 1st May a statement, prepared on behalf of the PCC, was presented to a meeting of the Congregation. This adopted a much more bullish approach to the future of St. Jude's, and while some of it reads rather like special pleading, it does raise important questions about the nature of the Church, and its rôle in a City centre situation. The Statement says, inter alia:

'The people of St. Jude's have given careful consideration to the statement made by the Vicar at the Annual Parochial Meeting. They are, of course, fully aware of the problems involved in the future of the church, but they are surprised to find that its continuance is once again called in question, as they were assured by the Diocesan authorities in 1949 that, after the escape of the building in the bombing of Birmingham, and the exclusion of the site from the redevelopment plans of the City, the future of the church and parish was assured. It was upon the strength of this assurance that the sum of £10,000 was spent on the fabric.'

The Statement goes on to emphasize the rôle of St. Jude's as a centre of:

'ordered worship and social service, emphasizing the Catholic heritage of Anglicanism, while remaining loyal to the Book of Common Prayer, and the formularies of the Church of England ... St. Jude's is the only representative of this type of churchmanship in the centre of Birmingham.'

It continues by remarking on the loyalty of the congregation, and the number of vocations to the priesthood fostered there. It points out that while their allocated share in the Jubilee Appeal was £375, the parish raised £900:

'by the simplest of share schemes'

and then emphasizes the spiritual aspect of the strong sense of fellowship in the parish. The statement then turns to the future:

> 'The parochial system is largely a medieval creation, and there have been periods when the Church has been served by other means. In general, of course, we should wish to see the parochial system continued and strengthened; but St. Jude's is by no means the only place in Birmingham and elsewhere, where it has partially broken down. Some of the most interesting experiments in Church work today attempt to reach people not where they sleep, but where they work and find entertainment.
>
> St. Jude's has long played the part of a central church. It is used by many organisations (Missionary Societies, Mothers' Union, associations of colleges and religious orders, and numbers of professional and devotional guilds); it is known far and wide as a place where spiritual counsel can be readily obtained, and strangers look to it during their visits to the city. It is accessible to the railway station and to many travellers who have a time of waiting between trains. It is in the middle of Birmingham's Theatre-land and has had a long connection with the theatres already established. It draws many lonely people, teachers and nurses, and others, who come to Birmingham without roots or friends. It is used regularly by large numbers for quiet and meditation. The frequent mid-week services declare that God is worshipped in this part of Birmingham, and the daily Celebration and the Reserved Sacrament give assurance to many of Christ's presence among His people.
>
> This part of the City is under reconstruction, and we at St. Jude's have long realised that this is an interim period in its history. Soon, however, a new life will be teeming about its walls, masses of people will be working, and shopping and seeking amusement here. We believe that new opportunities will open before us, and we are already thinking of new ways to make contact with and to help our future neighbours.'

This shows a strong sense of the rôle of the Anglo-Catholic tradition, in the old inner city areas, with its combination of worship and service to the people.

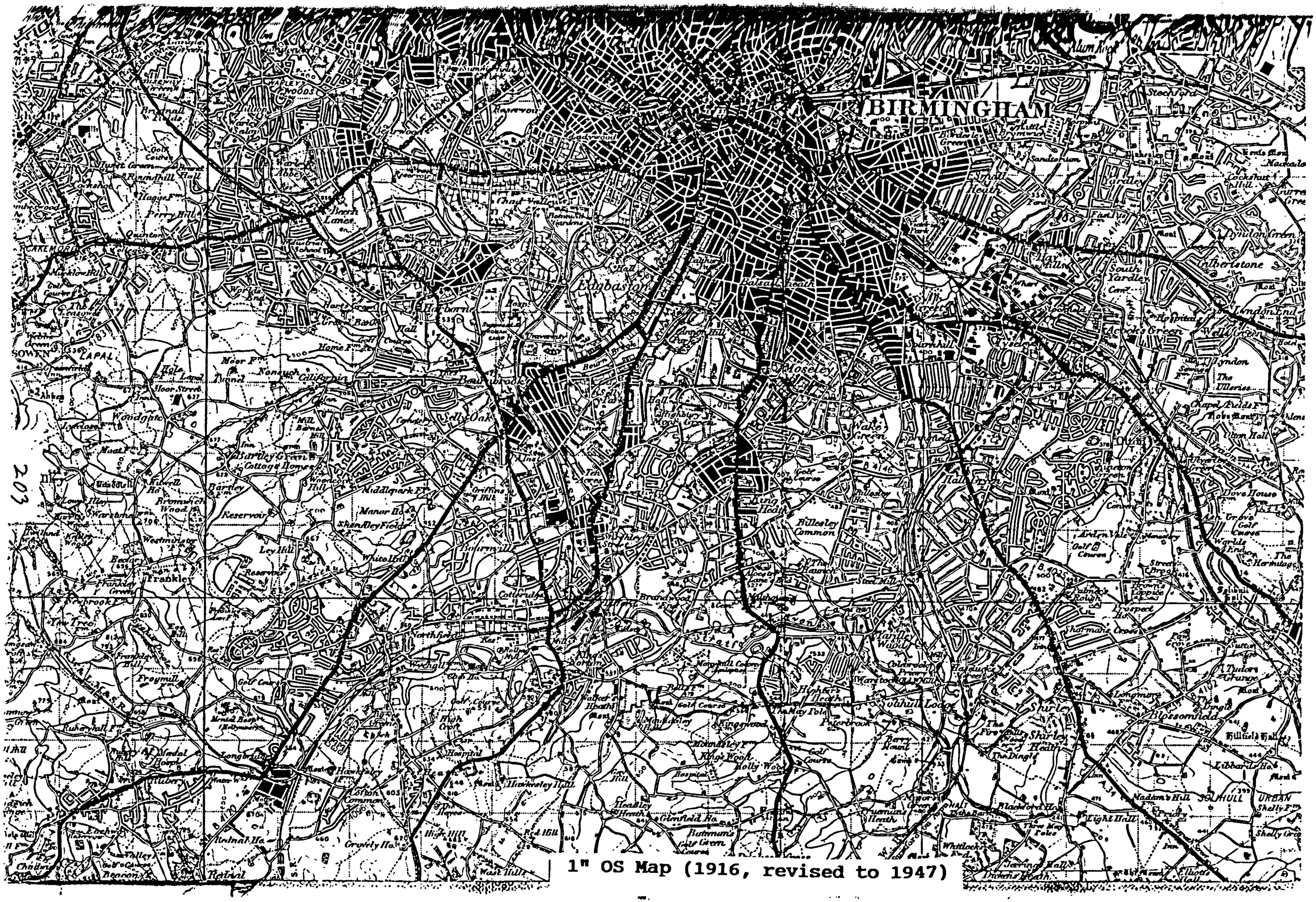
A Sub-Committee appointed by the DRC to consider the future of St. Jude's reported to the DRC in July 1959, and recommended that the church be retained. The Sub-Committee seem to have been particularly influenced by the fact that St. Jude's was financially sound, had a good, and steady, level of communicant numbers, and offered a tradition of High Anglican worship and pastoral ministry which was not found elsewhere in the City Centre. Nonetheless, by November of 1959 enquiries were being made yet again about the value of the cleared site; a letter dated 20th November 1959 from James and Lister Lea & Sons, who appear to be a firm of Valuers, to the Archdeacon concludes:

'(1) This is not a first-class shop or office position. (2) The benefits of the development on the Ring Road have yet to be felt, and it is necessary to remember that neither construction of the proposed Hotel or Theatre on the corners of Hill Street has yet commenced. (3) New Street Station prevents any direct expansion of the City Centre in the direction of Hill Street, and until a major scheme to build over or bridge the Station is put in hand, no major improvements in the tone of the area is likely to be seen.

We confirm our previous opinion that the value of the site of St. Jude's Church, with the benefit of planning permission, in the open market today, is between £40,000 and £45,000.'

St. Jude's was subsequently demolished, and the site re-developed.

1" OS Map (1916, revised to 1947)



1" OS Map (1916, revised to 1947)

Planning for the New Housing Areas

1942

In 1942 the DRC began tentative steps towards acquiring sites in the new housing areas for the establishment of new parishes. At the DRC meeting on 23rd January, 1942, it was reported that negotiations were under way with the Corporation for a site in the World's End District; the DRC agreed to purchase the site at its meeting on 12th June 1942.

At the meeting on 25th July 1942 it was reported that a letter had been received from the Birmingham City Works Department, offering a site at Quinton, at the rear of Quinton Road West. This was accepted on behalf of the Bishop's Appeal Fund.

At the meeting on 11th December 1942 it was reported that a site was available at Hobs Farm, Castle Bromwich. This was owned by the City, but the City Surveyor objected since it lay on a main road. Negotiations were to continue. At Hall Green, a site was available from the City, opposite the church in Foxhollies Road, for a vicarage. The PCC was to take up the option.

1943

At the meeting on 27th January 1943, Alderman Tiptaft, and Mr H.J. Manzoni, the City Surveyor, explained that five new development areas had been outlined. Mr Manzoni was to get the permission of his Committee to advise the DRC of their locations.

At the meeting on 18th March 1943 Manzoni spoke on the five areas, and showed maps and plans. The DRC decided to invite the Free Church representatives to the next meeting to discuss general principles.

At the meeting on 9th April 1943 the DRC, and the representatives from the Free Church Federal Council, considered plans for the five new areas, and particularly the Duddesdon and Nechells areas. The Bishop asked the meeting to consider the general principles upon which action could be taken with regard to Churches and Church Halls. The City Council Reconstruction Committee were considering planning on the lines of "neighbourhood units" of about 10,000, with a Community centre for each unit; five such units would make a suburban unit , with a sub-civic centre.

In the discussion, Canon Bax warned that the community hall was not always available when it was wanted by the Church, and noise at Recreation Centres could be disturbing to a congregation if the church building adjoined. An interesting development on the staffing of parishes was noted; since the City's redevelopment schemes made the future of some old parishes uncertain, when an incumbent left, a Diocesan Chaplain was put in charge, pro tem.

The Archdeacon of Aston raised the question of Kingstanding Parish and an area beyond, 'which seemed to show the need for further extension'.

At the meeting on 22nd October 1943, it was reported that a site for extension work in Kingstanding Parish had been found near Banners Gate Road and the main Chester Road; the site was owned by Ansell's Brewery, and the Brewery was to be approached.

A proposal was made by the Rector of Castle Bromwich to erect a building near Hobs Farm Estate. The DRC was sympathetic, and offered a grant of up to £1200, or half the total expenditure. Negotiations with the City Council were undertaken, for the lease or purchase of the site, but the proposal was withdrawn in November 1945.

1944 - Lord Portal and liaison between the Churches and Central Government

In May 1944 the Bishop of London wrote to the members of the Churches Main Committee, of whom the Bishop of Birmingham was one, asking for information to assist in planning for the Church's likely building and restoration requirements in the immediate post-war period. In his letter, sent from Fulham Palace, and dated 1st May 1944, he says, inter alia:

> 'Dear Member, You may remember that some while ago at the request of Lord Portal we supplied his ministry with figures collected from the several denominations showing the kind of sum which the Churches would want to spend on Church building and restoration in the two-year period after the war and in the subsequent ten years. Lord Portal's enquiry showed that he wished to give full consideration to the needs of the Churches, but at that time nothing was said as to how our claims were to be considered and worked into the general building programme.'

The Bishop of London subsequently approached Lord Portal, met him, reported to the Churches sub-committee, and the result was now passed, by this letter, to the members of the Main Committee. The letter continues:

> 'First, a general comment is needed upon the figures which were submitted to the Ministry. The aggregate for all denominations came to over £13 millions of expenditure desired in the first two-year period and £26 million in the next ten years. Lord Portal pointed out that even though much restoration of war damage is included in the first figure, the proportion between the two is out of all relation to what can be expected. The first year at least after the war will be a very difficult time for building and the position will only gradually improve. We must not expect that anything like one third of our total requirements for the whole twelve years will be satisfied in the first two years of it. In fact during the first period only the most urgent cases can be considered, and

the rest of this letter must be read in the light of that fact.'

'We discussed with Lord Portal the types of building work which the Churches might reasonably regard as having special claims to some degree of priority. They appeared to be as follows:

a) Rebuilding of war damaged churches likely to deteriorate if left unrestored or in areas where there has been a great loss of churches, leaving the population churchless.

Lord Portal considered that work of this kind has a high priority claim and that some of it might be begun even before the war ended. he said (i) that the Ministry would consider the needs of a district as they have recently done in Plymouth (ii) that so long as the war lasts it would be more difficult to permit building in areas open to enemy destruction than elsewhere and (iii) there might have to be a "ceiling" of cost in relation to such work.

b) Building of Churches for new housing areas being planned and laid out.

Lord Portal recognised the importance of Churches being built pari passu with houses. He undertook to inform the Secretary of our Committee of all large housing schemes (for comprising one thousand or more dwellings) as soon as they are officially passed, so that we can put forward our claims for the building of churches.

He pointed out that among the first housing schemes there will be pre-fabricated houses, and some housing may go forward this Summer. It is likely that many of the pre-fabricated houses will be erected on sites cleared in towns where churches are already accessible. Where that is not so, no one can tell how long the pre-fabricated houses will remain or whether they will be replaced by permanent houses. The Churches must consider what they want to do in these areas.'

In regard to new churches in existing areas the Bishop reported that 'a case could only be put forward hopefully where the need was great and exceptional', and in regard to parsonage houses that 'there might be cases where their repair or rebuilding could be pressed'.

He also touched on the question of Theological and Teacher Training Colleges, many of which had been requisitioned, and many war-damaged, and asked that lists of these be submitted, through the Main Committee. He discussed the procedure for dealing with claims for priority licences, and passed on the request from Lord Portal that any claims involving considerable amounts of work and material, from whatever denomination, should be channelled to the Ministry through the Churches Main Committee. This was clearly a sensitive

suggestion, and a time-consuming exercise, and the Bishop was treading carefully.

The letter closes with a post-script on the question of war damage claims, thus:

> 'After the correspondence with the War Damage Commission has been made public, your denomination will very likely wish to issue to its members some document setting out the practical steps which must be taken when it comes to negotiating claims for war damage payments. I am able to say that if your denomination does desire to issue such a document, the War Damage Commission will be willing to inspect the document and give advice about it before it is issued, so as to ensure that it is correct.'

Continuation of work in Birmingham Diocese

From 1944 onwards sites are assembled, and huts and church halls begin to be erected. The details of this, as it relates to individual parishes and areas, I discuss under the headings relating to those parishes and areas. There are, however, a number of more general matters which concern the members of the DRC, which I shall discuss below.

At the meeting of the DRC on 3rd March 1944 it was suggested that, for the Duddeston and Nechells area there should be two churches, one for each neighbourhood unit. What is described as the "Coventry scheme", of a joint Church Hall, with separate places of worship for Anglicans and Free Churches, was put forward. This was subsequently approved by the DRC and representatives of the Free Churches at a meeting on 30th April 1944.

During 1945 there is extensive discussion in the DRC about the parishes of St. Asaph, and others, which illustrates the changes and opportunities arising from War Damage and the Reconstruction of the City. This includes considerable information about the use of War Damage Commission funds for churches which were not to be rebuilt, for buildings elsewhere in the Diocese. There is scope here for a study of the re-organisation and rationalisation of city centre parishes as a result of the War and the consequent Reconstruction, although this is not a part of this present study.

There was also concern about the methods of staffing areas which were being created, or re-created, and where the future was uncertain. At the DRC meeting on 21st September 1945 the committee accepted the suggestion by the Archdeacon of Aston that:

> 'In areas which are subject to proposed schemes of the local authorities for re-planning or re-distribution of population, it is desirable that benefices which become vacant should be served by chaplains-in-charge, and not by the creation of a new freehold'.

On 26th September 1946, the DRC was informed that large housing developments were about to start in the Castle Bromwich district, and new estates at Hobs Farm, Burton's Farm, Shard End and Bucklands Estate, The Chestnut Estate and Kingshurst Estate.

1945 Commission of Enquiry

The strategy for the future development of the diocese was the task of the Commission of Enquiry, which was to form the basis for future planning. At the meeting of the Birmingham Diocesan Conference, on 31st May 1945, it was resolved:

> 'That a Commission of Enquiry into the needs of the Diocese be appointed: the Commission to consist of one clergyman and one layman from each Rural Deanery, and to report to the Diocesan Conference to be held early in November 1945.'

The Commission's Report was to be based on information received from the individual deaneries. Guidance notes were issued for the benefit of the deanery representatives, which indicated that the areas of concern - as far as they concerned this present study - included the following points.

> 'Representatives are asked to prepare a statement for the Commission, adopting any means which may appear to them best for obtaining a general survey of the needs of the Rural Deanery. ... The primary purpose ... is to assess the financial needs of the Diocese ... remembering that this cannot be done without some assessment of the needs of pastoral and spiritual administration.
>
> <u>Staffing and remuneration of clergy</u> ... useful to have information of any existing parishes where the stipend of the incumbent is at present grossly inadequate. With regard to assistant clergy ... information would be useful (as to) what deficiency in reasonable staffing is at present apparent. In view of possible developments within the deanery, how many extra (a) incumbents (b) assistant clergy do you consider may be required during the period indicated?
>
> <u>Buildings</u> - Are there any buildings (Churches or Halls) in the deanery which you consider to be redundant? And if such were disposed of, approximately what proceeds would be available for redevelopment elsewhere.?
>
> Are there any vicarages in the deanery which may be regarded as unsuitable for present-day needs?
>
> What new buildings may be required in existing parishes, and are there any parishes which urgently require temporary accommodation?
>
> Are there any new areas already built which are still unprovided for in respect of Churches or Halls?

What new buildings do you consider will be required in the near future to meet the needs of further movements of population?

Distribution of parishes in relation to population; (a) immediate; (b) anticipated. In the light of local information, do you consider that there are any parishes which might be united with other parishes for more effective ministrations?

Which parishes are already inadequately served in respect of (a) staff (b) buildings.

How many new parishes are likely to be required within the deanery (a) immediately (b) within ten years? What would be their immediate need in respect of buildings and staff?

Copies of three Deanery reports - Handsworth, Solihull and King's Norton - survive in the diocesan archives. These emphasize the link between staffing and buildings, and in some respects the 'aside comments', whether on selection of clergy, their distribution and the size of parishes, or on the cumbersome diocesan machinery for dealing with the problems of vicarages, give a more interesting side light on the tasks facing the Church, as seen from parochial level. Lengthy extracts from these are included in Vol. 3, pp442/6.

In its Report, at the end of the year, the Commission noted that:

'In the course of their survey, members of the Commission have found that the diocese can roughly be divided into four parts:

(1) Those which have changed little during the past thirty years;

(2) Those which have grown enormously since the end of the 1914-1918 war, the spiritual needs of which have been partially met by the Church Extensions Appeals of 1927 and 1933: twenty-seven new parishes and one conventional district have been formed, and fifteen mission churches and five halls have been built;

(3) Those central areas which have been affected by heavy bombing, in which church buildings have been destroyed along with other property, and in which large municipal schemes of reconstruction will be carried out, which must condition Church organisation, for which purpose the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee has been set up;

(4) The new housing areas which do not yet exist, but are being planned, in which sites for Church purposes are

needed immediately, and further provision as soon as the areas are developed.'

This Study is concerned particularly with the areas described in paragraphs (3) and (4), The Report continues:

'Our task has been to assess approximately the financial needs of the diocese during the next ten to fifteen years, but we wish to make it clear that our concern with finance is only a part, though a necessary part, of our concern that the Church should carry out its pastoral and evangelistic duty in every parish as fully as possible. We are convinced that existing endowments, even allowing for any further redistribution of incomes, would be insufficient to meet the work which faces the Church, and therefore that new money must be raised if the Ministry is to be maintained and its numbers increased, and if churches and halls are to be erected to meet the needs of the newly-built areas. ...'

'The need for strengthening the life of the Church to meet post-war conditions raises issues of great importance as to the conflict of interest between central, diocesan and parochial needs. We feel that only by the greatest co-operation and goodwill can a balance be kept which will ensure the well-being of the whole Church. .... The most urgent and pressing matter which we have to report relates to the number of clergy available for the staffing of the parishes of the diocese. This is a primary concern, as inadequacy of staffing lessens the effectiveness of the Church's ministry and the spiritual life of our churches no less than the health and vigour of the clergy who are actually at work. ... There are in fact 51 parishes of under 4000 persons to one clergyman, 64 parishes between 4000 and 9000, and 51 parishes where the number is over 9000. It is in this last group of 51 parishes where the strain upon health and efficiency is most pronounced, and where additional help is most urgently needed.'

'Nevertheless, taking the diocese as a whole, we find ... that the population has increased by approximately 300,000 in the 40 years of its existence. During that time the number of beneficed clergy has increased from 139 to 150, while the number of assistants has fallen from 170 to 30. The total number of clergy at work in the diocese has fallen, therefore, from 309 to 192.'

The Report turns to the question of Church Buildings thus:

'The minimum requirements for a parish or self-contained district are - a place of worship, a residence for the minister, and reasonable accommodation for those activities which are necessary to the life of a congregation. There is a very strong feeling against using the same hall for worship and social activities, apart from the inconvenience and work which such an arrangement entails. Reports from the deaneries show that, even judged by this minimum standard, there are many parishes in the diocese which are

still struggling, some of them after many years, to achieve the accommodation needed. This situation is greatly aggravated by the conditions of the new Education Act, which will mean that in a number of parishes the day schools which have formerly been used for parochial activities in the evening will no longer be freely available for this purpose. The reports from the deaneries disclose a grave concern at the lack of church halls for such purposes; no less a figure than 25 new church halls is stated as being desirable. It should be borne in mind that the constant pressure of the needs of new areas over many years has in fact restricted new developments in the older parishes, and to that extent weakened the life of the church and the contribution it might otherwise have made.'

The greatest effort was likely to be required to provide churches and church halls for the New Areas; however, this was not simply a matter of providing new buildings on new sites, but required a balancing act, taking account of the effects of war damage on churches in the older, inner, areas, and the needs of re-planning the city for the post-war period. The Report continues:

> 'Returning to the needs of the new areas, it has already been stated that 13 new parishes will eventually need similar equipment, i.e., a church, a residence, and a hall for parochial purposes. At this point, the Commission, though not unanimous, suggest that the experiment might be tried of securing an economical design for a composite building, which would in fact include a hall, a modest church, a simple flat for the clergyman and possibly an apartment for the caretaker; this arrangement, though more costly in the first instance, would provide a new type of equipment to meet new needs, and would effect a considerable saving in maintenance, as well as providing a real centre of Church life.'
>
> 'Towards the building requirements of these 13 parishes, as already indicated in the case of benefice incomes, some assets should be available from the 10 or 11 older parishes which will be united or extinguished owing to a removal of population. In 7 instances 7 churches have been totally destroyed, and compensation will be received at the estimated cost of a plain substitute building. In several other instances, churches and sites may be disposed of owing to town planning arrangements. There is in addition a sum of about £50,000 in hand from various sources, of which about £20,000 is already allocated to particular purposes, though not spent because of the war. Some 6 sites have already been secured, in addition to 4 or 5 further sites in the possession of individual parishes, and we therefore estimate that some modest equipment in the form of a church hall for most of the 13 new parishes may be considered as reasonably secured. We must, however, point out that some at least of the buildings in the older areas may have to be retained for church purposes, although the parishes may no longer remain as independent units,

that the transfer of property from one place to another in this way may occasion unexpected loss or difficulty in certain instances, and that the bare provision of a church or hall will not be sufficient in every instance, and we therefore estimate that a further sum of £20,000 - £50,000 may be needed to balance this item.'

The Report also considered the question of Church Schools, and also touched on the question of the administration of the diocese. Of this latter aspect it said:

'The actual administration of diocesan affairs has been carried out for many years, almost without cost to the diocese, by the devotion and voluntary efforts of Mr. G. A. Bryson and Mr. R. de C. Deykin, without whose invaluable work nothing could have been done at all. But the time has already arrived, and indeed is overdue, when the diocese must face the necessity of an adequate paid staff if its work is to be continued on a high level of efficiency. In the near future the diocese will need the services of a diocesan secretary and a financial assistant to handle the complicated business which is now being done without remuneration. There is need also of further provision for certain diocesan officials, especially the Diocesan Surveyor, if their highly skilled services are to be retained. The whole question of accommodation is also under review ...'

The present Diocesan Office, with its helpful staff and impressively efficient service shows that this problem, at least, has been addressed thoroughly.

The Ten Year Forward Movement

It was decided that the work of the Commission on the future needs of the diocese should be continued in what was called the 'Ten Year Forward Movement'. A co-ordinating committee was set up, following the adoption of the Commission's Report, and the Council for the Ten Year Forward Movement held its first meeting on 8th July, 1946.

The Movement was essentially an exercise in morale building, to instill a sense of vision, and togetherness - including a wider understanding by all of the various problems facing the whole diocese - to carry the people of the diocese forward in what promised to be difficult and challenging times. The name was chosen with specific reference to the motto of the City of Birmingham; "Forward", and emphasized the link which the Bishop fostered between the Diocese and the City. The terms of reference for the Council of the Ten Year Forward Movement included the following:

'1. To promote throughout the Diocese the building up of the life of the Church, and the work of Christian Evangelism.

2. To strengthen the work of the Church in districts where church life has been disrupted through the war, and to promote the work of the Church in new housing areas.

3. To instruct the people of the Diocese on the Plans of the Reorganisation Committee for the formation of new parishes in new housing areas, and for the re-formation of parishes in civic development areas.'

In addition, the aim was to educate people about the financial implications of these plans, and about the concept of stewardship, to raise a general - central - fund, and to encourage parochial appeals for local projects, to 'promote a sense of Diocesan responsibility whereby the stronger parishes may be encouraged to help others where the work of the Church is less advanced, or more difficult', and, finally, to 'assist the clergy and laity of the Diocese in their work through the organisation of retreats or study groups, and to encourage and train the laity of the Diocese in Christian witness and service in conjunction with the Council of Religious Education'.

These terms of reference were set out by the chairman - the Archdeacon of Birmingham - and discussed at the first meeting of the Council. The Minutes note that the Chairman said:

> 'The main tasks of the Council would be the two themes ... Primarily, there was need of spiritual recovery in the life of the Church, and secondly there were the many needs set out in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry. It would not be the task of the Council to do the specific planning. That was the task of the statutory committees, in particular the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee and the Church Education Society; but the Council must be the spiritual power house behind these other Committees ... there was considerable cross-membership between the Council and the Reorganisation Committee ... various members of the Council stated that the fact that evangelism and spiritual advancement are being put first is being much appreciated. It was generally felt that this was the right approach to any scheme for the revival of Church life in the Diocese.'

A two page Note of Suggestions for Church Councillors was produced. This emphasized again that church buildings are only one element in the work of the Church. The suggestions to members of PCC's are listed under five headings. The first is 'Knowledge of the Need', and emphasizes the need to spread knowledge of the present situation - widespread and increasing ignorance of the Faith, the manpower shortage, the Church's financial difficulties, and to publicise Parish needs, and the difficulties of neighbouring parishes and their need of help.

The second heading, entitled 'Every Churchman counts', exhorts PCC members to work with the clergy to 'bring home the need for individual dedication to Christ, and to the service of His

Church', to be eager to respond to study opportunities, to undertake some piece of work beyond membership of the PCC, including helping in a neighbouring needy parish, and to find other Church members who will help in a similar way.

The third section, entitled 'Speaking to the children of Israel, that they go forward', urged the members of the PCC to foster 'a consciousness of the Church as a family, built up in and through its worship', and team spirit in parochial administration; to think of the parish as part of the diocese, and the diocese as part of the whole Church; and to realise that the Church is made up of men and women, that in the great days of the Church it was always courageously and optimistically a Missionary Church, and that 'bold and imaginative living for God is required of all who accept office in the Church of Christ'.

Fifty years on, this Missionary rôle of the local Church is particularly relevant in the estates of the outer ring, where demographic changes have created areas of deprivation and alienation, where the traditional parochial approach just does not work. I shall discuss this with particular reference to the parish of St. Boniface, Quinton Road West.

The fourth section, entitled 'Men and Women in the Church's service', referred to the low level of benefice incomes, and the liability of parishes in this; it also encouraged members to recruit men and women for the ministry, to contribute to the diocesan share - £13,500 - of the Archbishop's Training Fund for Clergy of £600,000; and to adopt a candidate for training, or to do so in conjunction with another parish.

It was not until section five that buildings are mentioned. The section, entitled 'Bricks and Mortar. Extension of the Church's life', says:

> 'There is a great need for sites for buildings for Church purposes in the new areas. For the time being, in many cases, we shall have to erect temporary buildings, while the Church's living agents are working to establish a Church community in the area. Sites and buildings together will be costly. PCC's should consider how they can help in this work, for which a sum not less than £100,000 will be needed.
>
> PCC's should try (in spite of the difficulties some of us may be experiencing in this matter of putting our own house in order and in making ends meet) -
> (1) To help another poorer parish, e.g., by building a Church Hall or a temporary hut in a new housing estate.
> (2) Perhaps join with other parishes in helping a new area, or in supporting some other piece of urgent Church building.'

The note then gives a list of some of the schemes that some parishes are adopting. These include:

Evangelisation, by missions or a teaching convention; erecting a building for Church purposes in a newly developed part of the parish, possibly in conjunction with another parish; sponsoring an ordination candidate for three years; doubling Diocesan apportionment for increased expenses at the Centre; being responsible for erecting a building in a new housing area; making an annual donation towards the Forward Movement, or to Schools; helping the Stipend by taking over Dilapidations and Pension premiums, and paying for parochial telephone and postage expenses; increasing salaries of assistant Clergy.

The Movement was to be launched in the Diocese later in 1946. The date of 6th October was initially put forward by the Bishop, and a Publicity Committee set up to promote it. The Publicity Committee decided to publish a bulletin, three times a year,m under the title of "The Forward Review". The date for launching the Movement was put back to 1st December, Advent Sunday. At the Council meeting of 9th September, the Chairman, Bishop, Bishop Linton, stated:

> 'that it was hoped that all Incumbents would preach in their own churches on that day. In answer to a question as to whether special forms of service, or special lessons, psalms and hymns would be suggested, it was said that this would be left to Incumbents, since the whole message of Advent was so much in keeping with the spirit of the Forward Movement.'

As far as church buildings were concerned, the Movement aimed to encourage parishes to help the growth of the Church in the new housing areas by building halls or temporary buildings, and it was also empowered to offer whatever funds it acquired towards the improvement of facilities in existing parishes.

At the Council meeting of 9th September 1946 requests were considered from St. Peter's, Birmingham, for a loan of £1000 to help preserve the building; it was agreed that this should be one of the first charges on the Ten Year Forward Movement; from St. Martin's, Birmingham, for assistance towards raising £16,000 for a new hall, vestries, etc.; this was agreed as being within the terms of the Movement; a decision on a request from Canon Cribb, at Moseley, for the building of a hall to be included in the terms of the Movement was deferred.,

At the meeting on 14th January 1947 the minutes record that:

'The Archdeacon of Aston read a letter which he had received from the Vicar of Ward End regarding the plans for his parish, including the building of a hall. A letter was also read from the Revd. H.R. Chaffer of Cofton Hackett asking for the approval of the Council for an appeal for funds for the building of a hall in that parish. The Archdeacon of Birmingham said that parishes which were incomplete or were needing a vicarage, or church, or church hall should be included in the Forward Movement, but

luxuries should be excluded. It was agreed that Ward End and Cofton Hackett should both be included.'

At the meeting on 17th November 1947 of the Forward Movement Council, it was agreed: 'that we recommend to the Bishop that the Fund formerly known as "The Bishop's Appeal Fund" shall now be known as "The Church Extension Fund", to which all monies earmarked for Church Extension under the auspices of the Forward Movement shall be paid'.

At the same time, preparations were being made for a Summer Campaign, to be held in June 1948. To coincide with this the diocese published a booklet on the Forward Movement which. briefly, gives a very clear picture of the diocese at the time, and the challenges facing it. I include four pages from theis booklet, including illustrations of the extent of bomb damage at St. Thomas's, Bath Row, and housing conditions in the city at the time, contrasting the slums of the inner area with a pre-fab estate in a rural setting (see Vol. 3, pp

The Summer Campaign was to begin at the end of May, with the visit of the five Lambeth Bishops, was to include visits to major factories to talk about the work of the Church, visits to new areas, where little has been done so far, an open-air Act of Worship in the cathedral grounds - Sunday 27th June, and, in the week following, a Presentation in the Town Hall of a pageant of Diocesan Life - "Lively Stones - Building the Temple of God".

This sense of vision is most apparent in the Letter from the Bishop of the Diocese - the Rt. Revd E.W. Barnes - which was to be read in all churches on Sunday 20th June 1948. Particularly impressive is his identification of the work of the Church with the City itself, and its task of reconstruction. This was already evident, with the agreement by the City authorities to inform the Diocese of housing developments (see pp 188, 205, 207, supra), and was strengthened by the agreement to make available sites in the new housing areas for buildings for religious purposes at a very reasonable cost (see p 227 infra). He says, inter alia:

'Whatever may be said of the life of Birmingham it cannot be described as stagnant. There is in the city and in surrounding areas a population that still grows rapidly. because of our fine schools and important university, our people are increasingly well-educated. They have a confident virility worthy of the citizens of a great city.

There was a time in the nineteenth century when the Church of England did not play its part in shaping the religious life of Birmingham ... During the last forty years independence (i.e. since the formation of Birmingham diocese) has fostered self-reliance; the church has taken to itself the city's motto of FORWARD; and its members have shown a remarkable confidence in attacking the problems, religious, moral and social, which modern urban

communities have to solve. Such activity was in abeyance during the war. But the ten years that the locust hath eaten are gone. Progress can begin anew. Civic development is as rapid as circumstances allow. We of the Church of England have our Forward Movement.

To make it succeed we must in the first place strengthen Church life in the old-established parishes. We must especially draw in the younger people and show them that the main essentials of the Christian faith are both of vital importance to the community and also compatible with the scientific training they have received at school. The required teaching is now being given widely, not merely by the younger clergy, but also by older men who used for quiet thought the enforced opportunity of the years of war. If it was ever true that the churches of Birmingham were centres of reaction, the reproach is no longer deserved. In our intellectual confidence we welcome the light. Socially we take our share in the progress necessary for the rebuilding of our civic life.

But intellectual adventure and social enthusiasm must be steadied and enforced by private prayer and public worship. Sometimes the parish church fails to be the inspiration that it can become. I ask churchpeople to use its help and their opportunities more fully. They can thus deepen and strengthen their trust in God and their loyalty to Christ.

There are, however, important areas around Birmingham where the population is increasing rapidly but where there are as yet no churches. The situation would be worse had not the two church extension appeals that were made between the two world wars enabled us to build churches and church halls that have fostered religious life in new areas. But the population goes on growing, quite astonishingly. People, moreover, are moving from bombed and derelict areas in the centre of the city to new regions where we need to give them churches or church halls.

To see what was done before the late war visits have been arranged to new churches on Tuesday, June 22nd. Those who can take part in such visits will learn how solid has been church development since the first world war. On Thursday, June 24th, there will be visits to new areas. Those who go on these visits will realise how much still needs to be done.'

The letter closed with an exhortation to attend the Act of Witness, on Sunday 27th June, and to the Pageant in the town Hall.

At the meeting of the Council on 19th July 1948, the minutes record:

> 'The Secretary reported on the Summer Campaign. He said that he thought he was probably voicing the general opinion in saying that the Summer Campaign had been a great

success. During the preparation there had been times of anxiety, but in the end the Campaign had been supported by the parishes with the most extraordinary enthusiasm. All the parishes, with the exception of six, contributed in some way to the success of the Summer Campaign. As the Campaign developed, the enthusiasm of the parishes mounted, and the climax in the open-air processions and Act of Witness in the City Centre was felt by many to have been a genuine corporate act of dedication on the part of the whole diocese. The Pageant was an unquestioned success, and a tremendous testimony to the Archdeacon of Aston's powers of leadership and to his inspiration. The Secretary felt that the clearest evidence of the value of the Summer Campaign lay in the sense of unity, fellowship and purpose which had been engendered throughout the diocese.

As to the financing of the Campaign, this had been achieved without calling on central funds. The discussion at the meeting then turned to the future. under the heading of The Next Step, the minutes record that:

> 'The Archdeacon of Aston urged upon the Council the necessity of immediate action to follow up the Campaign; that the action must be based upon a definite policy embodying both a long term and a short term plan. He suggested that the plan must turn around (1) men, (2) money, and (3) buildings. He proposed that by 1955, the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the diocese, the Forward Movement should come to an end, and that by that time we should aim to have supplied all the new areas in the diocese with the minimum material necessities in men, money and buildings for the maintenance of full Church life.
>
> The Archdeacon of Birmingham proposed that the Executive Committee of the Council should be asked to meet as quickly as possible to work out details of the short term plan, based on a survey of immediate urgent needs, with a scheme of priorities and the ability of parishes in the diocese, working through the Deaneries, to meet these needs. The Secretary suggested that in view of the comparatively small number of new areas which were sufficiently developed to make the need for Church work there really desperate, we might make our immediate aim the provision of some sort of premises and some sort of staffing arrangements within twelve months. He felt that if this could be achieved it would be a concrete result of the Forward Movement to give the whole Diocese a sense of achievement, and to break through the prevailing sense of frustration.'

At the meeting of the Council of the Ten Year Forward Movement on 4th October 1948, the Council agreed on proposals for future action, as follows:

'(1) To urge the Diocesan Reorganization Committee to secure licences from the Ministry of Works for the erection as soon as possible of buildings on sites where the need is most urgent.

(2) Assuming that there are six sites where work is most urgently needed, and that the amount of money required for each site would be approximately £5000, to ask the Diocese to raise £30,000 by the end of June, 1949.

(3) To make the anniversary of the Summer Campaign the occasion for the presentation of the gifts of the Diocese for this work, probably with a special gift day when parochial contributions should be presented in the Town Hall.

(4) That the scheme should be launched with a service led by the Bishop in the Cathedral on Monday, 22nd November, at 8pm, and attended by clergy and parochial representatives, etc.

(5) The Archdeacon of Aston and the Secretary should go to visit Chapter Meetings, in order to work out with them the most effective way of carrying out the proposals.'

Work of the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee

The detailed forward planning of the work of the Diocese - under statutory control - was being carried out by the Diocesan Reorganization Committee. References to the recommendations or decisions of the committee are generally noted under the description of individual parishes below.

There is a reference to the use of prefabs by the City at the meeting on 29th May 1947, when the DRC was informed that at the Druids Lane and Bills Lane sites - Prefabricated Housing Areas - there was the possibility of a site from the City.

There was considerable discussion about the use of huts as temporary church buildings. At the DRC meeting on 9th October 1946 the Archdeacon of Birmingham reported on the availability of temporary huts; possibly for Kettlehouse and Banner's Gate. At a further discussion, at the meeting on 28th November 1946, the committee was told that Messrs. Moffatt charged £3,500 to move and erect two huts for the Baptists; erecting two pre-fabricated huts, without site works and heating, cost £1000. Messrs. Pitts estimated the cost of a timber hut, 60' by 18', at £400, plus £200 for erection. A brick hut, with lavatories, kitchen, etc., had been erected at Coventry Road, for £850. During a discussion

in the meeting on 12th December 1946, objection was raised to the use of corrugated iron for the roofs of huts, because of the noise when it rained.

At the meeting on 30th January 1947, there was a general discussion on the ways of working in the new housing areas, including the question of the use of huts, and a more flexible approach to staffing. The minutes record that:

> 'The Bishop reported that owing to the financial situation the Commissioners' regulations as regards grants would have to be modified. Circumstances are changing constantly, and we have to adapt ourselves to the changes, and try to foresee what is coming. The Archdeacon of Aston said that we wanted as far as possible to erect some sort of building in the new housing areas to lay the foundations of a spiritual community, and for the most part this would come under the control of and would be organised from the parish church. Presumably Shard End would have to be run from another centre. It might be possible for Diocesan Lay Readers to undertake this work. The need for these areas is very urgent. Bishop Linton suggested that it might be possible to encourage people in the new areas to contribute to the building of a hall, instead of always having to feel that it would be provided from a Central Fund. The Rev. A.G. Cooke said that he considered that a parish should take responsibility for the needs on its borders. It would be necessary for the people in the areas visualised to raise £10 a week. Most of them are already raising part of their clergy's stipends, which is more than the better endowed parishes are doing. ... Mr Deykin said he considered it was a question of man-power. The Archdeacon of Aston suggested that we should have a group of Bishop's Messengers - four or five clergy living together in one of our larger vicarages - commissioned for this particular work. He believed there were men who would respond to this call. Canon Guy Rogers suggested that a house might be built in each of the new areas, and that services might be held in the local school. ...'

The discussion then turned to the question of the use of huts. The minutes continue:

> 'Mr Plummer reported that he and the Archdeacon of Aston had contracted to buy a hut for £700. A deposit of £50 had been paid. This action was approved by the Committee. It now remained to be decided where to place the hut. The Archdeacon of Aston proposed and Mr Deykin seconded that it should be put up at World's End. This was agreed. It was also agreed that the approval of the Vicar of Quinton should be sought before the erection of the hut.
>
> Mr Plummer also reported that we had the opportunity of tendering for two concrete-built huts at Streetly. ... he thought they were probably worth £500 for the two. The erection would probably cost not less than another £1000. One hut could be used as a dedicated building, and the other for social purposes. This was agreed.'

A Statement setting out priorities for the Church Extension programme was submitted to the Diocesan Reorganization Committee at its meeting on 28th October 1948. The final recommendation - that the Diocese should raise £30,000 in the following year, seems to have been known already by the beginning of October, and this Statement is clearly a more detailed programme, for the benefit of the DRC. The Statement is noted as 'Confidential'. I set out its contents in extenso in the Appendix; future references to parishes will be set out more fully under the respective parishes.

The emphasis of the Statement is on the deployment of clergy, and then the provision of buildings to house the activities. There is a notable lack of the triumphalism which led to the design of the new church at Cheylesmore, in Coventry. This report gives a remarkable flavour of the period. In particular, it is noteworthy that the City was managing to press ahead with large swathes of housing, at the end of 1948. The country was still suffering from severe shortages of all kinds, and it was another six or seven years before building work for other than essential public works was to be given licences.

At the DRC Meeting on 9th December 1948 the Archdeacon of Aston:

> 'reported that sending in the list of Priorities to the Ministry of Works it had become quite clear that buildings should be erected in different parts of the Diocese in such a way that the work of Church Extension could proceed on an even scale.'

The minutes record the list of priorities for 1949 thus:

'A. <u>Ready to proceed in March.</u>

1.	Kettlehouse, Perry Barr	- Church Hall and House
2.	Elmdon Heath, Solihull	- Completion of Church Hall begun in 1939. The walls are 3 ft high - building operations suspended in 1939.

B. <u>Ready to proceed in June.</u>

1.	Rednal House Estate	- Church Hall and House.

In this area we have only one small wooden church at Rubery, built in 1905.

2.	Kent's Moat, Yardley	- Church Hall and House.

C. Ready to proceed in August.

1.	Longbridge Area	- Church Hall only.
	or	
	if negotiations concerning site not able to be completed	
	Brandwood Estate (King's Norton)	- Church Hall only.
2.	Garrett's Green, Sheldon	- Church Hall only.

D. Ready to proceed in October

1.	Brandwood Estate	- Church Hall only.
	or	
	Longbridge Estate	- Church Hall only.
2.	Kitt's Green, Sheldon	- Church Hall and House.

Needs for 1950.

Castle Bromwich (Whateley Estate	- Church Hall.
Kingshurst Estate (Coleshill)	- Church Hall.
Ideal Estate (Solihull)	- Church Hall and House
Robin Hood Area (Hall Green)	- Type of building not yet settled.

In the early stages of post-war planning the diocese suggested the type of building - the dual-purpose hall - which would be appropriate as a temporary measure. A number of these dual-purpose buildings survive in use today as halls, with the exception of Rednal; here the dual-purpose building has become the church, and hall and other ancillary accommodation has been added to one side.

In the later years, although in the cases of Longbridge and Shard End the Diocese expressed the view that these were to be important parishes, the DRC would offer advice on the choice of an architect; in cases where the parish, and the incumbent, had strong views on the type of building they wanted, the parish was encouraged to follow its own initiative, and was often commended by the DRC for its initiative, and for relieving the Diocese of the work of giving a lead.

The influence of Dr. Gilbert Cope and the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture was clearly felt strongly in the Diocese. At St. David's, Shenley, and St. Peter's, Hall Green, the incumbents went on Dr. Cope's Continental tours of Modern Churches; tours of 'contemporary' churches in the diocese were a feature in the deliberations of any parish considering a new church; as a result, there are fewer examples of the 'traditional church in Festival of Britain guise', and more churches of what may be called an 'advanced' design, and at an earlier stage, than in other dioceses.

There as an interesting item during the DRC meeting on 28th November 1946, which relates to concepts of new church building. The DRC was informed, in a letter from the War Damage Commission, regarding the replacement of a new 'plain substitute building' for St. Thomas's, that:

> 'The War Damage Commission recognizes that St. Thomas's was a church of outstanding architectural dignity, and would therefore replace it with a substitute building of similar importance. They would not replace a tower as elaborate as St. Thomas's, but recognized that the substitute church must be complete with a suitable belfry, and that the structure of that tower should be sufficiently strong to take a spire if desired.'

At a meeting of the Planning Committee (a sub-committee of the DRC) held on 3rd December 1948, there was a discussion about the detailed form the new church halls should take. The minutes record that:

> 'After considerable discussion, it was agreed that in the erection of halls there should be a permanent chapel, with doors which could be opened (I presume this means that the chapel could open into the hall itself to accommodate larger numbers), a committee room, a kitchen, a small vestry, and the usual sanitary accommodation: the entrance being on the south side, rather than at the west end.'

The Committee went on to suggest the names of a number of architects, viz: R. Dixon; Harvey and Wicks; Maurice Hobbiss; F.J. Osborne; E.F. Reynolds; J.B. Surman; and G.H. While.

The accommodation proposed for the new areas was described by the Archdeacon of Aston, in an interview with the Birmingham Post, in the early months of 1949. The report says:

> 'Permanent church halls of a new type, with rooms for religious and social activities, will supply the beginnings of Church life to a population of about 100,000 on Birmingham's new housing estates, until churches are built. Licences are expected to be granted soon for a start, in June, on the Diocesan Forward Movement's 1949-1950 programme of nine halls, for which £30,000 is to be raised by parishes before June 29. ... The halls would probably be brick-built, since bricks were more plentiful than wood or steel. When churches were built, the buildings would remain in use as church halls.

The basic design provides for a hall, seating 250, and separated by a movable screen from a chapel seating fifty. Other rooms in the building will be a vestry, a committee room and a kitchen, and the entrance will be by a porch leading into the hall. The external form of the halls has not yet been decided, but each one will be individual in appearance. Architects are working on the detailed plans.

The plan is the outcome of experience, and the social movement towards community has had a definite effect on the design. The halls would be centres of communal as well as religious life, but it was not intended that those who attended them should separate themselves from other community movements undertaken under the auspices of the education authority. The projected church hall on the Rednal Housing Estate, for instance, would be near the proposed new community centre, and they would be complementary.

> The basic design was suggested by the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee, the statutory body which co-operates with local authority on the siting and redistribution of churches.' (See illustrations, Vol 3, pp477/8)

July 1949 - Success of the £30,000 Appeal

The success of this appeal is set out in the press release of July 1949, which was used in the Guardian and the Church of England Newspaper, amongst others. The target was £30,000; the campaign realised £36,707. The press release says, inter alia:

> 'The Diocesan Forward Movement, launched in Advent 1946, was designed to strengthen the hand of the parishes in their work of building up and enriching the life of the Church throughout the diocese. Since then it has taken a limited number of objectives, dictated by the urgency of the moment and so concentrating the attention of Church people for short periods of time. This policy has had manifest effects in the producing of an extraordinary degree of unity and fellowship in the diocese, a greatly heightened sense of responsibility among Church people, and a deeper awareness of the obligation of Church membership.
>
> The most recent enterprise of the Forward Movement reached its culmination in a great Diocesan Assembly on the evening of June 29th. On November 2nd last, the foggiest night in Birmingham of the winter, a great congregation heard in the Cathedral plans announced by the Archdeacon of Aston for a short term appeal to Church people or the sum of £30,000 for the building of eight new church halls in the new housing areas of the diocese.
>
> This appeal was launched to the parishes on the Feast of the Epiphany. In the meantime, each Ruridecanal Chapter had considered the proportion of the £30,000 for which they felt they could accept responsibility, and each parish decided on its target and the area which it would prefer to support. The principle was accepted that as far as possible the money should be raised by direct Christian giving by Church people, and that there should be no general appeal - the provision of new church halls being regarded as a domestic matter to be dealt with within the family of the Church, those more fortunate parishes who had inherited their buildings and traditions helping those who

had none. Apart from this, each parish set to work in the way most suited to its own conditions.

The Bishop's announcement of the total - £36,707 - was greeted with a great ovation, which was a spontaneous expression of the thankfulness of all those who were fortunate enough to be present. ... Three points deserve emphasis:

(1) This sum of £36,707 was given in six months only by Church people themselves - with no general appeal and including no large individual sums.

(2) The publicity for the appeal was, so to speak, internal - each parish stimulating its own people in the way it found most effective - with support and encouragement from the Forward Movement.

(3) The appeal was not an end in itself, but one item in the Forward Movement programme of priorities - in which the raising of money forms only an incidental part.

One thing is clear. Birmingham Church people are awake to their responsibilities, and ready to throw themselves wholeheartedly into any task which they recognise to be urgent in the building up of the kingdom of God in the diocese.'

There seems to have been some criticism that this process of providing new church buildings for the new housing areas was proceeding too slowly and too cautiously. The Archdeacon of Aston addressed these criticisms in an address to the Diocesan Assembly - the date is unknown, but internal evidence suggests that it is shortly after the raising of the £36,707 - when he set out three reasons for exercising caution. He placed emphasis, first, on the rôle of the parochial system, saying:

'For the people living in those (new housing) areas the Parochial system, which is not only the unit in spiritual administration but also the foundation stone in the building of Christian community, is non-existent.'

He goes on to cite the reasons for caution thus:

'(1) The need for the building of houses has been so urgent that we have not wished to push our claims for building licences.

(2) We have learnt by experience both that temporary buildings (which are very expensive) are not altogether satisfactory, and also that Church work in temporary buildings without adequate supervision can lead to the creation of difficult situations.

(3) There is an acute shortage of clergy - especially of men to whom Pioneer work makes an appeal, and moreover, in most of the new districts it has been

found impossible to provide them with the necessary living accommodation.'

He continues:

'In short, too hasty action in the matter of Church Extension might have produced a situation which would not have been to the credit of the Church. but during this cautionary period we have not been wasting our time. We have - in the first place, attempted to create an awareness throughout the Diocese regarding the need for Church Extension; then, two, we have kept in constant touch with the new areas - taking notice of building progress in order to formulate our list of priority needs.'

By the end of the year, the Archdeacon of Aston reported to the Diocesan Conference, held on 10th November 1949, that (Birmingham Post, 11 November 1949):

'Rapidly expanding communities on Birmingham's new housing estates set the Church a tremendous task. ... The population of the new area extending from Yardley Church to Castle Bromwich (excluding Hodge Hill Common and Olton Ideal Estate) was 54,000, and those people had no church. The design of the new church buildings at New Oscott - work was to start on January 1 - was a little different from usual. There had been great changes in social life , and the movement towards community life could not help but have a very definite bearing on the type of church buildings. The buildings at New Oscott, to cost £8,953, would consist of a hall to accommodate 350 people with a chapel, seating 150, at one end. Committee rooms, cloakrooms and a kitchen would also be provided.

Reporting on the schemes for the central areas, the Archdeacon said the Church authorities were co-operating with the City Council which had prepared five redevelopment plans. Some bomb-damaged churches would not be rebuilt; and some would be rebuilt in other areas.

All Saints' (Small Heath), St. Anne's (Duddeston) and St. Catherine's (Nechells) would not be rebuilt; St. Thomas's (Ladywood) was to be rebuilt in another area not yet decided; and St. James's (Ashted) would be rebuilt on another site provided by the city within the Duddeston and Nechells area. St. John's (Harborne) was to be rebuilt, but where and when had not been decided.'

A meeting of the Forward Movement Council, with the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Diocesan Assembly was held on 7th July 1950. The meeting appears to have been relatively brief, but important, and the minutes record that:

'The Secretary reported on the Diocesan Assembly which was held on 21st June (in the Botanic Gardens), and said that it was to be regarded as a success. In spite of the weather, it was estimated that 14,000 people had attended.

> The Chairman raised the question of the future of the Forward Movement, and suggested that it might be wise to bring it to an end shortly. After discussion, it was agreed to consider this matter more fully at a meeting of the Forward Movement Council in September.'

By 1951 there was a significant rise in building costs, which affected the building programme. This is illustrated by a report at the DRC meeting on 5th July, 1951, when it was noted that the Clergy House at Rednal was likely to cost £4,000, as against £2,735 allowed in the licence. This was due to the general increase of 20% in house building costs, and 60/75% in the price of timber.

Also in 1951, the Bishop of Birmingham offered the post of Provost of Birmingham Cathedral to Mervyn Stockwood, at the time Vicar of St. Matthew's, Moorfields, Bristol. He had previously addressed the Diocesan Conference of "The Future of the Church of England". This would have been an interesting appointment, and would have offered Stockwood the opportunity to put forward his ideas in a diocese which was tackling difficult problems in an urban setting. In the event, Stockwood declined the offer.

The Bishop's Appeal - 1953/58

At the DRC meeting on 20th July 1953 it was reported that the Diocese hoped to provide £250,000 for the needs of the New Housing Areas in the Five Year Period from 1st April 1953. This scheme came to be known as The Bishop's Appeal. At the end of the five years, the Diocesan Leaflet, for January 1958, reported:

> 'The amount received to date is approximately £590,000. Of this the parochial contributions make up a sum of nearly £90,000. ... Although the collecting of money in the parishes is officially ended, it must be emphasized that the Appeal in general will continue. At the moment the diocese has fully committed itself in allocating money for new buildings, and there are still several areas where no provision for church life exists.'

At the DRC meeting on 26th May 1954 it was noted that, where land was purchased from the local authority, sites for churches and religious buildings, were purchased at one quarter of the housing value of the land; if the Vicarage was attached to the Church, its site could be purchased at the same price, but if it was separate then the land would have to be purchased at housing value. It was reported at the same meeting that the Robin Hood site was to be abandoned.

At the DRC meeting on 14th July 1955 it was reported that the Church Commissioners had increased their full allocation for the diocese from £80,000 to £110,000, of which £72,000 was

already allocated. At the DRC meeting on 24th February 1956 it was reported that a further £25,000 - making £135,000 in total - was now available for the New Areas.

A report submitted to the DRC in about February 1960 sets out the position of the parishes in the Archdeaconries of Aston and Birmingham, and their needs. At this time there was still a very large number of Dual Purpose structures in use, and churches waiting to be built. The report is set out in tabular form, thus:

Area	Present position	Particular needs
	<u>ARCHDEACONRY OF ASTON</u>	
Yardley: Lea Hall	Wooden DP., Vicarage	Church
Hall Green: Gospel Lane	School building	Church, Hall, House
South Yardley: St. Michael	DP House, Hall 2 years to run	more accommodation
Tile Cross	DP House	Church, vicarage
Castle Bromwich		Church needs alteration if to used for Whateley folk.
Hodge Hill	Sanctuary + poor building	Completion of church, vicarage.
Whateley	Site and house	
Solihull		
Hob Moat	DP + house	Church
St. Francis	DP + house	Church
Stockland Green	Hall, house, vacant land	Church, vicarage (provided for)
Aston: Perry Common	DP house + vacant land	Vacant land to be used.
Erdington: St. Margaret	Small church, house	Enlargement of church, Hall, Vicarage.
St. Chad	Poor church building, house, hall.	A plan for future.
Marston Green	Incomplete church, Vicarage.	Completion of church, hall.
Dorridge	Incomplete church, Vicarage	Completion of church, Hall.
Gravelly Hill	Incomplete church, hall, house	Completion of church, vicarage.
Balsall Common	Incomplete church, vicarage, small hall.	Enlargement of church.

Rednal	Temporary vicarage, DP about to be enlarged.	Church, vicarage.
Billesley	Church incomplete, Temporary hall, small house.	Vicarage, Doctor's house?
Highter's Heath	Incomplete church, hall, house for Vicar house for Curate.	Completion of church, vicarage
Kingstanding	Incomplete church, Vicarage, hall.	Completion of church.
Weoley Castle	Incomplete church, wooden Hall, Vicarage.	Completion of church hall.
Londonderry	Incomplete church, Hall, Vicarage.	Completion of church.
Stirchley, S. Hugh	DP + vacant land.	

ARCHDEACONRY OF BIRMINGHAM

Handsworth		
(Cherry Orchard	Wooden building - short life.	Church building small church?
(St. Andrew		
Hamstead - Tanhouse	Site purchased	Church buildings, vicarage.
King's Norton		
Brandwood	Site purchased, awaiting planning permission for DP.	House
Pool Farm	Discussion on size of site.	DP House.
Staple Lodge	Under discussion; probably not wanted , but West Heath will need additional bdg.	
Bartley Green	Small church, temporary Parish meeting-place. Vicarage - old and very near to new road.	?
Quinton - Brandhall	Site secured	Building, house
Hall Green,		
St. Peter	House	Church, Hall, Vicarage.

Shenley Fields	Site given, house purchased.	Building (Hall) Bournville arch't preparing plans.
Pheasey	Wooden DP + house	Church, hall.
Rounds Green	Whiteheath Estate being built in parish.	site, buildings.

At the DRC meeting on 19th October 1960, it was set out, during discussion, that the aim of what was now the Diocesan Reorganisation and Pastoral Committee was:

> 'To put forward recommendations with a view to the making of the best possible provision for the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Diocese'.

The sites selected for new churches, and subsequently new parishes, were the result of a careful process of selection. The local authorities included sites for church buildings within their general planning for new estates, and it was left to the diocese to decide which sites it required. At the DRC meeting on 12th October 1959, the Committee considered sites on estates at Brandhall and Staple Lodge, and decided that, at least for the present, the creation of separate parishes was not called for.

At the same meeting, there was a discussion about the quality of buildings required. During the discussion about the estate at Brandhall, when it was decided that a separate parish was not required - at least at present - the Bishop of Aston reported that Oldbury Borough Council was not ready to allow a "Reema" or similar building to be erected. Birmingham City Architect was equally reluctant to permit the use of "Reema" buildings. The site allocated at Brandhall was not, in any case, large enough for both a church and a hall, and he suggested that the solution might well be to build a hall with foundations strong enough to carry a church above at a future date. The minutes note that:

> 'Canon Warman emphasized the desirability of the Church's erecting buildings of good quality and materials, so that they did not start to deteriorate in appearance after about ten years; so much was owed to Civic authorities who allocated central sites for church buildings.'

At the DRC meeting on 18th September 1961, the minutes record that:

> 'In bringing the meeting to a close, the Bishop of Aston, who was making his last appearance as Chairman of the Committee, referred to the work which had been done by the Committee since 1942. This work of reorganisation, which had in a sense been shared with the City of Birmingham, had included the demolition of some sixteen churches and the

building of many more. The diocese was fortunate in being called on to negotiate in the main with one Local Authority, and the Bishop paid tribute to the ready co-operation with the diocese which the authorities of the City of Birmingham and other Local Authorities in the diocese had always shown.'

It was at the same meeting that the problem of ministry to Oldbury was discussed. The minutes record that:

'The Bishop of Aston said that the vicarage at Oldbury was in poor condition, and was moreover a mile from the parish church. The Oldbury town centre was being redeveloped, and the suggestion had been made that possibly St. John's Church might be made the centre of spiritual life at Oldbury. Another suggestion had been made that St. John's might be established as a statutory district.'

At the DRC meeting on 4th December 1961 it was reported that additional funds from the Church Commissioners for the New Housing Areas made the gross amount £389,700.

A Minute dated 30th January 1962 records a discussion in the Standing Committee in regard to a policy on Mission Churches. The Minute records that:

'The Bishop initiated a discussion on the policy to be followed in respect of mission churches and chapels of ease. The prevalent conception of a mission church was now out of date when the whole Church found itself in a missionary situation, and the establishment of such a church could, it was suggested, only be justified where either such a church served a body of people who were too far removed from the parish church to attend that church without difficulty, e.g., at least a mile away; or where the church was likely to develop in due course into a Parish church, or form the nucleus of a separate legal district. Care should be taken that no new ones should be set up unless these conditions were satisfied.

In any case, caution should be exercised in the matter of statutory services; such buildings should continue to serve a useful purpose as centres not only for old people, for Sunday Schools, and the like, but also for youth work and other such activities; this must, however, be in subordination to the Parish Church and without any claims to independence.'

The Second Mile

The Diocesan Leaflet for July 1962 included a report from the Bishop on the Second Mile of his appeal. He says:

> 'Most of my readers will know that the Diocesan Conference has decided to go the "Second Mile" with me in my appeal for a further £700,000 for new churches, halls and vicarages in new areas.... You may well ask why this "Second Mile". There are many reasons; one is that the original Appeal has fallen short, though we have raised nearly a million pounds; the second is that building costs have gone up very substantially, and thirdly, there has been much new development which was not, and could not have been, foreseen seven years ago. The title of the first Appeal was "Circles without Centres" and we have put some kind of centre into fourteen different places; now more is needed.
>
> The members of Diocesan Committees have given a great deal of cool and careful thought to the essential needs of these new areas and they have taken seriously their solemn duty of thinking out beforehand what we mean to do in our church premises, what we need to carry out our purposes, and what kind of structure is the most suitable. ...
>
> Our task is to make our congregations more effective as agencies for the Ministry of the Living Christ ... it is because we are in a missionary situation that we need the message or gospel of Jesus Christ, and because we know that God has a longing that His children should come to know and love Him, that we dare to come to our Christian members to go the "Second Mile" with us, and provide the necessary money for this essential task.'

The Diocesan Leaflet for April 1964 includes a further report on the Second Mile. It says:

> 'An army PT instructor once sent a batch of recruits off on a cross country run with the words "The second mile is the hardest, after that you get your second wind." Without in any way suggesting that the Bishop's Appeal will go beyond a second mile, I certainly agree that it is the hardest.
> As far as industry and commerce are concerned, appeals have reached the stage of being almost a nuisance, so greatly have they multiplied since the Bishop launched his Jubilee Appeal in 1955. Even moderate sized firms may receive as many as four or five more or less deserving appeals in one morning's post. Nevertheless, many of the Birmingham firms who gave or covenanted last time have done so again, and they have been joined by some new names on the subscription list. These include several firms having interests within the Diocese, but their main offices and works outside.

The money pledged by the Parishes over the next ten years is coming in at present somewhat behind schedule. But the Deaneries and individual parishes are organising various

schemes such as exhibitions, garden fetes and excursions to new churches, to rouse interest and raise money. We hope that at the end of the ten years they will have brought forth their full fruit.

In round figures the total subscribed or promised to date since 1955 is £1,190,000. This is made up as follows:
First stage 1,054,000
Second stage 136,000

The Second Mile in turn is made up as follows:

Parish contributions	... £15,000	(Since October 1962
Industry and Commerce etc.,	... £98,000	(Since March 1963)
Other sources	... £23,000	" " "

The funds of the Appeal have so far gone towards providing eight new churches, three dual purpose buildings and numerous halls and vicarages. At the moment building is progressing well at St. James, Rounds Green (consecration 12th September 1964), and at St. Matthew, Perry Beeches (consecration 21st September 1964). There have been delays at St. Peter, Hall Green, but it is hoped to be ready by the Autumn. All being well, building should begin within the next two or three months at St. Michael Bartley Green and St. Michael, South Yardley. Other proposed new churches are still in the planning stage.'

At the DRC meeting on 9th February 1966 it was reported that the Church Commissioners were to make a further £189,700 available for Church Building in the New Housing Areas over the next three years.

The 1963 exhibition 'Church Design Today'.

By 1963 the new churches of the Diocese, in their 'contemporary' guise were something of which Birmingham could be proud. An exhibition on the theme 'Church Design Today' was held in September 1963 at the Birmingham Building Centre. A press release, issued by the Engineering and Building Centre, dated 13th August 1963 says:

> 'The controversial subject of 'contemporary church design is to be featured in a special Birmingham exhibition next month. The Exhibition, 'Church Design Today', will feature models, plans and photographs of some of Britain's latest examples of contemporary church planning. ... It will be closely linked with the Bishop of Birmingham's Appeal, "Circles Without Centres" and will incorporate the Council for the Care of Churches exhibition, "New Churches", which is at present touring the country.
>
> An important feature will be the inclusion of a special section devoted to recent and new designs from Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, Leamington and Chester. ...Writing in the "New Churches" exhibition catalogue, the Dean of Gloucester, Seriol J.A. Evans, comments;

"The great difference between church buildings today and that of the last century is that we no longer start from a preconceived idea of what a church ought to look like. For the Victorians, there was only one way to build. A proper church was gothic in style and plan. It had a sanctuary for the altar and its Ministers, a chancel for the choir and a nave for the congregation. Any other arrangement was at best eccentric and at worst pagan."
"A Church is not primarily an architectural monument but the meeting-place of the people of God. Thus the design should start not from any pre-conceived idea of what it should look like but what is to be done in it. This involves active co-operation throughout the planning between the architect who designs the building, and the people who will use it."

The main purpose of the exhibition will be to show how the modern trend is to weld the church, hall and parsonage into a compact unit. In addition there are some examples of dual-purpose buildings combining accommodation for both worship and recreation in one building.'

Thoughts on new patterns of Ministry

In 1966 the DRC began to address the question of new patterns of ministry; in this, the Revd. D.A. Tytler, then Rural Dean of Warley, acted as a spur, or even an irritant! Leslie Paul, author of the Paul Report, was also a member of the DRC. The minutes of the DRC meeting on 15th July 1966, record, in a discussion about St. Martin's, Perry Common, that:

'The Chairman asked that consideration be given to the establishment of a Statutory District of St. Martin, Perry Common, which was at present a special curacy. Canon McLean hoped that very serious thought would be given to this matter before a decision was made, particularly as to whether Perry Common would be a viable entity. He repeated that experience had shown that some new districts had proved not to be so.

The Rev. D.A. Tytler expressed concern at the apparent proliferation of new districts, and hoped that the views of Mr. leslie Paul would be borne in mind, particularly regarding team ministries. The Chairman pointed out that no payment could be received from the Church Commissioners towards the stipend of a priest-in-charge of any particular area unless a statutory district were established. He hoped, however, that this would not rule out the setting up of team ministries where appropriate.'

The same parish, and the same problem, were on the agenda at the DRC meeting on 3rd October 1966. The minutes record that:

'The Revd. D.A. Tytler said that this problem raised the whole question of the flexibility of the pattern of pastoral care and responsibility. The rigid traditional position was steadily becoming less adequate. He felt

that a Commission should be appointed to examine, in its widest aspect, the pattern of pastoral responsibility as a whole, in relation to its physical basis, and to draw up a long term plan. Rigidly demarcated areas should be dispensed with and pastoral responsibility should be centred on great churches along the lines of the Paul Report. For instance, a Rector of Aston might have, say, half a dozen vicars working under him. There was a great need for flexibility and it was necessary to view these matters in accordance with the long term policy and not merely to examine each problem in isolation as it arose.

Mrs. Monkhouse supported Mr. Tytler and referred to the findings of the Chichester Diocese Building Study Group. ... Mr. Paul recalled that he had been a member of the Southwark Pastoral Committee and that similar problems had arisen in that diocese. Pastoral Committees tended to be overwhelmed by immediate problems and thereby to miss the long view. Southwark Diocese had dealt with this by establishing a Director and Department of Sociology. The New Pastoral Reorganization Measure, at present before the Church Assembly, should give more flexibility to the operations of Pastoral Committees.

The Archdeacon of Birmingham pointed out that any recommendation that the Committee should initiate a wide examination of policy would have to be referred to the Diocesan Bishop; though he recognized that the Committee was a statutory body with authority to consider such matters.

> Councillor Hollingworth felt that population movements should be foreseen so far as possible in advance rather than decisions taken after they had taken place. The Archdeacon of Aston said that there was often difficulty in getting positive information from the City Authorities but he recognized that this was partly due to changes of plan due to unforeseen circumstances.'

The Committee decided that a recommendation should be made to the Diocesan Bishop that the DRC be authorized to examine the whole range of diocesan policy in relation to the establishment of new parishes and districts.

In the event, a Sub-Committee was appointed to consider "the possibility of a survey of the diocese". This is not what the Revd. D.A. Tytler had in mind, but the brief did not prevent the Sub-Committee coming to its own conclusions.

The members were the Revd. D.A. Tytler, Mrs. Margaret Monkhouse, Mr. leslie Paul, and Mr. D.F. Gretton, who attended only one meeting, due to illness. The Sub-Committee submitted a report after it had held three meetings, the second of which was a half-day conference. At the Conference assistance was received from the Revd. Leslie Harman, Director of the Department of Religious Sociology in the Diocese of Southwark; Canon F.J. Hoyle, Vice-Chairman and Executive Officer of the Manchester Diocesan Pastoral Committee; and

the Revd. Peter Bridges, Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, in Birmingham University. The Report sets out the terms of reference of the Sub-Committee thus:

> 'We are asked to report on the possibility of a survey of the Diocese. This report arose out of discussions in the Pastoral Committee about the problem of relating decisions about specific pastoral situations to overall policies for the care of souls in this diocese, which are related in turn to the Anglican tradition of pastoral care for the people of England. Both strategic and tactical decisions are fundamentally about the right deployment of the Church's present and future resources of manpower, money and buildings in various types of living and working areas - private and municipal, commercial and industrial, rural and urban, including many areas of mixed development.'

The Report goes on to consider the changing context of the City thus:

> 'Changing factors in the present situation are many, and include the following, which are of special importance in assessing the pastoral needs of the diocese:
>
> (1) comprehensive re-development or urban areas, including (a) the construction of new living and working areas on the outskirts of the city of Birmingham; (b) the complete re-structuring of central and inner-ring areas.
> ;
>
> (2) the likelihood of a new pattern of regional and local government.
>
> (3) the massive alterations imposed by new transport plans, especially those for very wide express roads in and out of the city centre, and for links between long-distance motorways.
>
> (4) frequent changes in already published and approved development plans for the city of Birmingham.
>
> (5) changing ideas and problems of church life, including (a) steady or diminishing numbers of regular churchgoers and of confirmation and ordination candidates; (b) more flexible thinking about congregational structures for mission; (c) re-consideration in many urban dioceses about the size, permanence, flexibility and cost (capital and maintenance) of church buildings, both for worship and social action; (d) the strengthening of ecumenical links and the possibility of formal union between churches within 25 years; (e) a new pattern of government by synod and a new flexibility in the parochial ministry as envisaged in the draft Pastoral Measure and outlined in clauses 1 and 2 of that Measure.'

The Report then turns to the idea of the Survey. It says:

> 'All this involves grave planning considerations. There is clearly a need also for studies of the use of varying types of church buildings, of he pattern of religious life of people in new areas (outskirts, inner-ring, or central), of pastoral and educational methods, of church-community relations, of inter-church relations. If a survey of the diocese on these lines were to be made, it might enable a master-plan to be drawn up, in the light of which decisions about specific pastoral problems, such as the making of statutory districts or parishes and the provision of church buildings, could be taken with long-term considerations clearly in view, a method which would avoid the investigation of situations 'piecemeal' and would reduce the possibility of making commitments in perpetuity which might turn out to be wrong.'

The Sub-Committee had grave reservations about the usefulness of such a survey. It was likely to take some two years to carry out, it would entail the employment of professional, and costly, staff, and it might well be out of date as soon as it was completed. They concluded:

> 'As a once for all enterprise (it) would not meet the needs of the rapidly changing situation with which we are confronted.'

Instead, the Sub-Committee put forward the idea of an Executive Officer or Planning Officer, responsible to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee (the successor to the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee), whose task would be to establish and maintain virtually continuous liaison between the church authorities and local government, to interpret the ideas and needs of the one to the other, to obtain up-to-date information on planning matters, and to place that before the Archdeacons and the Pastoral Committee.

He would be involved in discussions about the allocation of sites and provisional proposals for ecclesiastical buildings as part of neighbourhood provision, and it would be his responsibility to prepare 'pastoral' plans and maps co-terminous with local authority plans and maps for development and re-development areas.

This was particularly relevant to the period of the fifties and the sixties; it sounds strangely out of date in the nineties, when local authority housing development, and the idea of Comprehensive Development Areas. no longer exist.

In line with the thinking which gave rise to the proposal for a Committee or Commission to consider pastoral and organisational problems, and in spite of the restricted brief which was finally given to the Sub-Committee, the Report concludes with a section headed <u>Pastoral Patterns.</u> It says:

> 'While it is no part of the sub-committee's task to make recommendations about future pastoral provision, we think

it right to draw the Pastoral Committee's attention to the considerable amount of new thinking that is currently going on about appropriate patterns for pastoral ministry in the next twenty-five years. The Committee will be aware of the suggestions of the Paul Report and the new Pastoral Measure regarding group and team ministries, and aware too of the possibility now being canvassed of 'great parishes' being made coincident with re-development areas, and of 'pastoral units' being similarly related to neighbourhood units. Such ideas invite reconsideration of the traditional size of the parish, and the traditional provision of a fully equipped and sizeable parish church for each aggregate of about 10,000 people. Similarly, we draw attention to the possibility of a more flexible pattern of ordained and lay ministry that would be facilitated by providing the largest possible number of clergy in a great parish with the smallest possible number of fully-equipped consecrated churches.

Our purpose in sketching these possibilities is to point out that new patterns in the development of men, money and buildings can be adequately considered only upon the basis of continuous liaison between the planning authorities of the churches and local government, and upon the development of research and "intelligence" to a greater extent than the Church of England has hitherto employed.

The making of decisions whether traditional patterns are to continue or new patterns are to be adopted depends, we believe, on the appointment of an officer for liaison and research to assist the Pastoral Committee. Only so can immediate tactical decisions and long-term strategic policies be fully co-ordinated.'

The Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture.

I have already discussed, in the General Introduction (p36ff), the rôle of the Birmingham Institute in encouraging study and disseminating information about new churches on the Continent, and the lessons they held for the Church in this country. The Institute had a particularly strong influence in the Birmingham Diocese. Although there are a few post-war churches which are, in effect, recreations of a late nineteenth century pattern in Festival of Britain dress, there are far more churches which display a more radical approach to the provision of church buildings.

The Institute was actively involved in the design and building of the church at Hodge Hill, but this seems to have been the exception. Its real influence was as a source of information and inspiration; in particular, the visits to see new work on the Continent had a considerable influence on both architects and clergy. David Pendleton, who was responsible for the buiding of St. David's, Shenley Green, went on two of these tours and was greatly influenced by what he saw.

Study of Individual Churches - Birmingham Diocese.

Of the churches in the diocese that I planned to discuss, I have been unable, largely through interregnums, to visit two of the churches; St. Bernard, Hamstead, and St. James, Rounds Green. However, I have added two churches to the list since it was first compiled; St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, and St. Luke's, Kingstanding. Both have provided very helpful insights for this study.

To help in the assessment of the comparative merits and qualities of the churches of the diocese, I have divided them into a number of categories, noted below. To some degree, these categories also reflect the period, within the span of 25 years, in which they were designed and built. The churches, and their categories are as follows:

1. Continued use of temporary buildings.

St. Chad, Erdington.
Address/Location: Stoneyhurst Road, B24 8HA.
Date: 1949.

St. Clement, Castle Bromwich.
A/L: Green Lane and Clevedon Avenue, B36.
Date: 1969.
Architect:

St. Stephen the Martyr, Rednal.
A/L: Edgewood Road, B45.
Date: 1957.
Architect: J. Osborne.

2. Historicist/traditional churches.

St. Barnabas, Kingshurst.
A/L: Over Green Drive, B37.
Date: 1957.
Architect: H.W. Hobbiss.

All Saints, Shard End.
A/L: Ownall Road, B34.
Date: 1958.
Architect: F.B. Osborne.

St. Luke's, Kingstanding. 1937.

3. Festival of Britain/traditional layout.

St. Boniface, Quinton Road West, Quinton, B32.
Date: 1958/9.
Architect: G.H. White.

St. John Baptist, Longbridge.
A/L: Longbridge Lane and Turves Green, B31.
Date: 1956-8.
Architect: G.H. White.

St. Chad, Rubery, New Road, B45.
Date: 1960.
Architect: Twentyman.

St. Thomas, Garretts Green.
A/L: Garretts Green Lane, B26.
Date: 1967.
Architect: G. Winteringham.

St. John the Baptist, Harborne.
A/L: High Street, Harborne, B17.
Date: 1960.
Architect: Marriner.

4. Large Liturgical Movement churches, showing Continental influence.

St. Peter, Hall Green.
A/L: Highfield Road B28.
Date: 1964.
Architect: Norman Rider.

St. Columba's, Sutton Coldfield, (Banner's Gate).
A/L: Chester Road North and Banner's Gate Road, B73.
Date: 1957/60.
Architect: N.F. Cachemaille-Day.

St. Paul, Bordesley Green.
A/L: Belchers Lane and Bordesley Green, B9.
Date: 1968.
Architect: J.Osborne.

5. Smaller, utilitarian, Liturgical Movement churches.

St. Richard, Lea Hall.
A/L: Ridpool Road and Hallmoor Road, B33.
Date: 1965.
Architect: Denys Hinton.

St. Michael and All Angels, South Yardley.
A/L: Rowlands Road and Yew Tree Lane, B26.
Date: 1965.
Architect: Denys Hinton.

6. Medium size Liturgical Movement churches.

St. Michael and All Angels, Bartley Green.
A/L: Romsley Road and Field Lane, B32.
Date: 1964.
Architect:

St. Mark, Kingstanding.
A/L: Bandywood Crescent (via Kettlehouse Road, B44.
Date1966.
Architect:

St. David, Shenley Green, Shenley Green, off Shenley Lane, B29.
Date: 1965.
Architect:

St. Anne, West Heath.
A/L: Alvechurch Road and Lilley Lane, B38.
Date: 1966.
Architect: Harvey and Wicks.

St. Mary, Hobs Moat.
A/L: Hobs Meadow, B92.
Date: 1966.
Architect: Lawrence King.

St. Peter, Tile Cross.
A/L: Haywood Road, B33.
Date: 1968.
Architect: J. Osborne.

7. Mould-breaking churches.

St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches.
A/L: Aldridge Road and Birdbrook Road, B44.
Date: Completed 1964.
Architects: Robert Maguire and Keith Murray.

SS Philip and James, Hodge Hill, Birmingham,
Built: 1968.
Architect: Martin Purdy.

8. Circa 1970, Liturgical Movement and multi-purpose complex. Culmination of the work of the Institute.

St. George, Birmingham (Newtown).
A/L:
Date: 1970.
Architect: RA Smeeton.

St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood.
A/l: Pike Drive, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7US.
Date: 1972.
Architect:

Group 1. The following three churches all demonstrate the continuing use of temporary, or quasi-temporary, buildings.

St. Chad, Erdington.
Address/Location: Stoneyhurst Road, B24 8HA.
Date: 1949 - hall; 1967 - church.
Architect for 1967 building - Charles Brown.
Incumbent: Revd. AR Brooks, St. Chad's Vicarage, Shepherd's Green Road, B24 8EX. 0121 373 3915/8984.
(Illustrations - see Vol. 3, pp483/4)
History.

A pamphlet, produced in 1964 to mark the jubilee of St. Chad's, sets out a brief history of the parish. It says:

> 'This little wooden Church which stands on a plot of ground between Ansell Road and Stoneyhurst Road has been in existence now for fifty years. It is our sincere hope that it may be replaced by a permanent Church building.
>
> The first church of St. Chad was a corrugated iron shed seating sixty people. The opening service was held on November 4th, 1914. ... The years since 1914 have wrought very great changes. Houses stand where cattle grazed. ... Money from a fund for a permanent Church, begun as early as November 1914, has been growing ever since. Sanction was given for money from it to be used to convert the corrugated-iron building into the present wooden building of greater length, shingle-roofed, and with greater seating capacity. This was dedicated on April 11th, 1942.
>
> A Church Hall Fund was started ... and when the 1939-45 war was over a wooden building was paid for, and foundations dug for its erection. Unfortunately, the firm from whom we had purchased this failed, and we had to start all over again. This was an unfortunate setback, but such was the will of the people of St. Chad's that on May 11th, 1949, a foundation stone was laid on these footings ... The Hall itself, a brick structure was opened by the Ven. Michael Parker ... on October 14th, 1950. Much of the work, for example, the cutting of trenches, laying of gas mains, installation of electricity, construction and fitting of a stage, the connecting of the Hall and the Church, was done voluntarily by the St. Chad's people themselves.'

Description of the buildings

The complex of buildings comprises a brick-built dual-purpose structure of 1949, which became the Hall when a church building was erected in 1967, built of two standard factory made Terrapin steel-framed units with light weight infill panels, side by side. This was followed by a more recent hall, erected circa 1974, on the site of the wooden building of 1942, which was itself a replacement of the corrugated-iron building of 1914. The church (the 1967 building) is, in effect, a flat-roofed industrial shed. This allows a very flexible layout of the worship space, although it is interrupted by a row of thin box-section steel columns, across

the centre of the building, marking the junction of the original two units. They are not seriously visually intrusive, but they are distracting.

The church is laid out with the sanctuary in the middle of one side, raised by one shallow step above the general floor level; the seating is in the form of short benches, aligned in straight rows, facing the liturgical East. The building, and the layout, is compact enough to provide a sense of 'togetherness'; unfortunately, the building - which was always intended to be temporary - is now coming to the end of its life. The roof is failing, as are the infill panels, which leaves little of the structure in a sound state.

The church seats about 150, but the average congregation at the main Sunday service of about 40 does not look 'lost' in the space.

The one feature the present incumbent particularly misses is some sort of identifying feature, so that the building can be recognized as a church for the passer-by or the visitor. It is too easy to miss the building, and dismiss it as a small industrial unit or a social centre.

The new hall is a very useful space indeed, but the parish is, in effect, poised to make a jump forward. The present collection of buildings is an extraordinary example of an ad hoc approach, making successful use of 'temporary' buildings to serve the needs of the parish. They have the advantage of providing accommodation, without an excessive financial burden for the parish, which can be used, and changed around, while the parish itself changes, and also experiments with activities and patterns of worship. There is clearly an opportunity here, but it needs a careful analysis of the needs of the parish, and imagination and initiative to lead the parishioners forward if the result is to mark a new way forward for the Church in this part of Erdington.

St. Clement, Castle Bromwich.
A/L: Green Lane and Clevedon Avenue, B36.
Date: 1969.
Architect: (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p484)

Incumbent: Revd. WJ Sillitoe, The Vicarage, Lanchester Way, B36 9JG. 0121 747 4460.

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in the report by Wallace Brown, incumbent of St. Boniface, Quinton, entitled "The Hidden Poor", which I discuss below (p321ff). In the Report, St. Clement's is included in the third group, comprising Fringe Council Estate Churches (Mixed properties; large council presence, with many privately owned).

History

A General Report on Diocesan Needs in New Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, says of Castle Bromwich:

> 'Whateley Estate. A site has been offered by Lord Newport. Consultations with Warwickshire County Council should take place at once to discover future plans. A dual purpose building and house for assistant curate are essential. This area might well stay in Castle Bromwich parish, which will be a working unit after the alienation of Shard End and Hodge Hill.'

Description

The church complex comprises: a dual-purpose flat-roofed building, of 1969, now used as the church; a small 'L' shaped hall, wrapped around two sides of the church, erected in the early 1970s with a grant from central government funds, for use for youth work; and a hall, built in the 1980s, built in the 1980s, linked to the church by a lobby entrance. I discuss the significance of government funding for buildings for Youth Work in the description of St. Philip and St. James, Hodge Hill.

The furnishings in the church are demountable, and the seating is in the form of chairs, and the whole is therefore quite flexible. The church itself is a rectangular brick built structure, with a flat roof supported on steel beams spanning the entire width, and with tall, narrow, windows lighting one side. The flat roofs have been a constant source of trouble. The walls are plastered and painted white. As presently usually laid out, the sanctuary is set against the middle of the long side with the windows, and comprises a single step timber plinth, carpeted, for the altar, with curved altar rails marking the extent of the sanctuary. Behind the altar a figure of Christ Reigning is placed on the wall. With the chairs, everything is capable of being readily removed or realigned. Although the worship area is rather bleak and featureless, when filled with people I understand there is a

good sense of togetherness. The main Sunday service is a Family Eucharist, with a congregation of 100 plus, including plenty of young people. The parish has a good social mix - i.e. there is a large proportion of owner/occupiers, as well as Council tenants, and tends to work more like a traditional parish, with organizations, than many in Birmingham. It had been intended to build a new church - circular in plan - between the present building and the street, but this never materialized.

This is another instance where the parish has utilised a collection of temporary buildings successfully.

St. Stephen the Martyr, Rednal.
A/L: Edgewood Road, B45.
Date: 1951.
Architect: J. Osborne. (Illustrations, see Vol.3, p485)

Incumbent: Revd. PW Thomas, St. Stephen's Vicarage, Edgewood Road, Rednal, B45 8SG. 0121 453 3347.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was designed by the John Osborne Partnership and erected in 1957, being intended as a dual-purpose chapel and hall with ancillary facilities, licensed for worship. An extension (for a hall) in sympathetic style and by the same architect was added in 1961-2, and a kitchen followed at its extremity. Walls are cavity (external), faced in Himley Mixed Russet bricks. Roofs are flat and of precast concrete plank construction on steel or concrete beams, surfaced with felt and latterly with Trocal membrane, having commensurate vapour barriers and insulation. By 1991 several windows had been renewed with PVC frames.

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the third group, comprising Fringe Council Estate Churches (Mixed properties; large council presence, with many privately owned).

History..

The Rednal House Estate lay within Rubery parish, and the DRC Sub-Committee for the Rednal House Estate reported to the DRC, in a report dated 23rd September 1947, that:

> 'The parish church of this estate is the wooden building of St. Chad's, Rubery. This is in a very bad state of repair and the parish is preparing to have necessary work done. The Committee feel that the present site of the church is geographically correct, and that the building of a permanent church here should have priority in diocesan building plans. There is a good wooden hall adjoining the temporary church. There should be no need for another church on the Rednal House Estate, but a site for a small hall for children's and club work might well be procured near the centre of this estate.

At the meeting of the DRC on 23rd March 1950, it was noted that the City Council had approved, in principle, the conveyance of a freehold site, and tenders were to be sought for a Hall and a house. At the meeting on 9th November 1950, it was noted that a tender of £12,500 was accepted, and the Church Hall to be commenced; permission was to be sought from the War Damage Commission to carry over the portable payment on All Saints, Small Heath, towards the cost at Rednal. The first sod was cut on the site in January 1951. At the DRC meeting in 8th February 1951, it was noted that a licence had

been granted for the new Parsonage. The foundation stone of the new Church Hall was laid on 21st April 1951, and the Bishop of Birmingham dedicated the Church Hall on 9th December 1951.

At the DRC meeting on 7th June 1951, it was noted that the War Damage Commission had agreed to the transfer of the payment made in respect of St. Catherine, Nechells.

At the DRC meeting on 24th February 1956 it was reported that the dual-purpose building of St. Stephen's was a very good building, but it was hoped to build a new church in ten years time. This idea was abandoned, and by the meeting on 7th February 1958, it was reported that it was proposed to build a Hall, with War Damage Commission funds from St. Catherine's, Nechells, and to use St. Stephen's as a Church only.

At the DRC meeting on 10th December 1958, the committee recommended that unexpended monies from the War Damage Commission payment on St. Catherine's, Nechells (about £4,000), be spent on additional premises. The new hall was built in 1962, enabling the original building to be used solely as a church.

Description of the present buildings

The date of 1957 in the DAC records is incorrect. 1957 is the year in which the new Statutory District of St. Stephen, Rednal, was inaugurated, As the records of the DRC, and the Silver Jubilee Booklet, make clear the present church is the dual-purpose Hall, erected in 1951.

The church and hall comprise a modest group of low, flat-roofed buildings, and the church itself is an interesting survival, and continued use, of one of the early dual-purpose buildings. The construction of the roof, with flat RC slabs, has inevitably given rise to major problems, and the roof ponded badly; it has been re-clad, and the down pipes are regularly cleaned, so that problems at present are minimized. It would be possible, with sufficient funds, to erect a shallow pitched roof above the present structure. Because the building is small, and accessible, it has lent itself to Do it Yourself repairs, and many of the fittings and furnishings have been made by local people. There is a very considerable pool of skills amongst the population, many of whom work at the local car factory.

The church is a modest, rectangular space, with the sanctuary, at the East End, marked by a single step, with movable altar rails, and with seating in the form of chairs. The church has been modified, with the formation of a side chapel out of a vestry, and the enclosure of part of the West end to form a small meeting room. The sanctuary is fairly clear of clutter and provides a clear generous space for the liturgy, and the church itself provides a modest, and intimate, space for worship. The 1962 hall provides a very useful general-purpose space, and on the afternoon I visited was being used for a dance class and club.

The complex seems to work very well for the present needs. The church, with its fresh coat of paint inside, looks good and works well for worship; the story of St. Stephen's, Rednal, shows the wisdom of building modestly, and allowing the local parish time to decide what it needs in the way of buildings to carry out its mission. The decision not to proceed with the building of a new church, in the early 1960s, was clearly a prudent decision, although the booklet on the history of St. Stephen's, compiled for the Silver Jubilee in 1976, comments that:

> 'The need (for a new hall) arose , as the idea of a permanent church was not likely to materialize for a great many years, and while the chance may have been lost to build an exciting new church, the lack of such a church does not, obviously, appear to have diminished the effectiveness of the mission of the parish. Although there is the recurring problem of the roof, the present building is not so large that its problems overwhelm the capabilities of the parishioners, and it is eminently flexible, so that it can be adapted for future needs, within the constraints of its size.

In the introduction to the Silver Jubilee booklet, the incumbent at the time, the Revd. RDC Whiteman, remarks:

> 'From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have felt the need to have their own church building. These have acted as a focal point for the spiritual and worshipping life of each church community, as well as places where Christians can meet for fellowship, education and recreation.
>
> In each case, the church building becomes endowed with the spirit of the community of people who use it. The occupiers of a building make it what it is - more than bricks and mortar - a place with atmosphere, somewhere in which we are at home and grow to love.
>
> This is very much the case with St. Stephen's Church which outwardly is a plain, insignificant building, with no splendid architectural features such as we associate with other Parish churches. However, it is functional and well-suited to its purpose and in these days economical and easy to maintain. Its simple exterior belies the beautiful and rich life that is contained within its walls.'

Twenty years on, this still seems to hold true. At present, and for the foreseeable future, the buildings serve very well; if the parish acquires a revolutionary view of its missionary task, it is not constrained, either by an over-large building, in which surviving members of the congregation have invested heavily, emotionally and financially, or by a building of such architectural quality or importance, that conservation becomes a major constraint.

Group 2. The following group of three churches all demonstrate an historicist approach to their architecture, and a traditional approach to layout.

St. Barnabas, Kingshurst.
A/L: Over Green Drive, B37.
Date: 1957.
Architect: H.W. Hobbiss. (Illustrations, see Vol.3, p486)

Incumbent: Revd. Dr. Jan Fortune-Wood, St. Barnabas' Vicarage, Over Green Drive, Birmingham 37. 0121 770 3972.
Secy.: Mrs Gwen Martin, 30 Dunton Road, Kingshurst, B37 6JN. 0121 770 1698.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'St. Barnabas' is a simple, but substantially-built, church of pleasant red brick to a design by the late Holland W. Hobbiss, and was completed 1955-57. It has cavity walls with patent stone dressings to the windows and is roofed with Roman clay tiles. The windows are glazed with clear glass. The church was built to serve a new housing estate and can accommodate four hundred people. The pulpit, lectern, reading desks and communion rail are all constructed from oak and there is a stone font.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate).

History.

At the DRC meeting on 22nd January 1953, it was reported that the Kingshurst Estate was likely to house 10,000, or more. A site had been suggested at the centre of the estate; negotiations were to begin with the City Council for the site.

At the DRC meeting on 24th September 1953 it was considered that a Chapel should be built, larger than that at Tile Cross, and should hold 80-100, and a hall for 200, with two other rooms, and "some sort of tower or distinguishing feature."

It was decided at the DRC meeting on 16th December 1953, that out of £80,000 allocated by the Church Commissioners for the New Areas, Longbridge (Hawkesley Farm) should be allocated £15,000; and World's End, Kingshurst, Hob's Moat and Garrett's Green, £12,000 each.

At the DRC meeting on 3rd February 1954, plans by MAH Hobbiss were considered and generally approved. The church would hold 200, "which is the minimum required if this were to become a parish church". By the meeting of 26th May 1954 a site was offered for £1,350, which was accepted.

A General report on Diocesan Needs in the New Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, says:

'Plans in hand - building to begin in March. A vicarage will be needed here since it must become a separate parish of 8,000 people in the near future.'

By 3rd February 1955 the contract for purchase of the site was ready for signing. A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 notes that the church will be consecrated the following year, and that the hall was completed and in regular use for services, etc.

The Diocesan Leaflet, for October 1957, carried an article on the newly consecrated church, and the work of the parish, headed "Kingshurst - A Circle with a Centre" in these words:

'A few years ago Kingshurst consisted of an old farm and a handful of houses. The population is now 7,000 and, within three years, will rise to 12,000 people. With the help of the mother church of Coleshill, the work of founding the church in Kingshurst began two years ago. A priest and his wife came to live on the estate. Services of Holy Communion were celebrated in the house, and short evening services took place in other people's houses. The small nucleus of the Church grew, and nine months later met for worship in a newly built school. The Church Hall was completed in October, 1956, and in June, 1957, the new church of St. Barnabas was consecrated. By this time the Christian fellowship had achieved sufficient stability and strength to enable it to accept the responsibilities of a separate parish. This was duly inaugurated during the Consecration Service.

The new building has a seating capacity of 200 which could be increased easily to nearly 300; it is adjacent to the hall which seats 200 people. With its attractive tower and long sloping roof it is "modern" but restrained n appearance, and fits well into the background of a new estate.

Inside, the low timbered roof is lightened by plenty of colour. The sanctuary and choir are furnished in natural oak in simple designs. The communion rail is curved and behind the altar table, which is covered with a fair linen cloth, hangs a plain rust coloured curtain. The cross and candlesticks in Renaissance style are of wood, painted gold. The general impression of the interior is one of light, space and simplicity.

The "House Church" or "School Church" provides exciting and rewarding work, but there comes a time when bricks and mortar are a necessity if the Christian fellowship is really to take root and grow. The Church in Kingshurst has its "centre" and is profoundly grateful to all who, by their contributions to the Appeal, have built it.'

Description of the Church

St. Barnabas is a late example of the work of the Arts and Crafts movement, with no recognition of the 'Festival of

Britain' style which characterises so many of the Birmingham churches of the 1950s. It is, in effect, a re-creation of a 'typical' small village church, which the movement did so well. The scale and materials sit very happily indeed in the midst of the brick-built housing around; while it is sufficiently distinctive in its design, and forms a landmark with its tower, to say "here is the church", it is comfortable and unthreatening, and of a better quality - of design, materials, details and execution - than the buildings around.

The church comprises nave and flanking aisles, with the nave arcades formed as simple pointed arches - a simplified Gothic - and the windows are stone mullioned, echoing the Tudor Revival, with its overtones of 'Englishness' and domesticity, which contribute to the image of a typical village church. The fittings and furnishings, again, are simple in design, but both well detailed and well executed, and the floor is a good quality wood block floor.

The chancel is long enough to accommodate a small choir, with chairs instead of choir stalls. The wooden altar stands on a curved plinth, paved, and with a stone kerb, and with free-standing rails, curved in plan.

The building is in generally good physical condition; until recently the subsidiary accommodation had flat roofs, which have recently been re-formed as pitched roofs tiled to match the rest of the building. This enhances the distinctive appearance of the church. The additional accommodation includes a very useful hall, which, at the time of my visit, was in use by a dance class for the retired!

The building works surprisingly well. At first sight, a building of the 1950s, in such an historicist style, and making no obvious bow towards either the Liturgical Movement or contemporary architecture, should be an oddity. However, it is both intimate and flexible; the general scale of the building gives the sense of intimacy, and the flexibility of furnishings - the general seating uses chairs, and the low-key effect of the choir seating - also chairs - avoids the dominating and rigid effect which one associates with historicist - especially neo-Gothic - buildings of the first half of this century. Although the celebrant, when at the altar, is some 40' from the front row of chairs, this distance does not appear to diminish the sense of participation; for a Family Service a moveable altar is placed on the first step of the chancel. The building is eminently useable and adaptable for its parishioners today, and the quality of the fittings and furnishings enhance that character.

All Saints, Shard End.
A/L: Ownall Road, B34.
Date: 1958.
Architect: F.J. Osborne. (Illustrations and notes; see Vol.3,p486ff)

Incumbent: Revd. John Ward, The Vicarage, 47 Shustoke Road, B34 7BA. 0121 747 3299.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'All Saints Church was completed in 1955 by FJ Osborne and stands in one of the largest post-war housing schemes within the City of Birmingham's boundary. It is constructed in yellow brick with a squat tower over a short cloister, which connects the church and church hall. The interior has a nave with narrow passage aisles and nine bay arcades of tall brick columns patterned to give a twisted effect.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate).

History.

The Diocesan Leaflet, October 1955, includes the following description of the work at Shard End; it says:

> On Easter Day, 1954, the Bishop planted a cross to mark the site of the new church, and now both church and hall are nearing completion. In the building of the church use has been made of all modern materials, though not divorced from the traditional style. The length of the nave is 86 feet, chancel and sanctuary 30 feet. In width the building is 30 feet, exclusive of the side aisles; in height it is 24 feet. An interesting feature of the church is the tower containing a room called, in the the plan, the library, and entered from the parish hall, which is linked to the church by a covered cloister. The church will be heated by the latest form of heating - electric elements set beneath the floor; it will seat 400 people, and will cost approximately £32,000. The architect is Mr. F. I. Osborne, FRIBA, and the builders are Messrs. C. Bryant and Son Ltd.'

A detailed history of the planning and building of All Saints', based on the minutes of the Diocesan Reorganization Committee, is included in Vol.3, pp487/9.

Description of the church today.

The church building is traditional in architecture and layout, and large in size. In style it may be described as 'stripped-down Romanesque', especially with its massive, rather Germanic, tower with its steep pitched roof.

Internally there is a wide nave, with narrow aisles, and round-arched arcades, with transverse arches to the aisles. The columns are of brick, with projecting headers in a spiral pattern. Although there is a steeply-pitched roof, the ceiling is formed as a flat ceiling supported on cross beams, which appear to be of reinforced concrete. The font is at the west end, and the sanctuary is in a chancel at the east end, narrower than the nave. There are no choir stalls in the chancel, and the altar is brought forward, with seating for the President and assistants behind. The furnishings generally of of good quality - as one would expect for this period, with a good wood-block floor, clergy stalls of a good contemporary design and well-executed, a pair of matching ambos, octagonal in plan, of plastered brick, relieved with a square stone panel on each face, and the one which serves as a pulpit has a wooden canopy above. The pattern of worship here falls within the Catholic tradition, and there is a side chapel for the Reserved Sacrament. I shall discuss the presence of the Catholic tradition in Birmingham below (see p326).

I expected the incumbent to complain about the size and orientation of the building; instead, he sees it as a challenge and an opportunity. Although strongly directional, the building is a good deal more flexible than one might expect, since the seating is in the forms of chairs. The present incumbent has been in the parish for only nine months at the time of writing. He has asked the Bishop for a Review; that is, for an Inspection by a team of specialists to identify the needs of this particular parish, and therefore the areas of potential growth. He is still looking at ways of working the parish, and he is looking for ways to make greater and more frequent use of the building. Since the parish is in the process of change, it is difficult to come to many conclusions about the effectiveness of the building, and it is not clear whether future use will result in a single large multi-purpose space, as has happened at St. Thomas, Garrett's Green, or whether some form of sub-division will be required, as has happened at St. Luke's, Kingstanding. Although the parish shares many problems with other Outer Ring parishes, there appears to be a large well of good will in the parish, and potential to bring in younger people.

St. Luke's, Caversham Road, Kingstanding and St. Mary's, Pype Hayes. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, pp490/1)

St. Luke's, Kingstanding, falls, strictly speaking, outside the scope of this study. It was built in the late 1930s, and it is another essay in the Neo-Romanesque, In architectural and planning terms it is not a forward-looking building, nor is it of particular architectural significance, nor was it influential. However, it was mentioned to me by a number of incumbents in the immediate area as a building - and a parish - which I should visit. The impression I was given was that it was a building with almost insuperable problems. In addition, as a traditionally designed, Neo-Romanesque building, it offered an interesting parallel to All Saints, Shard End.

The church was designed to a similar scale to All Saints, with a nave and two narrow aisles, but with the nave rising to a clerestorey, and with an open timber roof, unlike All Saints, Shard End. The nave was to consist of three and a half bays, with a chancel beyond. The nave arcades are formed with low and wide round arches, with narrow round-arched clerestorey windows in triplets above each bay. The west end terminates in a gable wall, with four clerestorey windows above a small projecting apse - designed as a baptistery, and there is a tower to one side.

The church was left incomplete at the outbreak of War; unusually, the East end was not built. After the War, an East End was built, but only to the depth of half a bay, very simply, and in a not-quite-matching brick. By the late 1980s the building was far too large for the needs of its congregation, and in a very poor condition.

A major re-ordering was subsequently carried out. This was based on a wider vision of the rôle of the Church in the community. The leaflet, accompanying the appeal - for £250,000 - asks:

> 'Will you help to make this Church the Centre of our Community in Kingstanding? We hope to provide:- Luncheon club for the elderly, Youth club, Parent and Toddler groups, Help for single parents, uniformed organisations, Fellowship activities.'

It continues:

> 'To serve the people of Kingstanding more fully, St. Luke's must change. We want to create a new hall, with facilities for young and old alike. It will have access for the disabled, a kitchen and toilets. This hall will be a focus for groups and activities within the community, and we believe would be of lasting benefit to the people of Kingstanding.'

The nave was reduced to two and a half bays, and the altar was moved into the apse - formerly the baptistery - at the West end. The third bay, and the former chancel - which was the

full width of the nave - was separated from the new nave by a solid wall, and an entrance lobby, community room, and offices above, were created in the new space. The wall at the rear of the nave has three arches, echoing the arches of the half-bay at the West end; two are blind openings, one houses the entrance doors into the church from the lobby. Above the centre arch is a semi-circular arch, traced in tile-on-edge, curiously reminiscent of Brixworth!

The interior of the church is treated simply; the walls are plastered and painted in a light colour, the floor is a good quality wood block floor, the altar is of timber, with an arcaded support, in a Romanesque style, and the seating is in the form of chairs. The worship is in the Catholic tradition, and the parish is part of a team with St. Mark's, Kingstanding, and St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches.

The incumbent recalls that the architect for the re-ordering was keen to add altar rails, and pews for the churchwardens; neither were needed, and they were not installed.

The building appears to work well for liturgy, and the newly created additional space provides space for a luncheon club - in use when I visited, a small meeting rooms and an office. The main Sunday Eucharist attracts a congregation of about 100 adults, and some 20 to 30 children.

The re-ordering was funded partly from the sale of spare land around the church for social housing, partly from local authority funding, because of the social work carried out, including the club for the elderly, and partly from Inner City funds.

St. Mary's, Pype Hayes, is another Neo-Romanesque church, built in the late 1930s. This was completed, and was built to an even larger scale than All Saints or St. Luke's. Its problems - too large a building, too small a congregation, and an excess of social problems - have yet to be solved. The solution will need very substantial funds, and imagination, to be achieved.

Group 3. The following group of five churches all demonstrate a traditional approach to the layout of the interior, but use contemporary architectural dress, often influenced by the buildings of the Festival of Britain.

St. Boniface, Quinton Road West.
A/L: Quinton Road West, Quinton, B32.
Date: 1958/9.
Architect: G.H. While. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p491)

Incumbent: Revd. W Brown, St. Boniface Vicarage, Quinton Road West, B32 2QD 0121 427 1939.

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the first group, comprising Predominantly Newer Type Council Estate Churches (Church actually on Estate).

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'St. Boniface was completed in 1959 to a design by GH While and is similar in conception to St. John, Longbridge, by the same architect. The West front is gabled with an octagonal bell turret with copper gables and a central ball and cross on a pinnacle. Interior consists of an undivided open space beneath a steeply pitched roof that is pierced by four dormers on each side. The West end is at a higher level and the aisles are marked by low flat ceilings. Attention is concentrated on the cross at the East end, the East wall being of brick without openings and with the North and South chancel windows direct in (directing ?) light towards the altar. The altar is by WH Bidlake from the demolished church of St. Stephen, Newtown Row. The other furnishings are pleasant simple designs by the architect.'

History of the parish

The parish comprises the area known generally as World's End. A report on Diocesan Needs, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954 comments:

> 'This should be made a statutory district at once, and become a parish in due course. It will need a church, a hall and the vicarage will need the planned enlargement.'

A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 states that tenders have been received for the building of a new church, and work will begin shortly. The approximate cost was £40,000. The first sod was cut, in the presence of the Bishop and the Mayor, on 2nd March 1957, and the foundation stone laid on 12th June 1957.

The Diocesan Leaflet, January 1958, that the building of St. Boniface is proceeding satisfactorily.

Description of the building

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P200, thus:

> 'Similar in conception to St. John, Longbridge, by the same architect. The W front is gabled with above an octagonal bell-turret with copper gables and a central ball and cross on a pinnacle. The interior consists of an undivided open space beneath a steeply pitched roof that is pierced by four dormers on each side. The W end is at a higher level, and the aisles are marked by low flat ceilings. Here, as at St. John, Longbridge, attention is concentrated on the cross at the E end, the E wall being of brick and without openings, and the N and S chancel windows direct the light towards the altar. ... (Apart from the altar, cross and candle sticks) the other furnishings are to pleasant simple designs by the architect.'

A plan of the church, dated March 1956, by Bromilow, While and Smeaton, survives among the parish papers, deposited in the City Archives. The structure uses an RSJ framework, cased in concrete, and faced in brick externally, It is rectangular in plan, with the font at the West end, flank by the choir. The altar, at the East end, is by Bidlake, and was salvaged from a demolished church in the City, and the chandelier came from St. Margaret's, Ladsam Street. The vestries are to one side of the altar. The layout of the church is strongly axial, and the low side walls and the steep roof - clad internally in dark timber horizontal boarding - emphasize this. Together with the East wall, which is finished internally in Brown Multi Brick, and is relieved by full-height vertical recesses, the general effect is distinctly gloomy and rather overpowering. However, this appears not to detract from the usefulness of the building for worship; the incumbent says that it works wonderfully for worship, not least because there are enough people to fill it!

The sanctuary, at the East end, is raised by a single step above the level of the church, with simple benches for altar rails. The altar itself, by Bidlake, is an elaborate turn-of-the-century essay in the Gothic style, with three painted panels in a somewhat Pre-Raphaelite manner, enclosed by four pilasters each with a figure in a shallow canopied niche, all liberally enriched with gilding. There are flanking candlesticks in the classical manner, in silver or silver-plate, and a richly decorated cross, also finished in silver, on the East wall, behind and above the altar. Although these sit somewhat oddly, in style, with the building itself, the quality of the these particular fittings, and the appropriate-ness of the colours of the altar against the wood and brick of the building, result in the enhancement of the church.

The main body of the church is floored in a chequer-board pattern of tiles, with seating in the form of chairs. The main entrance to the church is at the West end, by the font; due to the fall of the site this entrance is at a higher level than the floor of the nave, which is approached by a steep

flight of steps, which prove a considerable hazard for many members of the congregation. The incumbent suggested two improvements to the building; the first is to remodel the dangerous steps at the entrance; the second is to raise the level of the altar by some six inches, sufficient to improve visibility, but not such that it would dominate the building.

Work of the parish today.

The present incumbent has been here for the last eleven years. He has carried out a very careful study of the nature of the outer ring estates, and of the type of ministry needed to minister to them. His conclusion is that a new, missionary, approach is needed in these areas, which are not traditional working class areas - populated by people with a working class ethic, but are areas populated by a white under-class. I have described this at some length in the concluding section on ministry, at the end of this section on Birmingham Diocese, since this work is relevant to a considerable number of parishes with churches built in the immediate post-war period.

The congregation here at the main Sunday service approaches 200 - this is four or five times the size of congregations usually found in parishes of this type. The church is open on weekday mornings, for coffee, socializing, and company, as an open-door to the community, and is staffed on these occasions by volunteers from the parish. The staff includes a full-time youth worker. The hall, which could provide useful facilities, has come to the end of its life, but the church itself appears to work well for worship, although the building is somewhat oppressive inside, with a curious mixture of features, and a generally 'traditional' - i.e. nineteenth century - layout. In spite of this, the church is well used, and the large congregation overcomes the apparent disadvantages of the building.

The work in this parish is a most exciting example of a new approach to the spreading of the Gospel in what is a missionary situation. It makes use of the building, very effectively, but the work is God-centred and people-centred; the building serves its purpose, but it does not determine or dictate the pattern of work in the parish.

St. John Baptist, Longbridge.
A/L: Longbridge Lane and Turves Green, B31.
Date: 1956/8.
Architect: G.H. While. (Illustrations and historical notes, see Vol.3, pp492-497)

Incumbent: Revd. MS Bridgen, St. John's Vicarage, 220 Longbridge Lane, B31 4JT. 0121 475 3484.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'St. John Baptist church was completed in 1958 to a design by GH While. It is a rectangular brick building with a projecting chancel, the roof being continuous from the East to the West gables. It has a rectangular South East tower with a copper-covered double-gable roof. The West entrance porch projects and is made part of the adjoining line of the single storey hall and office buildings. On the mullions of the West window there are five oak statues designed by the architect. The interior is a single undivided space which concentrates attention on the cross at the East end. The architect designed the furnishings which are of a simple but satisfying line.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the third group, comprising Fringe Council Estate Churches (Mixed properties; large council presence, with many privately owned).

History of Longbridge; formerly Hawkesley Farm.

The parish began its life in 1918 when part of an existing shed, built in brick and timber, was sub-let to the Church for use as a Mission Room for an area described at the time as: "Austin Village, Northfield". It was situated in Hawkesley Crescent, opposite Central Avenue. In early discussions about the new church, built in the 1950s, the area is described as "Hawkesley Farm". The more detailed history of the parish, and its new church, is discussed, on the basis of the minutes of the Diocesan Re-organisation Committee, in the Appendix.

Description of the building

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Niklaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P191, thus:

> 'A rectangular brick building with a projecting chancel, the roof being continuous from the E gable to the W gable, and a rectangular SE tower with a copper-covered double gable roof. The W entrance porch projects and is made part of the adjoining line of one-storey hall and office buildings. On the mullions of the large W window behind there are five oak statues, designed by the architect. The effect of the pleasant undivided space of the interior,

somewhat contradicted by the many surface textures and the asymmetrical lighting.'

This is another variant on the reinterpretation of the late nineteenth century church pattern, in Festival of Britain guise. There is a complex of church, hall and vicarage, set in a generous plot with generally well-tended grounds and a weathered, close-boarded, fence. With its roofs sweeping down relatively low - over the aisles - the general scale of the buildings sits more happily with the surrounding housing than is often the case.

The church is a hall building, with no interrupting columns, and a narrower chancel at the East End. The main body of the church is about 90' long by 50' wide, and the layout is strictly axial, with the altar at the East End - slightly forward of the East wall to permit westward-facing celebration, and the seating in the form of chairs, linked in fives, and arranged in rigid, East-facing, rows. Although there are no interrupting columns, two aisles are defined by their lowered ceilings and the consequent boxing-in of the upper part of the nave. The high roof over the 'nave', with its dark timber structure and the dark stained timber cladding to he boxed-in volume of the aisle roofs, together with the East wall, which is faced in dark grey tiles, helps to emphasize the axial and traditional layout. There has been a structural problem with the roof caused by the spreading of the roof trusses. This was caused by poor construction - the contractor went bankrupt in the middle of the contract - but the trusses have now been heavily reinforced. On the East wall, above the altar, is a very large black and silver Celtic cross; over-scaled for its design and dominating, over-powering, and somewhat depressing.

The sanctuary is defined by two raised steps; it is reasonably generous in size, and uncluttered, with movable furnishings, permitting a dignified approach to the liturgy. The church is floored in a good quality wood block.

The principal Sunday service is at 10.30am, and is generally a Family Service, with Family Communion once a month. The parish is not, at present, liturgically-minded, and the present sanctuary seems to serve well. In general, the church works well for the needs of the worship of the congregation today. Although somewhat old-fashioned in its initial concept, the building is adaptable, when the Spirit moves. There is an extremely good hall, and ancillary rooms, which are well used. Among the activities is the Age Concern/St. John's Visiting Service for the Elderly.

St. Chad, Rubery.
A/L: New Road, B45.
Date: 1958-9.
Architect: Lavender Twentyman and Percy. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p496)

Incumbent: Revd. JJJ Barrett, St. Chad's Vicarage, 160A New Road, Rednal, B45 9JA. 0121 453 3255.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was completed in 1956/7 to a design by Lavender Twentyman and Percy of Wolverhampton. The building has a low pitched roof and a square brick campanile stands separately from it. The side walls of the church have a window grill along their complete length, Inside it is a single chamber church with an octagonal chapel to the right hand side of the altar. The East wall is blank and simply patterned inside (i.e. with a geometric pattern of stone panels), the whole effect is of a light and pleasant building.'

History.

The DRC was informed, at its meeting on 21st February 1946, that the City Surveyor had written to the Archdeacon, to confirm that a site for a church will be reserved, when the lay-out of the new housing area is considered.

The Rednal House Estate lay within Rubery parish, and the DRC Sub-Committee for the Rednal House Estate reported to the DRC, in a report dated 23rd September 1947, that:

> 'The parish church of this estate is the wooden building of St. Chad's, Rubery. This is in a very bad state of repair and the parish is preparing to have necessary work done. The Committee feel that the present site of the church is geographically correct, and that the building of a permanent church here should have priority in diocesan building plans. There is a good wooden hall adjoining the temporary church. There should be no need for another church on the Rednal House Estate, but a site for a small hall for children's and club work might well be procured near the centre of this estate.

At the DRC meeting on 20th July 1953 the committee was informed that the parish had asked for a list of architects favoured by the diocese.

At the DRC meeting on 26th May 1954 a plan of a church, to seat 275, prepared by Lavender Twentyman at the request of the PCC was considered, and the PCC was commended fir its initiative. At the DRC meeting on 24th February 1956, it was reported that the site opposite the Austin Works had been withdrawn, and another site was possible. The plan of the new Church, by Lavender Twentyman, was enlarged to seat 400.

A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 reported that Rubery Farm, Rubery, had been purchased as a temporary vicarage, and plans for the replacement of the wooden church of St. Chad were proceeding. The Diocesan Leaflet, January 1958, reports that tenders are awaited for the replacement St. Chad's. The foundation stone was laid on 26th June 1958, and the building was completed on 17th December 1959.

Description of the present church

This is a typical Lavender Twentyman church of the period; an over-large recreation of a late-nineteenth century church in 'Festival of Britain' mode. It is a large rectangular hall structure, with a slightly narrower chancel at the East end, and a tall, skeletal, tower in brick and reinforced concrete, housing two bells. The main structure is of reinforced concrete, although this is largely concealed from view behind brickwork, and there are intermediate column supports inside, which appear to mark out the presence of narrow aisles. The roof is of concrete, clad with copper.

The infill to the walls is of facing brickwork and concrete block, with slate cladding and glass block to the west wall. The mullions to the glazing on the north and south are of concrete. The chapel has a pitched concrete roof, also clad in copper, and the large bell tower - some 65' high - is in reinforced concrete and brick. The last Quinquennial Inspection Report, of November 1992, notes that very few alterations have been carried out since the church was completed nearly forty years ago.

It was given a traditional layout, with the altar at the East End - now brought slightly forward, separated by choir stalls from the main body of seating, which is in the form of chairs, linked in threes, and facing East in parallel rows. The last Quinquennial Inspection Report estimates the seating capacity at about 200 in the nave, and 35 within the choir. The main body of the building is about 45' wide, and 110' from the altar to the West wall, with the front row of chairs about 45' from the altar. Typically for a building of this period, the furniture is well-designed and well made. The woodwork is of good quality, and a 'matching set', and the paving to the chancel, including the sanctuary, is in Hopton Wood stone. The building is very high, expensive to heat, and the light bulbs are difficult to change. There is a very useful side chapel.

Present condition of the building.

The last Quinquennial Inspection Report comments that:

> 'The PCC fabric committee are clearly making a commendable effort in maintaining the church and dealing with the items raised in the last report.'

The Report notes that the previous Report was written little more than a year previously, and comments that some work

recommended then, including repointing of the concrete window mullions and the stone cladding, had still to be carried out. The Report notes the usual assortment of peeling paint, loose paving slabs, repairs to boundary fencing, defective downpipes, work to the mens' toilet, etc. Potentially more serious, the Report comments:

> 'The hairline cracking of the concrete to the mullions and to the exposed perimeter of the roof give some cause for concern and advice from a structural engineer with particular expertise of reinforced concrete structures is recommended, possibly with chemical analysis and opening up of the concrete to expose the reinforcement in a series of spot checks. It would not appear to have reached a critical stage as yet but consideration as to how the problem could be arrested should be given.'

Of the roof it says:

> 'The roof to the main church, the vestry wing, and the Lady Chapel are clad in copper with copper gutters and flashings. All appear to be in fair condition, though the gutters show signs of distress along their length. Joints in the length of the gutter appear to be beginning to give problems. We would also recommend that the gutter to the south elevation is fitted with a grille to prevent leaves building up and reducing flow capacity of the gutters.. ... The roof to the tower is copper clad and also in fair condition.'

Of the tower it says:

> 'The tower is generally in good structural condition. It appears from the log that the internal faces of the tower were repointed 7 years previously but the external faces are now in need of complete repointing.'

In general, the parish is on top of the task of maintaining its buildings, and although there are problems looming, they are not such as to prove insoluble, or to require the abandonment or demolition of the church.

Present use of the building

The present congregation at the main Sunday service - Parish Eucharist - is about 80 - scattered around the seating, although the church is full for occasions such as Remembrance Sunday, Christingle, etc. The principle Sunday service is the Parish Eucharist, at 10am, and during Lent there was the frequent devotion of the Stations of the Cross. On Maundy Thursday there was a service of Thanksgiving for the Institution of the Holy Eucharist. There was no suggestion, during my visit, that the parishioners thought of themselves as belonging to the Catholic wing of the Church of England, and this is perhaps a measure of the extent to which the Eucharist has become the centre of worship widely within the Church of England, and the extent to which the party affiliations of half a century ago are being dissipated.

The wooden hall, mentioned as being in existence in 1947, has now reached the end of its life; it is to be demolished, and Sheltered Housing erected in its place. The local authority has converted a former nearby school for social uses; this is used by many organisations, including the scouts, and provides a better standard of accommodation, for general social purposes, than was provided by the old wooden hall. The parish are now looking at ways of using the present church building more effectively and more imaginatively. The octagonal chapel, set to one side of the church and linked to it by a short corridor, provides a very good facility for weekday services or small meetings. It is carefully decorated and furnished, and offers a very pleasant setting. As part of experimentation with liturgy, the altar is occasionally brought forward to the front edge of the sanctuary - it is wooden and easily moved - and the chairs have been moved and Fairs and other activities have been held in the church, but it is taking time to work out where the parish goes next.

Although the building is very much 'of its period', it is light and airy, and its internal layout is a good deal more flexible than one might expect from this type of church. It has considerable potential for adaptation, when, and if, the parish decide the direction in which they go next.

St. Thomas, Garretts Green.
A/L: Garretts Green Lane, B26.
Date: 1967.
Architect: G. Winteringham. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p497)

Incumbent: Revd. AE Ash, The Vicarage, 112 Rotherfield Road, B26 2SH. 0121 743 2971.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'St. Thomas, Garretts Green, was completed 1958-60 by Graham Winteringham of ST Walker and Partners; the architect Mr. R Tolley is a partner with the practice, Mr Winteringham having retired. The church is constructed in brick with reinforced concrete portal frames whose shapes make a pleasant effect in the interior. There is a North West porch with a simple tower above, an undivided rectangular nave to a narrower chancel with sloping walls. There is a North East Chapel with a hall beyond. Furnishings are described as "good and simple". The dominating feature in the church is a mural on the East wall by Mervyn Wright, a full length figure of St. Thomas. Iconographically it is complex and unusual, but it is a compelling piece and is one of a few examples of a contemporary mural of quality.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate).

History.

At the meeting of the DRC on 23rd March 1950, it was noted that the City Council had approved, in principle, the conveyance of a freehold site.

It was decided at the DRC meeting on 16th December 1953, that out of £80,000 allocated by the Church Commissioners for the New Areas, Longbridge (Hawkesley Farm) should be allocated £15,000; and World's End, Kingshurst, Hob's Moat and Garrett's Green, £12,000 each.

At the DRC meeting on 26th May 1954 plans by ST Walker, Architect, were generally approved, and at the meeting on 24th June 1954 the sketch plans were approved. By 30th September 1954 final drawings were being prepared. By 28th October 1954 it was reported that the estimates had come in at £49,000, and this was 'to be looked at'. At the DRC meeting on 5th December 1957 it was reported that the War Damage Commission payment on St. Thomas's, Bath Row, was to be ported to Garrett's Green.

A General report on Diocesan Needs in the New Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954 says of Garrett's Green:

'A really good building, church cum hall, is an urgent need. A house should also be provided, capable of becoming a vicarage.'

A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 notes that a house at 371 Barrows Lane had been purchased as a clergy house, and that working drawings for the new church and parochial hall were nearing completion, and it was expected to go to tender shortly. The Diocesan Leaflet, January 1958, reports that site works have commenced.

At the DRC meeting on 12th October 1959 it was reported that the Elim Foursquare Gospel Church had applied for planning permission for a site at Garrett's Green. By 19th October 1960 it was reported that the Church of St. Thomas was dedicated on 17th September, and the building of the Vicarage was progressing.

Description of the church.

At first sight the building is rather dull! It is, in effect, a hall structure, but to a larger scale than was used for the early dual-purpose buildings. The church is a simple rectangle, with a shallow-pitched roof, constructed with a RC portal frame with large areas of glazing occupying much of the space between the trusses, and otherwise clad externally in brick. There is a tall brick tower in the middle of one side. To the rear of the church is a hall - of a utilitarian pattern, with a common entrance area to both.

The sanctuary occupies the easternmost bay of the building, and is reduced in width to define the area, and add emphasis; the choir and organ occupy the last full-width bay of the building. The floor is of wood block, and the seating is in the form of chairs. The font is opposite the entrance, at the west end.

The church is generally well-built, and provides a large, open, airy space for worship. The original layout is strongly traditional, with the centre line of the seating axial upon the altar, set at the east end, and emphasized by the procession of the structural arches. Its form and layout appear to pay no heed to the Liturgical Movement; by 1958 this was not yet making its influence felt in the diocese.

If one were starting to build a church in Garrett's Green today, it would not look like the present St. Thomas's, but, perhaps surprisingly, in view of the nature of the building, it is actually a rather useful building for the needs of the parish today. It provides a large, sound, open space, and the use of chairs gives a very high degree of flexibility. For the Parish Communion, the chairs can be laid out in a curve, facing a moveable altar brought forward to the front of the choir; for baptisms, the chairs can be laid out in a circle around the font.

There is the need for a great deal of work among young people; during last summer - 1996 - a Children's Club was held in the

church. The chairs were stacked in the sanctuary, which was screened off from the nave, and activities included a Bouncy Castle, which was wildly successful, and a visit from an urban farm, with birds, including an owl. This was a new experience for the children of the estate, and one which totally captivated them. A full-time Youth Worker is employed, who uses a double-decker 'bus for work on the estate, on the basis of going out to the youth, rather expecting them to come to a Youth Club, in a church building. This is increasingly the pattern of work among young people, particularly in the large Council estates.

There is a useful hall, with additional accommodation with very useful small rooms. In addition to the youth work, there is a Community Centre, with a Credit Union, and a money adviser; an Alzheimer's Club, and a canteen run by a group of people with learning difficulties.

The incumbent's aim is to develop the Church for the people in the parish, at the present time. There is a proposal to convert the rear three bays of the church to provide nursery accommodation on two floors; this would still leave room for seating for 300, if needed. At present the seats are laid out - with generous spaces around the blocks of seating - to accommodate 180-200 people.

The building is very adaptable, and the parish uses it very effectively at present. Because it is of little architectural significance, there is less need to respect its architectural character.

St. John the Baptist, Harborne (Heath).
A/L: High Street, Harborne, B17.
Date: 1960.
Architect: Marriner. (Illustrations and notes; see Vol.3, pp497-503)

Incumbent: Revd. JP Hughes, St. John's Vicarage, 99 Wentworth Road, B17 9ST. 0121 428 2093.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The original church, completed in 1858, was destroyed during the Second World War. The new church was completed in 1959-1960 by EM Mariner, on a cruciform plan in brick and concrete. There is a pitched tile roof and the gables thus formed are the main windows, each engraved with figures.'

History.

The post-war history of the parish is well documented, not least because the discussions and proposals aroused a good deal heat, and some antipathy at diocesan level! The detail of this history is included in the Appendix.

Through the subdued language of the various minutes, it becomes clear that the parish of St. John's knew what it wanted, was prepared to pay for it, and was equally prepared to push until it achieved its objective. This story reflects the problems which arise from parishes which were at one extreme or the other - Evangelical or Anglo-Catholic, which drew their congregation eclectically, and to a significant degree from outside the parish boundary, and which were prepared to fight their corner, against the strategic over-view of the Diocesan Reorganisation Committee, and the Diocesan Bishop.

Description of the church

The present church is a utilitarian structure, with a RC portal frame and brick infilling, high level windows, and a roof clad in pantiles. In plan it is rectangular, with two shallow transepts, one housing the organ and the other the choir stalls.

The altar, in the form of a wooden table, stands slightly forward of the East wall, which recesses slightly at its centre, and above the altar on the wall is a stone panel, inscribed with the words "Jesus is Lord", and above that a plain wooden cross. The altar stands on a dais of two steps, with matching ambos, for pulpit and reading desk, at either side of the dais. Suspended above the ambos are two screens, for projected texts, and in the transept, beneath the organ, are the musical instruments used during services.

The seating is in the form of fixed ranks of pews, all aligned facing the altar, and exceedingly uncomfortable. The front pews have Festival of Britain panelling, à la Festival Hall. The space on the dais is cramped, and does not allow for any elaboration in the liturgy, although since the parish is strongly evangelical this appears not to present any major problem.

The prime problem with the building is that it is just too small; there is need for a larger worship area and more space for ancillary uses, together with more car-parking. There is not enough space for the entire Church to meet for a single event. The building is barely large enough for the present congregations, and is exceedingly inflexible in its present form and layout. A block of offices and meeting rooms was added a few years ago, and works well.

The parish is of a strong evangelical persuasion - as it has been for a long time, and has a very active and varied life. The staff include the incumbent, a Director of Faith Sharing, and a Curate, all ordained, a full-time Youth Worker, a Vicar's PA/Secretary, a full-time administrator, and two stewards. There are major services at 9.15am and 11am on Sunday, with a crèche provided at both services, and 10 to 15 children using the crèche at both services. The earlier morning service attracts some 100-150 people, and the 11am service some 400 people. The electoral roll has about 500 names, about 100 of whom come from within the parish.

Current assessment by the parish of its needs

In 1994 the parish undertook an assessment of its future likely needs; the committee set up for this task had as its brief:

> 'To explore the needs of various organisations within the church, both now and in the future, and to submit a report as to what kind of church building is needed to fulfil our vision for the future.'

The lengthy results of this consultation are set out in Vol.3, pp498-503. In its conclusion, the report says:

> 'The present church building is inadequate, especially for youth work, worship and storage. One committee member felt that a church plant, similar to what had previously occurred with St. Germain's, should be considered. We have analysed the responses to our questionnaire and have reported what we believe is required for our current activity, if we are to remain as a single church unit. We received little response to our questions regarding the Church's vision for the future.'

Conclusion

To a degree, the present buildings serve the parish well. There is no complaint that the type of building is a hindrance to worship (although the seating could be made more

appropriate), or that the mixture of ancillary accommodation is inappropriate; the complaint is that the parish is so successful, in terms of attracting people to its worship and other activities, that more space is required.

It is, perhaps, surprising to read so little comment on the quality of the building itself, or of the meanness of the space available to celebrate the liturgy with any great degree of dignity. It is difficult to conceive that Robert Maguire's comment to Peter Vowles, about St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, that:

> 'the setting-up of the altar is the most important act in the making of a church',

would strike any resonance with the congregation at Harborne. The approach of the parish to its building is robust and utilitarian and, in the one comment about the quality of the building, curiously old-fashioned. Nonetheless, this does not appear to have prevented this parish from creating an environment which attracts many people to its services and activities, from both inside and outside the parish.

I visited the church some two years after the production of the report, and it was not clear what, in fact, the parish would actually do to the complex, and I do not know whether any architect would be either willing, or even able, to encourage the parish to think more radically about its buildings, and to let an architect loose to interpret the pastoral requirements of the parish, in architectural terms.

This particular case study does demonstrate the wide range to be found among the different parishes, in the approach to worship and ministry, the often determined individuality of a parish, and the robust approach to its buildings which seems to characterize the evangelical parish. It also highlights, more than perhaps any other of the churches considered, the problems raised by the apparent conflict between this type of ministry, with its eclectic congregation, and the rigidity of the parochial system. Nonetheless, there are striking similarities to the work of very different parishes - such as St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, or Hodge Hill, in the perception of the need for outreach to the disadvantaged and those in need.

Group 4. This group of three churches demonstrate the influence of Continental churches, built for the Liturgical Movement.

St. Peter, Hall Green.
A/L: Highfield Road B28.
Date: 1964.
Architect: Norman Rider. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p504)

Incumbent: Revd. NE Ball, St. Peter's Vicarage, 33 Paradise Lane, B28 0DY.0121 777 1935.

A brief description of the building, compiled for the records of the DAC, describes the church thus:

> 'St. Peter's church was completed in 1964 to the design of Norman T. Rider. It is constructed from reinforced concrete, is octagonal, roofed with a copper covered reinforced concrete dome and supported on reinforced concrete columns at the intersection of the sides. Around this area, which is undivided, low passage aisles form a second octagon. The East side has been made into an apse and the chapel runs off the aisle in the middle of the south side and the vestries project from the north East side of the octagon. The main entrance is through the West tower which is tall and tapering. There is an East facing window of five lights designed by Tristan Ruhlmann and made at Strasbourg. There are other windows by the same artist based on the designs of Persian prayer carpets.'

History

A short typescript historical note on the parish, produced within the parish circa 1970/1, supplements the information found in the Diocesan records.

A good deal of development took place in the area in the years immediately after the First World War and a local landowner, Colonel Jervoise, offered a plot of ground, on the site of the present church, on which a wooden mission church was built, dedicated to St. Cadoc, and licensed for services on 24th September 1923.

The parish includes the area known, in the 1940s, as the 'Robin Hood' area. A sub-Committee of the DRC was set up to consider the area in 1946. The report of the Sub-Committee, dated 27th January 1947, states (inter alia):

> 'Though the Sub-Committee was appointed following a request that the Reorganisation Committee should consider the position in the district including the many built-up roads radiating from the 29A 'Bus Terminus, the members felt that it was necessary to include in this survey the district that is strictly "Robin Hood", and in which on the East side of Stratford Road the Diocese has already a site for a Church.

The Sub-Committee considers :

(1) That the present parish of Yardley Wood should be divided ...

(2) That a new Parish should be formed ...

(3) Some of the members of the Sub-Committee considered that the site at present held by the Diocese on the East side of Stratford Road just beyond the City boundary would be an excellent position for the new Robin Hood Parish Church. On the other hand, while all recognize the great advantage of the Church being on a main road, some members are doubtful about this particular site. An arterial road with a double carriageway separates it from the thickly populated Baldwins Lane district. The location of the Parish Church here would involve drawing the parish boundaries so as to include some parts of the present parishes of hall Green, Shirley and (?) Solihull on the East side of Stratford Road. ...

(4) In view of the very large population in the district round the 29A 'Bus Terminus, and the fact that there is neither an Anglican nor a Free Church in the District, nor, as far as is known, any Sunday School, the Sub-Committee feels that as a temporary measure, a priest should be appointed to St. Cadoc's and be given as independent a status as may be possible.. He might be asked to give special attention to evangelistic, pastoral and children's work in the Baldwin's Lane district, though this would be some distance from his church.'

In November 1954 a priest was appointed as Minister-in-Charge, and the church was re-dedicated to St. Peter. A local architect was asked to prepare plans for a new church, and the task of building up the congregation, and building up the fund for a new church, went ahead with vigour. The fund for the new church rose from £600 in 1954 to £6000 by 1959. The number of Easter communicants rose from 54 in 1953 to 130 in 1954, 231 in 1955, and 279 by 1959, and the number of children attending Sunday School over the same period rose from a handful to over 160.

The wooden temporary church was burnt down in 1959. However, in order to accommodate the growing work of the parish a Nissen Hut had been erected and this housed services for some twelve months. At this time the Parish Hall was built. It was licensed for services in June 1960 and this served as a dual-purpose building for some four years.

The designs for the new church were completed by Autumn 1960. The Bishop's Appeal Fund allowed £49,000 towards the cost, of which the parish had to repay £7,000. The estimated cost was some £2,000 above this, and a private, and anonymous loan, was given to enable the work to commence. Until the estimated cost could be covered the Archdeacon of Birmingham would not authorise the contract. Work commenced in Spring, 1961, and

the Foundation Stone was laid on 14th July 1962. In May of that year Joseph Adlam, the Priest in Charge, was made Vicar.

Here, as elsewhere, the Birmingham Institute made its influence felt. The historical note comments:

> 'It was at this stage that the Vicar and Architect became interested in stained glass windows created "in concrete" by M. Tristam Rhulmann of Strasbourg. During a tour to see Churches on the Continent, where much post-war rebuilding had taken place, the Vicar and Mr. Rider met the French artist. Resulting from this a design was submitted which met with general approval and, when the window was ready for shipment, import difficulties were resolved with the Board of Trade by our then M.P., Mr. Aubrey Jones.

The Diocesan Leaflet, April 1964, notes that:

> 'There have been delays ... but it is hoped to be ready by the Autumn.'

and the church was consecrated on 24th October 1964.

Description of the church

The building is an interesting essay in reinforced concrete construction. It is octagonal in plan and is formed as a tall octagonal drum, with an aisle encircling it on all sides but the East. The aisle walls are faced, externally, in brickwork, but the main structure, the infill of the walls of the upper part of the drum, and the domed roof structure to the drum, are all formed in reinforced concrete. The walls of the upper part of the drum appear to be constructed in a 'thin-wall' system, which has suffered from some movement and cracking. The ceiling of the drum is some 35' above the floor, and the main body of the church is 93', East to West, and 75', North to South. The tower is 102' high, to the top of the cross.

At the Western side the entrance to the church is beneath a tower, also built in reinforced concrete. The tower is square in overall plan; it tapers as it rises, and each of the four faces is concave, resulting in a projecting 'wing' at each corner. There are thin rectangular slit windows in the lower part of the tower, and a bell-chamber with openings for the sound of the bells formed as rectangular panels with diagonal mullions, all formed in concrete. At the top of the tower is an open platform, surmounted by a flat 'lid' supported on four small piers, and surmounted by a cross, in metal. The tower appears to have been constructed of concrete poured in situ, and the lifts and shuttering marks are clearly seen in the interior of the tower.

There is a very useful assortment of additional accommodation, which has grown like Topsy, including a very good hall. This is housed in the Nissen hut which, with its extensions, offers an interesting example of the use of factory-made pre-cast

concrete units. The whole complex is a fascinating example of the use of concrete in the 1960s.

The East window, by Rhulmann, is 18' by 16' and consists of five tall panels, set in a reinforced concrete frame. The upper walls of the drum are pierced by a series of smaller windows, also by Rhulmann, designed to represent ancient Prayer Mats as, according to the historical note:

> 'were hung up to open windows in extremely early Churches and have slightly wavy edges to symbolise movement in the wind.'

The Lady Chapel East window, also by Rhulmann, was dedicated as a memorial in 1970.

In contrast with the form of the building, the interior furnishings are laid out in an apparent attempt to create the late nineteenth century church which never existed here. The floor is formed of wood block, in good condition, with the seating in the form of chairs, laid out in rigid, parallel, East-facing rows. Beyond the front row of chairs is an area set aside for choir and clergy, with two rows of seating on either side, and a further two rows of six chairs on the south side, for additional choir. The furnishings are of a high standard - as would be expected at this time; the font was carved by a local stonemason and its cover made at a local Secondary School. The Processional Cross and candlesticks were made by the Birmingham School of Jewelry and Silversmiths.

The sanctuary is at the East, opposite the principal entrance, and I understand, though I have not yet found evidence for this, that this was not the original concept. The sanctuary is elliptical in plan; its Eastern half projects into an apse, formed as an extension to the main drum, and with its roof formed as an extension of the concrete dome of the drum, sweeping down towards the head of the East window. This apparent amendment to the original design sits somewhat unhappily against the clear logic of the principal structure. The Western half of the sanctuary projects into the 'nave' where it is delineated by the first of three steps. The altar is of timber, with altar rails of timber and stainless steel. The sanctuary is generally clear and unencumbered, and permits a dignified celebration of the liturgy.

Present use and condition of the building

The church gives the appearance of being well looked after, with the parish in control of any building problems. £60,000 has just been spent on repair work to the failing reinforced concrete of the East window, Lady Chapel window and the upper windows, and on re-cladding half the copper roof. The building is high, and expensive to heat, and has curious acoustics. There are still problems with the reinforced concrete of the walling of the upper part of the drum which is cracking, as is the sanctuary floor.

There are two principal Sunday services; Choral Eucharist at 9.15am, and Morning Service and Sunday School at 11am. There is a curious apparent mismatch between the revolutionary nature of the building, and the conservative nature of the parish and its life. The church generally works well for worship, I am told, and it is flexible enough, with movable chairs and the open sanctuary, to be adapted in future.

St. Columba's, Banner's Gate Road, Perry Barr, Sutton Coldfield.
Date: 1957/60.
Architect: N.F. Cachemaille-Day. (Illustrations and historical notes; see Vol.3, pp505-509)
Vicar: Vacant - Autumn 1997, 280 Chester Road North, B'ham. 0121 354 5873.

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P196, thus:

> 'Interesting in plan and vault, but very weak and astonishingly retardataire in the details. The plan is a square, the vault is very shallowly domical on four segmental lunettes, rather like Soane, though the lunettes are filled with random grilles of concrete and abstract Stained Glass by A.E. Buss. An entrance bay with a windowless light-brick wall and an asymmetrically placed bellcote on one side, vestries etc. on the other, with a gallery reached by two-arm staircases and forming the background to the altar space.'

History.

In addition to the diocesan records, I am indebted to a History of the Parish, written in two parts, one in 1967 and the later part in 1981, for information. Details of the history of the parish are included in Vol.3, pp).

The Parish today.

The Parish is very different in character from most of the other parishes considered. The Parish is at present without an incumbent, and notes prepared by the PCC for the guidance of potential incumbents describes the Parish thus:

> 'The Parish of St. Columba, with its population of 7,800, forms a narrow, mainly residential area of owner-occupied houses some 6 or 7 miles north of Birmingham City Centre. It is sandwiched between, to the south, a large sprawling council estate (prior to 1974 this was the Birmingham boundary). The northern boundary is Sutton Park. This is an area of 2,400 acres of nationally known natural heathlands and pools, which is said to be the largest municipally-owned public open space in Europe. The western boundary is adjacent to Barr Beacon, another open area on high ground, which offers outstanding views across the West Midlands. To the east there is a similar parish, and just across the south-easternmost part of the boundary lies Oscott College, a Roman Catholic Seminary.
>
> The Parish is roughly divided by the Chester Road. The older part consists mainly of semi-detached houses built in the 1930s. The other part is of mainly detached houses completed around 1970. Most residents fall into the category of "working professionals", and many are self-employed. In recent years there has been an increase of residents from minority ethnic communities.'

The impression given by the description of the life of the Parish is of a traditional, somewhat old-fashioned, and unadventurous parish life. The principal Sunday service is a Family Communion, with an average attendance of 100, including the choir.

The church building today

Although the building was designed, ostensibly, under the influence of the Liturgical Movement, the present cluttered furnishing, and the 'busyness' of some aspects of the architecture of the interior, seriously detract from the potential of the building to provide a setting for the Eucharist.

The sanctuary is placed against the East wall, and is formed as a square stone plinth, with fixed, metal altar rails in a somewhat mannered design. Behind the altar, seating for the ministers is in the form of an elaborate, high-backed, triple pew, with a coat of arms, in the the top centre. Behind the sanctuary, and forward of the main East wall of the church is an elaborate brick structure, with stone coping, incorporating stairs to a meeting/committee room at first floor level, entered through glazed doors in a glazed screen. Immediately either side of the altar are doors into two vestries.

This brick structure occupies nearly the full width of the East wall, and two thirds of its height. The stairs, at either side, are each formed as a pair of flights, with the slope of the stone coping forming the handrail. The doors to the vestries are flanked by full-height brick pilasters, each crowned by an a figure of an angel, blowing a trumpet. The wall immediately behind the altar is relieved - or perhaps, enlivened - by a rank of eight narrow projecting ribs in the brickwork.

At the West end the West wall opens into a balcony, flanked by two ranks of organ pipes, and with a curving - perhaps 'wavy' is more accurate - front. Beneath the balcony is an entrance area, with the font in the middle - opposite the entrance doors, and with bookstall etc. to either side.

The seating is in the form of pews which were brought from Bishop Ryder Church, now demolished. They are painted dark red, fixed to the floor, and aligned in parallel rows facing the liturgical east wall. Originally pews were also fixed at right angles, facing the altar from either side; those on one side, by the organ console, remain, the others were removed, since 'no one sat there'.

The floor is of polished wood block, and the woodwork of the clergy seating and the twin ambos is of the high quality typical of the period.

The original roof was of copper over the concrete shell; the copper deteriorated, and has now been replaced with felt etc. The acoustics were poor, and were notorious among visiting clergy. They have been dealt with by means of an acoustic

system. It was suggested to me, when I visited, that the building could be improved by the addition of carpeting, which would lighten the general tone of the building, and probably improve the acoustics, and by the addition of a more flexible seating arrangement, preferably in a lighter colour.

The architecture of the interior - certainly of the East wall construction - is, in part, too aggressive and distracting. The balcony area, with the lobby and baptistery beneath, which opens through a large rectangular opening, occupying almost the entire height of the wall - i.e. it sits beneath what I take to be a substantial ring beam - and most of its width, allows the space of the nave to slide away, without the subtlety of a well constructed series of interpenetrating spaces.

The furnishing, including the layout of the sanctuary, is virtually a re-creation of a late nineteenth layout, which seems a sad waste of an opportunity. The general impression is that the parishioners did not quite know what to do with the adventurous building with which they were presented, and still don't.

St. Paul, Bordesley Green.
A/L: Belchers Lane and Bordesley Green, B9.
Date: 1968.
Architect: J.Osborne. (Illustrations and plans; see Vol.3, pp509-513)

Incumbent: Revd. Graham Turner, 405 Belchers Lane, Bordesley Green, B9 5SY. 0121 766 5401.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

'The Church was completed in 1968 to a design by John Osborne of JP Osborne and Son (Mr Osborne is a member of the DAC). The design is modern of sound construction in brick with a low pitch copper roof. The plan is trapezial, tapering symmetrically from West to East with a lobbied entrance, offices and stairs under a West gallery, which houses the organ as a feature at the North end. The nave is a broad high spatial whole, vaulted by a shallow segmental ceiling. The ceiling is patterned with square acoustic panels in a chequerboard pattern. The floor is hardwood block, the walls are textured plaster. The font, pulpit and lectern are integrated within a low dais across the East end which continues across to the South baptistry. Most lighting comes from the large clear glazed West window over the gallery and towards the East by storey height "stained glass" windows in the North and South walls. The copper spire stands at the South East end of the church. The church and hall are in a conservation area.'

The 1987 Quinquennial Inspection report has the following comments about the complex of buildings.

> 'The Hall was built before the First World War and served as a Church until the new building was constructed (with the vicarage) in the late 1960s. The Church was designed by the firm of John P. Osborne and Son and, in the Architect's note at the time, was planned "to accord with the present day liturgical requirements as a one chamber building". The plan is fan-shaped, maximum dimensions being about 70' in both directions, with a tower and spire rising to over 100', joined to the main body of the building by a self-contained baptistery.
>
> It is obvious that considerable loving care was devoted to the design; good quality materials were used, and some lively stained glass by Margaret Trehearne. **The finished building however, shows little appreciation of the community-centred churches which were then under discussion, and this omission is now causing a far from wealthy parish considerable problems.**
>
> The shell is sound and its fittings have worn well but the space is inflexible, its mechanical and electrical services poor and expensive to run. **The very shape and coherence of the overall form mitigates against change.'**

The words in heavy type (my emphasis) say it all. According to oral tradition the old parishioners say; 'It wasn't what we wanted, but the vicar said, The Architect knows best!' Certainly, it was never liked, from the time of its inception.

The 1996 Quinquennial Inspection report remarks:

> 'The Church and tower are constructed in good quality load-bearing facing brickwork and the roof comprises (consists?) of welted copper faced felt cladding. There is a balcony at the west end with a toilet, vestry, chapel, office and switchrooms etc. beneath. On the balcony an organ is mounted. The seating capacity is approximately 180 plus the balcony which is unused but would accommodate approximately 80.
>
> The Church Hall has now been converted into a day nursery and an adjacent shop converted into a community information and training centre which is part of St. Paul's ministry. The Church building itself is rarely used for worship as it is so difficult to heat and the space overwhelms the small congregation who meet for worship in the large upper room of the adjacent community information and training centre.
>
> Planning Consent (permission?) and a Faculty have been granted for the complete re-ordering and extension of the church building in order to provide accommodation more suited to current needs. Subject to the time taken to assemble the necessary funding, it is anticipated that work will commence within twelve months for completion in two years.'

Although I have not identified the sources in detail, the building seems to have been inspired by work on the continent; particularly the high brick walls - especially at the east end where they are unbroken by windows, the open space of the nave, the flowing, rather free-form, plan with 'eared' projections at three of the four corners, and the rather Scandinavian tower and spire.

Although the nave seats only 180, the form of the building, with its very high ceiling, sloping up to the west to accommodate the balcony, provides a volume which is far too large for the small congregation to heat, or to feel comfortable in. If this were St. John's, Harborne, where the church would be filled for two services on a Sunday morning, the parish would have no problem; they would fill the available space, and could generate ample income to cope with any maintenance and heating tasks. However, it isn't, and the parish cannot cope with the building.

The task of filling the church building is made more difficult since an increasing proportion of the population is now Moslem.

The parish has taken three steps, so far, to make St. Paul's into a Church centre for the people of Bordesley Green. First, the old church building, used as a Church Hall since

the late 1960's, has been converted into the St. Paul's Nursery. It is quite a pleasant, modest, turn-of-the-century building, in red brick. The conversion was not just a matter of a lick of paint, a few partitions, and furniture, but a thorough-going remodelling of the building - particularly internally - with lowered ceilings, new partition walls, and modern services; it has become, in effect, a purpose-built modern nursery. The leaflet about the Nursery says:

> 'St. Paul's Nursery is owned and run by St. Paul's Church and is located within its grounds. Although it is clearly a church nursery, it is open to children of any faith, or no faith. (It) is fully registered with Birmingham City Council and is a member of the Birmingham Community Nursery Network. Funding has been provided by the Church Commissioners, the City Council, the European Regional Development Fund and the Tudor Trust.'

The second step was the creation of 'Crossover', a very visible presence of the Church, where it can meet a range of social needs, and a far wider range of parishioners that it would otherwise. The church building is set back, behind the main road, and is largely sheltered from view by trees. Considering how large it is, it is surprisingly invisible. 'Crossover' is located in a small shop which the Parish acquired, part of a parade of shops, on the main road, Bordesley Green. It has considerable accommodation at the rear, with access to the church beyond. This has been turned into a community facility which includes a cafe, open from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday; community rooms providing meeting rooms for all ages, for young people, and a luncheon club for the elderly; and a help and information centre, including Job Search (Getting back to work), access to training for employment, legal, money and benefits advice, health care, and a credit union. The establishment of this was helped by money from the government's East Birmingham Task Force.

The third step was to prepare a re-ordering scheme for the church building itself. The PCC agreed the aims and objectives of the scheme, in January 1996, as follows:

> **'St. Paul's Project.**
>
> **Changes to Main Building.**
>
> The Church Council agreed that the finished project should
>
> **AIM:**
> To show Christian love and care to the community
> To meet the needs of many people in the local community
> To make a warm and welcoming place for worship and community
> activities
> To be open to local people for prayer, worship and fellowship
> To have an inviting and lively building used by all people who live and work in the parish of St. Paul's
> To be long lasting and help with the finances of the church through rent income

It will have these **OBJECTIVES:**

To meet the needs of Sunday worship and other church activities
To provide child care such as latchkey and holiday clubs
To provide space for training courses
To employ a full time caretaker for the whole site
To provide day care for the elderly during term time
To encourage uniformed organisations (scouts/guides) to meet in the building
To let space for community groups and events such as wedding receptions

These aims and objectives are listed in order of importance'

The proposals entail a series of major alterations to the interior of the building A partition is to be formed across the width of the church, placed forward - i.e. east - of the balcony front. The existing accommodation at the west end, beneath the balcony, is to be converted to provide larger toilets and a creche, and the space between these and the new partition will provide an entrance lobby area. At first floor level at the west end a suite of rooms will replace the balcony, to provide two meeting rooms or offices, an office, a vestry, and a larger meeting room; a single storey extension to the north side will provide kitchen and storage space.

Over the new, reduced, worship area a lowered ceiling will run eastwards from the new partition, and light-weight movable partitions running E-W and N-S will be installed which can be used to sub-divide the worship area. The altar and its dais are to be movable, so that they can be placed in a smaller, or larger, worship area, as need requires, and the baptistery, in its small side room - egg-shaped in plan - is to become the side chapel for daily services.

This will result in a far more usable complex of accommodation, which will be adaptable in the future as the work evolves. The present incumbent has been in the post for some twelve years or so and the achievement of this shows a remarkable vision and persistence.

Group 5. The following two churches, by Denys Hinton, demonstrate how modest and utilitarian buildings can be successfully used in a Liturgical Movement parish.

St. Richard, Lea Hall.
A/L: Ridpool Road and Hallmoor Road, B33.
Date: 1965.
Architect: Denys Hinton. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p514)

Incumbent: Revd. PM Bracher, St. Richard's Vicarage, Hallmoor Road, B33 9 QY. 0121 783 2319.

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate).

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'This single storey church complex was completed in 1966 to a design by Denys Hinton and Partners. It is a single storey building including hall, kitchen, committee rooms, vestries and worship area. The church is constructed from load bearing brickwork with a flat roof surfaced with aluminium. The roof is supported by lattice steel beams and steel columns. Over the sanctuary there is patent glazed roof light and bell tower clad externally with tiles and internally in painted timber all supported on steel frame work and columns.'

This is one of two churches built by Denys Hinton in Birmingham diocese at this time, which are included in this study.

St. Richard's is a plain, utilitarian, flat-roofed brick box, 'L' shaped in plan, which comprises a simple rectangular worship area in one arm of the 'L', a hall in the other, and vestries. The sanctuary is lit by a lantern light, which marks the location of the sanctuary externally by its triangular - wedge of cheese-shaped - superstructure. To the side of the sanctuary is a small rectangular extension which houses the organ. This may have been an addition, and it sits oddly against the form of the building, and leaks at the joint of its roof against the main external wall of the church. The internal walls are plastered, with a floor of brick, and tongue-and-groove boarding to the flat ceiling. The lantern above the altar is square in plan, slightly smaller than the sanctuary dais, and is supported on four square section steel columns.

The worship area is flexible, and therefore suitable for either liturgical movement worship, or the evangelical tradition. The building has a flat roof which, together with the built-in downpipes, is a constant source of trouble. The floor is of brick which, apart from the cold, does not appear to be a problem. The building is low, so that while there is

easy access for maintenance, there is equally easy access to the roof for stone-throwing and other forms of vandalism.

Generally the space works well for worship. The altar stands on a dais, formed of brick, with a single step at the altar rail, and two further steps for the altar itself. The font, which is of concrete, and the altar, which has a square marble mensa on a concrete base, are somewhat reminiscent of contemporary German work in their severity, but are not quite of the right quality. When it is vested the altar sits happily within its space, but when the coverings are removed the mensa appears to be too small - at least too thin - in relation to the base which supports it. The altar rails are of simple mild steel section, painted white, with flanges at the bottom to enable the rails to be screwed to the brick floor. They are rather unsightly, and none too stable.

The seating in the church consists of simple free-standing bench pews, aligned in a 'V' formation - the closest one can get to a curved layout with straight pews! To the left of the altar - facing its side - are the choir pews, also raised on three brick steps, with the font to one side. Behind the choir seats is a full-height folding timber screen, separating the worship area from the hall. This can be folded back to create a single space although, since this unified space takes the form of an 'L' - with long arms, it is difficult for the two halves of the congregation to feel at one. There is a very good hall which is in use every night of the week by a variety of organisations.

There are notable merits to the complex. First, the worship area is flexible; i.e. it works for the evangelical tradition, but equally well permits the celebration of the liturgy with decency, ceremony, and participation. The organ has been virtually abandoned, since water got into it through a defective joint in the roof, and has been replaced by a £2000 electronic keyboard. Second, since the building is simple, even utilitarian, it would be possible, if circumstances changed, to clean, decorate, adapt, and generally cheer up the building without having to be overly respectful of the original building. The altar is virtually fixed in its position, but, unlike that at St. Mary's Hobs Moat, while it is prominent, it does not dominate the space, nor is it fixed in such a position that it has seating on six sides of an octagon, nor does it have have a brick-built dais behind for choir and clergy. The sanctuary could be given greater emphasis, and clarity, but this could be accomplished by the removal of free-standing furnishings and the bolted-down altar rails, by the introduction of two ambones, more clearly related to the altar, by the giving of emphasis to the wall behind the altar, by an applied feature, and possibly by the covering of the brick floor. The pews, while serviceable, are not of such quality that they could not, with advantage, be replaced by individual chairs, to give more flexibility. Third, again, because of the utilitarian character of the complex, which includes the hall, the complex serves the needs of the parish today.

St. Michael's, South Yardley.
A/L: Rowlands Road, South Yardley, Birmingham.
Date: 1964/5.
Architect: Denys Hinton. (Illustrations and plans; see Vol.3, pp515-516)

Incumbent: Revd. K. Punshon, St. Michael's Vicarage, 60 Yew Tree Lane, B26 1AP. 0121 706 2563.

This is the second of two churches built to the designs of Denys Hinton for the diocese at this time. The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

'The present church was completed in 1966 to a design by Hinton Brown and Langstone. It was built round an existing church which was completed in 1930 and converted in 1966 for use as a church hall, the sanctuary becoming a sacristy chapel for use with the new church. The present worship area is designed as a free-flowing shape with indirect natural lighting, the windows being so arranged as to be out of sight of the congregation. The walls are of white render, and facing bricks being lighter coloured internally and an attractive warm red externally, carried up to form a parapet, capped with a slate coping. The roof is flat and covered with aluminium sheeting. The parsonage forms part of the overall design of the building which is not immediately recognisable as a church, but the atmosphere produced in the worship area is intended to be soft, peaceful and suitable for both meditation and worship.'

The Diocesan Leaflet, April 1964, notes that it is hoped that building will start within the next two or three months.

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P145, thus:

> 'To be built in 1964/5 by Denys Hinton. The plan provides for a rectangular nave and a curved E end adjoining at the S the vicarage, to be built at the same time. Brick walls. Lighting mostly from the roof, but also a large NE window (geographically due E).'

The parish does not form part of one of the post-war New Housing Areas; it was established in the inter-war years, and the present hall was built in 1937 to serve as a church.

This is the second of two churches by Denys Hinton in Birmingham diocese which I consider in this study. Like St. Richard's, Lea Hall, this is a flat-roofed, brick-walled box, but designed to a rather more complex pattern than St. Richard's, although this is not readily discernable from outside. The plan and form of the church recall those of St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby, and the church at Astley, in Manchester diocese.

The present church, built in 1966-8 follows a pattern which became established in the diocese in the sixties, under the influence of the Birmingham Institute. It is a simple, flat-roofed structure, trapezoidal in plan. The nave is roughly square in plan, with a choir gallery on the liturgical north side, and the altar in the angle formed by the canting of the liturgical east wall. The sanctuary is lit by tall windows to north and south, with the baptistry on the north side. The walls, internally, are part plastered, part faced in calcium-silicate bricks.

The sanctuary area is particularly effective. The altar rests on a generous dais of three steps, with ample space between the front - free-standing - pew and the first step, and equally generous space to permit a dignified celebration of the principal Sunday service, the Family Eucharist. The lower step forms the step of the altar rails, with the altar raised on a further two steps. The dais is curved in plan to echo the curves of the nave side walls. A small prie-dieu and a lectern cum pulpit, both in a simple design, stand in front of the curve of the south nave wall; while they are easily seen from, and a speaker easily heard by, the congregation, they do not compete with or obscure the sanctuary. A movable, folding, lectern is placed in the nave, between the front pews. The altar is seen against an uncluttered, white painted, east wall, against which the altar frontal, two candle sticks, and a suspended crucifix above the altar, stand out clearly. Again, like St. Richard's, the altar is easily seen, and permits a sense of participation, but does not dominate the space. It is clearly the focal point of the building, but not so raised that it dominates, and with ample space for the dignified celebration of the Eucharist.

The seating is in the form of open pews, not fixed to the floor, and although this gives, initially, a somewhat rigid appearance to the layout, the skeletal open form of the pews prevents them being too obtrusive or too "enclosed", and the relatively small size of the building permits a good sense of the congregation "gathered" around the altar.

When built, the church was equipped with underfloor heating, which has now been abandoned. The flat roof - now with aluminium sheeting on chipboard - has been a constant source of trouble since the building was erected, and the suggestion has been made that an entirely new roof should be constructed above the existing one. Apart from this, the building is in basically sound condition.

The church seats about 216; the electoral roll is about 75; the principal Sunday service is Family Eucharist at 10am, with about 60 communicants; there is Holy Communion at 8am, with about a dozen communicants, and Evensong at 6pm, although this said to be fading.

The parish itself is an area of mixed, and generally well-established, housing, which, according to information supplied by the City Planning Department, is largely owner-occupied,

and the area is predominantly 'White', in current ethnic terms. There is a good spread across the age ranges, with a very substantial proportion in employment. The church lies in the northern half of the parish, which is divided in two parts - one third to the north, and two thirds to the south - by the Coventry Road, running east-west across it. To the north of the parish - within walking distance, is the old village centre of Yardley - now a pretty preserved village centre, with a mixture of late-medieval and eighteenth-century buildings, and a very attractive old - pre-nineteenth century - church, protected from encroaching suburbia by a belt of parkland. This provides an alternative for those who prefer an old village church setting, and a more traditional, Anglican, pattern of worship, and a wonderful setting for weddings.

St. Michael's is said to work well for worship, and the present hall, which is linked to the church, is a sound and serviceable space. The open, unencumbered space, which this type of building provides, is able to accommodate a wide range of patterns of worship with equal ease, while also able to accommodate change in patterns of worship and activity. It also permits the use of the space for non-liturgical activity - at the time I visited the church walls held a large display of children's art, which looked at home there!

Hinton's churches appear to be informed by a clear philosophy. Certainly, he showed a considerable degree of prescience. He designed simple, useful and flexible spaces, which could accommodate a variety of patterns of worship and a variety of activities. Both churches have worked so far, and are adaptable for the future. The flat roofs have not proved to be a good idea, nor the built-in downpipes; that apart, he did not burden parishes with over-large, inflexible and over-expensive white elephants. The very simplicity of the buildings means that they can be modified without having to fight the what, elsewhere, could be the overly strong character of the building.

Group 6. The following group of six churches are all medium sized buildings, designed under the influence of the Liturgical Movement.

St. Michael and All Angels, Bartley Green.
A/L: Romsley Road and Field Lane, B32.
Date: 1964.
Architect: Norman Haines. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p516)

Incumbent: Revd. Colin Mansley. 0121 475 1508.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was built in 1964/6. The walls are brick with a pyramidic roof and intersecting pitched roof on the church. It has flat roofs for the hall and ancillary buildings. Architect: Norman Haines. Designed in the form of a tent, with the windows in the front elevation; i.e. with the flap front open, to welcome visitors. Works well for worship, and for other activities, i.e. drama.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the third group, comprising Fringe Council Estate Churches (Mixed properties; large council presence, with many privately owned).

Bartley Green.

A short note on the history of the church, prepared as part of the programme for a civic service, held there in 1994, remarks:

> 'Although Bartley Green is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 under its Saxon name of Beora-leage, which means "clearing in the Birch trees", there was no church building here until St. Laurence, Northfield, erected the old St. Michael's at the corner of Field Lane and Genners Lane. The £500 needed for its construction was raised by public subscription and the church was consecrated on September 17th 1840. An extension containing the chancel, altar and vestries was added in 1876.
>
> The old St. Michael's was much loved by the people of Bartley Green, but post-war expansion of the community and deterioration of the fabric led to the decision to build a new church.'

A general Report on Diocesan Needs in new Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, says of Bartley Green and the adjoining Estates:

> 'There has been much building here. Bartley has a population of 4,000. California estate 1,300. Jiggins Lane 1,350. Bangham Pits (Weoley Castle Parish) 3,000. Ley Hill (Northfield Parish) to have 2,400.

Bartley Church is inadequate and would not be accepted as a Parish Church. There is no proper hall, and the vicarage, which is unsatisfactory, may disappear through road widening schemes. It is felt that Bartley Church is rightly sited. But Bartley Church cannot cater for all these districts. A strong case can be made out for obtaining a site in Merritt's Hill, midway between Bangham Pits and Ley Hill Estates. If a separate parish is not formed, a good dual purpose building would be needed, with a house for an assistant curate, the area being served by Bartley.'

At the DRC meeting on 30th October 1958 the Minutes record that:

> 'The Archdeacon of Birmingham presented the report of the Sub-Committee, dated 28th May 1958. The Vicar, the Revd. N.A. Gurney, attended, and stated that the principal need of Bartley Green was to extend the church and to build a church hall, which was needed as well as the school, where social functions were at present being held with some difficulty. The Archdeacon of Birmingham proposed the sale and retention of the plots of land, as specified in the report, and produced plans for increasing the church accommodation to between 300 and 400, by extension towards the East end. It was believed that the structure of the church would warrant this course if money could not be found to build a new church.
>
> It was agreed that Bartley Green would rank as a new area within the scope of the Bishop's Appeal, but it would not necessarily follow that the ruling for repayment of one-seventh would apply to this parish.'

At the DRC meeting on 19th October 1960 it was reported that the existing church could not be enlarged; a new church was required, but no hall, as the hall of the new school could be used. At the meeting on 20th February 1961 it was decided that an approach should be made to the City to transfer the existing Church to a site in the centre of the Bartley Green Estate. By 17th April 1961 negotiations were in hand. By 20th February 1962 it was reported that an architect was to be instructed, and by 21st May 1962 it was decided that the 'Cinema site' in the centre of the Estate was to be acquired. The Diocesan Leaflet, April 1964, notes that it is hoped that building will start within the next two or three months.

Description of the present building.

Much of the volume of the building is contained within the vast roof space. The surrounding brick walls are low - only slightly higher than the link corridor to the adjoining hall - and internally are faced in silica brick, with an exposed reinforced concrete ring-beam, from which the roof springs. The structural frame of the pyramidal roof is formed of RSJs, with timber facing to the lower part and asbestos tiles in the apex, with high-level windows on the west, throwing light onto the sanctuary. The church has a number of good works of art,

including a Figure of the Crucified Christ and a Madonna and Child, both by John Poole of Pershore, stained glass windows by Rosemary Rutherford of Godalming, and two fine Wardens' Staffs. The font is in reinforced concrete.

The church is square in plan, with the sanctuary set in the centre of one side, opposite the entrance. The sanctuary is raised on a plinth of two steps; the wooden altar table, wooden reading desk and prie-dieu for the ministers, and the altar rails formed as pseudo-benches, are all moveable. The quality of the woodwork is particularly high, so that the general appearance is one of quiet dignity; the low plinth means that the sanctuary, while reasonably prominent, does not dominate the interior, and the moveable furnishings make the sanctuary area flexible to permit variety and experiment in worship and in other activities.

The seating is in the form of pews; again, the quality of the woodwork is high, but since the pews are fixed in position their disposition is, at present, inflexible. The interior generally is extremely cluttered - i.e. every corner is filled with things, and this effect is made worse by the variety of internal finishes - brick, timber, asbestos tiles - and the rather poor state of the finishes.

There is a useful suite of ancillary space - hall, kitchen, lounge - which could be improved in appearance and function. The church itself generally works well for worship.

The church has a great deal to commend it. The building itself could well be described as a period piece. Its external appearance is undeniably 'modern'; it stands out as a distinctive building, at the centre of the estate; it lies opposite a large green, where the buses terminate, the shops lie across the road, and next door is the vast space of the Bartley Green Social Club. Although the building is distinctive it is not overwhelming in scale in the townscape. Internally, although there is need of some improvement to finishes, it has much that is of artistic merit and of a high standard of craftsmanship. Although the pews are at present fixed, this is capable of alteration, and the interior generally is flexible; in particular the architect and client at the time avoided constructing a sanctuary which was both dominating and immoveable. The flexibility of the building means that there is considerable potential for modification if and when the parish wish to make changes.

St. Mark, Kingstanding.
A/L: Bandywood Crescent (via Kettlehouse Road), B44.
Date: 1952 and 1971.
Architect of 1971 church: Rodney Melville.
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, p517)
Incumbent: Revd. Ron Farrell, St. Mark's Clergy House, Bandywood Crescent, Kingstanding, B44 9JX. 0121 360 7288.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

'St. Mark's comprises a single storey worship area which was consecrated in 1971. It has an elliptical plan form and is attached to the old truncated hall with a flat roofed lobby and corridor between. The church was designed to serve a small congregation of 120 to 150 people. The ceiling and lining of the roof light are of Cedar of Lebanon boarding, joinery is of Ash, walls are plastered and decorated and the whole of the floor with exception of a small area around the font, is carpeted. The space is lit by a large roof light, illuminating the sanctuary by a long clerestorey light above the narthex and three tall narrow slit windows n the external wall. Sliding doors to the narthex and curtains between the narthex and church hall can be drawn back so that additional seating may be provided for extra large congregations.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate).

History.

The DRC was informed, at its meeting on 26th September 1946, that a site at Coppice View, Sutton Coldfield, had been purchased. It is in the parish of Kingstanding, but a long way from Kingstanding church, and was to be worked from Boldmere.

At the DRC meeting on 30th April 1951, it was noted that the new Church Hall at St. Mark's, Kingstanding, was nearly complete, but it was not dedicated until 5th October, 1952. By the meeting on 5th July 1951 it was reported that a licence was likely for the Clergy House.

At the DRC meeting on 29th April 1965 it was reported that the Diocesan Bishop was anxious for a Statutory District to be formed.

Description of the church buildings.

The old church hall, of 1952, originally used as a dual-purpose building, is still in use as the hall. Adjoining is the church of 1971.

The hall is a factory made building, in concrete, comprising a hall and a small extension, which formerly housed the chancel. It has been extensively refurbished, with a false ceiling, and kitchen accommodation in the former chancel. It provides light and airy accommodation for general social uses. At the time of visiting it was in use for the elderly people's luncheon club. At its former 'West' end it opens, through a glazed screen and doors, into a lobby, and thence into the new church.

The church, which is elliptical in plan, has simple brick walls, staggered to allow for full-height windows, and a flat roof, relieved by a copper-clad lantern above the altar.

The entrance lobby, and the sanctuary facing it, are placed in the middle of the long sides. The walls are plastered and painted white, and the seating is in the form of short benches, set in fan formation around the altar. The sanctuary is an uncluttered space, raised on a plinth of a single step, and the altar is lit from above by the lantern and from the (liturgical) south side by a full height window, in front of which is the font. There is seating for the President and ministers against the East wall and a reading desk, with a crucifix suspended above the altar.

The parish forms part of a team, with St. Luke's, Kingstanding and St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, and pursues a pattern of work and worship in the Catholic tradition. The church works very well for worship; it is one of a family of churches clearly showing the influence of Peter Hammond and the Birmingham Institute. At present the parish has an unusually high proportion of elderly inhabitants, and the work of the parish is therefore biased towards them. The main Sunday service - Eucharist - has a congregation of about 80, and a daily Mass attracts a congregation of up to 20.

St. David, Shenley Green.
A/L: Shenley Green, off Shenley Lane, B29.
Date: 1970.
Architect: Selby Clewer, of Architect's Dept. of the Bournville Village Trust. (Illustrations and plans; see Vol.3, pp517-520)
Incumbent: Revd. CJW Jackson, St. David's Vicarage, 49 Shenley Green, B29 4HH. 0121 475 4874.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

'St. David's church was completed in 1970 to a design by Selby Clewer of the Architect's Department of the Bournville Village Trust. There are several pieces of stone given by the Dean of St. David's Cathedral in Dyfed which had formerly been part of the cathedral. The church is an irregular shape, the walls are of reinforced concrete with ribs about 50mm wide and 60mm deep. The recesses are smooth and the faces have aggregate exposed. Other external walls are in red rustic facing bricks. The roofs and lantern are clad in copper sheet. The narthex is glazed from floor to ceiling and all windows are framed in aluminium anodised dark grey. There is a concrete turret with a single bell cast by Taylor's of Loughborough, which weighs 2cwt. The ceiling is finished in whitewood. The main entrance doors and the screen between the narthex and the church are decorated with ceramic plaques by Peter Thompson. The sanctuary furniture is of ash, and the pews of utile are arranged in three blocks radiating from the sanctuary. The main body of the church is approached through a wide narthex and the irregular shape is designed to bring the congregation as near to the sanctuary as possible.'

The story of St. David's, Shenley Green, is a model of the work of Birmingham Diocese at its best. The acquisition of the site, and the production of the buildings, shows a close co-operation between the diocese and the land-owner - in this case the Bournville Village Trust; the establishment of the parish had its beginnings in the provision of pastoral oversight, and the use of whatever buildings were available; the hall was a standard all-purpose utility building; and by the time the church was built, a Christian community was established, and the influence of the Birmingham Institute was clearly felt.

History.

The booklet produced by the parish, describing a brief history of the parish, says:

'At the end of World War II only a few hundred people lived in what is now a parish of some 4,700 homes, and although various housing developments bordered the area, only the edge of the Weoley Hill estate overlapped into what was otherwise farm land. As Birmingham started to expand again after the war, more houses were built in the area and

by 1958 there were probably about 8,000 people living here. ... Most of the land in the parish is owned by the Bournville Village Trust. When the decision to form a new parish was made, the Trust most generously gave the site on which the church, church hall, and vicarage were to be built. The church now stands on what was the orchard of Lower Shenley Farm.'

At the DRC meeting on 10th July 1956 it was reported that a site had been reserved by the Bournville Village Trust; by 28th March 1957, the site been conveyed, as a gift.

At the DRC meeting on 18th March 1958 it was reported that planning permission had been granted, and the layout of the Church, Hall, and Vicarage received. In the Autumn of 1958 Deaconess Elsie Tongue began work there; she started by drawing people from Lower Shenley, and then from the area which became the present parish. The first meetings were held in private houses, and Communion services were held in her flat, at 22 Burdock Road. Evensong began to be held in what was at that time called the Allen Cross Sports Pavilion, and a Sunday School was started there shortly afterwards.

In July 1959 the Revd. D.J. Pendleton was appointed Priest-in-Charge, and he immediately started to take services in the newly-built Lower Shenley Residents' Hall, now Shenley Manor Hall. Choir practice and the Infants' Sunday School continued at the Sports Pavilion, and an additional Junior Sunday School was also started at Shenley Court Residents' Hall.

At the DRC meeting on 1st July 1959 the Bishop of Aston said that he had celebrated Holy Communion in a flat four storeys up, with 16 present. At the DRC meeting on 19th October 1960 it was reported that the Hall was to be built first; pastoral work was being carried out by a Priest-in-Charge.

In February 1961 the site of the eventual church was marked by a large wooden cross placed in position by the Bishop. This cross had marked the site of the new church of All Saints', Shard End, where Mr. Pendleton had previously been Curate.

At the DRC meeting on 20th February 1962 it was reported that the Hall was now half-built, and work on the Vicarage would follow shortly. The hall was dedicated on 25th September 1962. The hall served as a dual-purpose building; with the eventual construction of the new church the dual-purpose building reverted to use as a hall. The principal disadvantage of the dual-purpose building seems to have been the reluctance of local people to wish to be married there. In November 1965 the area was inaugurated as a Statutory District, with the Revd. D.J. Pendleton instituted as Vicar.

At the DRC meeting on 28th November 1968 it was reported that the Architect for the Bournville Village Trust was preparing plans for the new Church, and by 5th April 1968 it was reported that the Church Commissioners had agreed to transfer

the allocation of £35,000 from St. Mark's, Kingstanding, to Shenley Green.

In January 1969 the new Vicarage was completed and the incumbent moved there from his temporary - ten year - residence at 75 Spiceland Road. On 1st March 1969 the Archdeacon cut the first sod on the site of the new church, and several pieces of stone were received from St. David's Cathedral, in Wales. The new church was consecrated on 9th May 1970.

Description of the complex

Although the church was designed by the architect responsible for the hall, there is a striking contrast between the two buildings. The hall is a utilitarian structure, rectangular in plan, with RC portal frames and concrete panel infill, with exposed aggregate, and a shallow pitched, copper-clad roof. The church clearly shows the influence of the Birmingham Institute and Peter Hammond, and, since the incumbent at the time went on two of the Institute's Tours of Modern Churches in France and Germany, one should add the name of Gilbert Cope. It was originally designed to be octagonal; this was abandoned, largely, apparently, because the use of a geometrical figure would impose too rigid a solution on the needs of the parish. In the event, the plan may be described as a square, with protruberances.

The principal central area, with the pews and the sanctuary, is square in plan. Added to this there is, on the liturgical west, a low, flat-roofed, glazed narthex; to the north is a 'bulge' containing the organ and choir seating; to the south is a triangular extension, housing additional seating and, at its eastern end, the font; on the east, the east wall is set at an angle, to enlarge the space around the altar, and to give light from tall windows on the south side.

Much of the external walling is in concrete, with a textured finish, with one area in precast concrete panels, with exposed aggregate, and the roof is copper-clad, including the large lantern providing lighting above the altar. The internal walls are plastered and painted white, and the ceiling and the inner face of the lantern are faced in timber. The altar, the pulpit, and reading desk are set on a low plinth of two steps, with a wooden cross on the east wall above the altar. The altar is set forward from the wall, with the celebrant's chair behind, so that there is ample space for the celebration of the liturgy, although this is not exploited in the present pattern of worship at St. David's. The seating is formed as pews, but these are movable. The font - also of concrete - is set to one side of the sanctuary.

Condition of the church

In general the building is in good order. The Quinquennial Inspection Report of 1986 concluded that the building was generally well cared for, but that the site was subject to vandalism and careless behaviour around it. It also

highlighted the vulnerability of the copper roof to damage by sharp objects thrown up from below and unauthorised foot traffic damaging the standing seam joints between the copper panel joints. The report also discussed problems with roof and lantern leaks and with the wood block floor, caused, in the latter case, by problems with the drains. By 1991 the major roof leaks had been corrected, and the drainage problem solved, although there were still minor problems with the roof.

The 1991 Report identified spalling of external concrete as a problem, together with still unresolved problems with the roof, mainly due to the failure of the mastic pointing to the roof coping and to the inadequacy of the rainwater outlets. Internally the church is in good order, except for the visible evidences of roof leakage. The conclusion to the 1991 Report could well stand for many churches of this period. The architect says:

> 'The building suffers from design faults in constructional detailing, which unfortunately are typical of this period. These faults give rise to a persistent and niggling series of minor leaks causing damage to decorations and disruption. It seems that the major leaks have been cured for the time being, although it is the design of the fabric itself which may in the long-term lead to further problems.
>
> The lack of pitch on the lower roofs invites water to pond and be retained on the roof, where any weakness will be exposed, leading to leaks, which may not necessarily correspond internally to the external point of failure.
>
> Where the copper roof is more slightly steeply pitched over the main church Prayer Room, fewer leaks seem to have been experienced through the covering itself. The leaks tend to occur at junction joints and here the over-reliance on mastic seals seems to be suspect.
>
> The outlets provided to the roofs seem to be wholly inadequate to drain the area of roof efficiently and simple calculations reveal that the outlets provided are less than half what would normally be considered adequate. The inclusion of the overflow gargoyle pipes, while going some way to relieving the problem at times of heavy rainfall, only serves to exacerbate the problem at a lower level where the outlets again appear inadequate. An effective solution to the outlets should be sought to solve these recurring problems.
>
> The evidence of the initial stages of carbonation in the concrete walls require careful attention at this early stage, to ensure that long-term damage to the structure is not set in train.
>
> The roof surfaces, already the cause of leaking, have been identified as a further potential source of problems. The copper covering is thin, subject to damage by objects thrown from below or unauthorised foot traffic and has

little fall in some places. Continuous monitoring of the performance of this roof would be a prudent precaution, so that any future problems can be identified quickly and actions taken as appropriate.

Finally, the electrical panel heating installed in the Church (above the timber ceiling) would seem costly and inadequate for the day-to-day functions of the building. The system provides little or no flexibility for heating the spaces quickly and efficiently and response time is slow. Further investigation into a replacement system of space heating and an analysis of the capital expenditure over comparative running costs, may provide a worthwhile exercise.'

By 1996, at the time of the next inspection, work had been carried out to the spalling concrete and to the roofs, although the problem of heating is still unresolved, and the architect reports of the general condition that:

> 'The general condition of the fabric is good. The building is obviously much loved and well cared for.'

He lists a number of items for immediate attention, including work to the cross seams of the copper roof, to copper fascias and to built-up felt and flashings, but the remainder of the work is essentially 'good-housekeeping'.

Use of the church today

Clearly the church building 'works' for its congregation today. The booklet on the history of the Church comments that:

> 'From the outset it was intended that the church would also be used for meetings, instructional groups, music and drama; and in fact this has been done. The interior walls have proved very suitable for the projection of slides during talks, and the acoustics are good for concerts of both sung and instrumental music. A popular, regular feature is the inclusion of a local orchestra at certain services throughout the year, dramatic performances are given by children from local schools at intervals, and there has been "worship in dance" by girls from Kings Norton School. The sanctuary rails can be moved back, to give uninterrupted space for such activities.'

The present pattern of worship provides for Holy Communion each Sunday at 9am; a service at 10.30am - the principal service - which varies between Holy Communion, Morning Prayer, and All Age Worship. The pattern of worship is not therefore entirely Eucharist-centred, and the layout of the church, and the 'low-key' sanctuary, accommodate this admirably, while, at the same time, leaving scope for change and adaptation.

There is a wide range of activities in the Hall, including Explorers, Pathfinders, CYFA, Friendship Hour, Women's fellowship, Barnabas Group, Beavers, Cub Scouts, Scouts,

Venture Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Mother and Toddlers Group and a Playschool.

By the time the church was designed and built the influence of the New Churches Research Group, and of the Birmingham Institute, was well established, particularly in Birmingham Diocese. The incumbent at the time of the building, the Revd. D.J. Pendleton, had taken part in two of the tours organised by Gilbert Cope and the Birmingham Institute, and members of the parish had toured other recent churches as part of the process of deciding what they wanted. This shows very clearly. The building has clear echoes of St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby. The result is a flexible building, with a pleasant atmosphere, adapted to the ideas of the Liturgical Movement, although not so rigidly designed for a Eucharist-centred pattern that other patterns are precluded. The building suffers from a number of design faults in its constructional details, which are typical of its period, but clearly the parish is in control of these. The construction of the church itself, with exposed hammered concrete, pre-cast panels with exposed aggregate, and copper clad roof, is again typical of its era, but it makes a clear statement as a building of some quality, but without being over-dominant, in its context.

It seems clear that the process of building up a Christian community in a housing area created over a short period of time, from scratch, began with the introduction of people, and the use of whatever space was available. A deaconess was introduced as the estate was reaching completion, and a priest-in-Charge followed less than a year later. The hall - a simple utilitarian building, as I have described - followed in 1962, but the church arrived only in 1970. It seems clear that by this time a community had been established, and one which was sufficiently alive to the current trends in church building in the diocese to be open to somewhat radical suggestion. The rôle of the incumbent in leading the parish is also made clear in this case.

St. Anne, West Heath.
A/L: Alvechurch Road and Lilley Lane, B38.
Date: 1966.
Architect: Harvey and Wicks. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p521)
Incumbent: Revd. Susan Mayoss-Hurd, The Vicarage, 54A Lilley Lane, West Heath, B31 3JT. 0121 475 5587.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was completed in 1975 to a design by Harvey and Wicks. The exterior is a dark brown brick with few windows. There is a steep slated roof and combined with expensive (an expanse of ?) brick produces a rather austere aspect. There is a continuous clerestorey along the ridge which provides more than adequate natural light inside.'

West Heath.

At the DRC meeting on 14th April 1964 the Bishop asked for the committee's views on the proposal to erect a wooden building to take the place of St. Anne's Church, West Heath, and use St. Anne's as a Hall. Further discussions about this are recorded at the DRC meeting on 3rd October 1966, when it was reported that it was now a Statutory District.

The present hall, which adjoins the church, was built in 1900 as a Mission Church of King's Norton parish. It is a simple rectangular building, with a steeply-pitched slated roof, and gothic traceried windows, in terracotta, in the front elevation, and terracotta crosses at either end on the roof ridge. The present church was completed in 1975 - this is, strictly, outside the limits of this study - and lies adjoining the hall, on a triangle of land at the intersection of two roads and a large roundabout. In a similar position across the roundabout lies a very large Roman Catholic church.

The structure of the building comprises a laminated timber cruck frame, and the main body of the building is rectangular in plan, with angled projections to either end. The main lighting of the building is by a long top-light following the ridge of the roof In section the building is asymmetrical; on the long side, facing the street - the liturgical west, the side wall is low - about door height, with the roof sweeping down in a large expanse. On the east side the wall is much higher, with a correspondingly smaller expanse of roof. At either end the walls rise to the height of the gable. The end facing the roundabout is angled outwards, and has paired buttresses rising to the ridge of the roof, surmounted by a cross. From the outside, this appears to contain the sanctuary; in fact, this is not so. The external brickwork is in a purple and dark brown multi, and the roof is clad in a green slate, giving a very harmonious effect.

Internally, the building is close to being square in plan, and the sanctuary is placed in the centre of one long side. The sanctuary is raised on a plinth, one step above the floor of

the church, with the altar and rails, in dark timber and in a 'Gothic' style, salvaged from the former church. There is a small, but prominent, organ to one side; this again is of a traditional appearance. The seating is in the form of short lengths of pews, which are moveable. The interior offers considerable flexibility, although the present furnishings are rather dull, and detract from the general appearance of the modern building.

The general appearance of the interior shows a curious dichotomy; the principal structure is the laminated timber cruck frames, with timber boarding to the underside of the roof. The walls, however, are in a curiously pale, almost indeterminate, whitey-yellow coloured brick, with tall rectangular slits for windows, except for the gothic-arched single light above the altar, and with concrete beams expressed internally. It is a strange mixture of high-tech. neo-vernacular, Continental functionalism, and nineteenth century sentimentalism

There is a particularly useful suite of more recent ancillary accommodation, where, amongst other Church activities, there is a meeting place for separated or divorced parents and their children. This is organised under supervision, and is a particularly useful and imaginative function for the local Churches - it is inter-denominational - to be sponsoring.

St. Anne's West Heath illustrates all too clearly the regrettable effect of attempting - either from shortage of money, or sentiment - to incorporate features or furniture from an earlier church into a new one. Where these are of the rather dull and uninspired Gothic Revival pattern, so characteristic of a multitude of late nineteenth century churches, the contrast is striking, and depressing. It can, on rare occasions, be successful, as at St. Oswald, Tile Hill, Coventry, where a Comper Triptych has been installed behind the font, or as at St. Boniface, Quinton, and St. George's Newtown, both in Birmingham, where the altars are re-used from other churches. In all these cases, the items re-used are of considerable artistic merit.

St. Mary, Hobs Moat.
A/L: Hobs Meadow, B92.
Date: 1966.
Architect: Laurence King. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p521)

Incumbent: Revd. DA Leahy, St. Mary's Vicarage, Hobs Meadow, Birmingham 92. 0121 743 4955.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The Church was built in 1967 to a design by Laurence King OBE. The building has an octagonal plan with the altar sited in the centre and surmounted by an aluminium lantern light with fibreglass spire. Behind the altar within the octagonal form are the choir vestry, sacristy, servers' vestry, lavatory and an external entrance. The main approach to the church is by way of two porches between which the chapel is found. Walls are of brick with fair-faced brickwork in the interior. The whole is a striking composition, generally one of the better of many churches built in the Diocese during this period.'

History of Hob's Moat - formerly Ideal Estate, Olton.

At the meeting of the DRC on 23rd March 1950, it was noted that negotiations were under way for the purchase of a site from Solihull UDC.

At the DRC meeting on 29th October 1953 it was reported that the area was now largely built up, and a site reserved. "Roman Catholics, the Gospel Mission, and other non-conformists were already working in the area. and the matter was urgent." The vicar of Solihull had suggested taking a house from Solihull UDC for three years, for a living agent; i.e. as a Special Curacy. It was decided at the DRC meeting on 16th December 1953, that out of £80,000 allocated by the Church Commissioners for the New Areas, Longbridge (Hawkesley Farm) should be allocated £15,000; and World's End, Kingshurst, Hob's Moat and Garrett's Green, £12,000 each.

By 3rd February 1954 the DRC was informed that the PCC wished to build a dual-purpose building, primarily a hall, but which could be used as a church for, say, 10 years. A scheme by L. Moore, architect, was approved. By the next meeting of the DRC, on 5th March 1954, it was reported that Solihull Corporation had offered a site of 3 acres. At the DRC meeting on 24th June 1954 the sketch plans for the hall were referred to the Building Sub-Committee, and by 30th September 1954 it was reported that building work should start in December.

A General Report on Diocesan Needs in New Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, notes on Hob's Moat:

> 'Arrangements already made for dual purpose building and curate's house.'

and a report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 notes that the clergy house was completed.

At the DRC meeting on 12th February 1965 a scheme for a Statutory District was submitted to the Church Commissioners.

The parish was first established in the 1950s in the estate with a large dual-purpose building, which now serves as the church hall. This is built of brick, with a steep clay tiled roof and dormer windows, and a small bell tower protruding - chimney-like - out of the roof. It provides a substantial amount of space, with a stage, and rooms behind.

The new church was built in 1967 as a steel-framed, octagonal building, with brick external walling and high-level windows. There is a shallow pitched roof, with a tall central lantern and a small fibre-glass spire. The altar is set in the middle of the space, beneath the lantern, and the vestries are set behind - i.e. to the east of - the altar. The vestries occupy the best part of two of the eight sides, and the altar is therefore surrounded by seating on the remaining six of the eight sides.

The stone altar is set on a stone plinth rising four steps; the first step, which is octagonal in plan, leads to a broad platform, giving space for movement around the altar, and for the distribution of communion. The remaining three steps are concentric and circular in plan, but fanning out at the rear of the altar to give ample space for westward-facing celebration, for which the church was designed. There are altar rails set in the perimeter of the first step.

Immediately to the rear of the altar is the president's chair, and two flanking chairs, set in front of a dais, which itself is set behind a low brick wall. This dais was originally designed to house the pulpit and reading desk. The font is placed immediately inside the entrance doors, tucked behind a column. The seating is in the form of pews, in short lengths, set in a fan, corresponding to the octagonal form of the building.

The church is undoubtedly a period piece, and is designed for the liturgy as it was understood in a forward-looking parish at the time. The most serious defect in the building is the rigidity with which it was designed for what was thought of as the latest thing at its time. The placing of the altar in the centre of the building, and the construction of it in stone, with its stone plinth, together with the construction of a walled dais behind, makes any re-ordering - should it be desired - a very expensive operation indeed. The location of the pulpit and reading desk, and of the font, seem not to have been resolved satisfactorily, even at the beginning, and the placing of pews on six sides makes the task of addressing a full congregation difficult. In the short term, the incumbent suggests that the removal of the altar rails, and the addition of two movable desks, would improve the sense of 'community'.

The vestries are 'lost' in the space to the east of the altar; because of the small space available, they are narrow and tall, and because the windows are set high, the clergy vestry in particular is rather like a pit.

There is a week-day chapel at the west end, adjoining the entrance. Because of the fall of the ground this is - like the vestries - a rather high room, for its size, and is entered by four steps down into it. This makes it a less comfortable, and less useful chapel, than it might be.

It is interesting to find a church designed so specifically for the liturgical movement, but which, because it is so inflexible, is a good deal less useful that it might be for the work and worship of the parish today. This provides an interesting contrast with the church designed in the Manchester diocese, by Raymond Wood-Jones and the students from the Manchester University School of Architecture.

St. Peter, Tile Cross.
A/L: Haywood Road, B33.
Date: 1968.
Architect: J. Osborne. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p522)

Incumbent: Vacant.

Secy.: Mrs V. Donald, 34 Shrewley Crescent, Tile Cross, B33 0HU. 0121 603 0519, or, 0121 788 1198.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was built in 1968, designed by the John Osborne Partnership of Birmingham. The building is of curved forms, having brickwork external walls comprising some steel framework, concrete floors and a large and flat asphalted roof. Main internal areas feature an almost circular "nave", leading to an ocular sanctuary and a choir in an arc to the East. A Baptistry lies off the nave to the South. There is a bell tower and an ocular ridge of clerestorey lights in the main roof. The building is situated on a 1767 sqyd-plot on Haywood Road, having vehicular access from Burleton Road. The Vicarage is adjacent to the North (1506 sqyd) and the adjoining church Hall (1206 sqyd, built around 1952) is to the South.'

This church is identified as being one of the Outer Ring Estate churches in Wallace Brown's Report "The Hidden Poor", and is in the first group, comprising Predominantly Newer Type Council Estate Churches (Church actually on Estate).

History.

At the meeting of the DRC on 23rd March 1950, it was noted that the City Council had approved, in principle, the conveyance of a freehold site.

At the DRC meeting on 7th June 1951, it was noted that the War Damage Commission had agreed to the transfer of the payment made in respect of St. Anne, Duddeston. The foundation stone of the Hall was laid on 5th October 1951.

A general Report on Diocesan Needs in New Housing Areas, submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, says of Tile Cross:

> 'About to become a statutory district. A church should be built, also a house as a vicarage.'

A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 notes that a house at 422 The Radleys had been purchased as a clergy house.

The church was consecrated on 13th November, 1968.

Description of the building

The building is a curious and complex one. Externally, it has all the hallmarks of a Liturgical Movement church, but manages to achieve the cluttered look of a pre-Liturgical Movement church.

In plan, the church is formed as a circle, but is cut off on the south side by the hall complex. Internally, this incomplete circle encloses the nave, which forms a smaller circle, also incomplete, and defined by the balcony on the south side of the nave, and the sanctuary, which is a yet smaller circle, defined by the communion rails and the altar pace, and interpenetrating that of the nave.

The church has tall, sheer, brick walls, curved in plan, particularly noticeable at the east end; full-height windows, extending to the base of the parapet; a tower in the form of a short stretch of wall rising above the height of the main building, supporting a skeletal metal "spire" and housing six bells; and a top-light, above the sanctuary. To one side - the liturgical south - is a complex of lower, flat-roofed buildings, housing the hall, kitchen, and other accommodation. This, as it were, cuts off a portion of the circular church, leaving an incomplete circle of some 200 degrees.
Internally, this incomplete circle commences at the bell tower, at the liturgical west end, includes a balcony on the north side of the church, the sanctuary, and a short return on the south side. Instead of a balcony, the south side has a concrete beam supporting a length of wall, oversailing the nave on the south side, which extends briefly, beneath the beam, to form an entrance area, approached from a common entrance to the hall and the church. Externally, this wall, visible above the roof of the hall, is formed of pre-cast concrete panels.

Within the circular interior the strong line of the balcony, on the north side forms a smaller - and incomplete - circle, into which a smaller circular sanctuary interpenetrates. The sanctuary is defined by a single raised step, which extends into the nave and houses the communion rails, which surround the altar on both west and east sides. To the rear of the altar is a narrow passage - left-over as it were, between the altar pace and the rear wall of the church. The sanctuary, which is top-lit, is surprisingly small; it is further cluttered by two seats and two prie-dieux; the narrow corridor behind houses the president's chair, other seats, and a cupboard, making a narrow space even more cramped. Set against the wall on the south side of the sanctuary, and beneath the beam - against the 'throat' of the sanctuary opening, is a substantial pulpit, set well above the level of the congregation. and constructed of brickwork, plastered.

The seating is formed as pews, curved in plan, and dark stained in finish; the brass eagle lectern came from another church in the diocese, and was originally given to its first home in 1883.

I have not, so far, been able to learn anything of the thinking behind this church. The church was consecrated in 1968, by which time the Birmingham Institute had had a major impact on church building both in the diocese, and elsewhere. Clearly, the architect was sufficiently familiar with churches of the Liturgical Movement, both in this country and abroad, to incorporate structural and design features - the sheer walls, the bell-turret, the tall windows; somewhere along the line, there seems to have been a lack of understanding of the purpose of the exercise.

The large - indeed over-large - pulpit dominates the congregation. The sanctuary, with its curious passageway behind, is too small to permit a dignified celebration of a Parish Communion, and, as a result of its form, which is defined by its enclosing walls, supporting the balcony to one side and a concrete beam on the other, is very difficult to alter. The pews are fixed, and therefore too inflexible, and are traditional - i.e. nineteenth century - appearance, at least because of their colour and fixed alignment. The brass lectern is a genuine import from the nineteenth century. Taken together, these elements give the impression that the final result of the erection of the church, if not the original intention, was to create a traditional interior, in spite of the 'contemporary' exterior. The result is a building which appears to be designed to defeat the intention of creating a setting in which the People of God can gather together around His table, to celebrate the Mysteries with dignity.

At the time I visited this church - in the autumn of 1996 - the parish had an interregnum. I would be fascinated to revisit the parish, in due course, to see what plans a new incumbent has for this somewhat intractable building.

Group 7. The following two churches are perhaps the best known of the post-war churches in the diocese, and both were innovative and mould-breaking.

St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, Birmingham.
A/L: Aldridge Road and Birdbrook Road, B44.
Date: Completed 1964.
Architects: Robert Maguire and Keith Murray.
(Illustrations and historical notes; see Vol.3, pp522-535)
Incumbent: Revd. SPM Mackenzie, St. Matthew's Vicarage, 313 Beeches Road, B42 2QR. 021 360 2100.

There were two churches built in the Birmingham diocese in the post-war years which attracted a great deal of critical attention. One was this church, the other was St. Philip and St. James, Hodge Hill. They represented two approaches to the post-war church. St. Matthew's follows the Liturgical Movement, and owes a great deal to work in mainland Europe at the time. Hodge Hill is an expression of the multi-purpose church building, and owes a great deal to the thinking of Professor J.G. Davies, at the Birmingham Institute.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'St. Matthew's is a modern church by Robert Maguire and Keith Murray and was completed in 1964. The design is austere, angular and complex; a lower set of walls wrapped round a tall, off centre hexagon. This hexagon is top lit, rises above the altar, and is surrounded by five wedge-shaped spaces, each progressively increasing in height. These spaces are at once distinct and part of the whole. The altar always being in sight. Side lighting comes from long thin windows below each roof slab.'

History.

At the DRC meeting on 2nd June 1949, it was noted that approval had been sought, and granted, for an extension of the Church Hall. Perry Beeches was made a separate district from 1st July 1949. On 6th October 1949 it was noted that Sutton Coldfield Corporation had agreed to sell a site for £250 - a quarter of housing value. Planning permission had been obtained for a Church, and applied for for the Vicarage. This last was received by 19th January 1950.

A Report was submitted to the DRC on 15th December 1954, on Diocesan Needs in the new Housing Areas. On the area which included Kingstanding Parish Church, Kingstanding St. Mark, St., Matthew Perry Beeches, and Old Oscott, the report comments:

> 'This area is in urgent need of a policy. The situation has become more difficult since extensive new building has taken place in the area of All Saints', Old Oscott, and along the Aldridge Road. The Bishop of Lichfield has suggested (unofficially) that the Pheasey Estate should be taken over by Birmingham. (This has been suggested

previously). If the latter suggestion was accepted, a solution might well be found by building a permanent church and vicarage at Pheasey. St. Mark (now Dual Purpose with house) would then come under Pheasey and be worked by an assistant curate. This would still leave the future of Perry Beeches to be settled. The clergy in this area agree that if Pheasey should become the Parish Church of the St. Mark area - then a permanent church should be built at Perry Beeches alongside the present dual purpose building. This is a good site and has the advantage of close proximity to the Brooklyn Farm Technical College. A site for a vicarage on waste land nearby is an urgent necessity.'

A report to the Diocesan Conference on 26th November 1956 notes that a site had been secured for a Vicarage.

Development of the design of the church

St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, is unusual in that the correspondence from the architect to the incumbent survives in the parish records, lodged in the City Archives. This demonstrates very clearly the degree to which an incumbent could take the initiative in choosing the type of church he thought appropriate, and, in this particular case, it demonstrates the great enthusiasm of both the incumbent and the architect. The correspondence gives a remarkably vivid picture of what it was like to be an innovator in this field, and it includes enlightening comments on both the detail and the principles of designing a church, and conveys something of the frustration which must have been felt from the 'dead hand' of the legalistic framework within which they had to work. I have included quotations from much of this correspondence in Vol.3, p523ff.

The Diocesan Leaflet, April 1964, notes that it is proposed to consecrate the new church on 21st September, 1964.

Description of the church

The church is described, together with other churches by the same architects, in 'Architecture in Britain Today', Michael Webb, Country Life, 1969. Webb says of it:

'The third example of Maguire and Murray's work, St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, is the most successful. Situated by a busy roundabout in a nondescript suburb of Birmingham, its outward form is dictated by the need to create a visual focus and to provide a sense of enclosure, insulated from the noise and bustle of traffic. Blank storeys of pale grey bricks are separated by concrete bands corresponding to the different roof levels. Interior and exterior are perfectly matched. On plan the hexagonal tower is enclosed by a larger hexagon: the form resembles a snail shell, with pent side roofs rising anti-clockwise from the porch round to the altar.'

'The interior is lit from the gables, and the structure is lightened by the thin glazed slits that separate each roof from the walls - so that each seems to float out from the massive cross beam spanning each corner. This sculptural form is both dynamic and practical. The square sanctuary projects from one wall, with an open-frame pulpit to one side, and the brick font beyond, just inside the porch. Floors are of glazed red brick; ceilings are boarded. Spotlights illuminate the tower over the altar, and lamps suspended from the cross beams light the congregation, whose pews are angled in on the altar in three blocks. Even more than at Crewe, unity is allied to variation in scale, and though the church seats 400, the vicar enjoys an almost conversational proximity with his congregation. Choir stalls constitute a fourth block of seating, subtly distinguished from the pews, on the far side of the sanctuary.'

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P196, thus:

'A really important modern church by Robert Maguire and Keith Murray. Completed in 1964. It represents a very honest solution to the problem of planning a building in which the whole congregation can participate in the worship. The outside is angular, austere, and complicated. The design turns in on itself with a lower set of walls wrapped round a tall hexagon that is off-centre. There are no traditional welcoming arches; the road to salvation, this building seems to say, is arduous. The interior shows a brilliant manipulation of an undivided space that depends essentially on the function of the various parts. There are no gimmicks here. The tall regular hexagon is top-lit and rises above the altar, and is surrounded by five wedge-shaped spaces, progressively increasing in height. These outer spaces are in this way both distinct and part of the whole. The first part on entering the church is naturally the baptistery, whose roof is half a hexagon, but the altar is always in sight. The side lighting comes from long thin windows under each roof slab.'

St. Matthew's today.

As a general description of the building, I have little to add to that by Michael Webb. The main Sunday service is a Parish Eucharist, with a congregation of some 60 to 70, plus young people. The building works well for worship, and it avoids the excessive amount of structure in the sanctuary, found at Hob's Moat. When it was first opened, it was a shock to the parishioners, although there had been lengthy discussions about it all through the planning and construction stages. The congregation had worshipped in the adjacent dual-purpose hall, which had become quite cosy. 'Cosy' is not a word one could apply to St. Matthew's, and the congregation had to learn to worship in it, and took time to develop a sense of prayer in the building. This undoubtedly is now present.

The church has had additional furnishings added over the years; the present incumbent has carried out a general 'tidying up' exercise, and has added a set of very fine, specially commissioned, painted Stations of the Cross. The careful choice of materials, including red brick for the floor, and blue brick for the font and sanctuary steps, is quiet, understated, but effective. The deep reinforced concrete beams of the roof structure are somewhat distracting; they are a fascinating exercise in geometry and construction, to any aficionados of RC, but the staining and discoloration now evident are a distraction.

The building is undoubtedly an important document in the story of Post-War church building; however, it would not have been like this if it had been planned only a few years later. Perhaps this is the price paid by a pioneer, but it is dated.

The height of the building, especially internally, feels grand, but excessive, and makes maintenance and cleaning difficult. At Hulme, in Manchester, only a few years later, the church itself was smaller - although still more than adequate for likely congregations, and the balance between worship area and space for other facilities is very different. This is an impressive building in which to worship, but its planning, even though a hall already existed, seems to have taken little account of the range of activities which were to be seen to be essential only a few years later.

Sts Philip and James, Hodge Hill, Birmingham.
A/L: Hodge Hill Common (West Side), B36.
Date: Completed 1968.
Architect: Martin Purdy.
(Illustrations and historical notes; see Vol.3, pp536-551)
Incumbent: Revd. RJ Taylor, The Rectory, Hodge Hill Common, B36 8AJ. 0121 747 2094/9262.

This is the second of the two post-war churches in the Birmingham diocese which received a great deal of critical attention and acclaim at the time it was built.

This is a multi-purpose complex, reflecting the thoughts of J.G. Davies, in 'The Secular Use of Church Buildings'.

The church was built with the involvement of the Birmingham Institute, and the architectural work - design and supervision - was undertaken by the Birmingham School of Architecture, under Denys Hinton, as part of the School's Live Project Department, with a research fellow, Martin Purdy, as job architect. As a result of this unusual co-operation, the progress of the church was well documented by the Institute in its various Annual Reports, and was also the subject of a separate document, entitled 'Hodge Hill - St. Philip and St. James - The Multi-Purpose Church', published in 1971. This substantial document - nearly 90 pages - gives a fascinating insight into the preoccupations and concerns of the Church, or at least of its more forward-looking members - at that time, and I have drawn extensively on this in my examination of the church. The history and underlying thought, which gave rise to the building, is included in Vol.3, pp536-56a

The complex was described and discussed in an article by Nigel Melhuish in the Research Bulletin of the Birmingham Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture in 1969, the year after the church was opened. The article was reprinted, in an abbreviated form, in Church Building, Summer 1991.

In his introduction to the original article, Professor Davies said of the comments made by Melhuish;

'While not disputing the theological ideas at the basis of the Hodge Hill design, he does question how far they have been or are capable of being realised. This is a decisive matter to which more attention will have to be paid.'

Melhuish says of the building, inter alia;

> 'It will be a long time before anyone can make even a tentative 'evaluation' of this building, but already it is some sort of success. Certainly no one visiting the place is likely to come away with the familiar feeling that the Church has been wasting money again. I saw Hodge Hill on a Thursday afternoon, and I had expected to find it empty. In fact the whole place was humming with activity: women and children were having tea in the Games Room, tables were

being laid in the lounge and people were playing table tennis on the stage.'

'I found it a surprisingly large project, very well sited on Hodge Hill Green. Architecturally it belongs to the best tradition of post-war school building, with no ecclesiastical vestiges externally except for the free-standing timber cross near the entrance. The buildings have a reassuring air of strength and solidity in a typically suburban environment.'

'Entering the Lounge, one looks into the famous 'multi-purpose volume' where the architect had to tackle an unusual brief of great complexity. At first, this suggests such classically flexible environments as the television studio or exhibition hall. On closer inspection it turns out to be a place built for a definite number of functions - more like a gym, with a lot of open space and a certain amount of fixed equipment.'

'An extensive area of hardwood strip flooring (the congregational space) is surrounded on three sides as follows; to the left are the sliding timber doors closing off the stage, and beyond the stage the organ and choir stalls; in front there is the 'sanctuary area' - a quarry-tiled platform on which are kept the wooden altar (with a plastic dust cover) and the lectern and seats for servers, etc.; finally, on the right there is a block of seating and the baptistery: this is a low-level extension accommodating a concrete font, with a large window overlooking the car park.'

'There is plentiful natural light, both from high level windows on two sides of the hall, and from windows at ground level on each side of the altar and behind the font. There is no sense of 'enclosure' in this hall, which affords views on all sides to the sky, to the lawns and car park outside, and into the adjoining rooms. The volume is given a certain 'direction' by a plastered panel of walling behind the altar.'

Work in the parish in the late 1960s

The Revd. Dennis Ede describes the complex from the point of view of the parish priest in his contribution to the Institute document. He describes the congregation when he arrived, and when the old dual-purpose hall/church was still in use as:

'a very loyal and conscientious congregation (who) were worship conscious in a building which was alien to worship.'

He goes on to describe the approach of the parish to its mission thus:

'Since 1961-62 the whole emphasis of Church (i.e. the Church in Hodge Hill) policy has been one of outreach, especially in the years 1962-65. The establishing of a

Church newspaper had far more far-reaching effects than the mere circulation of news, particularly in these years. The identifying of Church outreach can be summarised in the following way:

a) The Church Council were encouraged to discuss community matters rather than eclectic agendas.
b) Youth work was made open to non-church attending members from 1961 onwards.
c) An open Baptism Policy was pursued.
d) Considerable time was given to pastoral counselling, especially among non-church members.
e) The general social programme of the church was increased.
f) A firm policy of rapport with our twelve schools was initiated from 1966 onwards.
g) Attention was given to house meetings and house celebrations as early as 1960.
h) A Campaign of Christian Commitment inviting all Church members to offer time, talent and money was an important turning point in our Church life in 1962.
i) A Franciscan Mission planned between 1963-64 was held after Easter 1964 for two weeks.

He describes the work and worship of the parish at considerable length, and concludes with some thoughts as to the future. He continues (pp47/48):

> 'Two spheres of work deserve our attention. First is the teaching of the Faith. We shall need to discover ways and means of communicating the essential Faith especially to fringe and new members and helpers. It is not sufficient to let them become tried helpers without offering them the means of grace. Secondly, we need to streamline our ministry to the mentally and emotionally disturbed individual and group. .. We shall need to take a fresh look at the question of a licensed bar on the premises. Without doubt the 14-16 years old is moving into the public house discotheque today.
>
> In 1972 we shall need to take a completely new look at the whole question of church finance. Stewardship/Commitment in themselves are basically necessary but additional schemes will have to be investigated, together with the whole question of grant aid from the local authorities.'

He turns to the question of worship, commenting that, at that time, Series II

> 'is very archaic for the newcomer. The Eucharist is far from a meal in which all fully share. However we alter and mangle Evensong, it seldom pleases the congregation. Perhaps a growth in worship will take place through house groups to which young people should be invited. It is quite obvious that the types of service which are dispensed at present will fade out with the departure of the 1970 congregation. By 2000 AD. what we understand as worship will surely have disappeared.'

Finally, he describes the rôle of Hodge Hill as a training parish. He says:

> 'During 1970 we have built up a very close contact with Colleges of Education and, to a lesser extent, Theological Colleges. During 1970-71 we shall have thirty students undertaking various types of on-the-job training at Hodge Hill. We are not, as a parish, equipped in terms of personnel to develop this work Perhaps selected parishes will in the future be assisted by peripatetic lecturers from Universities and Colleges of Higher Education to assist in this task.'

The multi-purpose church at Hodge Hill was built as a response to the theological, pastoral and liturgical preoccupations of the time, and their expression in architectural terms, particularly as promulgated in the work of J.G. Davies and the Birmingham Institute. At the time it was built it was already famous - rather like St. Paul's, Bow Common - as the lengthy article in the Diocesan Leaflet showed; and the building still arouses intense interest.

It was designed in response to a range of activities, as those activities were organised and funded at the time. A major element was the youth work, which was centre-dominated at the time, and was funded by the LEA. At one time three full-time youth workers were employed. Current youth work is based on outreach, as at St. Thomas's, Garretts Green, with its 'bus touring the estate. Funding has also changed, and the future of some of the community-based work at Hodge Hill is at present (autumn 1996) uncertain. At the time the complex was erected, the height was in part related to the wish to play badminton there, and a generous stage was included to accommodate an interest in drama. Neither of these in fact contributed significantly to the life of the parish or to the funding of the complex.

Although patterns of use have changed, the building is still remarkably flexible. A day centre for the elderly use it on Tuesdays and Thursdays - I joined them for lunch - and the Girl Guides and Boys' Brigade still use the hall.

The roof is felted, and has been re-covered twice; I am told that there is a lot of flat roof, and a lot of leaks. Nonetheless, the building is still very adaptable, it works well for worship, and as a multi-purpose, not dual-purpose, the sanctuary is always prominent, whatever else is going on. Whether the arrangement here, with the sanctuary and altar permanently visible - according to the theory that if you can't do it in front of the altar, you shouldn't be doing it - is successful, I am not yet sure.

I have described this complex at greater length than any other of the post-war churches in the diocese. It was an exciting and ground-breaking venture. I have quoted at length from contemporary documents, to allow those involved to speak in their own words, to allow the enthusiasm and vision which drove this project to be manifest. The amount of

documentation which exists allows one to follow the process which led to the building, and the use made of it, very fully indeed. It is also made clear, in discussions at the time, that this is a solution for a parish; it is not universally applicable. However, there is a great deal to be learnt from this for any parish, both in suggesting the principles to be followed in discussion, and in the level of involvement of members of the parish which was achieved. As a snap-shot of theological concerns of the time, the means of achieving them, and hopes for the future, it is a fascinating story.

Group 8. These two churches, built circa 1970, were designed for both Liturgical Movement worship, and as multi-purpose centres for all the people of the parish. They represent the coming-of-age of the work of the Birmingham Institute.

St. George, Birmingham (Newtown).
A/L:
Date: 1970.
Architect: RA Smeeton. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p551)

Incumbent: Revd. Robert Johnson, St. George's Rectory, 100 Bridge Street West, B19 2YX. 0121 359 2000.

The brief descriptive note prepared for the records of the DAC describes the church thus:

> 'The church was completed in 1970 to a design by Mr. RA Smeeton. It comprises Church, upper and lower church halls, vestries, meeting and ancillary rooms and toilets. The structure is load-bearing brick. The floors are composed of precast concrete beams supported on a structural frame of steel joists encased in concrete. The main roofs are copper covered on a chipboard deck with timber rafters on steel purlins and trusses. Other roofs are flat, asphalt covered on precast concrete beams.'

This is an extremely well built and well designed complex of buildings. The lower part contains a hall and offices, the upper part has the worship area, with an interconnecting hall, and a small meeting room. The worship area is diamond-shaped in plan, and the roof is in the form of an irregular pyramid, with a thin copper-clad spire in the centre of the roof, at its highest point; the ridge of the roof falls to east and west, to only slightly lower peaks, and the sides fall away more sharply, giving a faceted appearance to the roof.

Internally, the ridge is expressed, falling away slightly from the centre to the east and west, but falling sharply to the north and south, with the east end rising like the prow of a ship, and with a sequence of close-set tall narrow windows, rising above the RC ringbeam at just over head height. The east end - the prow - is set in the angle of the space; facing it, at the west end, the angle is cut off by a beam, and folding partition below,

The sanctuary, in layout half a hexagon, is delineated by a low dais of two steps; the first step is at the altar rail, the second is occupied by the altar and seats for the ministers. The altar, and one chair, have come from another church. Unusually, and unlike the standard Gothic Revival catalogue furnishing usually introduced from a previous church, the altar, in particular, has a strong turn-of-the-century, Arts and Crafts character which sits very happily in the building. The font, in reinforced concrete, is placed just outside the sanctuary, on the liturgical south side.

The seating, for about 150, is in the form of chairs, arranged in an arc to align with the three sides of the half hexagon of

the sanctuary. The hall, to the west, can be opened into the church if extra space is required. The church seems to work well for worship and, with the other accommodation, is a generally useful and adaptable complex. There is a good deal of imaginative work being carried out with young people on the estate, which has - unlike the estates of the Outer Ring - a large West Indian population.

The estate in which it is built is the rebuilding of an old, inner city area, and comprises mainly tower blocks, set in landscaping. On a sunny day it looks very pleasant indeed. The church, with its individual design, is a landmark in the area; it is distinctive and friendly, without being either alien or overpowering.

The care which clearly went into the planning, design and the execution recall the church complex at St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, which I describe next. The contrast with St. Paul's, Bordesley Green is striking. The worship area at St. George's (built in 1970) appears to occupy somewhere between a third and a quarter of the volume of St. Paul's (built in 1968), yet it holds almost as many people - 150 against 180 - and with the opening of the partition into the hall, St. George's can accommodate at least as many as St. Paul's using the balcony - 180+80. In addition, St. George's has had, from the beginning, a far more useful collection of ancillary accommodation.

St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood.

A/1: Pike Drive, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7US.
Date: 1972.
Architect: (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p552)

Incumbent: Revd. David T. Shaw, The Rectory, Pike Drive, B37 7US. 0121 770 5155, or1511.

St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, is another church, like St. Luke's, Kingstanding, that I was told I must go and see. The impression I was given was that it marked pioneering work, in a very 'difficult' estate. The impression after my visit was a good deal more positive than I expected.

The general 'set-up' here is a very interesting example of a variation on the approach adopted at St. Philip and St. James, Hodge Hill.

The estate was one of the last large estates to be built on the periphery of the City. The church complex comprises a pair of buildings either side of an access and parking area; on one side is the church, with the vicarage attached, and facing it is the hall complex.

The siting of the complex, and its landscape treatment, shows a good deal more thought than appears in many other locations. The two buildings are built on the edge of a sloping site so that from the main part of the estate, the complex appears above a grassy slope, with tree planting around, and to one side is an enclosed memorial gardens, where ashes are placed, and small memorial plaques erected on a wall.

Both buildings are of two main storeys; in the case of the church the worship area rises through two storeys, with ancillary accommodation on two floors around. The hall has a variety of rooms at both ground and first floor level, and includes a flat on the first floor. Because of the slope, it was possible to form some accommodation at basement level.

Both buildings are generally square in plan, faced in brick, with lighting by means of a roof lantern; in the case of the hall this lights a room on the upper floor, in the case of the church it lights the worship area. Although designed as a near-matching pair, the buildings are carefully differentiated; the hall has long and narrow horizontal windows at ground floor level, set at high level immediately below the RC ringbeam at first floor level, with domestic type windows above; the church has some narrow, full-height, windows, but the principal lighting is from the lantern light, which is larger and more prominent than that on the hall. In addition, there is a large area of glazing at ground floor level, overlooking the memorial garden.

The worship area is roughly square in plan, with the sanctuary in the centre of one wall, lit by a tall window on the north side. The seating is ranged in tiers, rather like a small theatre, rising quite steeply on steps, and is in the form of

short lengths of benches, formed in a semicircle around the open space in front of the sanctuary. The walls are of exposed brick, in carefully selected yellow stocks; the floor generally is carpeted, except for the sanctuary, and a clear area before it, which are paved in multi-brown brick paviors. The sanctuary is raised on two shallow brick steps, and the altar itself is raised on a carpeted timber plinth.

The worship area is generally uncluttered; the materials have been carefully selected, and the brickwork of the walls is relieved by a number of tapestries, and the sanctuary furnishings, which are in timber, have fabric hangings, designed together. On the East wall, above and behind the altar, is a simple timber cross. There is ample space for the celebration of the liturgy, and the area can also be used for concerts and drama. I gather that it works extremely well, both for worship and other uses.

The church is entered, from the lobby, at the level of the upper tier of seating, and there is an approach to a corridor, serving a suite of small rooms, all top-lit. Beneath this, is a space at ground floor level, approached from outside. For some years this served for storage, and was dilapidated inside, and vandalised outside. After a good deal of discussion, the space was let to the local undertaker, as a branch office, and he was allowed to place his name in large letters above the entrance. This bold and imaginative - and financially beneficial - move has made the incumbent into something of a hero amongst his peers.

In addition to the rent, which is a useful source of income to the parish, the provision of this facility is a major benefit to the inhabitants of the estate. Many of these are elderly, and do not have their own means of transport. Until the branch office was established the nearest Undertaker was at least one bus ride away; the present arrangement is vastly more convenient for the inhabitants of the estate.

The range of activities at Chelmsley Wood is enormous. It includes: the Midland Care service, the Funeral Director, Probation Service (Community Service Volunteers), Counselling, including Domestic Violence, Bereavement Counselling, Alcoholic Advice, Victim Support, and Family Mediation; and a Charity Shop. It is planned to provide an IT centre, for both Vocational and After School training, in association with Solihull College. It is hoped that Lottery funding will assist this. In addition, there is a Footprints Nursery, five days a week, 9am to 5pm; a morning Playgroup; a Coffee and Activity morning, run by and for the Handicapped; Weight Watchers - weekly; Men's Group - weekly; Bible Study Group - one afternoon and one evening, weekly; Parent and Carer Group; Luncheon Club - weekly; Friendship Club; School of Dancing; Parent and Toddler Drop In Centre - weekly; Nearly New Shop; Disco Dancing, Line Dancing and Intermediates Youth Club.

Not all activities will survive, and they are tested, changed, adapted, or abandoned, as circumstances suggest. The result,

however, is a very vigorous organisation, with ties into the community at many levels, and service to the community at many levels.

The parish was established with much the same ambition as that at Hodge Hill: to integrate the Church into the life of the area, so that it could be both a worshipping and serving agent to the people of the area. At Hodge Hill, this was expressed in a space which was used for worship and social use in common - when I visited Hodge Hill the Old People's Luncheon Club was meeting in this common area, with the sanctuary and altar in its place at one side - although, even there, additional space was provided for particularly vigorous physical activities - notably the Youth Club. At Chelmsley Wood, the worship area is still multi-purpose, in that it can accommodate drama and music outside the context of a service, but it is restricted to activities which would not feel 'out of place' in front of the altar. Even when Hodge Hill was being designed, the question, Would you be comfortable holding a Saturday Evening Hop in front of the Altar? deserved more serious consideration than it was given. In spite of historical precedent and theological argument, the experience of clergy and laity seems to suggest that the answer to the question about the Hop was, No! Even the dual-purpose buildings which were established in the 1950s, ceased to become dual-purpose, and were usually eventually supplemented by a new hall, to become a church, or by a church, to become solely a hall.

The worship area at Chelmsley Wood appears far more attractive, and effective, than that at Hodge Hill, which is now looking depressing, not least because of the severe, 'industrial' look, of the building. At Chelmsley Wood, although the worship area is sufficiently flexible to cope with a range of functions, and flexibility in the pattern of worship, the real flexibility was built into the 'Hall' block which, as I describe below, is now proving to be a great boon.

At Chelmsley Wood, the block containing the hall was designed as a flexible space, with a reinforced concrete frame, so that fixed internal partitions were at a minimum. The space can be divided or opened up as needs change, although extending some of the rooms results in an 'L' shape. Sometimes this can be an advantage, at others it gives rise to problems in supervision. This building is now being steadily refurbished, particularly to accommodate the growing needs for nursery provision for working mothers. In addition, the pattern of Youth Work has changed radically from the Youth Centre based approach, to a more flexible approach; as a result, the old pattern of Youth Club accommodation is becoming redundant, and available for other purposes. Because of the social service aspect of the work of the parish, much of the funding comes, eventually, from local and central government funds. However, money is needed to kick-start the rolling programme of works, and this is provided at Chelmsley Wood by the near commercial rent, paid by the Undertakers.

Birmingham Diocese today.

The work of the Birmingham Institute has left a distinctive contribution among the Post-War churches of the diocese, both in regard to the form and layout of the worship areas, and the composition of the complexes of buildings and the rôle they are designed to play in the community. It is interesting to see how strongly the latter aspect echoes the thoughts of Bishop Barnes.

As a legacy of the work of the Institute, Sts. Philip and James, Hodge Hill, and St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, are perhaps the best known of the post-war churches; those by Denys Hinton are still very serviceable, without being ostentatious. and the churches of the early 1970s, such as St. George's, Birmingham (Newtown), and St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, are strikingly successful on most counts.

Ministry in the Post-War parishes today

The concept of Ministry to the whole community underlay much of the thought of Bishop Barnes, and with the work of Professor Davies at the Birmingham Institute, the building of Hodge Hill, and the thoughts of Donald Tytler and Leslie Paul on the pattern of ministry and distribution of clergy, opened the way to the more adventurous patterns of ministry which are in existence in the diocese. For example, at the DRC meeting on 5th April 1968, there was a discussion about Oldbury Parish Church, which needed £33,000 to be spent on repairs. Leslie Paul, sitting on the Committee, suggested calling in the Birmingham Institute to look at the whole context of the Church in the town centre, and at the Town Plan. These patterns are not necessarily unique to Birmingham, but they are encouraged to flourish there.

The churches of the Outer Ring Estates today.

The diocese continues to encourage experiment and imagination in the approach to the Church's Mission today. One of the most important pieces of work is that by Wallace Brown, the incumbent of St. Boniface, Quinton Road West, and I quote from it at some length.

His Report, 'The Hidden Poor', is sub-titled 'A Report to consider the needs of peoples living in the large Outer Ring Council Estates of the Birmingham Diocese'. This is a substantial study of the nature of the large council estates of the immediate post-war period, and an examination of their demographic make-up. While the inner-city has been the subject of study, and the receiver of money, the outer estates have been neglected. Their problems are markedly different from those of the inner-city, not least because the population is predominantly white, and the problems are quite different from those of the multi-ethnic inner areas. I have already discussed the demographic changes in the council estates in relation to a number of parishes in Manchester diocese, but this is the first time I have found a detailed study of the

situation, and a programme for the way forward. In the Executive Summary Wallace Brown says:

> **'35 'Outer Ring' Council Estate Churches have been identified in the Birmingham Diocese. Of these, 25 are actually sited in the midst of massive council estate sprawls.**
>
> These 25 churches minister to nearly 250,000 people - 17.2% of the diocese; yet attract less than 0.5% of the population of their parish. The average congregation is a mere 41 adults and less than a dozen children. ... a 5.03% decline in the past two years.

Council Estate Churches are in crisis

****

The report looks at Cultural, Social, Personal and Spiritual reasons for the problem. And offers the following recommendations:

* new understanding of today's culture.
* change in 'mind-set' from old pastoral norms.
* radical re-appraisal of mission to council estate areas
* reassessment of social 'make-up' of council estates.
* today's council estates to be seen as mission areas.
* consideration of action needed.
* examination of 'power groups' syndrome.
* need for 'on the job' training.
* need for diocesan support and accountability structure
* council estate clergy to take comfort, they are not alone
* need to understand the crisis in our midst.
* need to appreciate personal commission for ministry.

The report then goes on to offer a 'Way Ahead' through proven techniques of ministry in a Post Modernist society:

* hearing God.
* spiritual regeneration.
* fighting environmental problems with prayer.
* dealing with 'power groups'.
* incarnational ministry.
* establishing a support team.
* spiritual warfare.
* dealing with bad behaviour.
* understanding our non-book culture.
* being real and vulnerable.
* building community in the church.
* dealing rightly with sin.
* where to start.
* priorities.

This report recommends council estate clergy to employ a radical re-appraisal of method for ministry on the Outer Ring Council Estates. It advises that middle class Anglican norms will no longer do.

> The report specially commends Bishop Michael Marshall's recent statement: "A person who wants to serve God cannot be moved on to greater things until his soul has been troubled and widened and he has set his will to have complete certainty in the inward assistance of God." So it is for council estate ministry. We have to understand the crisis, turn to God in our pain and He will lead us forward.'

The report goes on to quote the concept of Bishop Leonard Wilson - the successor to Barnes - of 'Circles without Centres':

> 'New estates, well designed and spacious, are being swiftly built. But their inhabitants are strangers to one another, uprooted and often lonely. The estates are circles without centres. For generations, strangers have become friends around the parish church. From the roots of English worship there spring up many groups, clubs and organizations, open to all, which most of us need if we are to live as persons in a society and not as units in a crowd. The new estates will make their full contribution to our way of life when they are communities with centres of worship and service.'

'Well-designed and spacious' is a fair comment on many of these estates, and still holds true. Many areas look very pleasant indeed on a sunny April morning; what is not immediately apparent is the degree of poverty and alienation which exists.

Wallace Brown then describes the present situation at All Saints, Shard End:

> 'It was visited by Her Majesty the Queen on 3rd December 1955 and she expressed her pleasure at "this first achievement of the Diocesan Building Programme for the new estates." Today All Saints has an average Sunday attendance of a mere 51 adults (well over the average for Council Estate Churches!) and has declined by about 14% in the past two years. The church looks gaunt and separate from the community. It obviously suffers from graffiti, has wired-up windows and a high pronged fence around the hall and gardens. Only just over 4 adults per 1,000 population attend the church on an average Sunday!
>
> Shard End is little different from other Council Estate Churches. In some ways, it is much stronger and suffers less obvious vandalism. It just shows us the problem!'

I am not at all sure that this is entirely fair to Shard End; I think Wallace Brown caught Shard End at a difficult time in its life, and he does not take account of the enthusiasm, and freshness of approach, of the new incumbent.

Brown goes on to discuss the rapidly changing culture, the disempowerment of the elderly, the alienation of the young, their anti-literacy culture, the contrast between the 'haves'

and the 'have-nots', and the social make-up of the estates where 25% of the population are in employment, and of the remaining 75% 12% are lone parents, 13% are unemployed, 10% are sick or disabled, and 40% are pensioners, all of whom receive their main income from various benefits. He says:

> 'Council Estate Vicars are at the sharp end of the breakdown of culture pervading western society. On the one hand they are almost being forced to "hang on in there" by ageing and disempowered pressure groups. And on the other hand, there seems little "out there" to grasp for the Kingdom. There is danger of avoiding the real issues by adding more and more activities and becoming headless chickens rushing round in the last throes of death.

He describes the sense of isolation felt by him and his colleagues, with little if any support from the diocese, and with little or no leadership from within the parish, and a sense of failure because even the expectations of Church life in a traditional working-class parish are not met. He describes how, when he arrived in his new parish, in 1985:

> 'the Welsh House Farm Estate was wild and dangerous. Gangs abounded, drink dominated, children swore at passers-by and prostitutes stood on the street corners. The local primary school was beset by violence and was one of the first in Birmingham to have a security system.'

He itemizes some of the incidents in the parish, murder, suicide, gratuitous violence and harassment, and comments:

> 'I was deeply disturbed by the discovery that the "community" was profoundly unaware of such happenings in their midst. Or maybe they did not want to know. And I soon determined that most "respectable" people had the simple philosophy, "I keep myself to myself". ... Nobody even suggested my family and I were like missionaries to a broken community. It would have helped.
>
> The Church Family was not part of the council estate community. They were, by and large, an older group of "working class" who looked on the estates with horror and wanted to surround the church building with barbed wire - both physically and emotionally. A power group within the congregation controlled and ruled church life. They had become disempowered within the area, and made very sure they held the reins within the church. Sacrifice was not part of their worshipping vocabulary - at least not their sacrifice! Although lip service was paid to "reaching the estates" they clearly had no intention of changing the structures within the church to welcome "difficult" adults and children.
>
> I have since discovered that many Council Estate Churches are governed by this siege mentality. Often ruled by a group for whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the first priority!'

He goes on to discuss the problems, and the pattern of ministry needed in such estates. He identifies the churches of the Outer Ring Estates in four groups.

The first, comprising Predominantly Newer Type Council Estate Churches (Church actually on Estate), includes: St. Andrew, Chelmsley Wood; St. Bartholomew, Allens Cross; St. Boniface, Quinton; St. Cuthbert, Castle Vale; Druids Heath Church, Kings Norton; St. Francis, Woodgate; Hawksley Church, Kings Norton; Holly Hill, Frankley; Immanuel, Kings Norton; St. James, Round Green; St. Margaret, Short Heath; St. Peter, Tile Cross; Pool Farm Church, Kings Norton.

The second group, comprising Predominantly Older Type Council Estate (Church actually on the Estate), includes: All Saints, Shard End; St. Barnabas, Kingshurst; St. Gabriel, Weoley Castle; Holy Cross, Billesley Common; St. Luke, Kingstanding; St. Mark, Kingstanding; St. Mark, Londonderry; St. Martin, Perry Common; St. Mary, Pype Hayes; St. Michael, Gospel Lane; St. Richard, Lea Hall; St. Thomas, Garrett's Green.

The third group, comprising Fringe Council Estate Churches (Mixed properties; large council presence, with many privately owned) include: Ascension, Stirchley; St. Clement, Castle Bromwich; St. John Baptist, Longbridge; St. Michael, Bartley Green; St. Stephen, Rednal.

The fourth group, comprising Hidden Council Estates (Council Estate 'hidden' by private housing: Church in private area) includes: St. Andrew, Stechford; Bromford Bridge; Christ the King, Yardley Wood; St., Giles, Rowley Regis.

Birmingham Diocese Outer Estates Group

As a result of the Report the Birmingham Diocese Outer Estates Group has been set up; the policy of the Group is that every new incumbent or priest in charge of an Outer Estate parish must: (a) Be part of the Outer Estate group for at least two years; (b) have a mentor whom he/she will meet regularly for the first two years in order to share thinking and develop a ministry strategy for the parish. It is anticipated that the new incumbents will meet the mentor monthly in the first six months. Mentors will be clergy living and serving on Outer Estates and approved by the Bishop.; (c) Visit at least three Outer Estate parishes, two of these visits being with members of their own congregation; (d) Consider with the Director of Ministries their own training needs in the light of the new ministry and mission context in which they find themselves; and (e) Within the first year share their thinking about ministry and mission with the Outer Estates group.

The purpose of the group is threefold:
Mission To encourage and enable leaders of Outer Estate churches to develop healthy and growing congregations of all ages.
Mutuality To cultivate trusting support and commitment amongst leaders working on Outer Estates.

Motivation To share and develop strategies of ministry which are specially relevant to Outer Estates, and relate directly to the communities we serve.

This approach by Wallace Brown, and its conclusions, is not without its critics, particularly, it seems, from those with a more traditional approach to the working and organisation of a parish.

On the other hand, Robert Johnson, the newly inducted incumbent of St. George's, Newtown, endorsed much of Wallace Brown's approach and, like Brown, was very conscious of the danger, and the limitations, of running a parish to meet the needs of a very small group of established and entrenched church members, while excluding the vast majority. In his previous parish, he had operated a Credit Union, which had the effect of creating a larger, and second, congregation. In a similar way, other organisations, such as musical or drama groups, can also be fostered - by being able to use the church facilities, and then being encouraged to contribute to the life and worship of the parish.

The most surprising aspect of ministry I have discovered is a resurgence of the Catholic element in the Church. This is found at All Saints, Shard End, but is manifested particularly in the the group of parishes of St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, St. Mark's, Kingstanding, and St. Luke's, Kingstanding. These operate as a team or group; the clergy are much of an age - late 30s and 40s, and they are clearly friends and colleagues as well as neighbouring clergy. This makes for a much greater degree of genuine co-operation than might otherwise be expected. The pattern of ministry is, in effect, a late twentieth century version of the work of the Catholic arm of the church in the slums of the old inner cities, in the second half of the last century. It is marked by the endeavour to make the church the centre of the parish, for all who live there, to meet people where they are, and meet their needs today; the worship is marked by the sense of devotion, sense of being part of the company of Saints, and sense of continuity with 2000 years - nearly - of the Church, but the worship, instead of being concerned with antiquarian accuracy, and assimilation to a notion of 'what is correct', is designed to provide a service which is understandable - insofar as the Mysteries are understandable - and in which the congregation can participate, while still discovering a reverence for Christ in the mystery of the Eucharist. Both aspects inevitably require a willingness to experiment, and where things do not work, to try something else.

Birmingham Diocese - Conclusion.

It is, perhaps, surprising to discover the extent to which one diocese differs from another, both in its general ethos, and in its approach to church building and church planting in the post-war years. Coventry lost its cathedral, and became, for a number of reasons, a symbol of the terrible destruction wrought by war, and the ability of its people to hold fast in spite of all - although this was to a large degree an effort by the government to bolster morale, and conceal the level of despair actually exhibited in the city. In terms of numbers of buildings damaged and destroyed - houses, public buildings, and churches - Birmingham suffered to a far greater degree than either Coventry or Manchester.

In Bishop Barnes, Birmingham had a Bishop - who had been in post for 15 years when the war started - with a strong social conscience, and strong links with civic authorities. Shortly after his arrival he began a campaign, and fund-raising, for what he called 'church extension' in the new housing areas. His son, in his biography of the Bishop, says of his vision:

> 'If the younger inhabitants of the new areas, in particular, were not to become totally secularized, the services of the Church must be brought to them and in modern forms which they could accept. They could no longer be expected to travel long distances to attend old fashioned ceremonies in traditional buildings. This was the broad philosophy which underlay Barnes's determination to make a success of the appeal. The Church in Birmingham was for him the Church of the poor and must remain so; her resources must be devoted to their service and welfare.'

The churches erected at this time were not neo-Gothic buildings, but multi-purpose church halls. As his son notes, these new parishes were not required to follow conventional forms of worship, and he saw no need to insist on formularies which would be "mumbo-jumbo" to the average Church worker in an industrial parish.

Birmingham became a pioneer in this area of establishing new parishes, with new buildings; it was a pioneer in the way in which emphasis was placed on the importance of the mission of the Church in relation to the whole community of a given geographical parish, and the way in which this governed the nature of the building, rather than the traditional view, which inclined to let the building determine the mission. The balance was to shift from the architect as pioneer and leader, to the PCC as leader and active client, and the architect as interpreter and enabler, in co-operation with the parish.

Bishop Barnes's idealism and vision set the scene for the experimentation of the post-war years. There was the additional, and fortuitous, establishment of the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture within the University of Birmingham. This was a multi-skilled networking organisation - or so it would be described today -

which provided a forum for those who wished to push forward liturgy and church architecture to meet contemporary challenges, both for those whose principal professional concern this was, and at the same time it offered opportunities to others - mainly architects and priests - to study existing buildings, in this country, but especially in France, Western Germany and Switzerland. It is fascinating to discover, in talking to those who were involved in the building of new churches, how often participation in one of the Institute's tours had fired imagination. Indeed, for some of us, that excitement has never really gone away.

In addition, the Institute was closely involved with the diocese in the case of the new church at Hodge Hill. No other experiment in quite this manner, and with such enthusiastic co-operation between the diocese and an academic institution, seems to have taken place in any other diocese at this time. The other highly-publicized new church was St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches. Here, the relationship between building and worship, and ways of creating a building, against constraints of cost and structure, were worked out in great depth, and with the support of the diocese.

In Manchester, the two churches by George Pace were the result of initiatives by the clergy involved at parish level, in which the diocese acquiesced, and the one experiment by the Manchester University School of Architecture, at St. John's Flixton, seems to have been regarded as an experiment to be watched warily; it did not lead, as Raymond Wood-Jones hoped, to the establishment of a pattern for churches in the new housing estates.

There is a less well known aspect of the new churches in Birmingham, and that is the contribution of Denys Hinton. At the same time that St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches was under way, in the early 60s, Hinton was building two modest and flexible churches, St. Richard's, Lea Hall, and St. Michael's, South Yardley, which expressed much of the thinking of the Institute; the deserve to be given higher regard than they have so far received.

A STUDY OF CHURCHES BUILT FOR THE USE OF CONGREGATIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970 AND OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS.

Churches in the diocese of Coventry.

Coventry Diocese.

Coventry Diocese - introduction to the Diocesan programme of church building after the war.

The pattern of church building and church planting in Coventry Diocese follows a very different pattern from that found in Manchester Diocese. Coventry Diocese has a much smaller city at its centre, with substantial rural areas, and also includes the towns of Warwick, Rugby, Leamington Spa, and Stratford upon Avon. The scale of new housing development was much smaller than was the case in Manchester, and I have found no evidence of the diocese-wide drive for new churches, controlled from the centre, which gave such an impetus, and common pattern, to church building in Manchester. However, the results of war damage in Coventry were much greater. As a result, there are far fewer post-war churches than in Manchester, but a higher proportion were financed as a result of compensation for War Damage. A further distinctive feature of Coventry is that it was the one diocese which lost its cathedral as a result of enemy bombing, and three parish churches were built by the architect of the new cathedral. The design and construction of these churches marks a distinctive approach o the architectural solution of the requirements for a new church in a new housing area.

This period in the history of Coventry diocese is discussed in the brief history of the diocese, 'Seen in a See; the diocese of Coventry, 1918-1978', by Edward Bastin, 1978. Although this is brief, and therefore leaves topics hanging in the air, it does give a 'feel' of the immediate post-war period by one who ministered, in one parish in the diocese, through the war and well into the post-war era. He says (p30):

> 'New building was strictly controlled and was by licence for a number of years. Most church buildings had to wait eight or nine years after the end of the war. Housing and educational buildings had priority.'
>
> 'The traumatic effects of the war and the shortages of fuel tend to obscure the fact that many priests in the parishes had continued to maintain week-day services, and the worship of the Church, in houses where two or three were gathered together - so, in one respect, we were back into the ways of the Acts of the Apostles - now in 1978 that kind of ministration had become more common and we may be seeing a new phase of Christian Church "Cell" movement.'
>
> 'In Leamington it was considered that there were too many churches concentrated in the urban area, while elsewhere in the diocese housing estates were being completed with no church or church hall. Above all it seemed that the Church's influence was declining as a materialistic, secular, acquisitive and permissive society was emerging. The altruism of the war period was fast departing.'

'In some respects we had by 1954/55 come through the years of penury, and early in 1955 the re-built Church of St. Paul, Foleshill, was consecrated. The planning had been begun by Howard Pipe and the re-building was during the incumbency of Kenneth Pickett. The church was built on the site of one destroyed in 1940. Later a very good hall was added on the north side and adjoining the church.. In March of that year a dual purpose church was built and consecrated in the Canley area by a hostel site - that became St. Stephen, Canley.'

There is constant reference to the existence of 'hostels' as a feature of war-time Coventry. Bastin explains (p27):

'There was a shortage of accommodation in most industrial areas which had been raided, so to keep the factories going, and to man the machine tools in every suitable place, workers were brought in and housed in hostels. All over the city where there was adequate space these were built - in all nearly twenty of them. Some accommodated 500 workers, others 1000. The clergy of all denominations became involved trying to do something among these men and women, generally hundreds of miles from their homes.'

'Bishop Gorton brought into the diocese Kenneth Bell (an Oxford don from Balliol - he had chosen to leave the college to work in London among the hard-pressed Londoners). Kenneth Bell was to work in the hostels. He was temporarily lodged in one of the vicarages where the Vicar's wife greeted him with "Are you the electrician?" - and as there was only one room reasonably warm - the kitchen - sat him down there, and while she got his room ready and prepared "a bite" he quite cheerfully studied the Beveridge Report.'

Bastin continues to discuss the post-war rebuilding thus (p39):

'At Radford, where F.J.H. Lisemore had some years before succeeded Warren Hunt, the foundation stone of the new church had been laid by Bishop Harry Baines (about 1953) when visiting this country, and in September 1955, the consecration took place. ... At Styvechale Tom Bland had carried through almost to completion the Parish Church - the chancel being the former church. It would be ready early in the new year. ... In January 1956 ... Bishop Newnham-Davies consecrated the new church ... The tiny church which had been used (the Gregory family had built Styvechale Hall between 1750 and 1760 adjoining the church) was little more than a family chapel ... Before World War II a hall had been built for social purposes (and sometimes for worship).'

'By the end of 1955 in the diocese it was possible to see "the shape of things to come". Of those parishes in which the church had been bombed, St. Paul, Foleshill, St. Nicholas Radford, the dual purpose building of St. Francis (not the permanent church) had been replaced. Chilvers

Coton had been, by special arrangement, repaired much earlier - in fact by 1947. There were special factors such as the prisoners-of-war who assisted, and much local help, presumably because the task could be seen to be on its way. Christ Church, Coventry, was beginning to take shape.

'New building would be required in the Tile Hill area of the City. There were areas south and south-east of the City for which some provision would be necessary. Further afield there were other gaps.'

> 'There were three consecrations in 1957. St. Oswald, Tile Hill ... was consecrated in the presence of H.R.H. the Princess Margaret, St. Chad (Wood End) followed on and the last phase of Christ Church in Frankpledge Road. This last was of particular interest in that the church is built in the centre part of the site and is joined by a foyer to the hall which has a number of smaller rooms- the vicarage is on the other side of the church. An early visitor to the church was Bishop Wilson (Birmingham) and his wife Mary. ... In 1958 the church at Willenhall was consecrated.'

Bastin makes reference to the Bishop's Appeal, although I have found out little about its impact on the new churches. He says (p42):

'Eric Buchan took on the big task of the Bishop's Appeal (the sixth appeal in the history of the diocese), for the very large sum of £750,000, part being for the Cathedral, part for the new churches, and other needs, The "Stewardship" drive was on, but there remained the difficulty of those parishes which were already in debt on capital items and those where there were major repairs deferred during the war and post-war years.'

'In 1959 the permanent church of St. Francis', North Radford, was consecrated. The story is a long one. In 1938 there was a dual purpose building which was destroyed in 1940. A hut was obtained, and this was burnt down. The dual purpose Hall/Church was rebuilt, and then another building. Eventually Fr. Mason, who has been Vicar there for nearly twenty years, by sustained efforts had the Vicarage and Church built.'

> 'In 1960 was consecrated St. Christopher, Allesley Park, of unusual design and inside plan.'

Because of the extent of War Damage, and the consequent substantial rebuilding of the City Centre, and the building of new housing areas, the City Council, particularly as planning authority, was closely involved in much of the discussion and decision-making concerning new churches. For the Diocese, the Coventry Diocesan Reorganisation Committee had wide powers, and could make recommendation to the Church Commissioners for the creation of new parishes or the dissolution of existing ones, the demolition or disposal of

churches, parsonage houses and other buildings, and for the restoration or provision of new ones.

In common with Manchester, many churches were built to accommodate a larger congregation than ever existed, and increasingly parishes make the best use they can - often imaginatively, and sometimes fortuitously - of churches which are too large, too inflexible, or seriously defective, for their needs today. Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, is a good example of the over-large church; St. Nicholas, Engleton Road, Radford, is too large, and has major in-built defects. St. Philip's, Potter's Green, had a series defect, which has been solved by radical works. At St. Andrew's, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth, the parish 'makes do' with what was built as the church hall, and Basil Spence's St. Chad's, Wood End, is treated as a multi-purpose building. A number of clergy emphasized to me that 'The Church is the People', and that, consequently, the building is there to serve the people.

The two churches in which the building and the pattern of work and worship come together most happily are St. George's, Rugby, and Camp Hill, Nuneaton. The lessons learned in this period have been applied, successfully, to Christ Church, Brownsover.

The ambitious, and triumphalist, approach of the early Post-War years is expressed in a letter from the then Bishop of Coventry to the Vicar and Churchwardens of what became Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, of 10 April 1952, in which the Bishop wrote of the proposed church building (quoted in Munden, p39, see p572 below):

> 'We have to remember it will last 400 or 500 years, we hope, and it is essential we should in a new building represent the Church of England. We should have the finest building possible and the best architect we can obtain. The honour of the diocese is involved and church witness, and the character of the site is a most significant one.'
>
> 'The view of the experts is that the architect you have had producing the plans does not seem by them to be qualified technically or by experience to create a building of the quality we must have'
>
> 'My judgment is that we must drop this architect.'
>
> 'Both Christ Church and myself are committed in honour to create something which belongs not just to this generation but to all time. Therefore it is laid upon us a very great responsibility'
>
> 'The quality of any building depends upon the quality of the architect, and a man of the highest reputation and quality we must find.'

Again and again, incumbents emphasized to me their conviction that 'The Church is the People', and that the building is there to serve. The first priority is to establish the community, and let it work out how it wants to live, work and worship. Only then can one decide what building is needed, and what message it should proclaim. The work at Smorralls Lane, and at Brownsover, places great emphasis on the need to establish the community. Increasingly, I came to the conclusion that lessons seem to have been learned from this experience, and the most recent church to be built in the diocese - at Brownsover - meets present needs admirably.

As to the present condition of the churches examined, all are in reasonable condition, and none display - or are admitted to display - the type of problem which faces St. Christopher's, Withington, St. Luke's, Benchill, or All Saints, Langley, in the Manchester Diocese. The one church in Coventry which did display such a problem - St. Philip's, Potters Green - has been dealt with by a somewhat radical solution.

It has not been possible to gain access to the records of the Coventry Diocesan Reorganisation Committee; indeed, it is not at present clear whether they survive. It has not therefore been possible to assemble the comprehensive picture which was possible in the case of Manchester and Birmingham Dioceses.

Study of Individual Churches.

The churches examined in Coventry Diocese are as follows:

Pre-War Churches.

The Work of N.F. Cachemaille-Day.

St. Luke, Rotherham Road, Holbrook, Coventry.
Date: 1939.
Architect: N.F. Cachemaille-Day.

Post-War Churches - Basil Spence.

St. Oswald, Tile Hill, Coventry.
Date: 1957/8.
Architect: Sir Basil Spence.

St. John the Divine, Robin Hood Road, Willenhall, Coventry.
Date: 1955/7.
Architect: Sir Basil Spence.

St. Chad, Hillmorton Road, Wood End, Coventry.
Date: Designed in 1958.
Architect: Sir Basil Spence.

Other Post-War churches.

St. Nicholas, Engleton Road, Radford, Coventry.
Date: 1955/7.
Architect: Lavender, Twentyman and Percy.

Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, Coventry.
Date: 1958.
Architect: A.H. Gardner and Partners.

St. George's, St. John's Avenue, Hillmorton, Rugby.

St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton. Incumbent: Revd. Dennis Sneath. 01203 392523.

St. Andrews, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth. Incumbent - Revd Paul Norton. 01203 363322.

St. Philip's, Potter's Green. Revd W. Adamson. 01203 617568
Warden - Mr Broadley, 01203 616166.

Christ Church, Helvellyn Way, Brownsover, Rugby. Revd. Alan Stevens, 01788 573696.

St. Luke, Rotherham Road, Holbrooks, Coventry.

Date: 1939. Consecrated: 18 July 1939.

Architect: N.F. Cachemaille-Day.
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, p554)
It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P279, thus:

> 'Modernistic, and of brick. Yet in such ecclesiastical work lies a root of the style of the cathedral. Windows with concrete patterns and grids. Brick piers square, placed diagonally. Concrete roof beams across and a longitudinally folded roof. Outer pulpit and outer altar.'

St. Luke's is one of the few Anglo-Catholic churches in the diocese. There are four clergy, the vicar, a senior and an assistant curate, and an honorary assistant priest. Mass is said daily and on Sunday at 8 am, 10 am (or sometimes 9 am), and 6 pm, with the Stations and Benediction at 6.30 pm.

The church comprises a nave, and a single, north, aisle. The nave is a plain rectangle, with the altar set in a shallow apse. This strong linear axis contrasts with the Impressionist star- shaped church of St. Michael and All Angels, Lawton Moor, Manchester, 1937, by the same architect, which was designed to have the altar placed in the centre. As originally laid out the clergy stalls and ambones were situated below, and immediately to the west, of the sanctuary, at the level of the nave floor; these have now been relocated at the west end and in the entrance porch. These were well designed and well made, as one would expect in a church by Cachemaille-Day. Keeping the furnishings has preserved a sense of continuity with the church as it was, but relocating them has greatly improved the sightlines to the sanctuary, and increased the sense of 'togetherness', although it is still necessary to rope off a block of seats at the rear to encourage people to sit nearer the front. The choir and organ are at the west end. Seating is in the form of movable chairs. The building seems to work reasonably well, and its form is so strongly aligned along the axis that any major re-ordering would be difficult.

The building itself is very stark with white painted finishes throughout, columns formed of brick, square in plan, and set on the diagonal, with the corrugated roof supported on concrete beams.

History of the building

The last Quinquennial Inspection, carried out in 1993, includes a useful section on the history of the building. The Report comments, inter alia:

> 'The design was based on that of a Church in the Paris suburb of St. Denis, but is reputedly of more harmonious proportions. The architect was responsible for a number

of churches in Coventry and his typical design features of simple expressionism in red brick, zigzag cornices and concrete window tracery which are evident at St. Luke's are also to be seen, for example, at St. George's in Barkers Butts Lane, also completed in 1939. His post-war churches were, however, rather more austere, for example St. Francis in Links Road (1957-9) and St. Christopher's in Winsford Avenue (1959-60).'

The vicarage was built in 1950, and the hall and other rooms in 1969; neither were to designs by Cachemaille-Day.

The original design for the church was for a slightly larger building, and was never realised. According to the 1993 Report:

'As built, the church comprised a Nave with North Aisle and South Porch, a Chancel with Apsidal East End, a South Transept, and Choir and Clergy Vestries, a boiler house being located under the latter. The construction is generally of London "Rustic" facing brickwork with granolithic solid floors and a plain clay tiled roof. ... There is a parapet along the South elevation, but the roof sweeps down to an overhanging eave on the North side. The parapet line is broken by a brick wall tower over a projection from the South wall containing the Sanctuary door and originally an internal staircase giving access to the exterior pulpit. This wall was built as a temporary measure - it was intended that a bell tower some 6 metres square be constructed in this location.'

'Similarly the entire North wall to the Aisle and that around the vestries (except the East End) were also built in a temporary construction of timber studding as it was intended that an extension be built, some 3 metres wide and running the full length of the Church, and incorporating a Chapel. The sloping roofs to these areas were originally felted - again a temporary measure. ...'

'The Church was considerably damaged in the early part of the War and required considerable repairs. The first work was carried out in 1944 when the South wall was extensively rebuilt. The South Porch was completely rebuilt ... Further repair work was carried out in 1954, undertaken and paid for by the War Damage Commission. The conical lead canopy to the External Pulpit was completely renewed and a new coping was provided to the balustrade. The External Altar was completely renewed and the concrete sections forming the Cross on the South Transept were fixed back in position. The South and East windows had been damaged beyond repair and the concrete frames and coloured glazing were completely renewed - the opportunity was taken to redesign the South windows to admit more light to the Nave. ...'

'Interestingly, even though repairs were authorised to the External Pulpit because this feature was not considered essential by the War Damage Commission, no money was

allowed for a replacement of the bomb damaged internal staircase - to this day there is no access to the External Pulpit. ... During the 1960s extensive repairs were carried out to the tiled roofs. In 1968/9 ... the temporary timber stud walls to the North Aisle were replaced with a cavity wall with facing brick outer skin and internal piers. The new wall was built 1 metre further out, adding to the width of the church. The existing felted roof was replaced with a tiled roof. '

'In 1976 the Cross and Exterior Altar were refurbished and some repairs were carried out to the concrete window surrounds. In 1982 extensive re-roofing was carried out ... part of the rear slope (the remainder being quite new, and all of the front slope.'

Present condition of the building

The report lists works carried out since the previous Quinquennial Inspection. These indicate a building that is not in need of major works, nor one which is proving beyond the capability of the parish to maintain, but rather one which is subject to steady and careful maintenance. They include; Roof and gutter repairs and vestry ceiling repaired in 1989; total rewiring, and flood-lighting of the Cross in 1991; thorough cleaning of drains and felling of trees in 1992; and cleaning of the organ in 1993.

The Report identified a number of areas for future action, including cracks in brickwork, to be monitored, some small areas of brickwork and concrete repair, repair to an area of roofing, on the north side at the east end, and minor - but important - areas of work to counter the ingress of water. The general impression is that, as far as the building is concerned, the Parish is in top of any problems, and is looking after its buildings well.

The future work of the Parish

The parish has been undergoing a process of change, under the heading of the 'Welcoming Church', to bring in new members. This has been constructed across a broad front, and has included general improvements to the church building itself, a Discipleship Campaign to be held in the autumn of 1995, the accreditation of lay ministers, including two youth leaders and four 'Eucharistic Ministers/ Chalice Assistants', the development of the priority of prayer, the development of links between those attending different services, and also the development of the Parish Centre.

While the pattern of development seems closer to that of a traditional Anglo-Catholic parish, the emphasis placed on the primacy of using the gifts of the parishioners to serve the needs of the parishioners - in personal, rather than monetary, terms, and the approach to the buildings - to use them, rather than letting them dictate the pattern of parish life - is in accord with a good deal of contemporary practice across the diocese, irrespective of churchmanship.

Post- War Parish Churches in Coventry by Basil Spence.

I discuss three churches by Spence. The form of the churches, and of the ancillary buildings, is common to all three, but the disposition of the elements varies from site to site. I shall describe the churches individually, and then discuss them as a group. The most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report for St. John the Divine includes a comprehensive and useful description of the church building complex; I have quoted this at some length, since much of it applies equally to the other two churches.

St. John the Divine, Robin Hood Road, Willenhall, Coventry.

Date: 1955/8. Foundation stone laid - 22 Sept. 1956.
Consecrated - 1958.
Clergy: Revd. Terry Colling.
Architect: Sir Basil Spence. (Illustrations, etc.; see Vol.3, pp555-563)

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P283, thus:

> 'Plain, oblong, without aisles or structurally exposed chancel. Harled walls (see the Cathedral). Small low windows representing the side passages which take the place of aisles. Only one large, i.e. high, though narrow, window to give light to the altar from one side. Some of the furnishings designed by Sir Basil too. The chief external feature is the detached bell-tower, of concrete, an open framework, at different levels in different directions filled in by concrete studs and between them a few small coloured panels. The tower serves at the same time as the entry to an open passage leading to the church. The main entrance is S of the W front, grouping with Hall and Vicarage. The W front is all glazed and has just one large steel Crucifix made of I beams. The church is one of three designed by Sir Basil for Bishop Gorton.'

Structure: Routine maintenance carried out to roof; slight movement in the floor slab.

Services: Underfloor heating system abandoned and new gas-fired system installed.

Fittings, furnishings and re-ordering: The interior is little altered; it retains the original doors, font, altar, ambos, choir stalls; new pieces of furniture, given 'in memoriam', were designed by John Makepeace.

Liturgical layout: The church generally retains its original layout, with the altar at the east end with a dorsal curtain as a background, now moved forward of the wall to permit westward facing celebration, original altar rails, choir stalls in the form of simple but well-designed benches, ambos, two seats - one either side - for the clergy, a further kneeling rail, followed by the congregation with chairs.

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report gives a detailed description of the church. It notes:

> 'The Church forms part of a parish complex which includes a Church hall and Vicarage. The Church and the Hall have a common entrance giving access to a foyer which takes the form of a short corridor linking the two buildings together.'
>
> 'The Church was built by George Wimpey and Co. Ltd., in 1956-7 to the design prepared by Basil Spence. ... The building of the Church took place at the same time as the Willenhall area development was being carried out by the local authority using George Wimpey and Co. Ltd. as one of the contractors. ... The Church complex is surrounded by community buildings and is very much at the hub of the local community. Across Robin Hood Road is the shopping centre, and the Winnall pub.'

Description of the Church and ancillary structures

> 'The Church itself is an aisleless hall, being a simple reinforced concrete portal framed structure with 425mm thick concrete walls built using a Wimpey No-Fines specification. The walls are flush externally but slightly set back from the portal legs internally so as to accentuate the rhythm of the framing. Designed to seat a congregation of 250, the approximate dimensions are 9.145 metres wide, by 27.125 metres long, by 9.145 metres high to the eaves. The simplicity of the form has caused acoustic difficulties.'
>
> 'The low pitched roof is of aluminium sheeting on timber purlins spanning between the joists, with variously coloured fibre board panels below.'
>
> 'The West end of the Church is fully glazed whilst the East end is solid, as at St. Oswald's, whereas St. Chad's is fully glazed at both ends. There is a single row of small windows at low level on both N and S elevations, unlike the other 2 churches which also have a high level row. There is a further difference, at the E end of the S wall, where in the wall there is a vertical strip of 5 no. windows set in deep chamfered reveals of fairfaced concrete. The windows work well, providing subtle contrasts of light and dark, reducing the expected boxiness of such a simple structural solution.'
>
> 'Internally, finishes are restrained, in keeping with the simple design. The internal arrangements have been little changed from the original, with the altar hard against the East end, and unfussy furniture including lecterns, altar rails, choir stalls and font.'
>
> 'The Church and hall are linked by way of a timber porch, approximately 3.8 metres wide by 5.15 metres long, with a glazed screen on the East side, complete with glazed doors which serve as entrance to both Church and hall.'

'The Church hall is approximately 9 metres by 16 metres and was designed to seat 100. The hall has brick end walls with tubular columns supporting a low pitched roof. The East wall consists of a painted softwood framework ... the West wall is similar. The Church hall contains a number of separate rooms, the Vestry, toilets, kitchen, and choir vestry.'

'At the north side of the site, at some 11 metres from the Church there stands the campanile erected at the same time as the Church. This takes the form of an open tower, a rectangular reinforced concrete frame of four columns with connecting beams at four levels. It is partially decked out at three levels and has a concrete roof surmounted by a bronze cross. The tower has mountings for one or two bells, but these have never been provided. There are infill panels between vertical timbers at each level. The overall plan is 3.45 by 3.4 metres and its height approximately 12.2 metres. The Campanile is linked to the North doors of the Church by a concrete covered arcade leading just beyond the campanile to a landscaped area.'

'Leading off the hall is the newer Jubilee Room, opened in 1977.'

Present condition

The Summary of the Report notes:

'We were most pleased to see that the Church and its buildings continues to be well looked after, and remains in generally good order. Much of the work noted as being required is in the nature of routine maintenance, although some items should be attended to as a matter of urgency to prevent long term damage.'

The necessary items of work include repair of a loose patch of render, repair to Hall window frame, preservative treatment to all external woodwork, rebuild canopy over South door to hall, cleaning RWP outlets and gutters regularly, rod drains, check for furniture beetle, inspect Church roof and rectify any defects, resecure roof sheeting on Hall roof and provide satisfactory gutter, replace or resecure flashings to link corridor roof, repair small areas of spalling concrete on Campanile frame, repeat repairs to concrete Church window surrounds, inspect roof of Campanile and check security of cross fixings, consider rebuilding of Link Corridor/Jubilee Room gutter with larger outlets, partial internal decoration, and level up external paving.

The general impression is that, as far as the building is concerned, the Parish is in top of any problems, and is looking after its buildings well.

St. Oswald, Tile Hill, Coventry.

Date: 1957. Consecrated 1957.

Clergy: Fr. Brian Doolan, The Clergy House, 228 Jardine Crescent, Tile Hill, Coventry CV4 9PL. Tel: 0203 465072.
Architect: Sir Basil Spence. (Illustrations, etc.; see Vol.3, pp555-563)

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P281/2, thus:

'This is one of the three churches built for Bishop Gorton, who wanted good modern buildings for the new estates provided economically. St. Oswald cost £17,600, an amazingly low sum. The church is an aisleless rectangle and has a free-standing bell tower which is just an open concrete frame with some vertical studding in two or three of the framed areas and some small coloured plaques here and there between the studs. The Parish Hall also forms part of the group. At Willenhall and Wood End a little later Sir Basil used the same elements and varied the grouping and some details. At St. Oswald the W wall is bare except for two slit windows r. and l. and a horizontal slit at the top (and a Crucifixus without Cross by Carroll Sims), and the E wall is entirely bare. Inside a fine large wall-covering in appliqué work covers the E wall. It is by Gerald Holtom. The side walls have only a row of small oblong windows low down and a row of smaller square windows high up. The structure of the church is reinforced concrete. The walls are of what was then called 'no-fines' and roughly roughcast. To the W of the church a long crescent of three storeys with an unbroken roof.'

Structure: The reinforced concrete elements of the bell tower and the precast window surrounds have suffered from decay; the window surrounds have been replaced, but the concrete of the bell tower is spalling badly. The metal clad roof has remained sound.

Services: The church was built - it was later discovered - over old mine workings. There was subsidence about five years after the church was finished, which severed the cables of the underfloor heating. This was abandoned and a radiant electric system installed. This itself has been abandoned, and a new, gas fired, heating system installed.

Fittings, furnishings, re-ordering: The Church has been re-carpeted, the original altar and font retained, the choir stalls and ambos removed - to create a more appropriate liturgical setting. The wall hanging, on the East wall inside, and the Crucifixus on the East Wall outside, remain, and continue to enhance the building; a panel by Comper has been added to the West wall, inside, above the font.

Planning: The vestry is small and poorly placed.

According to tradition, when the church was opened, Spence said to the Churchwardens, 'You will be lucky if it lasts 30 years'.

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report says, in the Summary:

> 'We are most pleased to see that in general the Church continues to be well looked after and remains in generally good order. Much of the work noted as being required is in the nature of routine maintenance although some items should be attended to as a matter of urgency to prevent long term damage. The major items can be summarised as follows: Link Corridor Roof - investigate sagging roof and carry out remedial works to roof and West wall; Tower - arrange for repairs to concrete and resecure tin infill panels; Exterior decoration - scheduled Spring 1995; Regularly inspect and clear gutters and down pipes; Replace broken window glass; Check fixings of all exterior monuments and fittings; Resecure boiler flue cowl; Keep a constant check for furniture beetle.'

Since the previous Inspection, works carried out included: Internal painting of Hall and Link Corridor; removal of oak tree adjacent to entrance; installation of ramp for the disabled; a new Reredos screen; internal painting of the Church, including window frames, at both ends, and the smooth-rendered wall, but not the exposed no-fines wall; gutters and downpipes checked and cleared; rewiring of Church, Hall and link corridor; carpeting to Church and link corridor; together with minor alterations.

St. Chad, Hillmorton Road, Wood End, Coventry.

Incumbent: Revd. Nerissa Jones, The Vicarage, Hillmorton Road.

Date: Designed in 1956. Foundation stone laid - 29 Sept. 1956. Consecrated - 1957.

Architect: Sir Basil Spence. (Illustrations, etc.; see Vol.3, pp555-563)

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P276, thus:

> '(This church) is one of three churches designed by Sir Basil Spence in 1958 to an economically very tight specification. It was the pilot building of the three. They all consist of a detached campanile designed as an open concrete frame with some panels with concrete studs and occasional small coloured slabs to add variety, the church itself, concrete-framed and aisleless, and a hall and vicarage. The grouping varies and certain details vary also. Here, e.g. there is a clerestorey of small square windows; at Willenhall there is not. Also both W and E ends are glazed (which is not an advantage), and crosses of plain I section steel are against both ends.'

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in February 1996. The history and general description of the Church is common to that of St. John the Divine, quoted above. There are, however, a number of comments specific to this building, which I quote. The Report says of the North and South window walls (liturgically the East and West ends respectively):

> 'There are large windows at the North and South ends, both walls in fact being fully glazed, and two rows of small windows on the East and West elevations. Externally the fully glazed end walls are each further enhanced by a large cross formed of steel RSJs sitting on the line of the glazing grid and painted black and white. Within, and at the intersection of each cross, is fitted a smaller painted cross. Finishes are restrained, in keeping with the simple design. A particular embellishment is the hanging figure of Christ on the cross. When this figure is viewed against the North glazing with its external cross the overall effect is quite remarkable.'

> 'The original internal arrangement was simple, with the altar hard against the North (i.e. liturgically East) end, simple choir stalls and bench seats, and a range of matching furniture, including a fine President's chair with octagonal legs and a high back with painted heraldic cross on shield, a magnificent communion table, a small wooden table engraved with the name of the Church, and a lectern and pulpit with fluted motifs (both now removed). The font is a fine engraved stone cylinder with a copper bowl and hardwood lid with silver finial.'

'The gas warm air heating system was installed in around 1984, comprising individual wall mounted balanced flue heaters. The whole complex was rewired in the mid 1980s following the fire which destroyed the original Link Corridor.... The Link Corridor is of newer construction ... having been built in the early 1980s to replace the original which had been destroyed by fire. The cladding differs in being diagonal and the original zigzag plan form has been dispensed with.'

'At the South East end of the Hall is a newer extension (constructed during the late 1970s) of brick side walls and a glazed and panelled frontage (now remodelled). The extension and part of the original hall have been partitioned off with stud walls to form a meeting room (the Family Room).

Present condition

The Quinquennial Inspection Report lists the works carried out since the previous Inspection, of June 1991. This emphasizes the problems caused by vandalism, which have been particularly acute here.

An access and a toilet for the disabled were added in 1991. The reordering begun in 1987/8 continued with the replacement of the old organ with a new electric organ, the removal of the communion table, and the rearrangement of the chapel of prayer at the South end of the church. In 1992 the North and South windows, and the lower side windows, were replaced with Mitlite polycarbonate in an attempt to resist the persistent attacks by vandals. Of the Hall the Report notes:

> 'Following repeated vandal attacks in in the early 1990s the Hall was for a time boarded up. Refurbishment was tackled in two stages, in the Spring of 1994 and the Summer of 1995. The Hall is now in a far better condition, both in terms of appearance and security.'
>
> 'The principal works were as follows:- In Spring 1994; removal of all glazing to East elevation and replacement with a masonry wall construction with narrow vertical and horizontal slit windows glazed in polycarbonate; Vestry lower window removed and opening bricked and boarded up; canopy over South doors removed and wall made good; kitchen - full refurbishment including new fittings and extract fan; steel security fence to South and West sides of Hall car park; replacement of all exterior Hall, Family Room and Link Corridor doors with steel security doorsets; security works to Hall internal doors; installation of wall safe; burglar bars to all Hall West elevation windows; Link Corridor - removal of large window and infilling with panelling, and provision of small polycarbonate glazed high level windows in lieu and over both exterior doors; replacement of gutters and downpipes with cast iron; exterior security lighting; repair of West elevation window frames and boarding; removal of Hall cupboards and provision of new cupboards in Link Corridor.'

'In Summer 1995: - Refurbishment of Hall toilets; Hall, Family Room and Link Corridor reroofing with Trocal incorporating additional insulation; full repair and redecoration of campanile (by Concrete Repair and Maintenance Ltd.) using the Fosroc concrete repair system. Three broken windows at high level were reglazed in polycarbonate in October 1995.'

The defects noted in the latest Report generally relate to minor repairs, or the need for regular maintenance. There is, however, repeated mention of the need to reduce the ground level around the church and to remove vegetation growth, although the effects of this appear, so far, to be largely cosmetic. Concern is also expressed about the condition of bargeboards to the church and hall. Clearly, the extensive works carried out in the last few years have dealt with the physical problems of the buildings, and in particular the campanile is now restored. When I first visited the parish the condition of this gave rise to a great deal of concern.

Present work in the parish

This church has had a somewhat sad recent history. It is situated in a large Council housing estate, which has suffered from the decline common to so many of these. There is a high rate of unemployment on the estate, a large number of single parent families, with young, unmarried, mothers, and a substantial amount of crime and vandalism. Until recently the parish had been without an incumbent for 18 months, but the post has been now taken by the Revd. Nerissa Jones, who came to the parish from St. Botolph's, Aldgate, in London.

During the interregnum the vicarage suffered from severe vandalism, the hall suffered to an even greater degree, and the church building itself - although it continued to function - gave the appearance of desertion. The vicarage has been repaired and is now occupied.

The church building is in generally good order, with the exception - until recently - of the bell tower. The reinforced concrete of the bell tower was showing signs of decay, and is spalling badly, with the reinforcement exposed in places. When the incumbent approached the DAC in regard to repairs to the bell tower, some suggested that it be demolished. She resisted this on the grounds that the tower was a visible marker of the presence of the Church in the area.

The hall has now been partially rebuilt and is now in good order. It is used for a wide variety of functions, serving the needs of the community in general.

The church building itself is now used as a multi-purpose space. The only fixed feature is the font; even the altar can be moved, if desired, with the help of six strong men! The ambones were removed some time ago, together with the choir stalls. The building retains its pews, but these are movable, and chairs can be placed around the font for

baptisms. The interior can - and is - arranged or re-arranged for worship, concerts, drama, barn dances, and other study or social functions.

This is a very effective use of what appears at first sight to be a rather inflexible space, for the needs of the parish at this present time.

The incumbent 'sits light' to the demands of the building; in effect, she allows the needs of the work of the parish to determine what happens in and to the buildings, rather than letting the building determine the work of the parish. Interestingly, where an element of the building can serve a use - even if it is symbolic, as with the bell tower - she is anxious to reinforce that use. I consider that this is a totally proper approach in these circumstances. The incumbent has been involved in a number of initiatives to help to create or reinforce a sense of community on the estate, which seem to be working. I found this a singularly encouraging example of the work of the Church, aligning itself alongside the people of the area, helping them to meet their needs, and using the facilities of the Church - both in terms of physical plant. and personal initiative - for the benefit of the community; i.e., meeting the apostolic demands.

The Spence churches - General Comments.

These three churches by Spence were built to serve new local authority housing estates, built in Coventry in the immediate post-war period. They were designed by Basil Spence, who was engaged in the design of the new cathedral in Coventry, and were built by George Wimpey and Co. The churches are, in order of building, St. Oswald's, Tile Hill; St. John the Divine, Willenhall; and St. Chad's, Bell Green. They follow a common pattern, with slight variations from site to site. They were designed to be constructed very cheaply - the goal figure was £15,000, and were designed to meet the need for churches on the new estates quickly and cheaply.

The three churches, together with their halls and ancillary accommodation, were built for the sum of money allotted under the War Damage Act for the sum allotted for the rebuilding of a <u>single</u> church in the city centre which had been destroyed. The Bishop decided that the city centre was adequately catered for, and that three new churches for the new housing areas on the outskirts was far more necessary for the well-being of the Church in Coventry and the fulfilling of its mission. He succeeded in persuading the War Damage Commission of the correctness of this course of action.

The church in each instance is a simple rectangle, built to seat 200 to 250 people, with the altar at one - narrow - end, and the font, by the entrance, at the other end. It is built of concrete, with a portal frame system, with panels of 'no-fines' concrete between the frame members. The roof was shallow-pitched, and covered in metal. The floors were tiled over a concrete screed, with a heating system buried in the floor. The windows in the side walls are small and rectangular, set low down, and formed with precast concrete frame members. A parish room was placed at one side of the church, adjoining the entrance, with the vestry incorporated in it.

The church was identified in the townscape by a bell tower formed as a reinforced concrete framed structure, with added decoration in the form of wooden slats.

There was an element of variation in the treatment of the end walls, which could be either solid, or glazed with a cross formed of two RSJs, and in the treatment of the glazing in the side walls, flanking the altar.

The furnishing and lay-out were originally virtually identical. The altar was placed at the East end, the font at the West, close to the entrance. The choir was placed either side of the 'chancel', with ambos between them and the congregation. The altar itself, the altar rails, the ambos and the font were all to the same design.

The layout was essentially 'traditional', i.e. it followed the pattern established in the latter half of the nineteenth century and, while the structure itself was clearly of the 1950s, the height of the building, and the hierarchical

arrangement of people, choir, priest, and altar, followed the generally accepted form.

These were the first - and probably only - churches built using system building methods, directly derived from contemporary housing practice. The reinforced concrete portal frames were factory-made, the walling - of no-fines concrete - was cast in-situ and harled externally, but internally was left as it was when the shuttering was removed. The great advantage of no-fines concrete was that it was cheap, light, and had excellent insulation qualities. They were built to a negotiated contract with Wimpey. The architect drew no fees for the work, and many of the detailed drawings were supplied by Wimpey, and checked by the architect. This was a forerunner of the 'design and build' practice.

This system of building was in use, by Wimpey, for the construction of housing in Coventry, and the churches echo, to a surprising extent, not only the form and appearance, but also the structural system, of the surrounding housing. The simple rectangular form, and internal space, with simple square window openings punched in the walls, echoes to some degree the pre-war work of Rudolph Schwarz - e.g. the Fronleichnamskirche in Aachen of 1928-30 - although the Coventry churches are on a smaller scale, and carried out cheaply. The buildings relate in a quite extraordinary degree to their context - only the Primitive Methodist churches, formed out of terraced houses, perform this function to a higher degree. As far as I can ascertain, they were never intended to be 'complete' or unalterable; indeed there was always intended to be scope for improvement, and the exposed internal walling - with the no-fines concrete left as it came from the shuttering, looking for all the world like grey gorgonzola cheese - cries out for a more appropriate treatment.

No consideration was given to the length of life of the buildings; they were essentially 'utility' buildings. They provided a roof over the congregation, with the potential for enhancement, change, and growth. The aim was to create a base from which the local church could grow; to give the congregation, at minimum cost, an enclosure of space, within which they could meet, and to mark the presence of the church, and to identify its location, with a skeletal tower. The buildings are interesting as examples of the use of technological innovation and system building for churches. They were never thought of as perfect or unalterable.

The buildings were provided - in terms of design and funding - by the diocese. There was no participation with the local congregation as to the needs of the parish, and how they might be met in building terms: to a large extent this arose because the parish and congregation did not exist, except vestigially, until the buildings were in place.

As one might expect, the Festival of Britain left its mark on the buildings. The lightfittings were supplied by Troughtman

and Young, and the pulpit and lectern were faced in 'Copenhagen' panelling - which still survives - which was used either side of the stage in the Royal Festival Hall. The panelling has particularly good acoustic qualities. The font was designed by Spence, and made by Jethro Harrison and Leo Moulder, of Oxford.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these three churches is the way they have evolved. Although they started out as virtually identical complexes, they have had very different histories. This does emphasize the importance of taking the individual history of a building into account in considering its qualities, and its future, whether it be a Spence church in Coventry, or a standard 1820s terraced house in Finsbury.

St. John the Divine, Willenhall, is the least altered, both in terms of the building itself, and in the pattern of its use. Indeed, when new furnishings were added, they were commissioned from John Makepeace as fine examples of modern design, to enhance the church. This they do handsomely, as a modern interpretation of, and in the spirit of, the high quality fittings which, from Coventry Cathedral onwards, enhanced so many post-war churches.

St. Oswald, Tile Hill, is an Anglo Catholic church, where the building has been re-ordered to give the altar greater prominence, and to remove the barrier of the choir stalls between the people and the altar. The addition of a panel by Comper, rescued from another church, is a fine, but unexpected - visually rather surprising - addition behind the font. St. Chad's, Bell Green, serves a parish with considerable social problems, and has been re-ordered, altered, and partly rebuilt, to carry out its function.

Other Churches of the 1950s.

St. Nicholas, Engleton Road, Radford, Coventry.
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, pp564-567)
Date: 1955/7.

Architect: Lavender, Twentyman and Percy.

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P280, thus:

> 'Brick, with a tower formed as a high slab with rounded outline. The nave of hangar-shape, with inward-leaning walls.'

St. Nicholas is one of the few Anglo-Catholic churches in the Coventry diocese. Like so many other churches of the 1950s, this is an attempt to provide a traditional and conservative layout, but in contemporary dress. The result is a hangar-like interior, with strange sloping walls. The east wall has the expected patterned finish with a geometrical design in timber, and the sanctuary is lit by full height windows to either side, formed with reinforced concrete members. The church is rectangular in plan, and is laid out in the 'traditional' Anglican pattern, with the altar at the east end, separated from the congregation by twin ranks of choir stalls, and the congregation seated in chairs, but ranged in ranks, facing east.

The form of the structure so strongly emphasizes the axial layout that any attempt at re-ordering - say, by bringing the altar into the middle of one side - would probably give the impression that the congregation was fighting the building.

The sloping brick walls, the sloping concrete of the sanctuary windows, and the internal down-pipes all make water penetration a constant problem. Again, the church is far too large for present parish needs. The comment of the present incumbent is that the church should never have been built in this form, but nonetheless, the parish make the best of it, as the Quinquennial Report makes clear.

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report, of 1990, says of the building:

'St. Nicholas is a large church designed to seat nearly four hundred people if the Lady Chapel is included and with a spacious choir and sanctuary area. The Lady Chapel lies to the north of the nave, and the Vestry wing to the north of the choir. The main entrance to the building is on the south side and through a small lobby enters a spacious vestibule. The toilet is at the west end. The main building dates from 1955 and a choir vestry and committee room were added to the south of the vestibule in 1966. There is a prominent tower sited at the east end of the vestibule adjacent to the entrance lobby and this contains two bells.'

The Report describes the main structure thus:

> 'The main structure to the nave and sanctuary consists of inclined pierced reinforced concrete slabs which support a concrete barrel vaulted roof. These structures are flanked on each side by reinforced concrete mullion supports to concrete flat roofs which have a small saucer dome above the font and a raised section above the choir vestry. The flat roofs to the vestibule and to the Lady Chapel and Vestry wing have now been covered by pitched metal sheeting.'

Of the general condition of the fabric the Report notes:

> 'This is little altered from the last quinquennial inspection; the (works to the) roofs have resulted in a considerable improvement to the internal condition, particularly in the vestibule and Lady Chapel but the necessary repairs to plaster and decoration are still not being carried out. Some leakage was reported recently over the vestibule roof but this has not previously occurred since the re-roofing was carried out six years ago. The external facing materials are still generally sound although very mossy in the case of the tapered wall of the main block.'

The Report lists works of repair, in order of priority. Where estimated costs are given these are all under £1000, except in one case of £1000, but in all amount to £5,800, with probably at least as much again, or perhaps a good deal more, for items where costs were not indicated.

They include, for works of Utmost Urgency (items marked * were included in the previous - 1985 - Report):

> '*Repair vestry roof soffit; Work to roofs - flashings, asphalt, sheets (north side); Check nave rainwater pipe, etc.; *Reset west window cills to hall; *Fire stopping, other work in boiler house; *Repair and repoint reconstructed stone; Work at main entrance; Touch in rusting bolts in gutters; Electrical work; Lightning conductor check.'

Works essential within the next 18 months include:

> 'Check roof voids; *Repair tower window cill; Plaster repairs; Isolated areas of brickwork pointing (not tower; Point stone in east facade; Rebedding work to chancel slate facing; Work to churchyard walls.

Works essential within the quinquennium include:

> 'Work to tower; Repairs to concrete eaves, etc.; Bitumen coat inside eaves gutters.'

No estimate for these is given, in view of the time likely to elapse before they are tackled. The Report notes as desirable, internal decoration of the vestries, and re-finishing of internal hardwood, and also issues the usual warning to clear the rainwater systems twice yearly, and carry out regular external maintenance painting.

Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, Coventry.

Incumbent: Revd. Alan Munden.

Date: 1958.

Architect: A.H. Gardner and Partners.
Stained Glass: by Pierre Fourmaintraux.
(Illustrations and historical notes; see Vol.3, pp567-574)

Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, is a rebuilding, on a new site, of Christ Church, Union Street, destroyed by enemy action on the night of 10/11 April, 1941. The history of the parish and its various buildings is described at some length in 'The Third Spire; a history of Christ Church, Coventry', by Alan Munden, the present incumbent, published as Pamphlet No. 17 by the Coventry and Warwickshire Historical Association in 1991. The history of the present building, beginning with the sudden and traumatic loss of the old church building, the lengthy negotiations to rebuild - complicated by the relations - or lack of them - between the parish and the diocese, the story of the design of the new building, and the comments of the Bishop at the time, provide a most illuminating commentary on the motivation of the various parties involved. In view of this, and of the availability of the material, I included a lengthy discussion of the history, which is to be found in Vol.3, pp568-574.

Description of the church complex

Gardener's own description of the complex is quoted in the most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report; he says:

> 'The church, hall, classrooms, vicarage and caretaker's house, were built to my designs in 1954-8, when post-war shortages, licensing, and timber control, still created limitations, particularly on timber roof construction.'
>
> 'The walls are brick, or cavity construction, with copper ties. The church roof is supported on timber trusses, carried on reinforced concrete beams and columns. These trusses support both the fibrous plaster ceiling, and the roof itself, which consists of metal bound strawboard, spanning between the trusses, and covered with copper sheeting, laid in the traditional manner. The roofs of all other buildings are covered with built-up bitumastic roofing, laid on woodwool slabs (cork over hall) and timber framing, much of it exposed on the underside.'

Present condition of the church.

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection Report was carried out in June 1994. It notes work carried out since the previous (1989) inspection thus:

> 'General items of remedial work have been undertaken. In addition to this there has been repair work to the stained glass windows and a percentage of these windows have been

protected by perspex sheet in an aluminium frame. A section of the heating system in the choir stalls adjacent to the organ has been isolated as a remedial measure.'

The Report summarizes the present condition of the church thus:

'With one or two exceptions we consider the Church to be in a very good state of repair. Regular attention to details should ensure that the premises are maintained in this condition.

'There are no major problems, with the exception of the Tower and Tower roof, and we strongly recommend that remedial work be a priority. The Lightning Conductor should be tested for conformity with the current British Standard.'

'The whole of the electrical system should be inspected and certified by a fully qualified electrician, to comply with Health and Safety requirements.'

'The timber bearer supporting the ends of the pew should be replaced and repaired with the pews re-fixed. The floor made good with an "epoxy" compound.'

'The remaining stained glass windows should be fitted with a perspex cover within an aluminium frame.'

'The area of deterioration to the ceiling of the sanctuary is to be cleaned off, redecorated and monitored.'

'The joints to the external gutters of the copper roof are suspect and therefore the relining or replacing of these gutters should be a consideration in the short to medium term.'

'The roof to the Vestry shows signs of leaking. It is recommended that the perimeter details are attended to. The patch repair felt to the fitting fillets are to be removed and a new cap sheeting in mineral felt to be laid over the top and bonded to the existing flat roof and to be taken 150 mm up face of the wall to chase in the bed joint. The remaining area of roof to be closely monitored. All weatherings to roof lights to be repaired or replaced.'

'The facing to the concrete beams and column are deteriorating and it is recommended that a treatment is applied to the face to protect from further deterioration until such time as a surface repair is warranted.'

Of the Tower roof the Report comments that it is in a poor condition and at the end of its life. Of the Tower itself the Report comments:

'The Tower is constructed of reinforced concrete walls and floors and is faced with facing bricks. There is no evidence of significant settlement or cracks and the

> structure is generally sound. Its original intention as a Bell Tower has not been realised and the upper floor is in rather a poor state. The original louvres are in a poor condition although the main frame is satisfactory, with leaks to the roof, the result is a depressed area. There are some panes of glass that would appear to be in an unsafe condition and could shatter.'

As with other churches, the parish seems in control of its building. Since the building is now far too large for the present congregation and, in the case of the Tower, failed to fulfil the builders' hopes, one has to wonder whether the effort expended in maintaining the building would not have been better spent in work among the inhabitants of Cheylesmore.

The parish today.

Munden comments on the situation in the parish in 1991 (op. cit. p.p42/3):

> 'Thirty years later the parish has a population of 4,700 and an Electoral Roll of 130 ... today Cheylesmore has a 6% immigrant community .. there are other Anglican Evangelical churches in the city.'

This echoes similar patterns of development in other Council estates, both here and elsewhere.

There are a number of specific aspects of the rebuilding of Christ Church which merit comment. Christ Church had not been a true parish church - i.e. one serving those who lived within its parochial boundary - probably since the 1880s when it acquired its conservative Evangelical tradition, and the desire to preserve that tradition had been uppermost in the minds of the congregation, and its ministers, during the negotiations over the new building.

The church itself was designed to hold a substantial congregation, and its internal planning reflected the traditional pattern of worship, which, by its nature, precluded any consideration being given to the effects of the Liturgical Movement. The thought was to serve the existing - and hoped-for - congregation, not to serve the needs - whatever they might prove to be - of the inhabitants of the new housing area within which it was to be placed. The architect was clear that he was providing a traditional preaching-box interior, but with modern dress.

The church building is essentially a large box - square on plan - with a raised and shallow rectangular recess at the (liturgical) east end to house the Communion Table. The choir seating is in the body of the church, immediately below the steps of the east end, and there is a large timber pulpit to the south - right - of the choir stalls. An attempt at re-ordering has been made, and the Holy Table has been moved forward and down three steps, but as long as the choir stalls remain in their present position, and the pews remain fixed in

their ranks, there seems little that can be done to create a sense of 'God's people around His table'.

The walls are of brick, and the roof is formed of three shallow vaults, running liturgical east-west. The roof structure is supported on perimeter columns, with four columns within the body of the church. The ceiling is clad in decorative plaster panels, and the three walls at the east end are either textured - in brick or timber - or painted. The lighting is provided by what are known in the parish as 'bird-cages'; these are formed out of industrial lighting units, dating from the 1950s, which look exactly like bird-cages. Inset in the windows are the 22 3' square panels by Fourmaintraux. The general effect of these interior features is one of distraction and detraction. They dominate the building visually, and detract from any sense of worship, or quiet. The seating is in the form of fixed pews, in ranks facing the east end. The result is an inflexible space - even if the pews were moved or replaced the four centre columns would be 'uncomfortable'.

The interpretation, or re-interpretation, of a traditional preaching box, in contemporary architectural style, together with the inclusion of contemporary works of art, and the design and execution of fittings and furnishings to a high technical standard, using good materials, and with contemporary detailing, render this a particularly good example of a new parish church of the Festival of Britain era.

The church itself is now far too large, and, one suspects, was always more than ample for the needs of the congregation even at its largest.

The Bishop made clear his own vision of the new church building, with phrases such as "it will last 400 or 500 years", "we should in a new building represent the Church of England", "the finest building possible", "the honour of the diocese is involved". The building acquired a primacy which it did not warrant; whatever happened, the parish, and the diocese, were to have a good building; whether the diocese would have a lively group of Christians in Cheylesmore seems to have become secondary. This is essentially a mid-nineteenth century approach to the Church, and it seems to have taken no account of the vision of those chaplains who came back from the First World War, fired to take a new approach to parish work.

The one aspect of the complex which has proved useful in the longer term is the provision of the hall and smaller rooms - originally designed as classrooms. There is ample space for functions which serve the needs of the present parishioners, for social functions, and for smaller meetings.

St. George's Church, St. John's Avenue, Hillmorton, Rugby.

Date: 1961/2.
Architect; Denys Hinton and Associates, Leamington Spa.
(Illustrations, and text of booklet written at the opening of the church; see Vol.3, pp575-583)
Priest: Revd Peter Beresford, The Vicarage, St. John's Avenue, Hillmorton, Rugby, CV 22 5HR. Tel: 0788 577331.

The present parish of St. George, Hillmorton, was created out of the old parish of Hillmorton, to be served by a daughter church of Rugby Parish church, with a curate of the Parish church serving as priest-in-charge. This was carried out by Dr. Richard Brook, who was Rector of Rugby from 1935 to 1941. The first church was completed in September 1940 and dedicated on the 14th of that month by the Bishop of Coventry, Dr. Mervyn Haigh. The building, which still survives as the hall, was built as a dual purpose hall/church to the designs of N.F. Cachemaille-Day. The sanctuary could be separated from the body of the building - to create a hall - by means of rolling shutter. It is one of only a few churches built during the war.

It is described by Alan Coldwells, who was priest-in-charge in the late fifties and early sixties, as 'cleverly designed', and as working well as a church until the congregation grew so large that it was quite impossible to accommodate it even on a normal Sunday basis. The principal service, from the beginning, was Parish Communion, initially celebrated eastwards-facing, with Holy Communion at 8am, Sunday School, and Evensong at 6.30.

The dual-purpose aspect was not popular with the parishioners and the building was used as a hall on only very rare occasions.

This growth in the congregation led to the decision to build a new church on the site.

The story of this is described in a booklet, produced at the time the new church was completed, with an introduction by Alan Coldwells, priest-in-charge at the time, and a description of the building by Denys Hinton. The text of the original, which is type-written, is now badly faded and a re-typed transcript is included in Vol.3,pp577-583.

Although a daughter church, St. George's had its own Parish Council - the legality of which was uncertain, but pastorally sound. A meeting had been called of the Council with the intention of working out a plan for the new church, before giving it to an architect to be 'dressed up'.

A few days before this meeting Alan Coldwells became aware of the New Churches Research Group, and the work of Peter Hammond. He consulted Peter Hammond, prior to the Council Meeting, and instead of discussing the plan of the building, he presented the Council with a questionnaire - of some seventy questions. These were discussed at a series of

Council meetings, one of which was addressed by Peter Hammond. A Report on the Questionnaire was produced, which was submitted to Professor J.G. Davies who gave advice and helped to clarify some of the conclusions. From this a Brief was developed. During this time the search for an architect began. Ten names were considered, with advice from Peter Hammond and Furneaux Jordan; eight of these were interviewed by Alan Coldwells and plans and photographs of their work were submitted to the Council. The Council's choice was Denys Hinton.

The building itself - apart from the organ - was built and fitted out for £25,000, and seated 350 people - 500 at a pinch. There was a lot of building for a low price and some things were skimped. In particular, the roof covering was short-life; this subsequently gave rise to problems, but has been re-covered to a higher standard.

The approach to the planning of the church was exemplary; all the right things - apart from the roof covering - were done, particularly in terms of the working out of the brief and participation by parishioners. The involvement of Peter Hammond, J.G. Davies and the New Churches Research Group was particularly happy. In view of this, it is not surprising that when the church was reviewed in the Guardian, 6 December 1962, by Gilbert Cope, it was enthusiastically received. In a most perceptive article, he discusses the church in the light of his own thought and experience of the design of contemporary churches, and lays down guidelines and criteria for contemporary churches for the liturgical movement. I quote the review in full, as follows.

> 'At Rugby the new church of St. George has notably overcome those familiar ecclesiastical vices of unthinking traditionalism, liturgical ineptitude, passive clericalism, and artistic vulgarity. A modern Christian centre, which is truly functional, architecturally sound, and of good appearance, has been built for £25,000. This has been achieved because of a combination of five things: the drive of an informed parson; the response of laypeople to theological demands; the full co-operation of an informed architect; accurate quantity surveying; and the willingness of a local builder to do unconventional things without making excessive charges "to cover himself".'

'The design of the church began long before an architect was chosen. The priest-in-charge, Alan Coldwells, made his congregation ask and answer fundamental questions about the Church and its worship so that they could properly describe the theological and liturgical principles to be expressed in the projected building. Next, the work of 10 recommended architects was examined and eventually the Church Council unanimously decided in favour of Denys Hinton and Associates of Leamington Spa. A subcommittee of the council prepared a more detailed brief of the actual requirements as envisaged at that time, and there then began a lengthy "dialogue" with the architect; this

eventually led to the emergence of a practicable programme for building which would cost no more than the funds available. The whole process from the commissioning of the architect to the designing of the building contract took 18 months, and, in comparison with the prices which have been paid to other builders for similar church accommodation, the saving would appear to be at the rate of £1000 per month.'

'The success of this approach is clearly dependent upon an encounter between a well-informed Christian community and an architect whose skill is at least equalled by his patience and genuine concern. An ill-instructed, prejudiced, or careless council could no more produce this kind of church than an architect for whom it was either just another job or an unusual opportunity to show off. The church itself is traditional enough in form to avoid giving immediate offence to conservatively minded worshippers, and yet it manages to be entirely modern in construction without resorting to the deliberate crudity of some recent church architects.'

'In the single volume (roughly 70' square), the altar in the sanctuary properly makes a profound initial impact. Set against an impressive and subtly curving cycloramic east wall, the free-standing holy table stands in stark simplicity, with purple brick piers supporting a marble mensa (perhaps a shade too light in colour and an inch too thin) in a worthy space. To the north is a combined lectern-pulpit and also the bishop's throne: to the south is an impressive grouping of clergy and choir stalls. Here is an excellent solution of the problem of giving the singers a place which is functionally suitable, prominent but not obstructive, and at the same time integrated within the whole body of worshippers. They are in a single concave group, able to see one another, and close to the console of the organ.'

'It has been fully accepted that the worship room in the Anglican tradition is, in addition to being an auditorium for the ministry of the Word, a two-sacrament room. The emphasis must be on the altar, but here the font is also visually significant, not only from the main entrance, but also from outside. It is sited on the direct line of approach from the people's entrance and is also visible from the road.'

'Probably the most controversial aspect of the building will prove to be the treatment of the ceiling. Here, under a virtually flat roof, there was clearly a tension between appearance and cost as the possibly conflicting requirements of construction and acoustics had to be met. The exposed transverse lattice steel roof-beams are in contrast with the longitudinal varnished timber joists, and, together with the flat strawboard infilling, create a good impression of a spiritual workshop: even so, one has the feeling that somehow this treatment is less satisfying

than the very competent handling of the form, colour, and texture of the load-bearing brick walls.'

Michael Webb, 'Architecture in Britain Today', Country Life, 1969, P 230, says of it:

'St. George's ... is structurally more basic than (St. Paul's) Crewe, (Maguire and Murray) - a flat roof draining into an internal courtyard, supported on exposed lattice girders that span the side walls. But though its exterior is reticent, its plan resembles Ronchamp, with walls bent in and extended past the windows. Two sweeping curves on the south front frame the baptistery, and a watery mosaic pattern flows out through a clear pane from around the base of the font.'

'The interior, seating 250 in two regular blocks of pews, is bare. Sanctuary and baptistery are dramatically emphasised by indirect lighting. The east wall is a cyclorama, faced in rough white plaster, and sweeping round to enclose the organ and choir. A cross is suspended over the altar, which is placed well forward and top-lit.'

It is described in 'The Buildings of England - Warwickshire', by Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgwood, 1966, P385, thus:

'A very remarkable building, up to the standard of the best ecclesiastical buildings in the county. From the outside one sees a plain curved brick wall (rather dead brick unfortunately) without any windows, then a portal-like glass opening which, however, contains the font, and then a straight windowless brick wall with just a square cut in to hang a bell. These brick walls curve into the baptistery opening and moreover rise towards the bell end. The entry is through a porch further W, and one has to turn r. and pass a prettily planted small inner court to reach the church. The interior is not quite so convincing. The altar wall, the light metal beams, the lectern, and especially the font (by John Bridgeman) satisfy, but the seating is undistinguished and a little confusing in arrangement.'

The symbolism of the font - in its pond, reaching both inside and outside the church, symbolises 'going down into Jordan'. The mosaic does not quite work; it should be a continuous pattern, instead it form two halves, which do not quite 'meet', and it had to be juggled when it was fitted! It is reminiscent of the font in the Elisabethkirche in Frankfurt-Bockenheim, by Rudolph Schwarz, of 1938-42.

Structure: The roof covering has been renewed, and there are cracks in the brick walls which have been repaired, but the source of the failure has not been cured.

Services: The heating has been renewed.

Furnishing and re-ordering. The principal service continued to be the Parish Communion. Westward-facing celebration was

introduced - as an experiment - and remained the practice from the beginning. Alan Coldwells recalls that the Parish and People movement, and the Liturgical Movement were part of the ethos of the period. The degree of participation by the congregation in the decision making process arose to a considerable degree from the autonomy given to the daughter churches in Rugby.

Carpet has been substituted for tiles, and the pews, formerly screwed to the floor, have been unscrewed to make them moveable. They can now be canted for services, and reversed for concerts. This has given the building a flexibility which would have been welcome from the beginning.

The Lady Chapel, on a raised gallery, has proved less useful, not least since it is approached by a flight of steps, which are not easily negotiated by the elderly. The furnishing of the chapel, in a traditional form, looks at odds with the remainder of the church.

Present condition

The last Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in October 1991. The Report says of the General Condition of the building:

> 'The church is in a satisfactory condition generally and very well maintained. It is now 30 years old and there are further desirable works necessary beyond the significant work done in the last five years.'

These works include:

> 'New felt roofing to church roof; New gas-fired central heating (individual balanced flue convectors); Carpet covering floors of church and half of Narthex; Redecoration of old Hall; Partition constructed in Vestry corridor to form ante-room to former children's room which is now parish office; Adaptation of communion rail.

The Summary of works to be carried out includes the comments:

> 'It is absolutely essential that all rainwater gullies, downpipes and roof surfaces should be inspected regularly and at least twice a year.'

'Of utmost urgency: Clear pebbles from roof of main church; repair floor spring of main door; trim Cotoneaster back.'

'Essential within 18 months: Repair broken glazing to windows and roof lights; Remedial work to bell housing metalwork; repointing of brickwork internally and externally.'

Conclusion

In general terms, the building was well planned, including its ancillary rooms, and still works much as it was planned. It is described by the secretary of the DAC as a 'happy parish' - a considerable compliment. It appears to be extremely important as one of the first churches built according to the best current theories, and is one which still works. The failure of the roof is only to be expected, and has been corrected. The problem of the walls appears to be annoying, rather than dangerous; the cause, and the solution, are not at present clear.

St. John and St. Mary, Camp Hill, Nuneaton.

Incumbent: Revd. Dennis Sneath; 01203 392523.

Built 1963/4. (Illustratins; see Vol.3, p584)

This is another of the relatively few Anglo-Catholic churches in the diocese. It was built to serve a new housing estate on the edge of Nuneaton; the parish used a dual-purpose building at the beginning, and this is still in use as the parish hall.

Dennis Sneath was the young incumbent at the time the church was built. He was familiar with the churches designed by Sir Basil Spence and disliked them for 1) their traditional - i.e. late nineteenth century - layout, and 2) because of what he saw as Spence's disinclination to consult with the local community. As a result, he procrastinated, in order to achieve a building which he felt would serve the needs of the parish, and in particular its liturgical movement worship, better. I have no doubt in concluding that he succeeded admirably on both counts.

A local architect was appointed. The church sits roughly in the middle of the parish, and occupies a striking site on the crest of a hill, looking across a wide valley. The church is trapezoidal in plan, with an exposed steel frame internally, a monopitch roof, clad in aluminium, rising slightly towards the east. The external walls are brick, and the east end is marked by a tower-like structure, with a narrow east wall, rising above the main roof, and two flanking walls, like wings, rising even higher. Between the wings a simple cross, formed of RSJs, rises, with the upper part of the cross silhouetted against the sky above the east wall.

The altar is set in the angular apse of the east end, lit by full height windows to either side, with the seating, in the form of pews, in a wide arc. The church is quite small; it seats only about 200 in comfort, but a smaller number can worship there without feeling overwhelmed by the building.

The building is very simple, both in design and in its finishes and furnishings. The walls are plastered and painted; the only decoration or enrichment are the Stations of the Cross, and the shadows cast by the exposed steel frame on the walls, with the intersections of the members forming ghostly crosses. The east wall is plain painted, with a large, carefully proportioned crucifix, on the wall, and below, the altar with its mensa supported on a single central column. The six candles, the skeletal altar rail, and the Festival-of-Britain slatted pulpit and reading desk betray the fact that this is Anglican, rather than Roman Catholic. The choir stalls and clergy seats are set back against the wide-angled flank walls, so that while they are at the east end, and close to the sanctuary, they intrude minimally on the view to the altar. Like the pews, they are well designed, and well executed.

The building exploits the fall of the site, and includes vestries and a very striking weekday chapel below the east end of the church. This enables the eastern tower to be given added height, by starting it below, and finishing it above, the main church. The building seems to work extremely well.

Present condition

The last Quinquennial Inspection found the building and its surrounds in generally good condition. Recommendations for future work include the following:

> 'Refix metal coping to SE end of parapet wall; Repair and redecorate small damaged area of roof decking near NW entrance lobby, vestry doors and feature windows over these doors, replace cracked panes of glass, replace missing light fitting covers and light bulbs.; Redecorate church as funds become available, give priority to external fascias, cross and window frames; Returf worn grass areas ... replace missing concrete slabs -- gully gratings and manhole cover; Remove gate and fencing between church and hall ...; Inspect electrical circuits.'

Conclusion

This is perhaps the most 'Continental' of the Coventry post-war churches. The simple expression of the utilitarian steel frame, the abstract massing of the brick walls, culminating in the eastern tower, the lack of obsessive and fussy decoration and 'bits from the old church', and the simple directness of the plan form, gathering the people towards and around the altar, contrasts strongly with the churches built in the diocese in the previous decade, with their 'modern' guise, shackled to a late nineteenth century form, and the collecting of contemporary works of art - a pattern established by the new cathedral. The careful choice of the size of the building means that it does not lead to that gross over-provision of space, which is beyond the capacity of the local parish either to fill, or to fund. The skilful modelling of this small building makes it a landmark in the parish, and indeed from neighbouring parishes across the valley. The harshness of the plain steel cross marks the building as the place where the local Christians meet, and proclaims the starkness of the event which lies at the core of the message which they proclaim.

St. Andrew's, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth.

Incumbent: Revd. Paul Norton. 01203 363322
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, pp584-585)
This was built in 1963/4 to replace a Mission Hut, built in the early years of this century. The present church was built as a church hall, licensed for worship, as the first phase of a scheme which was to include a church building, which was never built. The hall is a very plain, rectangular, building, linked to the vicarage, with brick walls, and a flat roof supported on laminated timber beams. It is 47' long by 41' wide, including kitchen, toilets, and classroom.

The population of the parish is approximately 700, which includes a very substantial area of new housing. The main service is a Morning service, with an attendance of some 40 adults and 30 children, with Holy Communion celebrated 3 or 4 times a month. The Evening Service has an attendance of between 15 and 30.

Until recently the hall was laid out for worship with the altar at one - short - end. It has been recently altered, with the altar in the middle of one - long - side. Everything is movable, and the altar stands on a low plinth, with a rail of a simple design, and with seating, in the form of chairs, on three sides.

Quinquennial Inspection Report.

The report, dated December 1993, comments that, in general:

> 'The main building is of traditional construction, but with a flat roof, and is in reasonable condition, although no a terribly attractive looking building.'

The report notes perishing of brickwork on the front elevation, infilling of two windows in the rear elevation with very obviously non-matching brickwork; the flat roof is covered with bituminous felt, and 'ponds' because the outlets are poorly sited, but is weather-tight. The floors, windows and glazing are in generally good condition, except in a temporary building at the rear which is reaching he end of its useful life. Fittings, decoration and services are in reasonable to good condition. The recommendations are:

1) Check wiring for Church in each Quinquennial inspection.
2) Keep alert eye on flat roof, and any possible problems.
3) The temporary classroom at the rear is in very poor condition, and at some stage will need to be removed /replaced. It is probably past the point of repair, and would be unwise to spend a great deal of money on this building.
4) Investigate, and attend to roof leak/spillage on front wall.
5) Refix the Cross on Church frontage.
6) Repair perished brickwork (if it is not intended to conceal this with new building work).

7) Check outlets from roof to make sure that rainwater is getting away, this should be done annually.

It is clear that the present building, while utilitarian, is in a reasonable condition, and does not appear to present any substantial or burdensome problems. It serves the needs of the parish very well, while the community is built up, and determines what the rôle of the Christian community is in the area, and what its pattern of worship is to be.

Many of the population moved here from Scotland and Tyneside, to work in the pits. There has long been a considerable measure of unease between the different groups, brought together, as it, by accident. Thee has been the need for a good deal of work of reconciliation, which has been made more difficult by the tensions brought by the closure of the pits. Much of the local initiative, and leadership, which might have arisen, was stifled in the past by the work of the NUM, which looked after its members too well! (comment from the incumbent). There is a good deal of work needed to foster initiative, and promote leadership, from within the local community. Many of the 'incomers' were Nonconformist in origin - when there was any religious affiliation - and this bears both on the present pattern of worship, and its likely future development. There are parallels with the story of Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore, although in this instance, the nonconformist emphasis comes as a result of the origins of the people who make up the present parish population. As far as I know no one has said - aggressively - This is the Church of England!

St. Philip's Church, Potter's Green.

Built: 1964. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p586)

Incumbent: Revd. W Adamson. 01203 617568
Warden. Mr Broadley. 01203 616166.

The church was built in 1964, as a large, flat-roofed, building, with an uninterrupted internal space, and the roof spanning from wall to wall. One can see something of the influence of the cathedral on the form of the building; the walls, of brick, are staggered in plan, with areas of full-height clear glazing in three horizontal sections in the elements of wall facing west, and with narrow slots of coloured glazing in the short returns.

As originally built, the walls extended considerably above the level of the flat roof, giving a very angular, even aggressive, look to the building. The flat roof caused very considerable problems with the result that the building became unusable for worship. Work was carried out to the existing hall and the link corridor, in 1983, at a cost of some £43,000, and the hall was dedicated for worship on May 1st that year. In 1991 a very substantial amount of work was carried out to the church itself to enable it to be brought back into use. The upper portion of the walls was removed, the ceiling lowered, and a new pitched roof erected, at a cost of some £100,000; the church was reconsecrated in December 1991.

The pattern of worship falls within the Evangelical tradition. The church as it is now laid out is a single room, widening from west to east, with quasi transepts to either side of the east end; that to the south is occupied by the band and choir. The walls are in exposed brick, with alternate sections in yellow stocks, and multi-reds. The new ceiling is a patent system, finished with ceiling tiles. The Table, of timber, and very clearly a 'table', stands on a low plinth with a banner with a cross hanging on the wall behind. The floor is carpeted, with the seating formed as chairs. Immediately to the right of the Table a screen is suspended against the wall for the showing of slides, etc.

The building provides eminently adaptable space for a variety of activities, and its somewhat innocuous character does not impose predetermined patterns on the worship. The building, in fact, is rather dull; the variety of brick in the walling does not quite work, and the lowered ceiling creates a curious proportion in the building. The effect is made worse by the use of this particular commercial patent system, and the ceiling tiles.

The building seems to work well for the parish, considering that its original character was a not altogether successful stab at an essay in the manner of the cathedral. The problems with the roof were tackled somewhat ruthlessly by the parish. The solution could have been a great deal more

expensive, or short term, but it works, and seems likely to do so for a long time to come. The parish have done their best to make the most of a seriously flawed building.

The Quinquennial Inspection Report of December 1990 identifies the roof, the windows and the heating system as requiring urgent attention. These have been dealt with, and I have seen nothing to suggest that the result of the work was other than successful.

Christ Church, Brownsover, Rugby.

Incumbent: Revd. Alan Stevens, Christ Church Vicarage, Helvellyn Way, Brownsover, Rugby. Tel: 01203 363322.

Built: circa 1990. Illustrations - see Vol. 7, p 586.

Christ Church, Brownsover, was built circa 1990 to serve a growing housing estate, on the edge of Rugby. It appears to take account of lessons learned in recent years.

The estate was begun some twenty years ago, as a Council Estate, and was originally used as a 'dump' for problem families. The estate takes its name from the hamlet of Brownsover, some half a mile away, and separated from the estate by a new dual-carriageway road. The hamlet was served by a small chapel, of medieval origin. This is now in the care of the Redundant Churches Fund, and services are still held on a few occasions in the year.

The estate has been extended more recently, with a mixture of local authority and private housing. As a result, the social mix has changed considerably, and is very different from those estates served by the Spence churches in Coventry. There is still a high proportion of single mothers in the council housing, which raises interesting pastoral and semantic problems on Mothering Sunday!

The church is built of multi-red brick; it is hexagonal in plan, with a pyramidal roof, surmounted by a central lantern, with office accommodation to one side, with a pitched roof. The roofs are clad in red concrete tiles. The church complex is fairly small - the church itself seats no more than 200 at most, and in scale and materials sits happily in the context of the one- and two-storey housing around. Internally, the walls of the church are faced in concrete block, and the pyramidal roof is supported on a massive frame of laminated timber beams, and the soffit of the roof is clad with timber boarding.

The seating is in the form of chairs, and all the furnishings are movable, to permit the church to be used as a multi-purpose space. There is no permanent sanctuary, and the flexibility provided by the present arrangements permits experimentation in worship. This is particularly appropriate in Brownsover at the present time, to enable a growing parish, with little by way of tradition, to work out its patterns of work and worship. There is no hall at present, and the church building is heavily used - playgroups, etc. - for a wide range of community based purposes.

The building is of a simple and robust design, using largely traditional materials. Maintenance appears to have been designed to be simple and, apart from some minor roof leaks around the lantern, the building gives no cause for concern.

This seems to be a particularly successful exercise. In terms of its relationship to its built environment, the

building is visually harmonious, appropriate in scale - i.e. it does not dominate, but by virtue of its design, it is distinctive, and friendly in its impact - both inside and out. The building is large enough to accommodate present demands, but not so large, or so complex, that its maintenance looks like becoming a burden. Its design is such that a small congregation does not feel 'lost' in the building, and its flexibility permits the building to serve the needs of the community, and the parish to experiment in worship, without expensive schemes of re-ordering.

The church is too new to require a Quinquennial Inspection.

Conclusion

Coventry seems to have got off to a fast start with the task of rebuilding bombed churches, or providing new churches on new housing estates, in the immediate post-war period. This may have been due to a number of factors. Compared with, say, Manchester diocese, the task facing Coventry could be seen as a great deal more manageable. Moreover, the destruction of the Cathedral, and the devastation wrought by the bombing of the City gave Coventry a somewhat higher profile, and a rôle as a symbol, which neither Manchester nor Birmingham enjoyed. The building of the large housing estates on the edge of the City was undertaken during the 50s, and the church buildings swiftly followed on.

While this showed the diocese as tackling the problem of providing church buildings, it was unfortunate - with hindsight - that more use was not made of temporary buildings, and more time taken to assess the make-up, and needs, of the populations of the housing estates. The influence of the Liturgical Movement, and the widespread knowledge of what was happening on the Continent, was not to come to fruition until the beginning of the 60s, by which time Coventry had acquired a number of substantial - indeed, over-large - churches, whose lay-out reflected long-established patterns of worship, and the influence of the Festival of Britain. There are two churches of the 60s which reflect the influence of the Liturgical Movement; St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby, and St. Mary and St. John, Camp Hill. St. George's lies on the edge of Rugby and its building was unrelated to the new housing estates in Coventry City; as I have described above, it's design came about by chance - or even divine inspiration. The church at Camp Hill owes it's form to the persistence - even obstinacy - on the then and present incumbent who, fortunately, had his own vision of the type of building he wanted.

The three cheapest churches - the Spence churches on the Coventry estates - are amongst the most interesting. They were cheap to build, and in that sense do not burden the present users with the knowledge of vast expense raised by them or their parents. They relate in form, structure and scale to the housing around, and they provide space which is surprisingly flexible, given the simple rectangular layout. Although the three churches started out as being very similar indeed, if not identical, each has developed in its own way.

I have devoted considerable space to Christ Church, Frankpledge Road, Cheylesmore. The story of this parish and church is a complex one; it illustrates the complexity of the bureaucratic processes which anyone wishing to build a new church had to overcome, and these were exacerbated by the individualistic evangelical nature of the congregation of Christ Church, and tensions with the diocese. The story also illustrates the concern - one might almost say 'obsession' of the diocesan bishop - with establishing a church building to last for half a millennium. The church as completed is a good example of the pre-Liturgical Movement churches of

Coventry; it follows the pattern and layout of a previous age - for once, not that of the latter part of the C19th; it dresses that form in the architecture of the Festival of Britain, and the building is enhanced with contemporary works of art, and with furnishings of a high standard. As a result of the obsession with maintaining expectations, and patterns of worship of the past, the present building is both too large and too inflexible for the present. As a result, one asks whether the time, effort and angst expended in building the new church was well-directed. It was only possible to examine this church in such detail as a result of Alex Munden's work in compiling the history of the church, and the availability of the correspondence relating to the new building.

None of the churches I have examined now presents insuperable problems for the parish; the church at Potter's Green did, but this has been dealt with by the parish, and the building now seems to work reasonably well. All the churches appear to be in reasonable condition, and none appears now to have problems which are beyond the means of the parishioners to tackle. However, I do wonder whether this expenditure of time and effort, on buildings which are clearly too large for their present congregations, is, in the long term, a prudent approach. It does, of course, secure the future existence of the building, should things change, but I query whether the maintenance of such buildings should have this priority.

A STUDY OF CHURCHES BUILT FOR THE USE OF CONGREGATIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BETWEEN 1945 AND 1970 AND OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS TODAY.

Churches in other dioceses.

Study of Individual Churches in other Dioceses.

In the process of carrying out research for this study, and aided by an inability to walk past a church which looked as if it might be interesting and relevant, I have visited a number of churches in dioceses other than the three under consideration. These churches are:

Christ Church, Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex.
Date: 1961/2.
Architect: H. Norman Haines; Associate in charge - Norman Davey.

Group of churches by David Nye, Guildford diocese, built with laminated timber cruck frames.

Church of the Holy Spirit, Burpham, Nr Guildford, of 1965.
Church of the Good Shepherd, Coldharbour Road, Pyrford, Woking, of 1965.
St Alban's, Wood Street, Guildford, of 1965.

Three Bournemouth Churches:

St George's, Oakdale, Poole. 1959/60, by Potter and Hare.
St Thomas's, Barnes Road, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth. 1963/4?
St Barnabas's, Mount Pleasant Drive, Bournemouth. 1968.

Three churches in Eastbourne:

St. Elizabeth,
St. John the Evangelist, Meads'
St. Richard of Chichgester, Langney.

Five churches in Vienna.

St. Florian, Matleinsdorf, by Rudolf Schwarz.
Wotrubakirche zur Hl. Dreifaltigkeit, by Fritz Wotruba.
Christkönigskirche, Potzleinsdorf, by Karl Schwanze.
Kirche zum Guten Hirten, UnterSt. Veit, by Professor Ceno.
Konzilsgedächtniskirche, Lainz-Speising, by Josef Lackner.

Christ Church, Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex.

Date: 1961/2.

Architect: H. Norman Haines; Associate in charge - Norman Davey. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p592)

The building is described in The Architect and Building News, 20 March 1963, thus:

> 'The site for the church was an open one on the main Kingston Road from Staines, surrounded by the normal suburban development carried out between the wars. The only existing building was a church hall of ordinary construction on the flank furthest away from Kingston Road.'

This was in fact a dual-purpose Church and Hall, and was built in 1936. It is now used as the parish hall.

> 'The problem facing the architect was to provide a building which would serve as a focal point for the parish and yet link with the existing building. The latter requirement has been solved by the forming of an enclosed open courtyard with a covered walk on four sides. The main entrance to the church being off this courtyard, which would not only provide a meeting place, but form a break from normal activities before entering the church. '

Only two sides of this courtyard - one side forming the entrance to the church, and the other forming a covered walk to the present hall - were completed, due to the costs.

> 'It should be emphasized that the section and plan were not preconceived in any way and developed solely from the architect's interpretation of the requirements for the church of today in line with the liturgical reform movement. It may also be interesting to note that the acceptance of this plan by the parish meant that the architect and the church had to meet together on a number of occasions and to study the requirements for church worship and to write a brief from the answers. The altar is placed in such a position that the congregation is gathered around, with the clergy seated behind the altar and the choir on one side. The altar is not in the geometric centre of the church, as this has in the past proved unsatisfactory. The position of the altar is emphasized externally by the lantern light and spire and internally by the four supporting columns that arise from ground level. As a requirement of design the lantern was placed in that position solely for that purpose and not as an external feature.'

The spire and the lantern both act as an 'identifier' for the church above the surrounding housing.

> 'The baptistery is in the traditional position by the main entrance to the church, but in such a way that most of the

congregation have a good view of the baptismal service by slightly turning their heads, thus solving the problem of having a proper position for the font while at the same time satisfying the requirement that the baptism is a public rite.'

'The Lady Chapel has also been designed for use during week days and the folding screens to the main body of the church can be removed in order to give increased seating accommodation as may be required.'

The main body of the church is square in plan, with a central lantern light rising above, surmounted by a spire, and with two low - single storey - extensions, one containing the sacristy and vestries, and the other containing the side chapel and the baptistery, on opposite sides of the building. The main structure is of reinforced concrete cast in situ. According to the ABN much thought was given to the design of the formwork, although the architect's original intentions proved too expensive and had to be modified. The load-carrying skeleton of the four outer walls of the main core consists of four "Y" shaped frames, one to each wall, joined at each corner by a circular RC column. The central lantern is supported by four central columns. These support the main roof on a deep ringbeam at mid height, with the lantern light and its roof above. The four central reinforced concrete columns and the four free-standing columns in each corner were poured into reinforced paper cylinders, as, according to the ABN, it was found impossible to afford the formwork designed. Some rust staining from scaffolding made it necessary to use stone paint. The walls are of stock brickwork, non-load-bearing except to the low vestry and chapel buildings. The wall to Kingston Road is of patterned brickwork, although this is now less obvious after 30 years of weathering.

'The main roof is of folded-slab construction with high peaks at the four corners. The roof of the lantern light is also of slab construction, 4in thick, reinforced to act as both slabs and beams in their own planes, to carry the centrally-placed reinforced concrete spire formed in 2.5in thick aerated concrete cast in situ with the internal formwork lined with compressible "Flexcell" to reduce the risk of shrinkage cracks.'

'The glazing to the main body of the church is in tinted glass with only a small sample portion of glass in concrete to be inserted at a later date. This will reduce the level of lighting and eliminate the slight glare which at the same time emphasizes the clear light flooding down to the altar.'

Structure: Major works have been carried out to the lantern of the building. The mullions composing this are pre-cast RC units. They were made by a different company from that which produced the main concrete structure, which was cast in situ. The main structure has not suffered from problems but the lantern mullions have failed, and have been replaced at a cost of £80,000, of which £44,000 was contributed by the Diocese.

The principal windows have the same constructional method, but have not so far failed. The roof generally is sound, but has had no major maintenance, and the felt cladding will shortly require renewing. The heating system is failing, and probably needs renewing.

According to the churchwarden, the work of the congregation is increasingly 'building-led'. Work to increase the congregation is hampered by the need to maintain the church, and without a significant growth in the congregation he can forsee a time when the maintenance and repair of the church will become too much for the congregation, who will have to abandon the church, and possibly allow it to be demolished.

According to the architect, no proper brief was given for the building. The parish - and in particular the then incumbent - asked for a new church building, having outgrown the original church/hall. The diocese contributed significantly to the cost, and suggested the architect. The architect was appointed, and only approached the parish for guidance after he was appointed. He was told by the parish, in effect; 'You are the architect, design us a church'.

The inspiration for the building came from the architects, and from their own understanding - particularly Norman Davey's understanding - of the liturgical movement, and knowledge of church building on the Continent. The church was designed to create a setting for worship in the Liturgical Movement, and to provide a reasonably flexible setting, and one which was well-lit. The building was designed using contemporary building methods - much drawn from contemporary school building. The spire was requested by the parish to serve as an identifying element, and the lantern was conceived as the base on which the spire could stand. The RC columns and members, with shuttering marks, were the fashionable thing, as was the roof construction, and the glazed 'west' wall and covered ways were derived from contemporary school building. The sanctuary was designed by Norman Davey, with its furnishings, and was designed to enable everyone to see what was going on, and to give proper prominence to reading and preaching, as well as the Eucharist.

This church is a striking example of the church building of its day. It provided an appropriate setting for the Eucharist, in the terms of the Liturgical Movement of the day; it had a built-in capacity for change and modification; it was designed from basic principles; and it used contemporary building methods. It was exactly the sort of building which would be considered praiseworthy in its day. The lack of a brief was unfortunate, and ran against the Church's own advice to parishes.

Contemporary understanding of the building is expressed in the notes, prepared by the then incumbent, Revd. Nikon Cooper, which accompanied the Order of Service for the consecration on Saturday 27th October, 1962 (quoted in the Staines and Egham News, 2 November 1962). The paper reported:

'Referring to notes written by the vicar and printed in the Order of Service booklet, the Bishop said "I can only echo the words your Vicar has written, for it is what I would wish to say. It is not just a question of legal ceremony. You have got to do something which no architect, however skilled, can ever do. You have got to give this church an atmosphere of worship."'

'When they entered an old country church they felt it was indeed a holy place and in a way they did not understand, they knew that this was due to all those who, in the past, had brought there their hopes and joys, their sorrows, their failures and successes.'

'"For this building, that still lies in the future", said the Bishop, who went on to say it was an act of faith to build a church and in this anxious age that very church building, by its very construction and its architectural style, was not only an act of faith in the 20th century, but it was expressed in terms of the 20th century.'

'The following extracts from the notes ... are of interest. "What makes a church? Surely it is more than the 1,000 tons of concrete you can see here; more than the 80,000 bricks that are cladding it; more than the three miles of electric cabling that light and service it."

"Again, this building could be said to be the result of 36,000 man-hours of work; that is how long it has taken to build; or, of so many thousand more hours of effort and thought put in by generations of worshippers past and present who have laboured towards it - willed towards it - prayed towards it."

"Again, this could be equated quite simply in terms of money - £40,000 - much of which we still have to find.".

"But that does not make a church. . Nor yet, alone, the words of consecration the Bishop will direct."

"A church is a consecration. A consecration of ourselves, our wills, our bodies, all our potential, to the service of God.". ...

"This is a modern church. Its whole design speaks of modern treatment in this modern world, reminding us that for the work of Christ we must be modern and up-to-date in our outlook."

"Though the consecration of men and women, and churches, to the service of God is as old as the hills, it must be realized in contemporary forms, amid contemporary needs, if its influence is to spread outwards and its consecration be effective."

"In the design of this building there is one, overall, dominant note. A vertical line which carries the eye in an up-and-down movement. In the graceful sweep of its

proportions that line characterises Up, through the mullions of the windows, up through the lantern columns, up, through the spire, itself a pointer to God, directing our thoughts to the consecration of ourselves to His service."

"But that line is not 'upwards' alone. It is up-and-down. Just as the eye does not stop at the top of the spire. It is carried down again. So, too, with the thought of consecration. What is under the spire? Directly underneath it is the altar, where God's grace and blessing and power are called down. Downwards and outwards. Downwards to the altar. Outwards through the church, through the people round the altar, through you and me, going outwards then to the world."

"That is what a church is; the place where man's worship goes up; the place where God's power is called down. God's place ...".

The building does have problems; notably the failure of the lantern mullions, the need to renew the roof covering, and to renew the heating. These last two are not surprising since little if any serious maintenance appears to have been carried out over the years.

Christ Church provides a structure in which the liturgy can be performed with dignity; it is a structure which can be adapted if this is desired; it could accommodate more people; a renewed and lively congregation could bring the impetus to carry out necessary repairs, the impetus to carry out improvements to the building - to enhance it as a setting for the liturgy, and could provide the funds to achieve this.

Three Cruck-framed churches in Guildford Diocese, by David Nye.

Church of the Holy Spirit, Burpham, Nr Guildford.
Date: 1965.
Architect: David Nye.
Cost: £18,000.

Church of the Good Shepherd, Coldharbour Road, Pyrford, Woking, Surrey GU22 8SP.
Date: 1963/4
Architect: David Nye.
Cost:- £55,000, all told.
Clergy: Revd John Ashe, The Rectory, Aviary Road. Tel.: Byfleet 352914.

St. Alban's, Wood Street, Guildford.
Date: 1965?
Architect: David Nye.
Clergy: Revd Brian Shand, St. Alban's House, 96 Oak Hill, Wood Street Village, GU3 3DQ. Tel: 0483 235136.
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, pp587-8)

These three churches in Guildford Diocese, close to Guildford, were all designed by David Nye circa 1963/5. They were designed as low cost buildings, designed to be erected swiftly and cheaply in areas of new housing - the same principal as the Spence churches in Coventry. They used a common structural system of cruck frames, made of laminated timber trusses. This, in effect, produced a kit of parts, which resulted in reduced costs in design and production, but gave a flexible system to enable a variety of sizes of church building to be produced, depending on the needs of the parish. Each church has at its core a quasi-crossing, formed with a pair of crucks to each wall, and a further pair of crucks on either diagonal, giving a distinctive cruciform plan to the 'crossing', which is even more clearly visible externally in the form of the roof. The crucks forming the sides of the crossing can be continued to enlarge the building by forming a nave, transepts or a sanctuary. The crucks on the diagonal are similar to those used for the sides, but have an extension piece linking the apexes, to allow for the geometry of the form. The altar in each case is placed forward of the east wall, permitting westward facing celebration.

All three churches have a distinctive family resemblance, both inside and out. The 'crossing' focuses the attention on the altar, in a light and airy space, sheltered, as it were, under the arching arms of the structure. Externally, the steep roofs, in a cruciform, give a distinctive and easily recognizable appearance to the building. An advantage of the cruck form is that an open and lofty internal space can be created, without the disadvantage of the vast un-heatable volume created if the walls are perpendicular!

While the use of this common structural form gives a distinctive, and 'family', appearance to the churches, it

permits variation in size and shape, and variation in internal and external wall and roof cladding, to suit local conditions.

The great advantage of these churches is the flexibility they provide. This relates not only to the possible variations in size, appearance and planning of the churches when first built, but also to the possibilities they offer for adaptation in the future. They can be extended, if desired, using the same structural system, their external cladding can be renewed, and the appearance changed and the cladding upgraded, if desired; they can be re-ordered to some degree, since the simple geometrical space imposes fewer constraints, and the internal cladding can be changed and up-graded - e.g. timber boarding could be substituted for wall-board - if desired.

A recently completely extension to the parish church at Stoughton, on the edge of Guildford, increasing the church by at least twice its original size, uses laminated cruck frames to produce a light, airy and flexible worship area.

St. Alban's, Wood Street. This is the smallest of the three churches. It comprises the 'crossing' only; i.e. it is square in plan, with the feet of three crucks in each corner. This plan form permits seating on three sides of the altar, with everyone having a clear view of the altar. The external walls are clad in narrow vertical weatherboarding, and the roof in plain concrete tiles. The exterior of the (liturgical) east wall has a cross with a 'sun ray' effect around it in steel rods. The internal walls are clad in a patent blockboard, or something similar, painted white.

The church of the Holy Spirit, Burpham, is slightly larger than the church at Wood Street. This has the 'crossing', but has three additional bays forming a nave and two transepts. The altar stands forward of the (liturgical) east wall, with seating on three sides.

The church of The Good Shepherd, Pyrford, is the largest of the three. The foundation stone was laid in June, 1963, and the church and annexe were completed twelve months later.

A draft statement, by David Nye, setting out his intentions for the new church (Diocesan Record Office) says:

> 'My aim in designing this new church has been to provide a building which will encourage worship, draw the family round the priest at the altar table, and be functional for its various purposes. Together with the meeting room and clergy house, it should provide a centre of religious life in the parish. It is hope that the design of the exterior will harmonize with the rural character of the neighbourhood, and that the altar, with its richly coloured furnishings would provide the focal point of the interior.'

This was slightly amended before being published as part of the publicity for the new church. During discussions about the new church the then incumbent was in contact with the rector of St. George's, Norton, Letchworth, a new church then

being erected, under the supervision, and to the design, of the architect, Peter Bosanquet.

A leaflet produced at the time of the consecration says of the building:

> 'The architect ... had a vision of a place of worship traditional in design yet belonging very much to the 1960s with the Lord's Table as the focal point, and the building dropped as it were like a great tent around it. The people would gather as one family round the Table, the clergy would not be remote but accessible ... Lofty curving pillars of laminated Canadian pine, together with the large expanse of glass give to the whole structure its sense of height and light.'

The fittings are largely by contemporary artists or craftsmen; the altar drape is by the Edinburgh Weavers, the chalice and paten a Norwegian design in chrome, the credence table by Percy Wattleworth, the burse, veil, stole and bookmark, and kneelers, by Joan Edwards, the hand made wool rugs to the pulpit and lectern were made by Major GGC Coleridge of the 1st Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, the coloured window in the east transept by Margaret Trehearne, the processional cross was made from the dead branch of a yew tree in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Pyrford - the older Norman church in the civil parish, the font was designed and sculpted by Penelope Staniforth, and the candlesticks, were designed and made, of aluminium, by the church warden, Julian Walker.

The RHS Gardens at Wisley, nearby, contributed to the laying out of the surroundings to the church.

The church is centred around the 'crossing', with the altar standing forward of the (liturgical) east wall. In addition, there are transepts to either side - each of one bay, and a nave formed of two bays, and enlarged to either side by flat roofed extensions. There is seating on three sides, in three blocks, each block aligned on the line of the structural line of its compartment. This makes it somewhat inflexible, and those sitting in the narrow, flat-roofed, quasi-aisles, will feel separated from the main body by the line of structural members, and the low flat roof. The walls are clad in brickwork, with a tiled roof.

The building has flat-roofed additions to either side, in the form of porches and aisles, a flat-roofed extension to the 'east', forming offices and vestry, and additional flat-roofed accommodation to the west, for meeting rooms, etc. There has been trouble with the flat roofs, and with the 'south' window, which is a large window occupying the south wall of the crossing. This was constructed of poorly matured softwood, and, according to Arthur Saunders, of Nye and Saunders, the detailing of the window transoms - which was left to Newsoms, the suppliers of the windows - proved defective. A good deal of timber has had to be replaced. A Fund, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the consecration of the church - 1964-

1989, raised £100,000, much of which has been spent on roof and window repairs.

Liturgically, the church works well, but lacks a Lady/side/ Morning chapel for weekday communion and occasional services.

The parish includes three churches - two Norman churches - St. Nicholas, Pyrford, and Wisley, and the Good Shepherd, Pyrford. Services are held in all three churches; each serves a centre of population within the larger parish, and permits a range of services to be held, e.g. HC (1662), HC (Rite A), Parish Communion (Rite A), Matins, Matins (1662), Evening Prayer, Evening Service, Family Service, Morning Worship, Morning Service, Service of Praise with Prayers for Healing.

Comments on timber churches

There is a short discussion on the use of timber construction for churches in the report entitled "Buildings and Breakthrough", which is the report of the Chichester Diocesan Buildings Study Group, set up in March 1965, with the commission:

> 'To advise the Diocese of Chichester through the Buildings Committee on methods of location, design, construction and cost of new temporary and permanent buildings for liturgical and social purposes.'

The report was published in association with the Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, in the University of Birmingham.

In a section on 'Timber Structures' the Study group discusses (pp26/27) examples from a programme of churches built in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, USA. The report says:

> 'In common with church building authorities everywhere, the diocese was anxious to find an acceptable alternative to the expensive "one-off" churches being built by a multiplicity of individual parish committees, many of whom faced serious difficulties as a result of inaccurate forecasts of eventual building costs. Contact was made with a timber building firm with no previous experience of church architecture but which had specialised in ski-lodges, resort motels and vacation homes. In collaboration with this firm the Diocese in due course erected three timber churches for less than it would have cost to build them traditionally. Their planned life is fifty years and the interiors are designed without load-bearing partitions to give the maximum flexibility. As is customary the church itself is linked to a very generous complex of ancillary rooms for teaching/social use and from experience gained since the buildings were opened it is evident that their authors and users find much to commend, especially in comparison with their traditionally built predecessors.'

The buildings are commended for their good thermal qualities and the excellence of door and window fittings - one would expect this in this part of the USA - and for their acoustics and their general flexibility. The report does have some reservations about these particular buildings. Because of the attraction of the "package-deal" cost, ongoing maintenance costs appear to have been somewhat neglected; the timber cladding needs regular re-staining, and asbestos roof-tiles were used, which have a limited life. The absence of an architect, at the design stage, and for supervision later, means that individual parish requirements are difficult to incorporate, and there can be poor co-ordination of sub-contractors.

At least one of the Guildford churches had been erected by this time, and two were at least in the design stage. It is slightly surprising that the Chichester Group did not come to hear of these - at least, the Group makes no mention of Nye's work, the more so since Nye and the three Guildford parishes appear to have overcome the problems which the Group saw in the Massachusetts examples.

Three Bournemouth Churches:

1. St. George's, Oakdale, Poole. 1959/60, by Potter and Hare.

2. St. Thomas's, Barnes Road, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth. 1963/4.

3. St. Barnabas's, Mount Pleasant Drive, Bournemouth. 1968.

1. St. George's, Oakdale, Poole. (Illustrations; se Vol.3, p589)

St. George's Oakdale was built in 1959/1960, to the designs of Robert Potter and Richard Hare, as a replacement for a mission church, and to serve the growing population of Oakdale, an area of extensive new housing development on the edge of Poole.

The building is described at length in a booklet produced by the parish in 1969, which expresses much of the contemporary pastoral and architectural thought behind the design. It describes the building thus:

'GUIDE TO INTERIOR.'

'The first impact on the visitor is, as the architects intended, the centralisation of the altar and the focus of light on the sanctuary streaming inwards from the windows which surround it. Slightly raised above the floor level on a 24ft. x 20ft. island of reconstructed Portland stone, the altar is surrounded on three sides by communion rails and can be floodlit from both floor and roof. The furnishings are simple. Following ancient tradition, no cross appears on it, which allows the priest, should he so desire, to celebrate Holy Communion in the westward position. [This is now the normal practice here.] The simple beauty of the candlesticks repay careful study.'
'The symbolism of Baptism as the initiation of the newcomer to the Christian faith is maintained by the placing of the font in its traditional position at the west end, near to the main entrance. This font, of natural Portland stone with a spun aluminium cover is of complete simplicity and draws its beauty from the sheer grace of its design; a far cry from earlier days when beauty was held to be measured largely by the elaboration of ornamental detail.'

The parish now uses a moveable font for baptisms which are held once a month in the main service, so that the congregation can see the sacrament, without having to turn uncomfortably in the pews. This is becoming an increasingly common arrangement.

'An attractive helical staircase of reinforced concrete leads to the choir gallery and organ loft. ... The 22

pews seating 160 are, like the font, of a design which depends for its beauty upon its simplicity. They are of Afrormosia, a West African hardwood which was also used for the altar, the pulpit, which is portable, and the communion rails. The standard of craftsmanship seems to call for special comment and emphasizes the great truth that God can be worshipped by the work of men's hands, as well as by their lips. Indeed it has been said that no shoddy furniture could have come from the carpenter's shop in Nazareth.'

'NOVEL ROOF DESIGN.'

'The vaulted timber roof is of a novel design based on a series of cantilevered timber trusses free at the ridges resting on interior columns and tied down at the eaves with post-stressed reinforcement passing through the central mullions of the main windows. The complicated nature of the arrangement of the roof trusses, and the subsequent calculation of the stresses upon them, involved firstly the construction of a scale model in balsa wood and secondly the employment of an electronic computer at Southampton University. The interior of the roof is finished with cedar slatting behind which are the concealed floodlights which provide the main illumination. The spacing of thee slats, each one quarter of an inch apart, was the subject of special consideration by the architects, because upon such spacing the acoustical property of the interior largely depends.'

'The slender columns supporting the roof are of reinforced green marble aggregate, the colour of which is unobtrusively repeated in the random glazing of the windows.'

The green of the columns is also echoed in the green of the reconstituted stone panels beneath the windows.

'The effect of the triangles of slatted cedar springing as it were from the summit of these graceful columns has recalled to more than one visitor from overseas the palm trees of a sunnier climate.'

'MODERN APPROACH TO WORSHIP'

'The parish church of St. George's was completed in 1960 being consecrated ... on July 11th. At very first glance the building shows how far the thoughts of church designers have progressed to present the basic truth that the Christian faith is for the whole community to be practised by all as members of one family.'

'The location of the altar in the centre of the building is, perhaps, the first example to strike the eye. It has been almost universal practice that the spiritual centre of worship should be placed, often partially out of sight and hearing of the congregation, at the extreme east end of the church. This is a throwback to the days when the general

public were admitted to listen to, but to take no active part in, the services, and to listen from a distance usually separated from priests and choir by a heavy screen. In this twentieth century the central altar provides a physical as well as a spiritual focus for the worship of all attending.'

'The placing of the choir in the gallery is another instance of this approach. The idea is that their trained leadership of praise and thanksgiving flows past and through the congregation, carrying them with it.'

The choir has now been relocated to one side of the altar.

> 'The large clear windows, through which can be seen the oak tree, the playing field and the homes of the community, emphasize the truth that Christianity is not a religion to be practised in seclusion from the world, but is the strengthening power and driving force of everyday life and must be lived as such, not just for an hour or two in some consecrated building on Sundays, but everywhere, in all circumstances and all the time.'
>
> **'FABRIC AND STATISTICS.'**
>
> 'The architects, Messrs. Robert Potter and Richard Hare, achieved a design without a right angle anywhere. The nave tapers towards the west end, giving by ocular illusion, an impression of greater length when viewed from the east, and conversely, of greater width, when viewed from the west. The overall size of the church is 119 feet, by 57 feet and is designed to hold a congregation of about 300, although more than 500 have attended special services such as Mothering Sunday and Good Friday which have quickly established traditions.'
>
> 'The exterior of the building, with its 66-foot high tower, designed to carry a peal of six bells but housing only one, [now more?] is in conformity with modern trends being distinguished by sharply peaked eaves and large windows. Stone from the fabric of Salisbury Cathedral is incorporated in the south wall of the tower.'

The choir has been moved, in recent years, from the gallery to a position on the south side of the altar. In spite of the acoustic advantages of the position, the choir felt separated from the worshipping community, and small boys tended to misbehave during weddings. The present arrangement works well.

The church is contemporary with St. Paul's, Bow Common, and, like that, is a building specifically designed for the Parish Communion. St. George's recalls Coventry Cathedral, and, liturgically, achieves what Spence would have liked, but was unable to achieve there. The angles of the walls recall the 'zigzag' of Coventry, as does the faceted roof, supported on thin columns, which appear not quite to reach the floor. A striking feature of the building is the quality of the

materials and of the design; the cedar cladding to the interior of the roof - so superior to plaster board or ceiling tiles, the columns of green marble aggregate - which are cast with great skill and care, the high quality of brickwork and of the reconstituted stone used for the windows, the quality of timber and carpentry in the pews, altar and other fittings, the font, the staircase to the west gallery, and the quality of design of the whole. This produces a light open space - with views out to the trees and housing around, but the windows are not so low that worshippers are distracted by people walking around the perimeter of the church. The roof is clad, externally, in copper, and the tower, also with a distinctive copper-clad roof, and a cross on one face, is a feature in the townscape.

The principal Sunday Service is (in 1994) a 10am Parish Communion.

Built in 1959/60, St. George's is one of the earliest of the post-war Liturgical Movement churches in England. It is extremely well designed and executed, has lasted well, is well looked after, and works extremely well for worship. Although the more striking buildings of Maguire and Murray attracted the greatest publicity at the time, and greater comment since, the work of Potter and Hare is at, least equally successful, and deserves a more prominent place in the story of the Liturgical Movement churches than it has so far received.

2. St. Thomas's, Barnes Road, Ensbury Park, Bournemouth. 1963/4? (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p589)

St. Thomas's Church, Ensbury Park, was built by an incumbent who had moved from a curacy at St. George's, Oakdale, and is a reflection, albeit a pale reflection, of St. George's. In plan the building is rectangular, traditional in layout, and with pews in rows, aligned facing east. It has brick walls, large windows in reconstituted stone trimmed openings, and a shallow-pitched roof, clad in copper-faced felt. The woodwork is well-designed and even better executed, and the building works reasonably well for worship, but it lacks the architectural quality of St. George's.

3. St. Barnabas's, Mount Pleasant Drive, Bournemouth. 1968. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, p590)

This is an interesting essay in creating a multi-purpose complex. The building sits in the middle of a housing complex - part private, part local authority - and is sited on the edge of a steep slope. The site was the only one available at the time but, in spite of its awkward configuration and location - it is on the geographical edge of the parish - the architect created a striking building.

It is constructed on two levels; on the upper level, and entered roughly on the level from the road, is the worship area. This is constructed with a reinforced concrete frame,

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with brick and glazing infill; it is square in plan, set on the diagonal, with the altar set in the north-facing angle, and lit by tall windows. The altar is set on a low pace, and the seating, in the form of chairs, is set around the altar. The roof is of copper-clad felt, in parabolic form, and from the outside, and in particular from Castle Lane North - in effect a by-pass road - which runs below the church on the north, St. Barnabas's is a striking feature in the townscape.

At the lower level, and entered either by a steep flight of stairs from within the church, or by a steep path outside, is a general purpose room, designed initially as a coffee bar and youth club. The room itself has a high ceiling height, sufficient to accommodate the coffee bar area on a mezzanine. In the main area, in the corner beneath the altar, is a stage. This lower room is also of RC construction, with massive beams supporting the worship area above. In addition, the stage, and the mezzanine and associated steps, are also of reinforced concrete. The space must always have appeared somewhat inflexible; with the changing pattern of youth work the parish would like to open up the entire lower room but the use of concrete on such a scale makes this a very expensive proposition. In addition, the roof has given rise to considerable problems. These problems, and the location - the church is separated from much of the parish by Castle Lane North - place the future of the building in question.

It is an interesting example of a mid 1960s approach, architecturally, liturgically, and socially, and the worship area is pleasant and works well; without being overpowering, the building contributes to the visual interest of an otherwise rather dull area; and, as an example of RC construction the building merits regard, as does its neighbour, and near contemporary, the Bournemouth Bus Garage, which is a small version of the great Stockwell Garage in south London. Unfortunately, its disadvantages - the problems with its roof, and the inflexibility of the lower storey - make its future uncertain.

the size and character of the present building, to create a greater sense of 'togetherness' in worship, and to permit greater flexibility in worship. The accommodation in the crypt could be up-dated to be more generally useful. The proposal also suggested that the hall be demolished, and its site, together with other available land around the church, be used for housing, probably sheltered housing.

This is now being re-considered, and the influence of the new incumbent, may well lead to a longer period of consideration, while the parish works out its longer term strategy, in terms of worship, study fellowship, and outreach, and the consequent likely needs in terms of buildings. Certainly, at present, the parish is led by the character and needs of the building, and this state should, in time, be reversed.

St. John the Evangelist, Meads, Eastbourne.
(Illustrations; see Vol.3, p591)
For many centuries the area known as The Meads was a small hamlet, whose people were served by the old Parish Church of St. Mary, in what is now known as Old Town. The coming of the railway in 1849, and the consequent planned development of Eastbourne by the 7th Duke of Devonshire, brought a great increase in the population of the town, and The Meads, lying on a small hill on the west of the town, was well suited for residential development, and use for educational and convalescent institutions.

A site for a church was donated by the Duke, and an appeal for a church was launched in 1869. A church was built, at a cost of £5,500, in a Gothic style, to the design of a local architect, H. Ewan Rumble. The church was enlarged in 1896; a new, and larger, Church School was opened in 1899; the tower added in 1911, and the Church Hall, nearby, built in 1927. On 4th May 1942, the Church was bombed during an air raid and so badly damaged by fire that only the tower survived. The vicarage was also badly damaged, and for the next fifteen years, the church services were held in the very handsome and serviceable Church Hall.

In 1946 the Revd. Philip Richards became incumbent, of whom the small Guide Book to the church says:

> 'The building of the present church is owed in no small part to his dedication and perseverance in overcoming innumerable obstacles during the post-War years. The architect was Alexander E. Matthew who received much encouragement from the Bishop of Chichester - Dr. Bell.'

In the rebuilding, the surviving tower was retained, as a free-standing element. The church itself gives the impression that the intention was to rebuild the nineteenth century church, but in a restrained modern idiom. It is a large rectangle in plan, extending at the east into a slightly narrower chancel, and with low and narrow aisles to north and south. The layout is entirely traditional, with ranks of solid, and beautifully executed, pews, made of Iroko and

Beech, either side of a narrow centre aisle, all facing east. The chancel arch is flanked by the pulpit and lectern, with seats for the clergy beneath the arch, and the altar set almost against the east wall. There is a canopy above the altar, and the sanctuary is lit by tall windows to either side. Externally the church is faced in flintwork, with the window mullions in reconstituted stone. The one surprising element is the circular baptistry; this appears as a smaller version of that at Coventry Cathedral, but was apparently designed before that at Coventry was published.

The church sits very happily in its setting - against the old tower with its flint and stone dressings, against the sub-Butterfield vicarage, and among the late nineteenth century large houses of the area. Internally it is a light and spacious, and welcoming, building, well maintained and cared for, with the carefully-designed and beautifully-made furnishings, in fine quality timbers, so typical of the post-Festival of Britain era. The inhabitants of the parish - at least among those who attend the church - tend to be conservative in outlook. Whereas, in the years after the War, there was still a very large population of families, living in large houses, there is an increasing proportion here of retired people. This contrasts with the other two parishes I have looked at in Eastbourne. As a result, there seems little call - at present - for radical changes in the way the parish works and worships.

The parish has two principal services on Sundays, the Parish Communion at 9.30am, and Morning Prayer, according to the BCP, at 11am, with Evening Prayer, again BCP, at 6pm. There is a good deal of ministry to the elderly, with services in Nursing Homes and Hospitals, private and house communions, and services with the laying on of hands for healing.

This is a quite extraordinarily old-fashioned parish, and while the population of retired people is maintained, it seems likely that this pattern will continue to serve, at least for the foreseeable future. The present incumbent is only too aware of the degree to which the parish appears to be out of kilter with the experience and practice of many parishes today. This demonstrates, in an acute form, the particular nature of ministry in what is increasingly a retirement parish. As the work becomes increasingly changed to a ministry for the elderly, the present church, both in size, and in flexibility - or rather lack of flexibility - shows signs of becoming less suited to the ministry in the area.

One interesting point, raised by the incumbent, concerns the chapel at what will shortly become the redundant All Saints' Hospital, nearby. This hospital, which lies within the parish, was established in the late 1860s as a convalescent home, by Harriett Brownlow Byron, the founder, and first Mother Superior, of an Anglican community, the All Saints' Sisters of the Poor. The community took its name, and much of its impetus, from the parish of All Saints', Margaret Street. The architect was Henry Woodyer, and the Chapel, also designed by him, followed in 1874.

The chapel is a magnificent essay in Decorated style, recalling, in general form, the Sainte Chapelle, with patterned and multicoloured brick walls and a fine open timber roof. It comprises a nave and apsidal sanctuary, with a free-standing altar in a large, unobstructed sanctuary, and seating in the nave in the form of chairs. In spite of its strong architectural character, it offers surprising scope for flexibility for worship and other activities.

This chapel, which is, of course, listed, will shortly become redundant, along with the rest of the hospital. The incumbent of St. John the Evangelist did wonder whether it might be possible, sensible, and a good use of resources, to abandon the site of St. John's and sell it for residential development, and make the hospital chapel the centre for worship. This is certainly an idea with fascinating possibilities, and one which would make good use of a building for which permission for demolition is extremely unlikely to be given, and is eminently suited to its original purpose!

St. Richard of Chichester, Langney, Eastbourne.

St. Richard's Church serves an area to the east of Eastbourne, known as Langney Village. This is an area of housing which was first developed in the 1950s, and grew during the 1960s and 1970s. It is an area of traditional, two-storey housing, of which a substantial proportion was built by the local authority. The church lies at the southern edge of the area, but is easily reached from all parts of the parish, and does not suffer from the effects of any major road bisecting it. The oldest building in the parish is Langney Priory. This dates, in origin, from the early twelfth century, and for centuries lay at the centre of a scattered hamlet. The priory became a private residence at the time of the Dissolution, and remains so today. There still remains a Chapel in the complex, which was reopened for worship for the first time since the Dissolution on Christmas Day, 1953, to serve the needs of the growing housing area.

The congregation of the growing housing area worshipped in the chapel until 1957, when a small dual-purpose Church-cum-Hall was built. This was illustrated in the Architects' Journal for 20th November 1958, (p763). It was designed by H. Hubbard Ford, and is a modest building, with reinforced concrete trusses, in the form of a cruck frame, with a steeply pitched roof, and windows set at a low level. In scale, it sits happily with the housing around; distinctive in form, but modest in scale. It is, in effect, a 1950s variant of the small parish church, built to the design, and in the materials and structural system of the day. The building cost less than £10,000 - even then a very reasonable sum. As originally designed, the sanctuary could be curtained off from the remainder of the space.

Since then the church has remained in use as the church, the hall use been accommodated in a new hall, built in 1967, when a porch, cloister, western choir gallery, and an organ loft

were added to the church itself. The congregation continued to grow over the years, and a Lady Chapel was added in 1977, and St. Edmund's Chapel in 1986, to provide additional seating. The two chapels are in the form of aisles, to either side of the nave.

The principal Sunday Service is a 10am Parish Communion. There is a good range of activities, mainly centred around the young - Scouts and Guides and their younger branches, a Playgroup two mornings a week, and Whist on Tuesdays.

The church building appears to serve the present needs of the parish well. The building is not a 'Liturgical Movement' building but, because of its modest scale provides a sense of 'togetherness' which works well for the Parish Communion. The complex of buildings has grown steadily over the years to accommodate the growing congregation, and has followed the needs of the Church, rather than providing it with accommodation which it had to grow to fill, or which determined the pattern of use. Equally, because of its modest size, its maintenance does not provide too great a task for the congregation. In a simple and unobtrusive way, it works well, and provides a happy example of a successful relationship between the congregation and its building.

Churches in Vienna. (Illustrations; see Vol.3, pp592-595)

Finally, I turn to a group of churches in Vienna which illustrate the radical architectural approach and the whole-hearted acceptance of the principles of the Liturgical Movement, found in the Catholic Church on the Continent. They also illustrate the importance of good detailing, a good specification, good supervision, and good maintenance, in achieving a building which 'works'.

Influence of Schwarz, and his church in Matzleinsdorf, Vienna.

One of the the most influential figures on architects in Post-War Britain was the German architect, Rudolf Schwarz. Schwarz himself was a thoroughgoing modernist, and used modern materials, or traditional materials in a non-traditional way, to produce buildings which looked like anything but a 'proper' church. Much of Schwarz's work is found in northern Germany, and especially in Cologne which underwent a great deal of rebuilding after war damage. It was to northern Germany, and to France and Switzerland that the Birmingham Institute went on its influential tours, which provided inspiration for so many of the architects and clergy involved in Post-War church building.

Vienna has a long architectural tradition of innovation and boldness, found today, for example, in the Haas Haus and the work of Hundertwasser; its suburban churches built in the 1960s by Austrian architects are well within that tradition. They offer striking examples of churches designed for the Liturgical Movement, and built in modern materials, in a thoroughgoing modern manner.

Schwarz's church of St. Florian, in Wiedner Hauptstrasse, in the Viennese suburb of Matzleinsdorf, is a particularly striking example of his work. The old church was destroyed in bombing raids by the Allies in September 1944 and August 1945. The old church stood in the middle of the road; its replacement was built, in 1961/63, to one side, allowing for road improvements, and is a plain rectangular box, with rectangular aisles to either side, built with an exposed reinforced concrete frame, and glazing set in concrete. The frame itself is expressed externally, and internally, in a striking, angular and geometric pattern. The starkness of the building is seen by the present priests as a welcome contrast to the distracting character of Austrian Baroque.

Perhaps the best known of the Viennese post-war churches is the so-called 'Wotrubakirche', the Church of the Holy Trinity, on the Georgenberg, to the southwest of the city, on the edge of the suburb of Maurer. Designed by Fritz Wotruba in 1965, and completed in 1976, to Wotruba's design, by the architect Fritz Mayr, it is an abstract sculptural essay in concrete. It gives the impression of a giant Sculpture, in the Constructivist manner, rather than a shelter for the people of God. Bold and uncompromising, Mannerist, and self-indulgent, are also terms which spring to mind. The Wotrubakirche is

not a parish church, and this may well account for the distinctive character of the building.

The Church of Christ the King (Christkönigskirche) in Potzleinsdorf (Schafberggasse 2) was built in 1963 to provide a new church for the growing suburb of Potzleinsdorf. The old village, with a few houses either side of the road, and a small eighteenth century church, still survives, a kilometre up the road. The new church was built in the centre of the new suburb, overlooking the tram terminus. It was designed by Professor Karl Schwanze in what is described in the Diocesan handbook as the 'practical-functional' style, typical of the 60s. It is trapezoidal in plan, with a reinforced concrete frame; much of the walling comprises hollow clay pot, but the (liturgical) west wall, fronting a forecourt and carparking area, is glazed. The glazing is set between stanchions formed of RSJs, with the entrance doors designed as jib doors; i.e. formed as part of the steel and glass structure, and not immediately obvious. The building is a striking example of the bold and effective use of modern materials, to a high standard, and well maintained. It seems to work well for worship although, as I was gently reminded by a parishioner, it is the people who make the Church!

The Church of the Good Shepherd (Zum Guten Hirten) at the foot of the Rote Berg in the suburb of Unter St. Veit (Bossigasse 68), was built in the early 60s by the partnership of Professor Ceno and the engineer Herta Kosak. It has the form of an upturned boat, with an asymmetrical plan, and is constructed entirely - walls and roof - of reinforced concrete. Apart from two wedge-shaped windows flanking the sanctuary, all the other windows are small openings, punched in the concrete walls. As a result, the interior has a 'dim religious light', with attention drawn towards the altar in a rather theatrical manner.

The third parish church, the Konzilsgedächtniskirche, in the suburb of Lainz-Speising ((Lainzerstrasse 138), was built to the designs of the Innsbruck architect Josef Lackner. The bunker-like building looks for all the world like a symbolic representation of Luther's great hymn, 'Ein feste burg ist unser Gott', but that seems unlikely for a church built for the Order of Jesuits! It is square in plan, built of reinforced concrete, with a flat roof, and is lit by continuous glazing around the perimeter of the roof, and a roof-light in the centre. The external concrete of these last two churches shows remarkably little staining or discoloration; it is well maintained, and gleams in the sunshine. The contrast with, for example, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, is striking.

All three parish churches are planned, of course, with the altar as the focus, and with the congregation 'gathered around'. They are notable for their thorough-going use of modern materials, employed and detailed to a high standard, and well maintained. However, in contrast to the majority of churches I have examined in England, none appears to be in an area of high deprivation and alienation.

Conclusion.

Conclusion.

1. Introduction

In the course of carrying out the research for this study, I have visited some 70 churches; 19 in Manchester diocese, 26 in Birmingham diocese, 11 in Coventry diocese, 10 elsewhere in the country, and a number elsewhere in Europe, as the opportunity presented itself. I do not claim to have visited every church building erected during this period in the three dioceses - indeed, some have not survived - but I judge that I have visited by far the greater proportion, and sufficient to make useful judgements about the church-building of the period.

When I first envisaged this study, I intended that it would be an examination of the buildings, looked at within the context of the mission of the Church. As the work of research proceeded, the matter of the mission of the Church, and in particular the manner in which individual parishes, at particular points in their history, viewed their mission, assumed priority, and the buildings became subsidiary to that mission. The balance of the work changed.

In the process of examining these churches and parishes, I have reached a number of conclusions, which I shall discuss in this concluding section.

(i) Misconceptions.

The great flood of church building, accompanied to a large degree by the formation of new parishes, is a distinctive feature in the life of the Church of England in the twenty-five years following the end of the Second World War. It is characterised, in the public mind, by a vision of churches which "don't look like churches", with roofs which leak, with strange acoustics, strange internal arrangements, and which you wouldn't want your daughter to get married in!

This perception applies, to a large degree, not only to those whose familiarity with the Church is limited to the occasional "rites-of-passage" visit, but also to very many committed members of the Church. For very many churchgoers, most of their experience of attendance at church is limited to one church, in one parish, often over a long period of time, and while they may be familiar with the character, problems, and merits of one church, they do not have the advantage of the wider view.

This judgement on the post-war period is, of course, an over-simplification; indeed, a parody. The period is one of great importance in the history of the Church in England; it is a period of experimentation, and while some experiments - some individual buildings - did not work, or did not work very well, the lessons learned have influenced the Church, greatly to its benefit, in the succeeding years.

(ii) The six years of the Second World War brought about a pause in the life of the country, which affected civic life, particularly in regard to urban planning and the provision of public housing, and the life of the Church, particularly in regard to the general approach to the provision of new church buildings. The subsequent 25 years, from 1945 to 1970, was a relatively short period, within which great changes came about, both in the form and appearance of church buildings, in the pattern of worship and activity which was carried out within the buildings, in the liturgical layout of church buildings, in the range of functions which the buildings had to accommodate, and in the relationship between the architect and his client, the Parochial Church Council.

In the decade preceding the War the large conurbations were involved in the building of new housing estates - greatly influenced by the Garden City Movement - and the Church was involved alongside the local authorities in providing new churches in the new parishes. This is typified by the story of St. Luke the Physician, Benchill, Wythenshawe, Manchester, which began life in a farmhouse, moved to a wooden hut, before moving into its completed church just before the outbreak of War.

The War brought the housing programme to a halt; it also produced a pause in the Church's church-building programme, giving an opportunity for fresh thinking and planning. Experimental, or, at least, non-traditional churches were built in the 1930s in England, particularly by Cachemaille-Day and Bernard Miller. The designs and concepts were essentially architect-driven, and based on buildings of the Modern Movement in Continental Europe.

After the War, the housing programme was resumed, impelled by a sense of idealism, which permeated much of central and local government thinking. The Church shared in this idealism, and often worked in close partnership with the local authority in establishing new parishes and sites for new churches. Local authority and Church alike suffered from the shortage of materials and manpower in implementing their building schemes, and - as exemplified in Coventry - turned to new techniques and building systems to meet the challenges.

For the Church, in the years immediately after the end of the War. there was a period of rapid and substantial reassessment and change, in its approach to the task of establishing new parishes, and providing buildings for the parishes. Within the Church, although the architects still drew much of their inspiration from architects working in Continental Europe - particularly France, Germany and Switzerland, there was a fresh understanding of the theological and pastoral basis which underpinned the work abroad, and the new churches in England were now driven primarily by theology and by pastoral and liturgical concerns. The impetus for these changes came from within the Church itself, from visionary priests, aided by visionary and sympathetic architects, with a new perception of the rôle of Christians within their parish, and the way their building should serve them.

The programme of church building in the immediate post-war years falls roughly into two parts. The first tranche of building took place during the 1950s, overlapping into the sixties; at this time many churches displayed, in architectural terms, the influence of the Festival of Britain, but the formation of the parish itself - if it was a new housing area, the size of the church, and its general internal layout, reflected a pattern which had obtained for the previous half century and more. As the new thinking in the Church - expressed particularly in the work of the Birmingham Institute and the writings of Peter Hammond - began to make itself felt, more and more churches were built recognizing the the importance of the Liturgical Movement, and the importance of working to a proper brief, which itself depended on the ability of the congregation to understand what they were supposed to be doing in the parish, and what was required of the building.

I incline to the view that the turning point is marked by the church of St. George, Oakdale, Poole, in Dorset, of 1959/60, by Potter and Hare, and by 1970, the end of the period under examination, the majority of new churches reflected contemporary trends in design and construction, the strong influence of the liturgical movement, and the provision of multi-purpose complexes to meet new needs.

(iii) The changing rôle of the architect, and relationship to the client.

Perhaps the most important change in church building at this time was the change which came about in the rôle of the architect, and in his relationship with the client, whereby the initiative was removed from the architect, and placed it firmly in the hands of the parish. This is an approach which is now commonplace.

The old approach is described by Bernard Miller when he speaks of the need to:

> 'plan imaginatively a building possessive of atmosphere, .. arising naturally from the deepest religious sensibilities of the designer; reverent, universal and enduring in its appeal.'

This seems to be the 'pictorial approach' that Peter Hammond condemned, and was characteristic of a time when, often, the only guidance for the architect from the parish came in a few vague hints from the incumbent, in the course of a slightly 'wandering' discussion. This survived into the early post-war years, illustrated by the experience at Christ Church, Cheylesmore, Coventry, in 1958, when the Bishop spoke of a church which would last 400 or 500 years, which would 'represent the Church of England' .. 'the honour of the diocese was involved', or St. Paul's, Bordesley Green, as late as 1968, whose parishioners still complain that they were told that 'the architect knows best'.

The shift in approach, whereby the parishioners decide what they are supposed to be doing in the parish, and what sort of accommodation they need for the purpose, is well illustrated by the wealth of information about St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby, and even more about St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, and Sts. Philip and James, Hodge Hill, Birmingham, which I have discussed at length, both in the main Thesis, and in the Appendices.

(iv) Do the buildings, erected in the Post-war era, serve the needs of the Church today? The task of providing church buildings for a parish is always somewhat hazardous, since parishes are subject to change, as people move in and out of the area, as people die, as populations grow or decline, and change in social character, it is virtually impossible to provide a building - or complex of buildings - which will serve the needs of a parish precisely, at periods separated by three or four decades. However, it is possible, with prudence, forethought and imagination to do better rather than worse.

The question as to whether the 'buildings work' also raises the more general question of the rôle of buildings in the functioning of society. I am conscious that this topic deserves several theses in its own right; however, I venture a few comments.

Buildings are important, and do contribute to our wellbeing, or to our detriment, but their contribution, their usefulness, or otherwise, and their meaning, depends on the context both within which they were built, and within which they are used today. Many churches of the latter part of the nineteenth century were built in the belief that, if one provided the buildings, people would fill them. The tower blocks of the post-war public housing boom were provided in the belief that better buildings would permit society to function better, and people to live 'better' lives. Indeed, Wythenshawe estate was planned and built in this belief.

It doesn't quite work like this. People change, and society changes, and what served at one time, and in one social situation, does not serve when things change. Visiting estates in Birmingham and Manchester, on a sunny day, can create an illusion of a community at peace with itself. This is, all too often, an illusion, and addressing the problems raised by trying to create a stable society is one which would have better engaged the resources of those who wish to celebrate the year 2000, rather than building a stately Pleasure Dome.

One curiosity in the rôle played by buildings is the growth in the perception of buildings as 'cultural objects'. This, I suggest, has been greatly advanced by the growth of Conservation and Amenity Groups, and, officially, by the process of Listing. Parishes such as those of St. Nicholas, Burnage, and the William Temple Memorial Church, Wythenshawe, have embraced the idea that their building is of cultural

importance, and at St. Nicholas a great deal of effort and money has been spent in restoring the church building. I find that this conception of the building as 'cultural object' sits uneasily with the rôle of the People of God in the area - to be Christ among their fellows - and I question the appropriateness of giving this primacy to the building.

Types of church building provided

The church building programme of the immediate post-wars years provided a wide range of buildings; the fact that some, intended to be temporary, still survive and are used, and others, intended to be monuments, are in danger of disappearing, only demonstrates the general uncertainty - the unknown - in planning for the future. The initial provision of buildings was of halls, or dual-purpose buildings, many of which still survive, although not always recognised as such. Many of these were intended to serve as temporary buildings; their survival, often providing useful accommodation, demonstrates the uncertainty of long term planning. The provision of permanent buildings took a variety of forms, often dependent on the rôle assigned to the parish in the diocesan plan. Some were simple structures, provided as inexpensively as possible, of which the Spence churches in Coventry are a good example, as are those by Denys Hinton in Birmingham. Following this are the modest, village-scale churches, such as St. Barnabas, Kingshurst. The next group are those churches designed to stand as large churches in important parishes - a prospect which was not always realised. They were conceived as being major buildings, continuing the traditional concept of the parish church, and they were often designed as architectural reinterpretations of the late nineteenth century parish church, but in contemporary architectural dress. Finally, there are the experimental churches of the Liturgical Movement and of the concept of the Multi-Purpose church. The categorisation of individual churches is, inevitably, somewhat arbitrary, and examples may fall into more than one category.

The most successful buildings seem to be those which were built with sufficient flexibility to cope with changing needs and patterns of activity. This flexibility is enhanced if the building does not have so strong an architectural character that that character forever dominates the occupants of the building and their use of it.

(v) Merits and disadvantages in the structure and detail of the building.

A most useful source of information has proved to be the Quinquennial Inspection Reports. They include not only detailed comments about condition, necessary repairs, and repairs carried out since last time, but often, more general comments about the usefulness, or otherwise, of a building, and the care, or otherwise, exercised by the parishioners. The Reports are not always readily available. Manchester diocese keeps a central register, in the Diocesan Office, but elsewhere it is a matter of asking each individual parish for

a copy, which is not always readily available or forthcoming. However, there is clearly scope here for the compilation of detailed studies of the usefulness, and 'wearability' of types of buildings and types of construction.

Factors associated with the physical nature of the church building.

Finance was, of course, a major constraint in the building of new churches. Where the need for economy was turned to advantage, by providing simple, relatively low-cost, structures, these have often proved surprisingly successful; where economy was gained at the expense of the quality of the roof - disaster awaited!

The building may have constructional weaknesses, which render maintenance excessively expensive, or may even lead to such major structural failures that demolition is the only sensible solution. Expanding iron cramps in walls, and faulty joints in roof systems - as at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral - are major hazards.

The use of reinforced concrete enabled new and exciting shapes and forms to be created; it also brought with it a number of hazards. Its use for flat roofs, and especially when there was inadequate maintenance, brought major problems, which sometimes were solved only by demolition, but when it works well - as in the interior structure of St. George's, Oakdale, Poole, or in the Roman Catholic cathedral at Clifton, Bristol, or in the churches in Vienna I have described, it can be quite stunning.

Flat roofs generally give rise to problems, as do roofs with a shallow pitch and too-large valleys. Flat roofs over secondary areas, such as porches, vestries, aisles, etc., seem always to require constant and annoying maintenance.

Comments in a recent Quinquennial Inspection Report on the Ascension, Hulme, are telling: 'The fact that the buildings were not skimped pays off and shows', and the result is a complex which is warm, dry and easy to clean and maintain. Again, the high standard of detailed design and execution, and subsequent maintenance of the Viennese churches I have described, illustrate this point.

The general planning and layout of the building can result in features such as size or disposition of accommodation in a form which no longer serves the needs of the parish. Some churches were built with an over-optimistic expectation of the size of congregation. In other instances, an interior which is too closely tailored to, and too solidly built for, the pattern of worship and activity of one particular period can be equally difficult and inflexible. This is, of course, significant in the case of buildings designed, albeit in the mid-twentieth century, for a late-nineteenth century pattern of worship, but it can be equally true of buildings designed in the early years of the Liturgical Movement.

However, constructional problems can usually be solved by the application of sufficient money, and problems of planning can often be solved, if the will and the imagination is there. Even when a building has structural faults or weaknesses, or is planned in a manner which was becoming out-of-date when it was built, it can still serve the needs of the congregation if their expectation of what the building should provide matches, or can cope with, what it does provide. Whether the building works, depends to a large extent on what you expect of it.

(vi) The problem of the parish system, and the over-large church.

Churches built with an over-optimistic expectation of the size of congregation, and with an architectural form and layout based on late nineteenth century precedents, provide the single largest group of buildings which fail their parishes.

Demographic changes - quite outside the control of the Church - have made many of the over-large buildings redundant. The majority of the new parishes, and new churches, were established in new housing estates, on the outer edge of the area served by the local authority. At the time - the 1950s in particular - these estates provided the only source of new housing. The demographic changes which have taken place in these estates, and their changed character today - as I have described in relation to estates such as Langley and Withington, in Manchester - have resulted in significant changes to the way the Church perceives its rôle in these areas, and consequently on the demands placed on the buildings of the local parishes.

These demographic changes, resulting from the movement out from the estates of those with initiative and subsequent local authority housing policies for re-housing on the estates, have resulted in the estates becoming areas of deprivation and alienation. Parishes which were established with the aim of developing into traditional parishes, with a strong element of working-class and lower middle class, have instead become missionary areas for the Church, where the middle-class norms of parish life are inapplicable. Work in these parishes today requires skills, initiatives, and perseverance, which make the original task of building a parish in a new area relatively straightforward.

This problem is exacerbated by the Church of England parochial system. If churches were distributed on a basis that the area which they served could provide a large enough congregation to fill the building, and fund it, then many building problems would be capable of solution. Churches are not distributed on this basis. There is a 'given-ness' whereby, under the parish system, a building exists in an area, with a particular population, by the accidents of history; even if the building once provided adequate space and a type of accommodation which served the needs of the parish, changing demographic patterns, and changes of understanding of the Church's rôle in society and of its

worship and activity, and natural decay of a building, may well mean that it no longer serves. It may well not have served very well, in the first place.

However even over-large churches can 'work', particularly if the internal furnishings - especially the seating - are flexible enough to permit the interior to be used for a number of purposes, and the parish, and incumbent demonstrate imagination. Then, a large space can be a considerable advantage.

(vii) Making buildings work - the perception of the building by the parish.

One might expect that a church building which is grossly too large for the congregation, suffering major structural collapse, or totally inflexible and unable to be adapted for present patterns of worship and activity, would be rejected by the parishioners. **I have been surprised at the extent to which a congregation will cope with a difficult building.**

This seems to arise from a number of factors. First, there is an element of conservatism, and the inclination to stick with what you know, and with what is familiar. This includes the tendency to resist changes within the pattern of worship and activity. Secondly, the task of dealing with such a problem is both complex and expensive. If you are going to carry out major changes, you have to decide what you are going to do in the changed buildings, and what your needs are. Once this has been analysed, the task of implementing the changes always - at least at first sight - seems to require a sum of money which is quite beyond the ability of the parish to raise.

There is therefore a sense in which, provided nothing important actually falls down, the building serves the needs of its congregation. This may well say more about the poverty of vision of the congregation, than about the usefulness of the buildings.

Whether the building works, or not, depends on what you want of it.

With imagination and initiative, it is possible to make the most unlikely buildings come to life. A building may work today, but it may be a hindrance a few years hence; equally, a building may be a hindrance today, but useful a few years hence. The problem, of course, is that one does not know what the future holds. I have been surprised sometimes at the approach - half visionary, half pragmatic - of some incumbents who have created eminently useful accommodation out of unpromising material. St. Thomas's, Garrett's Green, Birmingham, and St. Chad's, Wood End, Coventry, come to mind. St. Luke's, Benchill, Manchester, about which I wrote a rather depressing report as a result of my visit in 1994, has 'turned round'; the roof has been repaired, the interior painted, and - most significantly - there is a wide range of work being

carried out in connection with the parish, in conjunction with a number of non-Church agencies, and money from a range of sources.

It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of the place of visionary and imaginative leadership in the parish.

(viii) The most successful of the post-war churches.

The prophets were right. Those who had the vision to anticipate the future rôle of the Church enunciated a number of principles:

First, the Church needed to look again at its roots to discover the source of its vision, and once again to place the Eucharist, and the events it commemorates, at the centre of worship and of Church life;

Second, the buildings were there to serve the Church, not vice-versa, and therefore their planning and design should spring from an understanding of the function of the Church in that area, i.e. a proper brief, based on consultation within the parish, should be the basis for the architect;

Third, there should be flexibility, both within the worship area, and within the church complex, to allow for the development of functions, ranging from experiments in worship to lunch clubs and Credit Unions, which we do not yet know about; and,

Fourth, don't skimp, build well; it is better to take it slowly, and build a little and well, than something vast with a leaky roof.

The most successful of the churches are those which followed some, and preferably all, of these principles.

A number of architects and forward thinking priests had the ability to achieve successful solutions, by a mixture of humility to listen to the parish, obstinacy to stand out against the traditionalists and the diocese, and sheer ability in creating a good building!

The work of Robert Potter and Richard Hare is notable; at St. George's, Oakdale, they created a building which, while in the idiom of the Festival of Britain, has a quality of design and material, a lack of fussiness, and a quality of space for worship, which transforms what, in other hands, is pedestrian, into one of the first Liturgical Movement churches in England.

The work of Denys Hinton, from St. Richard's, Lea Hall and St. Michael and All Angels', South Yardley, to St. George's, Hillmorton, Rugby, and leading to the successful derivatives such as St. Stephen's, Astley, and St. Mark's, Kingstanding, show his skill, and that of those he inspired, to create effective and flexible worship spaces, employing variations on a simple brick box.

The work of the Birmingham Institute, not least in organizing visits to France and Germany, inspired a number of architects to reinterpret what they experienced for this country. Their work includes St. Peter's, Hall Green; St. David's, Shenley Green; St. John's, Flixton; St. Chad's, Limeside; and St. John and St. Mary's, Camp Hill, Nuneaton. I would also include here the two very different essays by George Pace in Manchester, St. Mark's, Chadderton and the William Temple Memorial Church, Wythenshawe.

Two churches I examined, in Birmingham diocese, St. Matthew's, Perry Beeches, by Maguire and Murray, and St. Philip and St. James, Hodge Hill, by the Birmingham Institute and the Birmingham School of Architecture, were the subject of most discussion, comment, and architectural acclaim at the time they were built. As to St. Matthew's, the smaller, and less assertive buildings by Denys Hinton, and by other, less well-known architects, are at least as effective in meeting the needs of the parish, and - without the height of building - are easier to maintain. As to Hodge Hill, the multi-purpose worship space may be theoretically and theologically sound, but it still feels uncomfortable, and the later complexes at St. George's, Newtown, St. Andrew's, Chelmsley Wood, the smaller Christ Church, Brownsover, Rugby; and The Ascension, Hulme, seem more welcoming, more generally useful, and more effective.

Finally, a number of modestly built structures, sometimes of a quasi-temporary nature, serve surprisingly well, providing the right size and mix of accommodation for the parish for its present needs, and without requiring an excessive amount of time or money to be spent on repair and maintenance. Examples include St. Chad's, Erdington; St. Stephen the Martyr, Rednal; the Basil Spence churches in Coventry; St. Mark's, Blackley; the churches by David Nye, in Guildford diocese, and St. Richard of Chichester, Eastbourne.

(vi) The underlying significance of the programme of church building during this period is that it enabled the Church of England to break free from the strait-jacket of what Don Cupitt has called the 'medieval theme-park' into which the Church plunged a century and a half ago. It enabled the Church to give itself permission - as it were - to experiment in order to find new ways to respond to a changing world.

The curious feature of the Church in the latter half of the nineteenth century was that while Biblical criticism and Darwin began the long - and still incomplete - process of rethinking the understanding of both the Bible and theology, in architecture the Church moved firmly backwards.

The Oxford Movement, in the 1830s, provided a fresh insight into the rich heritage of the Faith, and provided a necessary antidote to Church life of the late Georgian era. However, the influence of the antiquarian-biased Cambridge Camden Society, with its emphasis on that heritage as expressed in the physical appearance of the church building, came to have a stultifying effect on the life of the Church, as deadening in

its way as that of the late Georgian Church, which the Oxford Movement sought to remedy.

This re-introduction of permission to experiment is more significant for the future of the Church than any individual building. Certainly, individual buildings mark the experiments and evolution of thought of the time - they illustrate the ferment which was taking place; but asserting the primacy of pastoral and liturgical needs, rather than architectural fashion or antiquarianism, and placing responsibility for the buildings back with the local Church community, with the architect as its servant, opens the way to more radical changes for which a rapidly changing world is likely to call.

It is not surprising that, when a large number of churches are built in a short span of time, and in a period of experiment in architecture and ferment in religious thought, some of the churches have had major faults, and some were overly backward-looking; in general terms, in their contribution to the Church's understanding of its rôle in society, and of the contribution that its buildings make to the fulfilment of that rôle, the churches of the immediate post-war years have been a great success.

The experience of the post-war years has helped the Church to break away from the straight-jacket of the romantic historicism of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of this; it has helped church people, and the population in general, to become accustomed to church buildings of a new type and appearance; it has led the Church to re-assess the way in which the planning and design of church buildings is approached and changed the relationship between the architect and the Church as client; and it has opened the way to a continuing re-assessment of the rôle of the Church and the part played by its buildings. There is no certainty that the church buildings of the future will resemble those being built today, but there is every reason to think that they will be planned with greater freedom and flexibility to meet whatever patterns of worship and activity emerge.

6. Final thoughts.

At the beginning of this study I quoted David Lodge:

'Every encoding is a de-coding'.

Every analysis, every attempt to find meaning, is inevitably influenced by the cultural context.

I think one has to accept that those responsible for the planning, designing, and building of the churches of the immediate post-war era did their best by their lights, and made the decisions they thought were right, based on the factors before them. That we can see that some decisions could have been better is the benefit of hindsight. There

were those, of course - whom I have called the prophets - who spoke out, said 'hold on, we can do this better'; as so often, we can now see that, while the prophets may not have right in every aspect, their ideas have worn better, and have provided buildings which have been more useful, for a longer period, than those they condemned. While it is possible to assess the usefulness of buildings, it is, of course, a great deal more difficult to say to what extent the other side of the prophets' ideas - the spiritual message of the Liturgical Movement and the message of Reconciliation and Redemption, and of being Christ in the community - has been effective in people's lives.

Important and influential as the Liturgical Movement was, at the time, in determining the design of many of the churches, the concept of a multi-purpose complex has proved at least as significant, and the lessons learned can now be seen in both new churches and the re-ordering of older ones. The provision of a liturgical space, where all can feel themselves participants, is commonplace, and often done with immense skill and imagination. This is often combined with flexibility in the liturgical space, so that music and drama can be used. Equally, the provision of a range of ancillary spaces, for a variety of uses, is commonplace. However, the concept of multi-purpose provision, within one space, has not proved to be a precedent to be followed. The idea that the parish should be fully involved in the preparation of a brief, and that they should look at other examples to see what works, is now commonplace. Lessons have clearly been learned from the experience of the post-war years, both in terms of what works for a parish, and what doesn't, but especially in the means of tackling the task of creating a building to serve the needs of the parish.

It did seem, in the immediate post-war years, that the emphasis of the Liturgical Movement would help to erode the polarity between the Evangelical and High Church wings of the Anglican Church, and that a new, sacrament-centred, way forward could help to reduce the old antipathies. The comment by Michael Jones-Frank, in the May/June 1998 issue of Church Building, that:

> 'There is a growing awareness that the full implications of the liturgical renewal have not, as yet, been implemented on the ground'

is relevant here, although many of us have thought this for the last thirty years or so. Surprisingly, the evangelical movement has acquired greater strength, and is the most rapidly growing area of the Church today, although it is also clear that the Anglo-Catholic movement is finding new ways forward, particularly in the deprived areas of the Outer Estates. Moreover, what, half a century ago or so, would have been called Modernism is acquiring a new impetus through the Sea of Faith. Although the Sea of Faith is not large in numbers, the number of those who share its questioning approach is surprisingly large, and one has to wonder how long

the rigidity of approach of the Evangelical wing will maintain its impetus.

As for the usefulness of these buildings today, one has to bear in mind that the cultural and social context is vastly different. In particular, the primacy given, in the immediate post-war years, to the rôle of architecture - that good architecture contributes to a healthy society - is seen to be an over-simplification, and the assumption that parish life would continue in the latter half of the century as it had existed for the first half was perceived, early on, to be unwarranted. In spite of the well laid out estates of the outer ring of Birmingham, or Wythenshawe at Manchester, we have not discovered how to create a society - particularly an urban society - without alienation, where people are able to live and contribute to the quality of each other's lives.

The purpose of religion is to answer the questions; Who am I, and What is my relationship to my fellows? The understanding of those questions was different, forty years ago, from what it is today; indeed, we may be a good deal less certain that we know the answers, or even understand the problems, today. The speed of change in culture and society seems unlikely to abate - if anything it will increase - and in forty years time, the Church could well be very different again. The lessons of that immediate post-war era; that the building should serve the needs of its users, that monuments to last half a millennium no longer have a place, that flexibility is required, and that quality in a building works, will still apply, and will help the Church to function, in whatever form it takes, whatever pattern of worship and activity it undertakes.

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" " " Church Building " Ditto
Quinquennial Inspection Reports Ditto.
Parish pamphlets, historical notes, etc., - Incumbent's office.

Birmingham Diocese
Minutes of Diocesan Reorganisation Cttee - City Archives
Parish Boxes (parish papers lodged for safekeeping) - Ditto
Quinquennial Inspection Reports - Incumbent's office.
Parish pamphlets, historical notes, etc., - ditto

Coventry Diocese
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