

Parish of Basingstoke

St Michael's Church



Reports from St Michael's Organisations

St Michael's AGM

10th April 2011

registered charity no. 1133775

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1) RECTOR'S REPORT

RECTOR'S REPORT

My Rector's Report this year gives a perspective on my own wider ministry as well as our work at St Michael's.

St Michael's 500th Anniversary

2010 was a tremendous year for St Michael's and it was a real privilege to see the great burst of energy and activity in our 500th anniversary celebrations. So many people gave skills, enthusiasm and commitment to help realise our themes of Thanksgiving, Heritage and Community as we marked the 500th anniversary of the rebuilding of the tower and nave. There are too many people to thank by name, but it was a wonderful experience to work together with you all. As the events gathered momentum we found a sense of greater engagement with the town and were touched by the affection in which St Michael's is held by local people. We continue to work on forward-looking plans to serve our community and to invite people to build a relationship with God. Our challenge lies in finding ways for more church members to share in the Monday-Saturday life of St Michael's as well as in all that is offered in Sunday worship. Visually St Michael's public face was enhanced by the new external notice board and by refreshed notice boards and information for visitors in church. There is still more to do in this area, and particularly in improving our first point of contact, the Church Office and Pastoral Centre.

Ministry

It was good to have Margaret Gray from the Whitewater Benefice on placement with us in February and March as part of her Reader training. In the Winchester Diocese there is an increasing recognition of the great contribution made by Readers, and we are immensely fortunate to have both Alan and Mike, whose gifts and creativity enrich the ministry here.

In June we welcomed Bishop Peter (as Bishop of Basingstoke designate) when his appointment was announced at a press conference in St Michael's. It was a real joy that he was consecrated as bishop just in time to preside over the Festival Eucharist at the end of our 500th anniversary celebrations. In July I completed the seven years of ministry for which I was originally licensed to the Team Ministry, and the Bishop of Winchester agreed to renew my licence. On 31st January 2011 a new system came into effect to give clergy "common tenure", putting clergy appointments on a slightly different basis and removing the fixed term licenses.

At the end of the year, following a period of ill health, The Revd Martin Quayle took up a placement in a benefice in the Alton Deanery to support his further development in ministry. Thanks were expressed to Martin for his contribution to St Michael's and a card was sent wishing him and Fiona well for the future.

Team Ministry

The Team Parochial Church Council has worked hard in 2010 on fulfilling the requirements of our registration with the Charity Commission. This has meant something of a shift to seeing ourselves as one parish (our legal reality) and drawing our work together, whilst also encouraging the individual identity and flourishing of each of the five churches. We have been particularly challenged in the area of financial reporting and the six treasurers have worked very hard and very well together.

Beyond St Michael's

It is important that I report to St Michael's on some of the ways in which I serve the wider church and community in addition to my leadership of this church. I balance my responsibilities as Team Rector with other commitments. As a governor at the University of Winchester I am a member of the University Standing Committee, and chair the Foundation Committee (which sustains and promotes the Christian foundational values of the university). I also give a little time as an honorary canon of Winchester Cathedral to serve on one of the Cathedral Advisory groups, looking at the relationship of the Cathedral with the diocese and its role within the county.

My experience in leading ministry teams and as a training incumbent is offered to the church in two roles, one of which is new to me in 2010. I continue to meet candidates prior to selection for ministry in my capacity as an Examining Chaplain and in May, after a nomination from Bishop Michael, I undertook training as a Bishops' Advisor for Selection. This role involves taking part in the national selection conferences for candidate for ordained ministry, with one or two weeks of residential work per year.

Thanks

I am enormously grateful to Sue Irvine and Ian Wheatley, the Churchwardens, and to Stephen Leach, DCC Secretary, for their support, and the wisdom and care they have given me, especially in this past very challenging year. I would like to thank Ian for his prayerful and encouraging leadership, as he stands down from the role of Churchwarden. Thanks also to Martin Irvine for so many years of quietly dedicated application to the demanding role of St Michael's Church Treasurer.

St Michael's daily life and work is underpinned by the vital role of the Church Office and Shelagh Kavanagh's skill in handling both administrative and pastoral tasks in such an effective and caring way. In thanking Shelagh I should also like to thank Sue Irvine and Pauline Mayer who covered many weeks of office duties while Shelagh was unwell.

Once again, it has been a privilege to serve with so many dedicated people and to share in God's work here. I extend my thanks to you all.

Jo Stoker

March 2011

2) BUILDINGS/PREMISES/FABRIC

Church Cottage

Glebe Hall

Fabric Committee/Churchwardens

Car Park

Flower Group

Church Cleaners

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH COTTAGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Betty Godden Chairman

Church Cottage House

Throughout 2010 there was full occupancy of the four suites of offices, one lease expired but was renewed by the sitting tenant .

The committee were pleased to be able to extend the central heating system to the two suites within Church Cottage House for £5809 in December thus avoiding the forthcoming increase in VAT. The obsolete lighting in the main first floor offices was replaced with energy saving equipment..

Church Cottage

All the regular inspections and checks were carried out – the boilers serviced, the Fire Alarm, Emergency Lighting, Fire extinguishers and P A T.

The annual Fire Risk Assessment was carried out by members of the committee and the necessity for Fire Drills in the week and on Sundays was re-inforced.

The committee are always aware of any possible fire hazards and have had to reinforce the ruling of 'no naked flames – candles or otherwise' at parties or events and unthoughtful smokers have caused difficulties for other hirers by gathering in the entrance way. A designated Smoking Area in the car park has been suggested.

A new floor polisher was purchased at £500 and minor additions made to kitchen equipment. In November it was found necessary to replace the dishwasher which again was paid for in time to avoid the impending increase in VAT, at a cost of £2378. Broken diamond lights in the Chapter Room windows were replaced.

The first week end in October a Break-In took place – one of many according to the police. The intruders broke into the kitchen fire exit door and proceeded up the spiral staircase to break into the first floor suite of offices from where valuable items were stolen. All three broken doors were re-installed covered by our insurance.

The drain from the house in Church Square adjacent to the car park joins the drain from Church Cottage and blockages for the house were occurring frequently and occasionally for our premises. Clearing caused disturbance to car park users. Investigation and repair was carried out at no expense to Church Cottage.

It is gratifying to see The Barn, School Room and Chapter Room in use by the many hirers everyday of the week representing part of the church's' outreach into the community and of course the many happy church occasions particularly throughout the 500 years celebrations culminating with the welcome to Bishop Peter our new Bishop of Basingstoke.

The committee express their thanks to John Banks, caretaker, who not only looks after the building, but cares for the hirers and tenants, and to David Sams who so ably stood in while John was ill.

I wish to thank all the committee for their hard work and support and especially Jane Talbot who has overseen our finances with a firm hand enabling us to be able to transfer £8000 to the St Michael's Church account in 2010. Last year Jane expressed a wish to relinquish the post of treasurer but so far a replacement has not been found and Jane has valiantly continued with the task.

Being responsible for Church Cottage, part of the town's heritage is a privilege which benefits from the dedication of the committee.

GLEBE HALL

Sue Irvine

The Cubs and Beavers, Explorers and Scouts continue to occupy Glebe Hall, the scouts having moved to Mondays leaves a vacancy on Friday evenings. Our other hirers include youth and charity organisations. Hampshire County Council now use the hall for youth counselling work (Connexions). Carers Together remain in the small office. There are vacancies for occasional bookings so if you are involved with a charity looking for a town centre venue please consider Glebe Hall.

We had to replace the gas boiler (for central heating) during the summer, and have also had some problems with the electric water heater under the sink. We have ordered new letters for the name on the front of the building; they will be installed in the spring of 2011. John Banks and David Sams have done many minor repairs and improvements including plumbing and carpentry work. Our thanks to them for their care and maintenance throughout the year. Thanks are also due to Shelagh who manages the administrative tasks so capably. Dennis Rowlandson, who has represented the scout group on the committee for several years, is now standing down and we are waiting to hear if there is a nomination forthcoming from the group. Many thanks to Dennis for his interest and support over the years.

Pat Lambert does a wonderful job as treasurer and liaises with all the hirers.

CHURCHWARDENS

Sue Irvine

FABRIC AND FITTINGS

Ian Wheatley

The stonework contract which began last year has been finished early in 2011, but there will certainly be more to do! We were able to complete this last phase with the help of a grant for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

A leak at the east end of the North Aisle was detected by the choir and repaired by Doltons.

The light switches in the memorial chapel had to be changed. Fortunately it proved possible to refit switches to modern safety standards without changing the appearance.

Health and safety guidelines issued by our insurance company advise that we should have tie-off points at all positions where ladders are used for high level work (i.e. changing light bulbs) This is currently in hand: estimates, DAC permission etc and should be completed in 2011.

The bell ringers are making good progress with the overhaul of the ringing chamber.

A new CCTV system has been fitted in church; this was largely financed by a generous donation.

A request has been received to keep the memorial book for HMS Royal Oak in a new case in the memorial chapel. Discussions with the donor and the DAC are ongoing.

The Queen Elizabeth II coat of arms in the memorial chapel needs some conservation work. Estimates have been received and approved by the DCC; the work will be done in the summer of 2011.

It was noticed in the autumn that squirrels had taken up residence in the void between the North aisle roof and ceiling. A pest control company was employed to remove them and the Borough Council, who maintain the churchyard, have agreed to cut back the yew tree on the north side, which should prevent a repetition of the problem.

Office equipment: a new photocopier has been purchased and installed, the computer system has been upgraded with a new printer and the ability to see the Church CCTV from the office and, most recently, a remote computer back up system is now installed in the vestry.

The Churchwardens would like to thank Mary Oliver, the fabric committee members and the faithful band of volunteers who clamber about clearing gutters, changing light bulbs and generally keeping up with the regular maintenance tasks which ensure that St. Michael's remains a welcoming and safe environment.

CHURCH CAR PARK

Tim Shapland

Car Park Coordinator

At first glance, a report about a car park might not come cross as the first choice of reading matter. Maybe when you've finished the crossword; read through the small ads and checked the lottery numbers; then – then you might turn your eyes to the car park report, but only if your train still hasn't come, and the platform is otherwise utterly deserted.

In a good year, the car park brings in about 10% of the income for the Church, through the fees raised from the letting out of the parking spaces during the week. 2010-11 was no exception, and the car park continued to provide a very necessary source of funds. As we go into 2011-12 however, it appears that numbers of permit holders are down on last year, and some selective marketing will be necessary to restore this income back to its normal levels. Did you know that our rates are very competitive when compared to town centre car parks? Do you know of anyone who might be interested in prime site, town centre parking place? Put them in contact with either me or Shelagh in the office for more details.

As most parishioners are aware, the church has given authority to a parking management company to carry out enforcement patrols of the car park. The principal purpose of these patrols is to protect the interests of those who have legitimately paid for the privilege of using the car park and taken out a permit. Each year, despite our best efforts, a small number of cases arise where individual's cars are immobilised, either through lack or incomplete knowledge of the enforcement arrangements or simply failing to display their permit correctly. In such circumstances, there is very little the Church can do to set aside the penalty charge that is levied. Steps are in hand, however, to improve the signs in the car park, to make it abundantly clear that a Permit scheme is in place. Parking on Sundays however, is unaffected by this regime.

On this subject, back in August last year, the Government did announce that they intended to prohibit the use of wheel clamp enforcement in car parks on private land. This was in response to some extreme cases reported in the media of extortionate charges being levied, and drivers effectively being held to ransom by landlords or parking management companies. Despite the promise of early action to bring this ban into effect, this has yet to be brought into law. It is understood that this is because there is some legal complexity in making sure any alternative scheme could be made fully enforceable.

No part of the church's business works without a dedicated team of supporters in the background and in this respect the car park is no different. My thanks go to Stephen Leach, and Tony and Tristran Patrick-Gleed who did a sterling job in clearing the snow over the winter, and in keeping the traffic flow moving. Thanks are also due to Shelagh for all the administration and assistance provided from the office, without which this little enterprise would swiftly grind to a halt.

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Betty Godden

Diane Allen

2010 proved to be the busiest and the most satisfying for the flower arrangers at St Michael's. Organising the Flower Festival meant a great deal of planning and hard work by so many people. All this effort culminated in a Flower Festival that exceeded our expectations and actually raised money to contribute to the anniversary fundraising. The standards set have encouraged our own arrangers in more creative arrangements.

The festival was ably supported by our team churches, other town churches and religious organisations as well as by tenants of Church Cottage and community groups. The friendships created by this community effort are on-going and were celebrated at a "Thank You Tea Party" in October.

We have welcomed Gill Broderick to the group but have said good bye to Fiona Quayle. Betty Blake has decided to hang up her secateurs after more than 50 years of dedicated service in flower arranging at St Michael's. We will miss her very much.

Following good feedback from 2010 a Saturday Brunch was held again on 22 January 2011. The Market Stall with its home-made produce was very popular again. The profit was divided equally between the Flower Fund and the Bellringer's Refurbishment Project.

This is an appropriate time to recognise that the flower arrangers are ably supported by a number of other people who helped the festival by moving furniture, painting pedestals and making supports for arrangements. Others have helped at the Brunch and with many more unseen jobs. We are indebted to these supporters.

As we look backwards at the last year with some pride we also look forward to the coming floral year starting with the Easter celebration of thanksgiving and resurrection, with flowers to enhance our worship.

CHURCH CLEANERS

Rita Wilson

Each week as you come into church, you find it polished, dusted and welcoming – this would not be so without the loyal band of cleaners who come and care for St. Michael's. They come and go, quietly and almost unseen, week by week; we would all notice a tremendous difference in the appearance of St Michael's without their help.

Most of our cleaners are well over 70 years old and they would welcome some younger people to take over from them. Of course, it is a commitment, but can fit in with daily life, taking not more than about an hour, at a time to suit you during church opening hours.

Please contact me if you feel that this is a task you could undertake for God and the church.

This report gives me the opportunity to give my personal thanks to the regular broom and duster brigade and to all who will come to help at the annual Spring Clean on Saturday April 16th between 9.30 – 12noon. Once a year we welcome extra pairs of hands to tackle the jobs that cannot be done on a weekly basis; polishing wood panels, sending spiders in search of new homes and dusting g=high and awkward areas.

With some extra help, we will be gleaming brightly to welcome Christ on Easter Day.

3) WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

Choir Committee/Director of Music

Intercessors & Readers

Worship

Servers & Communion Assistants

Sidespersons, amplification & counting

Bell-ringers

St Thomas' Nursing Home worship

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH CHOIR

Paul Nash Director of Music

The last year has been a particularly busy one for the choir. The choir played a major role in the 500th Anniversary celebrations, from the opening 'Pentecost Praise' to the Festival Eucharist in October. There was also a memorable concert in June, which featured music from across the centuries.

The choir sang choral evensong at Southwark Cathedral in April 2010; the next Cathedral visit (Portsmouth) will be in April 2011, and Chichester is booked for Jan 2012)

The repertoire has been expanded too: as well as learning unfamiliar material from our library, we have purchased a new carol collection (Bob Chilcott) and also some settings of *Preces and Responses* (Clucas, Sumsion and Rose) as well as new Canticle settings (Stanford in A, Vaughan Williams in C, Brewer in D). There has also been some music composed for the choir by the Director of Music, including a Eucharist setting for use in Lent, and an anthem for the Dedication Festival. This year, Choral Evensongs became a more regular fixture; it is hoped that they become a monthly event.

2010 also saw the end of Ben Morris's term as Organ Scholar, and no replacement has been found as yet. The Director of Music is delighted that he continues to help out and play when he is at home on holiday or visiting.

As ever, recruitment is an issue, and the Choir have discussed possible creative ways to encourage new members.

The amendments to the website are finally up and running also and the music list for the coming month can be viewed online.

I'd like to thank Simon Ward as outgoing Chairman, and want to extend a particular word of thanks to Anne Craddick as Choir Librarian (and for Penny Morris who does the job in Anne's absence). Finally, thanks to the choir, who attend so regularly, and who sing so enthusiastically.

WORSHIP REPORT

Jo Stoker

St Michael's offers a full and varied pattern of regular worship through the year, according to the church's seasons. Major Feasts are usually celebrated with a Sung Eucharist. In 2010, as part of our 500th Anniversary Year, we celebrated two acts of worship with a "heritage" aspect, using a form of worship not currently in use at St Michael's. On Easter Day at 6.00am we held an Easter Dawn Liturgy, with Vigil, Service of Light and Eucharist: incense was used, and the service was followed by a cooked breakfast. On St Michael's Day we celebrated with a Sung Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer, using the musical setting by Merbecke.

My report this year is largely factual, with an opportunity to report numbers rather than to reflect on the content of worship. But I would like to express my thanks and admiration to all

who contribute to the offering of worship at St Michael's in any way. It is very much the heart of our life and is offered at a consistently high standard.

Sunday Worship through the month

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am	Parish Communion (Common Worship Order One)
10.00am	Third Sunday Worship (informal, non-eucharistic worship, 3 rd Sunday)
12 noon	Baptisms (2 nd Sunday)
12 noon	Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child (3 rd Sunday, occasionally)
5.00pm	'Time for Children' (worship for small children and their parents, 1 st Sunday)
6.30pm	Sung Evensong (BCP, most Sundays)
6.30pm	Choral Evensong or Occasional special services (Advent, Palm Sunday, Civic Service, Commemoration of the Departed)

The only unchanging service week in, week out, is the 8.00am Prayerbook Holy Communion. Numbers have remained steady at an average of 25 communicants.

The 10.00am service produces the largest congregation with an average of 88 Communicants for Parish Communion, and average attendance of 92 at Third Sunday worship

'Time for Children' at 5.00pm on the 1st Sunday attracts in the region of 40 children and adults. (See separate report).

Attendance at Evensong continues to decline very slightly, with an average congregation of 27 including the choir and organist. Special Evening Services attract a larger congregation.

There were 23 Baptisms in 2010, and 2 services of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child.

Midweek Worship

Wednesday morning Holy Communion, (BCP) has a regular congregation averaging 11. An average of 6 communicants attend the 12.30pm Holy Communion on Friday.

At the end of 2009 monthly Sung Compline was introduced at 9.00pm on the 1st Friday of the month. Attendance through 2010 averaged 9.

Pastoral Offices

Pastoral Offices is the name given to Baptisms (mentioned above), Weddings and Funerals.

There were 28 Wedding Services in St Michael's in 2010, and 3 services of Thanksgiving for Marriage (often with a renewal of vows). 18 Funeral Services were held in church, with a further 17 funerals conducted by St Michael's clergy at the Crematorium or Cemetery.

SERVERS & COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

Stephen Leach

The number of servers on the rota for the 10 o'clock service decreased by 1 during 2010 when Lucy Gray left for Australia. However in early 2011, Daniel Hotten, Tristan Patrick-Gleed & Reuben Lane joined the rota bringing the number of servers up to 10. I am grateful to all the servers for their loyal and regular support for our Sunday worship.

The communion assistants are licensed by the Bishop on the recommendation of the DCC to help with the distribution of communion. There are currently 8 lay people on the rota for the 10 o'clock service along with Alan Hoar and Mike Browning who are licensed as Readers. For weekday services, Helena Alston is also licensed. I am grateful to all the assistants for their support and regular attendance through the year.

SIDESPERSONS, AMPLIFICATION & OFFERTORY COUNTING ROTA

Ian Wheatley *Sue Irvine*
Churchwarden *Churchwarden*

It has been another year with many members of the congregation quietly working in the background to ensure the smooth running of all our services.

During this year, we've had a small turnover of volunteers. (***'Thank you for your time' to those of you who have stepped down and 'Welcome' to those who have joined us.***)

We still have a few vacancies across the list, especially for people to operate the amplification ('twiddle the knobs') during the 10am service but we're actively seeking extra people to help out in all areas. Please speak to a Churchwarden or sides person if you feel you may be able to help in any way.

The Churchwardens would like to say 'Thank you' to all the sidespersons, greeters, amplification operators and counters who give their time each week. A note of special thanks goes to those of you who step in at short notice whenever you see a 'gap' and those who volunteer for during extra services (e.g. Christmas and Easter).

BELLRINGERS

Peter Rowe – St. Michael's Tower Secretary.

At the onset, let it be appreciated that both the bells, clock and the general ringing organisation are all in excellent order.

We have minor problems from time to time and these are easily rectified by Tower Members.

We now have photographic records of the bell inscriptions and we have created a Web site.

The refurbishment programme is progressing well (due to the endeavours of the ringers and to generous financial donations). We hope to complete this task by mid year 2011.

Though we have lost a few ringers through the year, we have gained a healthy number of newcomers, all of whom are progressing well. As has been the case in the past, we have rung the bells for both services each Sunday, and for the occasional special events when requested (including Weddings).

We enjoyed playing our part in the 500th Anniversary Celebrations (particularly the Flower Festival).

[Bells are put up for the Worship of God, and to say something about him to as many people as possible. They are not only rung to call people to Worship, but to carry outside, what the people are saying inside.]

ST THOMAS' NURSING HOME

Jo Stoker

The faithful group of singers continued to offer a simple service of hymns and prayers for the residents of St Thomas' Nursing Home throughout 2010, with the vital help of Jean Waddell as pianist. On most occasions we were able to use the small chapel at the Home and it is very heartening to see how the residents enjoy joining in with familiar traditional hymns and prayers, often knowing the words by heart. This small but valuable ministry takes place roughly every 6 weeks, and for 2011 has moved from Mondays to Wednesday afternoons at 2.30pm. We would encourage anyone who would like to share this ministry to ask for the dates, and come along.

4) NURTURE AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Junior Church

11th Basingstoke Brownies & Guides

Young People's Fellowship

Home Groups

Faith Development & Adult Nurture

Time for Children

ST MICHAEL'S JUNIOR CHURCH

Audrey Boucher

We came to the end of our first 5-year curriculum using the Workshop Rotation Model (WORM) in July, and started again at Year 1 in September. As we had been invited to produce a display for the Flower Festival in June, we did a little bit of juggling, and brought the Creation Rotation forward (not due until 2012 again). That way we could fit making paper flowers into the June story. Hard work particularly by Lisa Hotten and Helen Christian, with Roderick organizing old photos from Junior Church graduates, resulted in a very happy display.

We are now half way through the current Year One, and during the Spring term are focusing on Parables and what they teach us. We learn through a mixture of video, art and craft, cooking, science, games and puzzles, listening and drama. Children prone to fidget tend to find learning through drama and games the best. Others prefer art. All enjoy science and cooking (applied science!). Showing a video at the beginning of a new rotation is an effective way of introducing the story of the month. We do not currently have a musician to lead singing, and it would be lovely if there were someone in the congregation who might occasionally come in to help with a lesson using music. Please let us know if you might be able to do this – the lesson rotations are planned according to the skills we have available, and so no lessons based around music can be scheduled unless we have someone with the appropriate expertise.

We have 11 children split evenly between the Lions and the Lambs. We also have four “graduates” who come in as helpers – Greg, Gemma, Tristan and Reuben. This term we have produced badges for the helpers (henceforth known as Shepherds) so that the younger children can easily identify whom they can ask for help – as long as they say the magic word “please”! The badges are worn by the Shepherds on a lanyard. Greg being much older than the others has chosen to have a Lion Tamer badge instead! He can certainly keep the Lions in order.

Last year we said farewell to Veronica Webb, who had been a leader for several years. Helen Christian has been a leader for several months, but has now had to stop. We are left with three regular leaders – Audrey Boucher, Roderick Boucher, and Lisa Hotten, and are three leaders short. The ideal is to have 3 teams of 2 people, with a commitment of one Sunday a month. We are grateful to Pam Banks who is happy to be called on occasionally for holiday cover. However the current dearth of regular leaders is untenable, and is likely to lead to burnout if other volunteers do not come forward soon.

11th BASINGSTOKE BROWNIES & GUIDES

Sue Smith Brownie Guider St Michaels Unit.

or contact Ann Newell or Alison Pinto.

Brownies at St Michaels, what a memorable year it has been for all Guiding as we have taken part in events to celebrate the 100 years of Guiding. One of our memorable dates for the Pack was in March 2010 we celebrated our 50th Birthday as a Brownie Unit at St Michaels. At present we have 16 members from various schools over the town and surrounding villages.

February 2010 started with our Thinking Day held this time at St Michaels where we joined with other Brownies, Guides and Rainbows the Founders birthday based on the them let us hear the beat.

May saw us along with the District Brownies and Rainbows join others from all over North Hampshire at the Hawk Conservancy to celebrate the centenary in all there were over 500 members of the organisation there on the cold and windy day but this did not stop them enjoying themselves and watching flying displays and to hold some of the owls if they wished.

May and June we prepared our display for the Church celebrations at the Flower Festival.

July saw us in Eastrop Park with a Teddy Bears picnic. Also some of the Brownies went with other District Units to London and slept on HMS Belfast for a night and went to Crystal Palace Maze and other places.

In October we visited the Willis Museum along with our Guides to see the 100 years of Guiding exhibition along with visiting the Mary Rose Exhibition. Also our big celebration was going to Milestones Museum along with the others in the Basingstoke and surrounding areas (1200 people) and learnt about Basingstoke as it was, and renewed our promises and having a great campfire sing song. 2014 looks forward to the 100 years of Brownies. Apart from that we also had time to make pancakes, craft work, and work on various badges, go carol singing at Ashcombe House, bat watching, play games and learnt new things so it has been a very busy year.

We are looking forward to going on visiting the Police Station and have a very variable programme for the coming year and also welcoming new Brownies into the Unit as we have a few spaces along with the Guides. We are always looking for new volunteers to start Rainbows and other Guiders to learn how to lead. Our aim is to enjoy Guiding in all its many different ways and learn new skills.

ST. MICHAEL'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP

Stephen Leach, Susan Shapland & Ken Sandell.

The YPF is now in its twenty-fifth year. The regular membership in 2010 was static at 4. Although we are small in number, the group has a strong identity and it is rare for members to be missing. We hope that any young people in the congregation who are already at secondary school or will be going to secondary school in the autumn, will consider joining us so that we can maintain the vitality of the group.

As always we have continued our regular pattern of Sunday evening meetings. Study sessions have included a course called "Substance" on kingdom values, Jesus' parables, symbols in the Bible and in the church, and following some of the "Café Logos" sessions that are based on the Bible readings of the day. As usual, these study evenings were interspersed with games evenings, quizzes, food and social events.

In March we went on a trip to Winchester and had a tower tour at the Cathedral. We joined in the 500th anniversary celebrations and hosted an anniversary party for all teenagers at St. Michael's in July.

The autumn half-term break contained the YPF week away; the first in 4 years. We spent 5 days in the Peak District staying in a converted post office in the tiny village of Earl Sterndale. We spent some time walking, visiting local attractions (including a mine, a working cotton mill and the Alton Towers theme park) and we had study sessions each evening. We were self-catering so

everyone joined in the cooking, washing up and other chores. It was a great few days and the highlight of the year. We would like to thank the DCC who provided the funding for the accommodation.

As in other years, we are very grateful to Mary Oliver and Sue & Martin Irvine who, along with the leaders, allow their houses to be used for our meetings. Special thanks are due to Tim Shapland who gave up a week's holiday to help lead the trip to the Peak District and has provided support and help with many of our evenings and activities.

TUESDAY HOME GROUP

Julie Wheatley

The **Tuesday evening Home Group** has gained two new members this year, and two existing members are taking a short break due to work and family commitments.

Until November we continued with our series of studies around the life and ministry of Jesus. At our December meeting we shared snacks, discussed our studies so far and the direction in which we wanted to proceed. We decided to commence following the E100 Bible Reading Challenge from January, starting with the Old Testament readings, 5 a month.

Thanks, once again, to Eric and Betty for their hospitality, and parking facilities, throughout the year.

FRIDAY HOME GROUP

Pat Stott

Our group currently has ten members and we have met once a month over the last year, with the exception of Lent when we did a six week course led by Margaret Gray, and August when we had a break. We have studied a variety of topics and are currently starting on the Essential 100 Bible Readings, again for the six weeks of Lent and to continue afterwards.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT & ADULT NURTURE

Start! – Jackie French, Virginia Routledge & Debbie McLeod

Next Steps – Stephen Leach, Sue Irvine & Debbie McLeod

St. Michael's comes into contact with large numbers of people via marriage and baptism preparation as well as with those who are newcomers at our regular services. Having recognised ways of helping enquirers is therefore vital for St. Michael's and our role in spreading the Gospel. St. Michael's tries to run two courses each year, both of which are lay led.

The Start! course runs for 8 weeks and is based on material provided by CPAS. It covers topics such as God the creator, Jesus' life and parables and sin & redemption.

The Next Steps course runs for 6 weeks and was created by Rev'd Alison Way from John Pritchard's book "Beginning Again". It covers topics such as the Holy Spirit, Bible study, prayer, the church and living a Christian life.

The Next Steps course was run in January/February 2010 with the 3 participants. The Start! course ran in the last 2 months of 2010 and January 2011. It is planned to run the Next Steps course again in April/May 2011.

From a leader's point of view, running the courses can be challenging but ultimately rewarding too. Church language can be a barrier and no prior knowledge of doctrines or concepts can be assumed. Nevertheless, being part of the process that allows new Christians to bring God into their lives must be one of the most important things that we can do.

"TIME FOR CHILDREN"

Jo Stoker

It was something of a shock to realise that by the end of 2010 "Time for Children" has become the second largest congregation at St Michael's, attracting on average a greater attendance than the 8.00am or 6.30pm Sunday services or our midweek communions. The average number of children at "Time for Children" in 2010 was 18, with approximately the same number of parents and other adults, plus the support team of 6 – 7 helpers and clergy.

The friendships made over tea and cake at the end bring young families together and help to support parents bringing children for baptism. "Time for Children" began as an initiative to encourage new parents to make a regular connection with church as part of their baptism commitment for their children: it is interesting to note that 60% of the infant baptisms last year were from "Time for Children" families (including some who also attend the 10.00am service).

Although it takes place monthly "Time for Children" is clearly part of St Michael's church and can no longer be seen as a preliminary to 'real' church attendance. Our challenge in 2011 is to find a meaningful way for some of the children and their parents, who are not otherwise involved in our worship or activities on Sunday mornings, to continue to grow in Christian faith. I would like to thank all who regularly support "Time for Children", and those extra helpers who created a wonderful Big Birthday Party in July as part of the 500th anniversary celebrations.

5) PASTORAL

Pastoral Care team

Home Communion

Mother's Union

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Pat Stott

The Pastoral Care Team have been fairly busy this year with visits to new and existing members of our Church congregation. Members have been very much appreciated as they seek to support and encourage people who are not too well, or going through hard times. Sometimes all it takes is a phone call just to let people know they are not forgotten.

HOME COMMUNIONS

Jo Stoker

Having taken over the co-ordination of the Home Communion Team from Martin Quayle, I would like to thank all those who have offered this prayerful and caring ministry to the sick and housebound through the year. A review and further training took place in 2010.

MOTHERS' UNION

Pat Stott

The past year has been another busy one for members of our Branch..

In June we had a display at the Flower Festival in Church, which was created by the ladies of All Saints Church. We had collected money for that. We led Cathedral Prayers in August, and in the same month had a Cream Tea with Bring and Buy which raised £160 towards the Mothers' Union Family Holiday.

At our AGM in September we enrolled one new member, but sadly two others have died and one or two are not very well. The Christmas Celebration in December and the Annual Eucharist in January were happy events for us.

This year we are putting forward the name of a family for the Family Holiday in August and will be raising funds to help support them. We are still supporting the Camrose Centre. Several Committee Members attended a farewell presentation for Bishop Michael at the end of March.

6) SOCIAL EVENTS

Social Events Co-ordinator

SOCIAL EVENTS ANNUAL REPORT

Phil Mayer

Many of the activities associated with our 500th Anniversary celebration had a social element to them so we decided to scale back our regular Social activities this year, however we did manage a couple of new events and a few old favourites.

Here are details of what's happened since the last Annual Report:

Sunday 25th April – Spring Walk around Overton and the source of the river Test attended by 14 people.

Wednesday 25th August – A Curry Night organised Mike & Gill Browning at the Red Rose Restaurant in Buckland Parade.

Sunday 12th September – Late summer walk in the beautiful Hampshire countryside around Avington Park attended by 9 people and organised by Stephen.

Saturday 20th November – Skittles Evening at the ex-Services Club in New Road attended by 35 people. Phil Jarman was Champion for the night with Martin Irvine winning the knockout prize.

Saturday 26th February – Quiz Night run by John Banks, with 43 people making up 8 teams. The winning team was from YPF scoring 101 points out a possible 120.

Social events can be an ideal way of introducing new people to St. Michael's so if you have an idea for a social event or would like help with organising one please offer your assistance to Phil or Pauline Mayer.

7) SOCIAL JUSTICE

One World

ONE WORLD GROUP

Gary Newell

The aim of the One World Group is to offer and encourage opportunities for members of St. Michael's to reach out in love and service to those in need. Over the past year it has worked towards these aims in a number of ways.

Thanks first to Virge Routledge for all her hard work preparing for Christian Aid Week in May, and to all the envelope collectors who extend the opportunity to provide financial support for those most in need to a large area of Basingstoke, primarily centred around St. Michael's. Shortly after St James Day in July, there was the opportunity to provide financial assistance to the staff and pupils of St James Mission & School in Zimbabwe. As noted last year, we are currently aiming to build on the link with the Camrose Centre. To this end the money raised when the Christmas Greetings board made its appearance during Advent went to the Camrose Centre.

Thank you to all of you who have supported the aims of the One World Group over the past year.

8) OUTREACH

“The Messenger”

Web site

THE MESSENGER

Gary Newell

The Messenger continues to provide space for news of what has happened and what will soon be happening at St. Michael's; reflections of clergy, lay readers and others on the life of the church in every sense; plus a variety of reminders, from readings to themes and dates of the Home Groups.

Amongst the more frequent articles have been reports from St James' Mission & School in Zimbabwe, updates on forthcoming social events, sharing of significant dates via Church Chat and details of the goings-on at St. Michael's District Church Council meetings. In addition, there have been details and promotions of significant events – such as activities to help us Refresh and Renew during Lent, Christian Aid week and, of course, the 500th Anniversary celebrations.

Thanks as ever go to all those who write all the above articles, especially the more regular contributors – Alan Hoar, Jo Stoker, Mike Browning, Pat Stott, Phil Mayer, Stephen Leach, Janet Bamber, Pete Jordan and Shirley Kirsopp. Special mention must go to Ellen Boucher for her reflections on life in New Zealand. Thanks are also due to Shelagh Kavanagh for compiling the details for 'From the Registers'. Finally, a special thanks to Doreen and Arthur Thew for printing and assembling the magazine.

WEB SITE

Pat Stott

The web site continues to be updated and proved a great help in advertising the 500th Anniversary year. Special services are included and the prayer diary from the Messenger is uploaded every month and changes day by day. Our thanks to Allan Palmer, the team church webmaster, for his help in setting everything up.