

A few words from the Vicar

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. I have a goodly heritage. Psalm 16:6

Preparations are gathering pace for our 500th Anniversary celebration weekend (25th – 27th September).

The festivities kick off with a concert by Greater Manchester Police Male Voice Choir in Church at 8pm on the Thursday evening (24th). Tickets are available from Derek Bamber (0161 763 6921 or 0755 437 3381). Judging from their visit last year, this will be a fun event and well worth the price of a ticket.

The Churchyard Team (with the support of many others) are well advanced in their planning for the anniversary exhibition in church. The intention is to celebrate the life and history of our church on Cockey Moor. The church will be open for people to look around. There will be photos and displays together with information about the church building, Christ Church School and church life in general. The church registers (baptisms, weddings, burials) will be available for anyone who would like to look up information about a relative.

In addition there will be some interesting information about a few of the people buried in our churchyard. For example, did you know there is an Ainsworth connection with the Von Trapp family of *'The Sound of Music'* fame?

Refreshments will be available, so wander in, have a cuppa, have a mooch and enjoy yourself. There's no charge!

Which brings me onto another subject; church finances. At the last PCC meeting June Brooks, the Church Treasurer, reported that our General Fund (the pot from which we disburse day to day church expenditure) could do with a cash injection because our income is less than budgeted. Fortunately September is our Gift Month (very strong hint) so

our finances, hopefully, will be in a better shape sometime soon.

Talking of finance, we have submitted a bid for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to cover much of the cost of some essential building work. If our bid is successful, work will start sometime in 2017 and will include stabilising one of the church walls and extensive repointing to the stonework. Without this work the building will begin to deteriorate, which means the work is needed to secure the long term future of our beautiful church building. Please pray that our application is successful.

The good news(?) is that, if we're unsuccessful, we can reapply at a later date, which is a relief because the overall cost of the project is eye watering to say the least! The really good news is that, if we are successful, we will only need to cover a relatively small proportion of the total cost ourselves. I am confident this will be manageable for us so you should look forward to some fund raising activity next year!

One of the things I like about the HLF system is that, part of any grant we receive from them must be used to encourage the community to engage more with the heritage of our building. This is something we would want to do anyway; it's part of our God-given mission as a parish church. So, we have a few things in mind, such as an oral history project to record the memories of long-term residents and a heritage trail around the church and churchyard.

And guess what? The preparations for our 500th Anniversary celebration weekend will help us put together the heritage trail. Nice one Churchyard Team!

Every Blessing

Dave