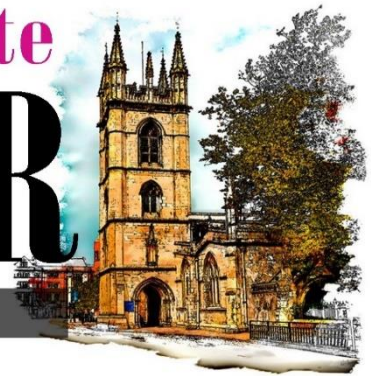


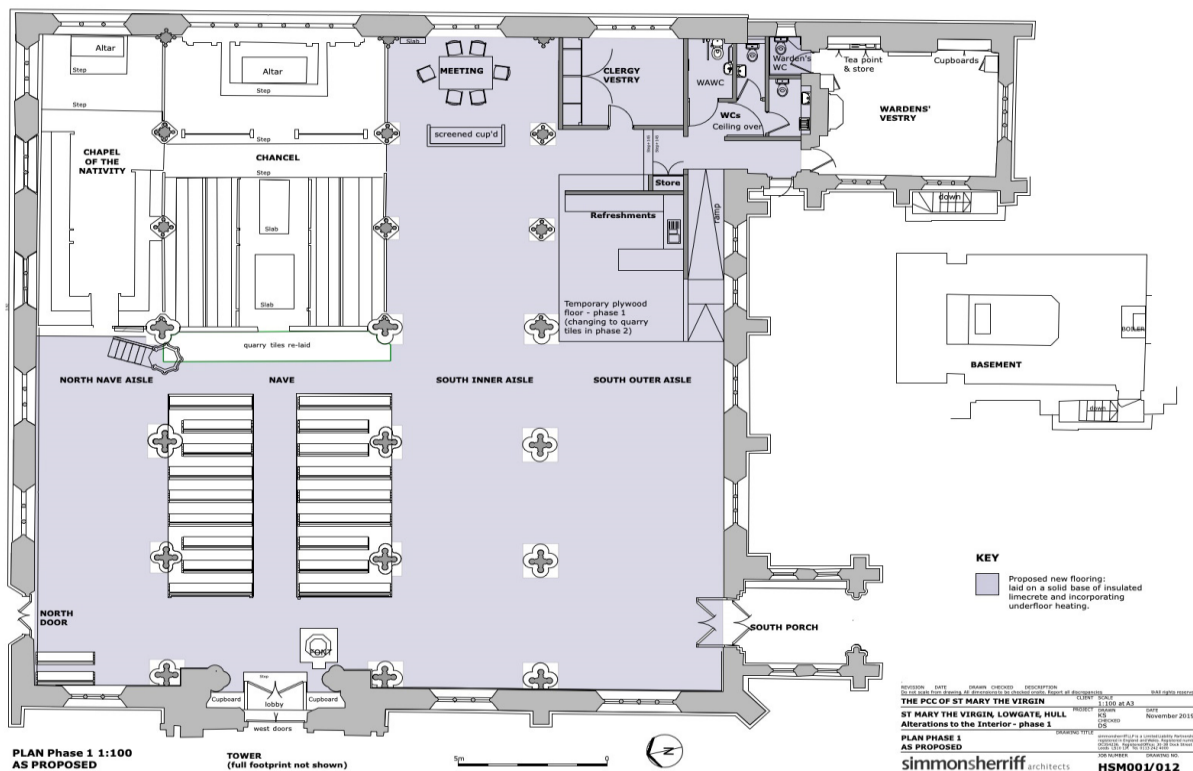
# Friends of St. Mary's, Lowgate NEWSLETTER



Issue 4

March, 2021

## SPRING START FOR IMPROVEMENT SCHEME



Following years of consultation, planning and fundraising St Mary's is finally in a position to start work on an improvement scheme, which will make this fine medieval building fit to play its role at the heart of Hull city centre.

Since St Mary's received news in late October that the Diocese of York had granted Faculty approval for the improvements to the interior, St Mary's architect David Sherriff of Simonssherriff LLP has been busy scrutinising four tenders received from potential building contractors.

It had been hoped that work could start in January, but this was delayed, because it was necessary to wait for confirmation that the Government's Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, whereby the 20% VAT element of the cost of works can be reclaimed, was to continue beyond March 2021. The Government confirmed this in late February.

### Main contractor appointed

On 7<sup>th</sup> March St Mary's PCC accepted a tender for the works from Scothern Construction. Malton-based Scothern was established in 1989 by managing director Paul Scothern. The company's tender was the most competitive and backed by a strong track record of heritage projects.

## Preparatory works

Preparatory work will start on 29<sup>th</sup> March when York Pipe Organs will dismantle St Mary's 1904-built pipe organ. The organ has not been in working order for decades and would require an unattainable budget of over £200,000 to restore. The pipe organ contains a number of 18C Snetzler pipes, which are to be retained for possible future display.

The organ's current location in the South East corner of the church will be used to create three WCs, including one with wheelchair access. Thankfully, as reported in the last issue of this newsletter, St Mary's received the kind donation of a superb Viscount electronic church organ from David Brown in October, so that St Mary's fine musical tradition can continue.

## Easter at St Mary's



*Caption - St Mary's churchyard cross was designed by Leslie Moore of Temple Moore & Moore and erected in 1921.*

Fr Ian and St Mary's congregation look forward to worshipping at St Mary's on Good Friday and Easter Sunday and then to celebrating Sunday Eucharist in church until a second phase of preparatory work, to remove asbestos, begins in mid-April.

Once the asbestos work is complete it may be possible to continue to use the Chapel of the Nativity during the main works (TBC) but services may move to the Minister temporarily – keep an eye on St Mary's website for updates.

## Complete for Christmas 2021

The plan is for Scothern to start work on the main contract to give St Mary's toilets, kitchen facilities, heating, new electrics and lighting and a new York-stone floor in the South and North Aisles and at the West End in May. It is estimated that the work will take 30 weeks. The aim is for St Mary's to reopen before this coming Christmas.



## Message from the Chair

As the virus pandemic continues to restrict what we, as Friends of St Mary's, can do, so that we have not been able to re-arrange the hoped for Spring visit to All Saints' Church in Hessle, we have decided to produce this additional Easter newsletter to keep you informed.

There is still a possibility that we may be able to arrange the Friends' annual John Scott Lecture this year and that Dr Alec Gill, who was to give the lecture in September last year, may still be able to join us, but, with the scale of the improvement works to be undertaken this year, this will necessitate finding an alternative venue. With that being the case, we may hold off until 2022 when we shall have an ever beautiful, but also newly warm, well-lit and welcoming church in which to hold the lecture.

Especially through these challenging times, we do appreciate your continued support as a 'Friend' to St Mary's and do hope you will renew your Friends membership for another year, if you did not do so in September, despite our inability to welcome you to events.

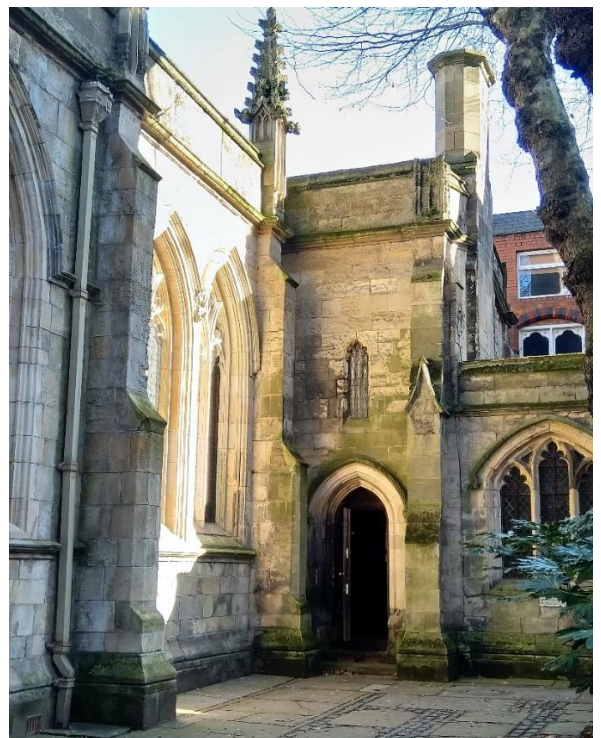
As St Mary's embarks on its ambitious plans, with hard won funds about to be invested in a major scheme of essential improvements, St Mary's needs your prayers, support and involvement more than ever.

You may be able to contribute towards the cost of the improvement works? You may be able to donate a few hours of your time on a weekly or monthly basis to look after St Mary's or to welcome visitors when the church reopens towards the end of this year? You may join us for the occasional event in future. Or, if you live some distance away, you may simply renew your membership each year. We want to assure you that whatever form your friendship takes it is valuable and it is appreciated.

**Amanda Habergham**  
*Chair, Friends of St Mary's*



*Caption - Winter gives way to .....*



*Spring*

## A REFLECTION FROM FATHER IAN WALKER



After what seems to be a very long time, it looks as though we can, at last, look forward to some significant work beginning on the St Mary's Project after Easter. We are grateful to the Project Group for their sterling work in bringing this work to fruition. The wheels of any church restoration project always grind slowly as there are funds to be raised from individuals and grant making bodies. We also have to ensure that what we wish to achieve is in accordance with the character and heritage of Hull's oldest church building and there are many bodies whose task is to see that what is proposed is not only useful but also appropriate.

To add to all this, there is the current pandemic which has held up the Project and also meant that we have not been able to worship in church for much of the past year although we were able to hold our Christmas services. I look forward to leading worship on Good Friday and Easter Day before the Project work begins in earnest.

It is right that our efforts should have been concentrated in planning the renovation and improvements of our building, but we need also to pray and work for the time when Phase One of the project is complete. What is the distinctive role of St Mary's in what is (hopefully) a post-Covid City? We have a strong musical tradition and worship rooted in the Book of Common Prayer and this is unique in this part of our City. The Church of England has learned a lot about offering worship in the past year when it has not been possible to attend church in person. It should be relatively simple to do this once the first phase of the Project is complete which would be of interest to Friends who do not live within easy travelling distance of St Mary's.

As well as our worship we also have an important ministry to the homeless and elsewhere in this issue you can read about the work of Hull Homeless Outreach. Sadly, this work seems to be more and more necessary, and we hope that St Mary's can be a more effective base for HHO in the future.

These days the Church has to stress the need for financial help more than it would like. We are thankful for all that the Friends have contributed over the years. Please continue to pray for St Mary's and we look forward to welcoming you back in St Mary's in the near future.

*Father Ian Walker  
Priest-in-charge,  
St Mary the Virgin*



## OPEN DURING THE CRISIS

Thanks to a team of volunteers, St Mary's has continued to open for Private Prayer and Reflection on Saturday's during the coronavirus crisis.



*Caption - Saturday maintenance tasks*



*Caption – Stalwarts of the Saturday opening team left to right Hilary Newton, Patrick Plunkett and Fr Ian Walker. Also, thanks to Olga Li La-Vigars who is not around for this picture.*

St Mary's Saturday openings during the pandemic have provided an opportunity for people to sit in quiet contemplation or tackle the many tasks involved in looking after our medieval church.

Thanks to churchwardens Hilary Newton and Olga Li La-Vigars, Covid-19 safety measures have been carefully thought out and diligently applied, so that people have been able to enjoy the 'Oasis of Peace in the Heart of Our City' which St Mary's offers.

Regular support from our organist and choir master Patrick Plunkett and the presence each Saturday of Fr Ian have been appreciated.

### Services

During the third lockdown Fr Ian continued St Mary's weekly 11am Sunday service via the free telephone service Whypay, so that participants have been able to dial in each Sunday using a password to join the service.

Now that lockdown restrictions are being rolled back by the Government and growing numbers have received their first vaccination, services are resuming in church with the first to be held at St Mary's on Good Friday and then Easter Sunday – see the back page for dates/times.

## GRANT NEWS

**Following on from grant application successes in 2020, St Mary's has received the good news that the 'Making St Mary's Fit For Our Communities' improvement scheme has secured a £23,350 grant from Allchurches Trust.**

Allchurches Trust is one of the UK's largest grant-making charities and gave £17.8 million to churches, charities and communities in 2019. Its funds come from its ownership of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

Commenting on the grant for St Mary's, Allchurches Trust grants officer Usman Saeed, said: "These improvements will ensure that St Mary's can remain at the heart of its community, enhancing the support it can provide and making this heritage treasure more accessible to all."



### **ALLCHURCHES TRUST LIMITED®**

OWNERS OF ECCLESIASTICAL INSURANCE GROUP

Father Ian Walker, St Mary's Priest-in-Charge, said, "All at St Mary's wish to thank Allchurches Trust for this tremendous boost. We value highly the Trust's support, which brings us very close to having all the funds in place to embark on the first phase of interior improvement works to make St Mary's a safer and more welcoming place for worshippers, community users and visitors."

St Mary's does not receive funding from the Church of England for running costs or repairs though the church has been awarded a £5,000 grant by the Diocese of York towards the replacement of the electrics as part of the scheme.

So far, a total fund of £744,381 (as at 15/3/21) has been generated from kind legacies, fundraising and grants, including a National Churches Trust (NCT) Gateway grant, towards the improvement scheme.

**However, we are still £79,484 off target for Phase 1. A. with further work needed in the near future.**

We await the outcomes of three further grant applications to the NCT Cornerstone scheme, the Wolfson Foundation and the Sir James Reckitt Charity.

## How you can support St Mary's improvement scheme

You can donate by:

**Cheque:** Cheques made payable to 'St Mary's Parochial Church Council' and posted to:  
Mr P Gibson, PCC Treasurer, St Mary the Virgin, Lowgate, Hull, HU1 1EJ

Or

**Online banking:** Sort code      56 00 06      Account Number      03821269

Or

**Online:** Via St Mary's 'Give a Little' page – there is a live link to the page on St Mary's website [www.stmaryslowgate.org.uk](http://www.stmaryslowgate.org.uk).

7th December, 1929 - 16th December, 2020.

## **GORDON ROBINSON Organist and Choirmaster 1970s – 2017**

**It is with deepest regret that we announce the death of our dear Friend Gordon Robinson, St Mary's' Organist and Choirmaster from the 1970s to 2017. Gordon's funeral took place at St Mary's on 6th January, 2021. Our prayers, thoughts and condolences are with Gordon's family and friends.**



### **Eulogy by Andrew Robinson and Helga Penny**

Gordon was born on 7th December 1929 in Bradford, the only child of Sam Robinson and Lily Murgatroyd. Sam was a self-employed plumber.

He attended Ryan Street School. A very bright child, Gordon was awarded a scholarship to Bradford Grammar School. He still had his impish streak ..... on one memorable occasion he lifted all the desk lids in the classroom and ran up and down slamming them shut one after the other. He was caught in the act.....it didn't end well!

He gained entry to Leeds Medical School in 1948, commuting there by tram from the family home in Odsal. In his spare time he played the piano and had organ lessons with Mr Wright at Dirkhill Methodist Church.

His keyboard skills were impressive and he was held in high regard by the Bradford Orpheus Male Voice Choir.

After qualifying as a doctor in 1954 house jobs followed, and it was whilst working at St Luke's Hospital that he and Cynthia met and fell in love. They both attended the Youth Fellowship Holy Trinity Church, Low Moor. They were married on New Year's Day in 1955.

There followed 2 years' National Service as Surgeon Lieutenant for the naval reserve in Derry, Northern

Ireland. The next move was to Wakefield in 1957 where Gordon became a GP and Cynthia worked at Snapefield Fever Hospital caring for patients with TB.

In 1959 they made the decision to move to East Yorkshire so that Gordon could join his dear friend George Parker in general practice at the Albany Street surgery on Spring Bank West. It also gave him the chance to catch up with another close friend from medical school, Stan Noble, who was already living in Hull. Gordon was much loved by his patients and colleagues alike, providing exemplary care until his reluctant retirement at the age of 70 in 1999.

Initially renting a flat in the Avenues, Cynthia and Gordon soon bought their first house on Inglemire Lane. Along came Helga and Andrew and then a move to what would become the 'family home' on Swanland Road in Hessle. He could also turn his hand to DIY and managed to rewire the entire house.

Faith played a very important part in their lives. They discovered this beautiful old church soon after arriving in Hull, and have attended virtually every week since. Sadly the Covid pandemic has prevented their weekly visits since March; dad would ask Helga every week when would they be able to go again. They supported the church financially behind the scenes as well as being an integral part of the choir, planning services, and playing the organ.

Another passion was Hull City AFC. He was a season ticket holder from 1970 until 2017, and found it hilarious that his last ever home game vs Spurs in the Premier League in 2017 ended in a 7-1 defeat!!

He had a wicked sense of humour and enjoyed regaling us all with his endless supply of jokes and amusing anecdotes.

In 2004 the Swanland Road house was sold and a new chapter started with a move to a bungalow on South Lane, opposite Helga and family. We all had many happy times there, going for walks on the foreshore, family meals, and admiring the beautiful garden.

In 2018 Cynthia and Gordon decided they were ready for 24 hour residential care and moved into St Mary's Care Centre in Anlaby, making life much easier for Cynthia. Here they enjoyed the various activities on offer – even winning the carpet bowls cup as part of the St Mary's team.



## **GORDON ROBINSON Organist and Choirmaster 1970s – 2017 cont'd ....**

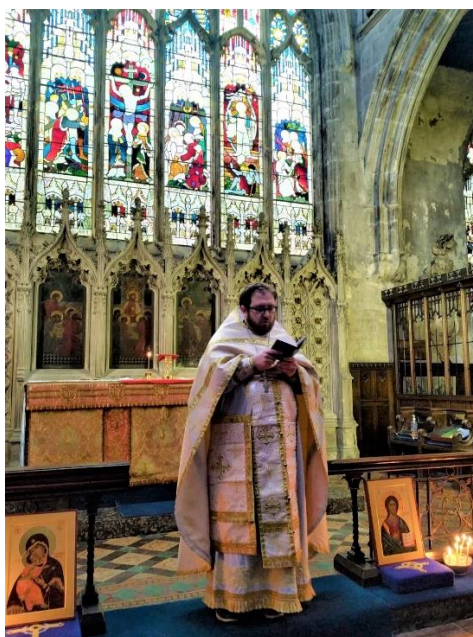
Gordon was a gentle, humourous, talented and incredibly generous man who made friends easily wherever he went, as we know from the many kind messages we have received. We all looked forward to seeing him and being in his company – it was always such fun. He always had wise words and good advice, encouraging his children and grandchildren with everything they wanted to do.

It is a real privilege for me to be his son. He has been such a fantastic dad to me and Helga, a brilliant grandpa to all his grandchildren, a fascinating great grandpa to Esther, and a loving and devoted husband to Cynthia.

We loved him so much. We will all miss you terribly dad. God bless you and rest in peace.

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## **St Mary's welcomes Hull Russian Orthodox Church**



**St Mary's has been very pleased to welcome the Hull Russian Orthodox Parish of The Nativity of Our Lord for services in St Mary's in January and February.**

The Hull Parish is part of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh, a diocese of the Russian Church (ROC) covering Great Britain and Ireland.

We hope that they will continue to worship at St Mary's regularly following the improvement scheme.



## HULL HOMELESS OUTREACH UPDATE

**Volunteer organisation Hull Homeless Outreach has been running soup kitchens at St Mary's for a number of years on Wednesday and Thursday evenings serving between 70 and 90 people, and more recently another team has joined them to provide hot food on Fridays too.**

During the latest lockdown the team had to suspend the operation for a number of weeks, but they re-started in late February and numbers of attendees have been growing again with around 25 per evening in mid-March.

One of Hull Homeless Outreach's directors Debbi Lee says, "It's good to be back in action and more and more people are coming along as the word gets out that we are at St Mary's again. Most of our volunteers, seven of us and medics, have had their first vaccines and we continue to social distance."

Debbi says that local retailers supply food for the hot meals the team prepares. M&S donate bread and cakes and Aldi give vegetables and bread.

In order to keep to a tight bubble, because of Covid-19 precautions, the team is not recruiting volunteers at present and they have an ample store of clothing to give away.

However, donations of tinned, dried food such as pasta and rice or other forms of long-life foods are welcome and can be left for Hull Homeless Outreach at St Mary's during Saturday openings 11am to 1pm (check St Mary's website for confirmation of opening).

During the forthcoming improvement works inside the church, arrangements are being made with the main contractor to enable Hull Homeless Outreach to continue to use the churchyard. Later this year, after this first phase of improvements is completed, although very basic, the new kitchen facilities should make the group's wonderful work a little easier.

# Thanks to Myton Law

**Hull law firm Myton Law as made a £500 donation to St Mary's improvement scheme 'Making St Mary's Fit For Our Communities'.**

Based on Nelson Street overlooking Victoria Pier, Myton Law is a specialist shipping, rail and logistics firm, so its association with St Mary's, which has many connections with the city's maritime and international trading past and houses monuments to Benjamin Blaydes, who it is believed built the Bounty, and to Thomas Wilson, who founded the Wilson Line, is particularly appropriate.

Following an appeal for donations, kindly circulated by Hull Incorporated Law Society in February, a number of Hull lawyers have made private donations and St Mary's Project Group and PCC would like to thank Myton Law and other city lawyers who have so kindly supported the scheme.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to those of you who renewed your subscriptions for the year from 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

**If you have not yet done so, please would you be kind enough to return the membership renewal form, which you will receive by email with this newsletter, along with your subscription for the year 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2020 to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to The Friends of St Mary's, St Mary the Virgin, Lowgate, Hull, HU1 1EJ.**

The amount you give to join the FoSM is at your discretion. A suggested minimum annual donation is £10 per person, but please feel free to give what you can afford.

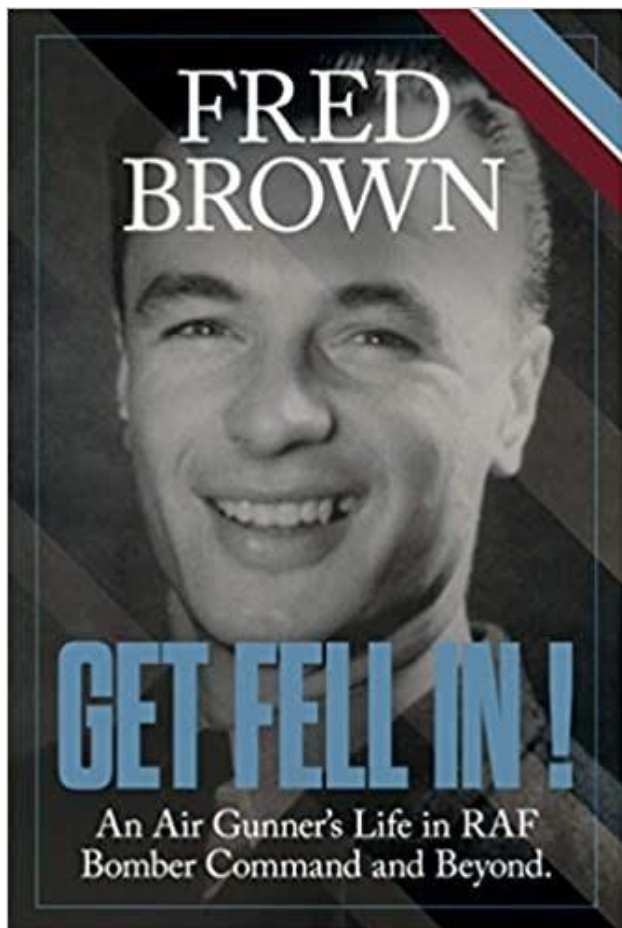
We are keen to encourage more people to join the Friends. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please let us know and we will post them a copy of the Friends leaflet which outlines our aims and how they can become a member.

**Thank you.**

## MEMORIES OF ST MARY'S SCOUT GROUP

Fred Brown, a member of St Mary's Scout Group in the 1930s, has published a memoir in which he describes being sent home early from St Mary's Sunday church parade on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1939, to hear an important announcement by the PM on the wireless.

Fred's book 'Get Fell In! An Air Gunner's Life in RAF Bomber Command and Beyond' has been published on Amazon.



Fred's daughter Jane Cutler writes:

Your parishioners may be interested in my father's story about the Second World War.

Dad grew up in Hull and the street where he was born in 1922 (Spyvee Street) was heavily bombed. Later he lived in Ellerby Close, Preston Road. He writes of his feelings as the day the war began approached and of cycling all over the East Riding on Sundays.

He emigrated to Adelaide, South Australia in 1965 and wrote the book after he retired. Much of it is based on the diary he kept during the war.

**Excerpts from Fred Brown's book:**

“EARLY DAYS

My journey had begun long ago, way back in 39, or even before. I had decided to join the

RAF as soon as I was 18, the decision I had taken long before the war started. The sight of Whitley bombers at RAF Leconfield excited me, I wanted to be part of it.

Sunday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, being the first Sunday in the month, was a uniform church parade for The St Mary's Lowgate Scout Group. The service finished about 10.15 am, instead of the usual get together after the service, T.L. Witty, the Group Scout Leader, a solicitor known to all as T.L. instructed us all to go home and listen to the wireless. He told us the Prime Minister was to make a statement at 11 am.

For almost a year, in fact ever since Mr. Chamberlain had returned from Munich waving his piece of paper saying 'Peace in our time' T.L. had been instructing the Rovers and senior scouts the rudiments of Air Raid Precautions, (ARP), gas drill, messenger duties, weekend winter camps and long hikes, all to prepare the group for a war which T.L. believed was inevitable T.L. instructed all Rover scouts to report to the ARP depot on Summergangs Rd at 2 pm. “

*And a couple of pages later:*

“Most of the rover scouts were now in the forces, our first casualty occurred in the Dunkirk evacuation. Four rover scouts were killed in action during the war, there's a memorial to them in St. Mary's Lowgate. Two aircrew, one in tanks, the other in the Navy. All good friends.”

Available only on Amazon just Google:

Amazon Get Fell In ! Fred Brown

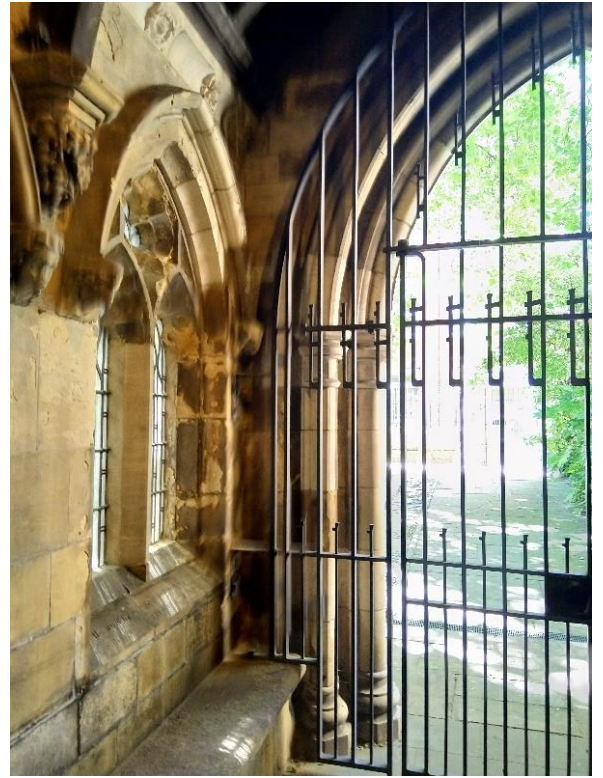
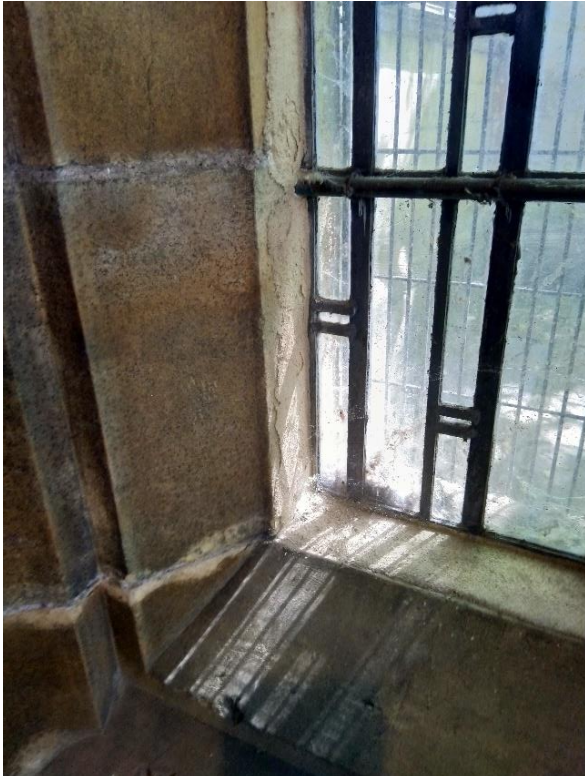
Paperback £9.95, Kindle £4.95

**If you have any memories of St Mary's, and you would be happy for us to publish them in a future newsletter, we'd like to hear from you?**

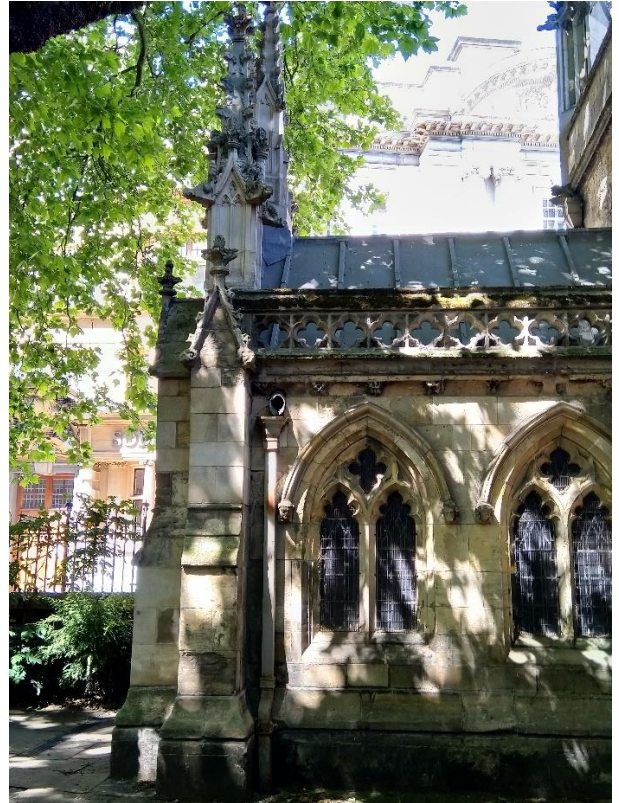
Please email us at:

friends@stmaryslowgate.org.uk





*'The greatest glory of a building is not in its stones nor its gold. Its glory is in its age and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy .... which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity' John Ruskin.*







*Caption – Churchyard characters*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**With the virus pandemic these continue to be uncertain times, but please put these dates in your diary and check the St Mary's website closer to the time to ensure they are confirmed before venturing out:**

### 2021

Good Friday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> April	1pm-2pm 2pm-3pm	Church open for the vigil and private prayer and reflection Meditation
Easter Day, Sunday, 4 <sup>th</sup> April	11am	Sung Eucharist
Saturday, 18 <sup>th</sup> September	11am 2pm	*Friends AGM *Friends 'The John Scott Lecture'

\*These Friends events are yet to be confirmed and a notice will be sent to Friends in due course.

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**Due to virus precautions general openings are suspended but St Mary's aims to be open again as follows as soon as possible:**

Thursdays	11am to 2pm
Fridays	11am to 2pm
Summer Saturdays	11am to 4pm (2021 dates to be confirmed)

Please encourage friends and family to visit – they will be very welcome.

Also, if you can spare time to be part of the volunteer team who keep St Mary's open on these days please do contact Churchwardens Hilary Newton and Olga Li La-Vigars at [info@stmaryslowgate.org.uk](mailto:info@stmaryslowgate.org.uk) or call the vestry on 01482 618199.

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### Regular services:

*Sundays	BCP Sung Eucharist	11am	approx. one hour
(Fridays	Holy Communion	12.30	approx. 35 mins) service currently suspended

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### Openings for Private Prayer:

*Saturdays	11am to 1pm
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\*Please check St Mary's' website for confirmation. During the forthcoming improvement works, which are expected to begin during April, our Sunday service and Openings for Private Prayer may be held in the Chapel of the Nativity or may move to Hull Minister temporarily – please visit our website to find out the latest arrangements.

*Newsletter produced by: The Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Lowgate, Kingston upon Hull, HU1 1EJ.  
Tel: 01482 618199. Email: [friends@stmaryslowgate.org.uk](mailto:friends@stmaryslowgate.org.uk)  
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