

ST FRANCIS.

A HISTORY OF THE NEWEST CHURCH IN CLEETHORPES.

The Beacon Hill Estate was built up gradually during the late 1940's to the mid 1960's and comprised of a mixture of semi-detached family houses, bungalows and flats, some privately owned and some owned by the council (now Shoreline). The inhabitants included many young families as well as elderly people. To cater for this new ever expanding estate the Revd Canon Richard Crookes at St Peter's Church in Cleethorpes decided that a new church needed to be built to bring the word of God to the estate.

The land for the church had been set aside when the estate was planned and had been given by Sidney Sussex College. Plans were passed in 1956 but had lapsed so in 1961 it was decided to build a dual purpose building which was sourced from a company in Wakefield called Lanner's. The construction method meant it could be built in six months as the sections were produced at the factory and erected on site on a prepared foundation. The plan was to use the building as a church and hall until a "proper" church could be built on adjacent land at a later date.

The fundraising for the new church was led energetically and memorably by the curate at St Peters at the time, the Revd Edward Harrison who had arrived in Cleethorpes in 1959 and, at a time of great recession was certainly not an easy task to undertake. Many can remember him at his happiest sitting on an upturned wooden box in the open streets of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, playing the accordion and entertaining children with his glove puppets while collection donations for the many charities he supported throughout his life.

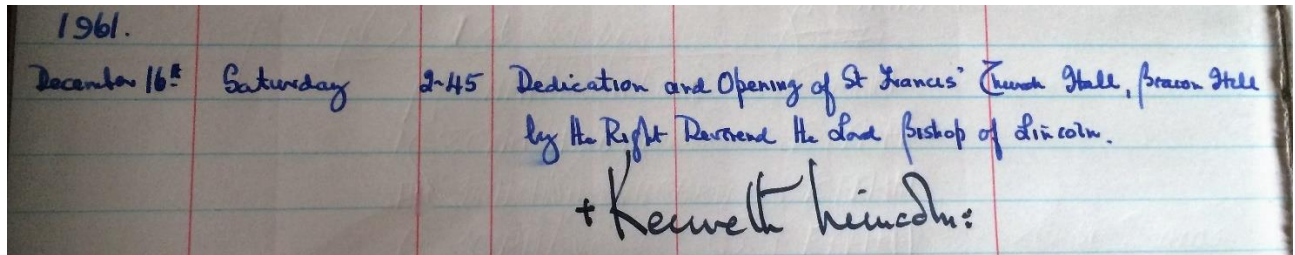


The Revd Edward Harrison.

Shortly before his death at the age of 79, at a home for retired clergy in Lancashire, he received a cheque from the people of Grimsby and Cleethorpes who fondly remembered the accordion playing priest. After his death his family

donated his glove puppets to the Borough of Cleethorpes so they could be included in a museum if ever one was built.

In a remarkably short time the money was raised and the new church, dedicated to St Francis, was built and Canon Crookes asked Brian Robinson and Peter Braithwaite (members of St Peters congregation) if they would go to St Francis for two years to help build up the congregation. St Francis Church was officially opened and dedicated on Saturday 16th December 1961 at 2.45 pm by the then Bishop of Lincoln the Rt Revd Kenneth Riches.

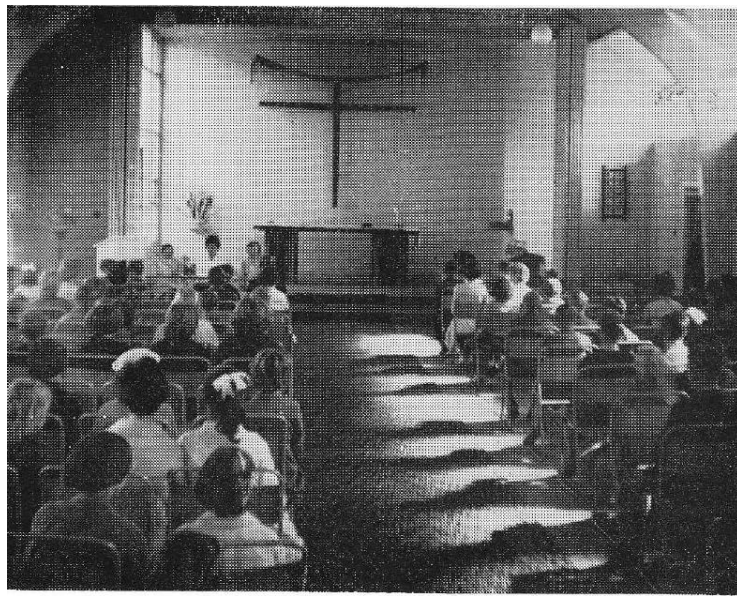


Details of St Francis's opening and dedication service.

As a mark of faith in the new church a large congregation turned up for the well-advertised opening service and a collection of £65 was taken. The Revd Harrison became the first Priest in Charge and Brian Robinson (along with his wife Pat) chose to remain at St Francis and was churchwarden for the next thirty-four years. Due to the large amount of young families on the estate the Sunday School had an unbelievable number of children, the congregation was large and Brian led a well-regarded Youth Club which, more than vindicated Canon Crookes faith in establishing a church on the Beacon Hill Estate.

The Revd Harrison remained at St Francis till 1963 when he was replaced by the Revd Robin Greenland. During Robins time, St Francis held its first christening on the 5th October 1963 and the church was so short of funds and equipment a font had to be borrowed from Old Clee Church so the service could go ahead. In an attempt to remedy this shortage of funds the first stewardship envelope scheme, to encourage giving, was started in December 1963. As the church grew it became apparent that it was not an ideal situation having the priest living away from the church at 66 Oxford Street so, in March 1964, discussions began to build St Francis House on land adjacent to the church hall. A £1500 grant was secured and the rest of the money was secured through fund raising which started in April 1965. After two years the money was raised and the house was built which was opened in April 1967.

In late 1965 the Revd Greenland decided to move on and was replaced by the Revd John Thorold, a former assistant Curate at St Peters who was persuaded by Canon Crookes to take the job. John and his young family had the distinction of being the first St Francis Priest in Charge to live next to the church when they moved in to St Francis House in 1967.



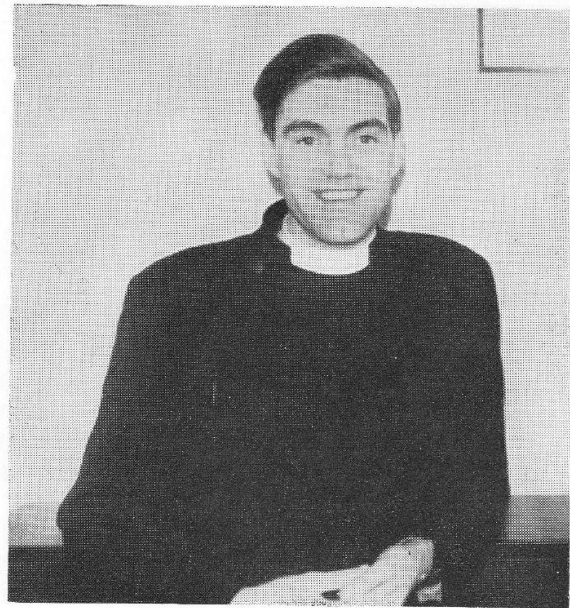
An early picture of St Francis Church.



St Francis decorated for Easter.

Once John, his wife Joyce and their three young children had moved in they quickly began the task of further increasing the congregation at St Francis. This flyer sent out in 1966 shows the vision that John had for St Francis.

Worship and Prayer at St. Francis' Church



SUNDAY SERVICES

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (last Sunday in month only).
- 9.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist (10.00 a.m. on last Sunday only).
- 10.45 a.m. Junior School.
- 11.45 a.m. Infant Sunday School.
- 3.15 p.m. Holy Baptism (1st Sunday in month).
- 6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon.

Week-day Services

- Holy Communion each Thursday morning at 7.00 a.m.
- Pram Service for Mothers and small children on the
1st Wednesday in each month at 2.45 p.m.

St. Francis' Church is a daughter Church of St. Peter and looks to "the rock whence it was hewn." This Church serves the growing population of the Beacon Hill Estate, which at the moment stands at 7,000, but it may well grow to as much as 12,000. Being a Dual-Purpose building, St. Francis does not have the tradition of the Mother Church, but slowly and surely a worshipping community is emerging. The main support at the moment comes from the younger members of the parish—we have a Sunday School and Junior Church numbering over 160—and the "teenagers" play a great part in the life of the Church on Beacon Hill. It is hoped in the near future to build a house for the Priest-in-Charge near to the Church, and eventually to be able to erect a permanent Church on the land which is available alongside the building that we are using at the moment.

Arrangements concerning Baptisms or Churchings can always be made with the Priest-in-Charge after any service at St. Francis', or at his house (66, Oxford Street; Tel. No. 63530).



St Francis Harvest of the Sea Supper introduced by the Revd John Thorold

Saturday Night Group

This group is composed of older teenagers who meet each Saturday night at St. Francis to discuss a varied programme of interesting topics. Subjects such as Church unity, nuclear disarmament, and contraception have been tackled with great interest, and at present a programme is being prepared for the next few months. The group also provides help for various Church activities, including the Sunday Schools, 50-50 Dances and the Youth Club, and has voluntarily cleaned St. Francis Church both inside and out. Recently, several members have gone away to College or University, so that fewer people have been present to take part in the discussions. If anyone would like to come along to St. Francis at 7.30 on a Saturday evening, they would be most welcome.



The "Saturday Night Group" which was introduced to try and bring youth into the church



The Church Extension Society Dinner and Dance with (from the front right) the Revd Richard Crookes, Revd John Thorold and the Revd Doug Perry who took the first Sunday service at St Francis, also shown are (from the front left) churchwardens Charles Warrender and Brian Robinson.

For the 50th Anniversary edition of the Grapevine (our parish magazine) in 2011, John was asked to write an article about his time at St Francis which I have reproduced here as I think it brings back some wonderful memories of the time.

Memories of St Francis - from Canon John S. Thorold

I was delighted to receive the invitation to share my memories of my time at St Francis Joyce and I, (proud but poor parents of three children under five) arrived in Cleethorpes in September 1963, taking up residence at 66 Oxford Street, next door to an excellent baker and opposite a newsagent.

Canon Richard Crookes was the vicar and a supportive friend. Revd Greenland with his wife Liz and children, was Priest in charge of St. Francis on the ever expanding and interesting Beacon Hill Estate. I, as assistant Curate, made up the team.

When Robin Greenland decided, in late 1965, that the time had come for him to move on, Canon Crookes asked me to become the third Priest in Charge of St. Francis. This was an exciting time, especially as the brand new Priest 'sHouse was in the process of being built. Eventually we moved in to the new building which the people of St. Francis had long awaited not least because Ernest Harrison and Robin Greenland had resided in Oxford Street and Bradford Avenue, and therefore they had felt remote from the people of the Beacon Hill Estate. To have the Priest in Charge actually living next door to the Church was such an important stage in the life of the Church.

I can hardly believe that I am writing about a time of forty-five years ago. I have memories of a dark haired young Curate taking Junior Church and Infant Sunday School— with huge numbers of children. One occasion always stands out in my memories: that of a boy and his sister who had come to Church bringing their baby brother in a pushchair. The baby started to cry. I carried on the Sunday School, holding the baby. Norma was dispatched to the parents. She rushed back with the news, "You can keep the older two but can you send the baby home!"

I could not have done my job without the back-up of the "Saturday Night Gang" and I'm delighted to say that we keep in touch with some of them. I would like to pay tribute to my two wonderful Church Wardens and their wives- Charles Warrender and Brian Robinson. Without their unfailing support my task would have been more onerous.

What memories we have-the Animals and Pets Service, the Harvest of the Sea and supper, the 50-50 dances, the dancing and talent shows (Gwen and her hard-working team), and many more, not least Beryl's voice reverberating around the Youth Club, gaining order, love and respect as she went.

I could write a book about my time at St.Francis, and indeed a friend suggested a title, "Fish Scales on my Cassock" but that's for the future, may be !

Meanwhile, my grateful thanks to the people of St .Francis for their warm and loving friendship, and God's Blessing on you all'

Canon John S Thorold

John stayed at St Francis until 1970 when, after a year in interregnum, the Revd George Parrott was appointed Priest in Charge in 1971. Like John, George was similarly asked to write about his time at St Francis which I have again reproduced here.

George Parrott

In 1971 a family of six rather depressed people took up residence in St. Francis' House and so began a very important and meaningful period in our life. We had not long returned from Zambia rather precipitately, had been suffering from jaundice – or rather, three of us had - and were taken on by Richard Crookes to minister on the Estate. What was intended to be only a brief stay to get our feet back in the Church of England system turned out to be of far greater significance.

Real friendships developed which have continued to the present. The Churchwardens Brian and Charles and later Bruce were of enormous support together with Pat, and the two Marys. Beryl became a close family friend and encourager. We were introduced to lots of good things, Harvest of the Sea, Easter Tea and Pets' Service being amongst them. I managed to persuade Richard Crookes that it would be appropriate to celebrate an adult confirmation at St. Francis'. There had not been a confirmation there before. Amongst the candidates were Carol Harris, Barry and Dorothy McKenna and Maureen Cottingham. I look back to that occasion as an important milestone in the development of St. Francis'.

With small children of our own we concentrated a lot of effort on children's work, with a children's choir, the Three Hours' Activity on Good Friday,

various seasonal courses and providing a good deal of input into the Sunday School, which had a good band of teachers. We came to realise how vital and challenging children's work at St. Francis was – and of course still is! It was at St. Francis that our family stabilised and started to grow up. Mary and Martin attended St. Peter's School, Frances went to the Play Group, and, as soon as she could, Helena gate-crashed into Play Group as well.

St. Francis is a caring, welcoming, lively, hard-working place that encourages and accepts all. When the time came to leave we went with fresh hope, even wondering why we were leaving at all! On this fortieth anniversary I wish St. Francis congregation everything they would wish for themselves and I have every confidence that with God's help they will achieve it. Thank you for what you gave us as a family and for your continued interest in us and your support since 1975, I can assure you I will continue to be interested in your welfare and pray that you will grow stronger and stronger as a separate Parish – a long held dream now a little nearer being realised. I do hope that in some small way we were able to repay your ministry to us by our weak and unworthy ministry among you. As St. Francis would say, 'the Lord give you peace'.



The Revd George Parrott with a confirmation class.

Up to this time the music at St Francis had been provided by a piano but it was felt at the time by the P.C.C that congregation's always sing with more "gusto" when accompanied by an organ so, a new Compton Cantata organ was purchased at a cost of £1,180. This was first used within the church on the 15th October 1971.

Also during 1971 the first discussions took place within the P.C.C with regards to raising the funds to start building the church on the land adjacent to the church hall. It was suggested that the money needed could be raised by asking people to donate Green Shield Stamp books to the church.

George stayed until 1975 when, after a year's interregnum, the Revd Julian Dunn was appointed Priest in Charge at St Francis. Julian's time at St Francis was to mark a time of great change, not only in the appearance of the building but also in the way St Francis was run. As it became more apparent that the funds could not be raised to build the new church it was decided to improve the church hall with a series of additions. Firstly, the storage room at the left hand side of the chancel was added in November 1976 and, in March 1977 a major program of alterations was planned. The cost of the improvements was estimated at £8830 and included the new entrance to the building from Sandringham Road, half the committee room and the lady's toilet became the Lady Chapel, the old entrance from the side of the church became the new lady's toilet, the old vestry became the kitchen, the old kitchen and the choir vestry became the new vestry and gas central heating was installed in the church for the first time. The work was funded by a grant from the Dioceses of £5000, a grant from St Peter's Church of £1000, £1000 from St Francis church funds and a mortgage of £2000 from the Church Extension Society. Once again the idea of using Green Shield Stamps was looked into as a means of raising the necessary funds and it was estimated that 3,600 books would be required but, alternatives had to be sort when in June 1977 Tesco supermarkets withdrew from the scheme and the whole Green Shield empire collapsed as a result. This however did not deter the P.C.C from sending a strongly worded letter to the Chairman of Tesco's explaining their disgust at this decision

by the main board but, nothing came of it. The work was carried out in stages so as not to hinder the life of the church too much, the first stage to be completed was the new chapel which was dedicated as the "Chapel of our Lady" in September 1977. The rest of the work was spaced out over the next eighteen months and was finally completed in March 1979. Julian also wrote about his time at St Francis which I have included here.

Memories of Saint Francis
Julian Dunn

I was fortunate to be at St Francis in Cleethorpes at a very interesting time in its history. In 1976, when I arrived with August, Antony and Timothy – and Fred, our Siamese cat – there had been an interregnum of nearly two years. Brian Wisken had been Vicar of St. Peter's for a few months and my appointment had been one of his first duties.

Change had been built into the expectations of everyone right from the outset as there were plans well advanced to create a Team Ministry made up of the Parishes of Old Clee, St Aidan's and St. Peter's with St. Francis. But first, there were relationships to be established, work to be done, and I had to find my way round a new town and come to terms with such forms of endearment as 'Flower' and 'Petal' used of both male and female.

Relationships were pretty easy as we were made very welcome, not, I hope, just because there had been such a long vacancy. The whole congregation was united in wanting to take the church forward into its new Team status, delayed when Old Clee decided not to come into the Team thus separating the two parts of the Team from each other.

But the new status demanded that St. Francis grow from being a daughter church, with the dependency that goes with it – financial dependency, frequent changes of priest who see it as a stepping stone to a 'more responsible' post, a church committee with less authority than its neighbours. Added to that was the fact that it was a dual-purpose building. For most of those who used it, it was where they went for Friday night Bingo or took the children to playgroup and not a church.

One of my first priorities was to create a space that would clearly identify the building as a church so, with a lot of hard work and assistance from the Deanery Churches Extension Fund, the Lady Chapel was constructed, just off the new entrance facing the road. The Chapel was dedicated by Simon Phipps, the Bishop of Lincoln, on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1978. What had been seen by many people as little more than a community centre, now had the church visibly welcoming them to Brownies and Bingo.

But the change of status brought with it more complicated changes in relationships with other structures. The District Committees of St. Aidan's, St. Francis' and St. Peter's were all in theory of equal status but finances were very different. The Team clergy were also more equal in status but it

took a number of years to break down the old thought-patterns. St. Francis' still didn't look like a church and it was an uphill struggle to be seen as a natural place for a wedding or a baptism. But that made the few such occasions all the more special because couples or parents had made a conscious decision to choose St. Francis' because of the warmth of the welcome they had received.

And that was central to the life of St. Francis'. During the rather more than eight years I was there, I made many friends and am still in touch with quite a few. During those years, there were several central people who seemed to have dedicated their lives to the church – Beryl Lyons who seemed to be there 24 hours a day; Bruce Metcalf who was Churchwarden and Santa Claus for years, and Mary Metcalf who was in charge of the Monday Club; Olive Townsley who fell in and out of love with St. Francis' and eventually fell out of love with the Church of England and went to Corpus Christi.

And there are so many who were important then and are still around – John and Di Sharp – organ, choir and Junior Church; John Silvester – muscles at the end of Bingo; the Robinsons, Browns, Calders, McKennas, Meechans, Cottinghams and the young server I was for some time convinced was a boy but insisted she was called Kaye!

And there were the other clergy – Brian Wisken with whom I fought many a battle for what I saw as St. Francis' autonomy and independence; Lindsay Bowman with whom I fought frequent verbal battles; David James at St. Aidan's; Derek Webster, still one of my dearest friends. Ah, they were interesting times!

In 1975 Canon Richard Crookes left St Peter's and was replaced by the Revd Brian Wisken who, in 1976, started to lay the foundations of what was to become the Cleethorpes Team Ministry. It was initially going to include all five Anglican churches in Cleethorpes but, Old Clee and Christchurch had reservations about the plan and so, both decided to opt out. In February 1977 everything was in place and the Cleethorpes Team Ministry was born with Brian as Team Rector and included just three churches namely St Peters, St Francis and St Aidan's.

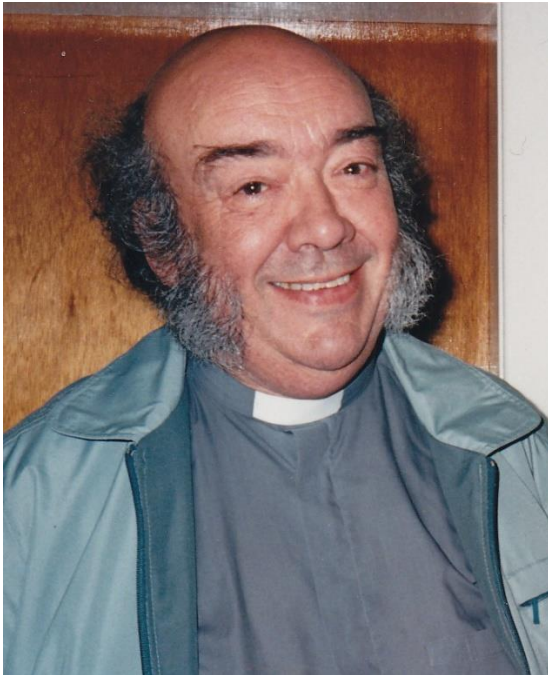
One other notable event at this time, which was on the 2nd September 1979, the Revd Dr Derek Webster officiated at his first service at St Francis. Over the coming years Derek was to become a very good friend to all at St Francis.



The Revd Julian Dunn making a presentation to Bruce and Mary Metcalf during his time at St Francis with churchwarden Brian Robinson looking on.

Julian remained at St Francis until 1985 when he was replaced by the Revd Stuart Eveson. Stuarts stay was cut short when, after an altercation with at least one member of the congregation, felt he had to leave.

So, in 1986 St Francis once again found itself without a priest and had to rely on clergy from within the Cleethorpes Team Ministry to fill in for services. This included a new curate at St Peters who had arrived in 1986, the Revd Ian Slater who, as he neared the end of his curacy became more and more involved in taking services at St Francis. Once his training had been completed Brian Wisken ask Ian to become Team Vicar at St Francis which he duly agreed to and was licensed in 1988.



The Revd Ian Slater pictured at the Summer Fair with his trademark brown cords.

During the late eighties Pete Stacey presented to St Francis a mural by local artist Tina Gray (which can be seen above the sanctuary) depicting, in a modern way, the theme that “God is everywhere” the mural was paid for by the charity Project 85 which Pete founded.



Tina Gray pictured working on her mural above the Sanctuary.

In 1989 it was becoming apparent that the wooden windows on the north side of the church were beginning to deteriorate and, only being single glazed, were contributing to a lot of heat loss during the winter. It was therefore decided to replace them with double glazed UPVC windows. A funding campaign was started and in 1990 enough money had been raised to completely replace all the windows. Another notable event which happened at this time is when Ian and his wife Maureen decided to host a barbecue in the garden of St Francis House for the congregation and, set up the barbecue next to the house. Unbeknown to them it caught fire and was only just put out before it spread to the house. Ian stayed at St Francis until 1992 when, after being offered the post of Rector of St Peter and St Paul Parish Church in his home village of Cherry Willingham, Ian decided to move on. This again left St Francis having to rely on the Cleethorpes Team for pastoral support until in 1993 Father Terry Atkinson was licenced as Team Vicar of St Francis.

During 1989 the now Canon Brian Wisken left St Peter's for a post at St Nicholas Church in the shadow of Lincoln Cathedral and, in 1990 was replaced by an ex-army Brigadier the Revd Tom Robinson as Team Rector. Tom seemed to be less enthusiastic for the concept of the Cleethorpes Team Ministry than his predecessor which, was never very popular with the three churches involved so, after a very acrimonious funding campaign led by Tom, was abandoned in 1996 when St Francis once again became a Conventional District and was able to work independently with its own P.C.C and have charge of its own finances.

Terry, now Priest in Charge, remained at St Francis until 2001 when he moved down the coast to take up a post at St Clément's Church, Sutton-on-Sea.



Father Terry Atkinson pictured cutting the cake at the 40th Anniversary Celebrations of St Francis's Church opening in 2001 with churchwarden Kay Pinner looking on.

In December 2001 St Francis celebrated its 40th Anniversary and in a special edition of the Grapevine various longstanding members of our congregation were asked to put in to words some of their memories of St Francis which, I think is worthy of inclusion in our history.



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND JUNIOR CHURCH SINCE 1960's

During the time Rev. John Thorold was at St. Francis, Sunday School met on a Sunday afternoon at 3pm. It started with a service of about twenty minutes with hymns, prayers and a story, and then the children 'split up' into groups taken by John and other members of the congregation.

When Rev. George Parrott came, the time of Sunday School was changed, it was after the morning family Eucharist, from 11pm to 12pm approximately (In those days the Eucharist service started at 9.30am). There were many helpers that were on a rota system including, Brian, Barrie, Eric, Carole Harris, John Silvester, and others.

All changed again when Rev. Julian Dunn was at St Francis. The children met at 10am and came into church for communion or a blessing with the congregation (as happens now), at approximately 10.45pm. As the Lady Chapel hadn't been added to the building, the younger children and teachers went over to the house for their activities, and the older members stayed in the vestry. Diane, Pat Robinson and myself looked after the younger children, Brian and his helpers took the older group. When Roderick Clarke joined the church he helped with the Senior group. (Apologies to anyone I have missed out—the memory isn't as good as it used to be!!).



St Francis Sunday School Party

Just like to mention some of the Special occasions with the Sunday School.

The summer outings were always in July. Places visited were Mablethorpe, Lakeside Lido, Hubbards Hills and the favourite two, Elsham Hall and Normandby Park. These outings weren't for the children only, the whole congregation were involved. Coaches cost a lot of money so everyone with a car took children and grown-ups alike in a convoy of cars after the Sunday Service—it was like a mass exodus! The annual summer outings were always church outings, a happy social affair. One July on the way to Mablethorpe we stopped at the vicarage in Witherm, and had our packed lunches in George and Barbara Parrott's garden.

One lovely summer's day St Francis Sunday School joined St Aidans and St Peter's on a double decker bus and journeyed to Lincoln Cathedral for the Diocesan Sunday School Convention. We took with us a huge banner made by all our children. It was a collage with St Francis, Cleethorpes in large letters at the top, and a beach scene underneath which included the pier, sea, sand, shells, donkeys, etc. The banner was paraded with pride around the inside of the Cathedral with the banners from all the other Sunday Schools in the Diocese. Pat, Diane and myself all remembered with a smile one comment made by one of our young members called Shaun. As we walked around the Cathedral he looked around in awe and said "It must take ages to pack this church up," Having watched St Francis chairs being packed away every week he must have thought all churches did the same!

Mothering Sunday with the tradition of giving bunches of daffodils to mothers, grandmothers and congregation has always been special to the Sunday School, as they have always played a leading part. One Mothering Sunday in Julian's time he wove his sermon around the subject of the Simnel Cake. On a table at the front of the church as a large mixing bowl and during the story each child added an ingredient to the bowl. The very small children had an ingredient printed on a card and they took them up to the front. At the end of the story the ingredients were mixed. They were put

Into a baking tin and Di Sharpe took it home to bake. On Easter Sunday the cake was cut up and eaten by all.

The Christingle service so well attended by Sunday School members and others has always involved the children which has given a wonderful, spirited start to the Christmas celebrations.

When Roderick Clarke was with us, he organised with the Sunday school teachers and others, a Good Friday Activity Day for the children in the area to give them a Christian based fun day. To our shock and delight approximately 80 children poured through the church doors. The day was hard work but a huge success, enjoyed by all.

Brian and myself carried on taking Sunday School until July 1998, and then Andy and Jenny with their helpers took up the challenge and Junior Church has continued, whereas in many churches Sunday School has 'fallen by the wayside!'

Eileen Calder

NOT JUST A BUILDING

The church is seen as a family affair as many families attend. Well my family have been going to Saint Francis Church since the first day it was open. My mum, Ann Silvester, has been attending Saint Francis Church since the age of seven. She has seen many changes within the church as well as many new faces that have joined the church. I asked my mum what was church life like for her when she was a child? Her reply was, "It's very similar as it is today as we still have a Sunday School and seasonal fairs and other annual events". I then asked my mum how she joined Saint Francis Church? Her reply was, "My mum used to drop me off at Sunday School and pick me up afterwards, then she was invited to a mother's day service and attended, then she became a member of the congregation". So from then on my mum, and my grandparents (Bob and Joyce Brocklesby, who are now sadly deceased) were members of Saint Francis Church. Other family members attended such as, my great aunt Margery and my great uncle John who is still a loyal member with his wife Dorothy. My mum's cousin, Carol Bennett was also a member of the congregation. My mum became a leader of the Sunday school, my granddad, Bob Brocklesby, was the treasurer for a number of years and my dad, John Silvester, who later joined, was a Church Warden for a number of years and is now Lettings Manager and a member of the PCC.

My dad joined Saint Francis Church in 1975 when he started helping at the summer and Christmas fairs, he then decided to get confirmed so he joined the congregation at Saint Francis and began confirmation classes there.

My mum and dad were married at Saint Francis Church on the 19th February 1977 they were one of the first marriages to happen there, it was also Father Julian's first task as the new priest in charge. My brother Allen was born in 1979 and he was baptized at the church, as I was five years later. My brother and I have grown up in the congregation of Saint Francis Church and have also seen drastic changes (the green walls) and many new faces. Allen was a server at the church and was involved in many other aspects of church life. I, too, have been a server for a number of years and I, too, have many rolls in the church. We have also attended many youth programmes within the church such as Sunday school, youth club, Sunday school trips and the Big Foot summer club that happened in the early 90's.

Allen and I have experienced church life within four priests, these were Father Julian, Father Stuart, Father Ian and Father Terry, although I can only remember the last two.

I guess the main family events that happened in the church for my family were my parents wedding, my brother's baptism, my baptism and my confirmation which was special as I was only 8 years old and had special permission from the Bishop.

Family makes the church what it is not just a place to practice faith but a friendly surrounding and I hope in another forty years time one of my descendents will be able to write about their life in Saint Francis Church.

Joann Silvester



John Sharp at our present day organ

MUSIC AT ST. FRANCIS'



"I don't think you should get rid of the piano," said Canon Crookes, that wise and generous counsellor of the early days of St Francis' Church. "Congregations sing much more heartily accompanied by a piano. They shut up with an organ."

Well, even such a wise old bird as Canon Crookes could get it wrong on occasions. Bert Mason, St Francis's first organist and choirmaster, had initially managed with a prodigiously heavy wrist and finger action to allow himself to be heard on the piano above the healthy singing of the dozen or so boys he miraculously conjured up and blessed with the name of choir. However, he very quickly encouraged the purchase of an organ.

The organ was entirely appropriate for the church's needs, and at the forefront of the technology of the times. I well remember him lovingly demonstrating some of the subtleties of tone he could evince from it, a display later to be replicated and a more sophisticated organ some twenty-five years later by Nick, a similarly inspired enthusiast.

Alas, shortly after he had constructed an impregnable fortress to protect his beloved organ, but before he had time to settle down to regular performance on Sunday mornings, Bert felt he had to move on. In desperation, George Parrott approached the present author. By default he remained for the next quarter of a century, give or take a year or two, and eventually grew to enjoy the job.

He had no great pretensions to musicianship, but did like hearing people sing heartily. His modest philosophy was based on the fact that most folk have a limited breath span and that, therefore, hymns have to be sung considerably faster than the prescribed metronome markings and that when they sang *Colours of Day* the congregation should feel the urge to waltz out of their pews.

Choirs had brief, but pleasant, life-spans. They graced various occasions but did not become permanent institutions. Their role was often to introduce new material into St. Francis' worship. Some of those lovely hymns of Sebastian Temple and Estelle White, for example, were introduced to our church through the small, unpretentious choir which met on Sunday afternoons just for the joy of singing. Later, another choir attempted four-part singing and tackled more ambitious projects. However, the strength of the singing at the church lies in the uninhibited efforts of the congregation. The friendly acoustics and the sheer abandonment of any pretensions to professionalism have created a joyous sound, which rarely fails.

And that brings us back to Canon Crookes. The congregation didn't "shut up". And now, with Nick at the helm, and with all the grandeur he is able to evince from the fine instrument he acquired for us and his ever-increasing powers of interpretation, it is difficult to see how they ever will.

John Sharp

Soon after our 40th Anniversary celebrations it increasingly became apparent that the building was again in need of major refurbishment which, due to a change in the law, had to include disabled access to all parts of the church as well as disabled toilets. For inclusion in our 50th Anniversary edition of the Grapevine, the churchwarden at the time Pat Ford wrote an article explaining the difficulties St Francis faced at this time which I have also included.

As we celebrated our 40th Anniversary in 2001 we were seven months into an interregnum after Father Terry left in the May. We saw it as facing a long period when we would have to manage without a priest and we relied very heavily on Father Ray Simmons who was always so willing to take our services despite increasing ill health. I don't think there were any weeks when we did not have a Eucharist service thanks almost entirely to Ray and we must also thank Jennie for her support.

We were then extremely lucky that Revd. Terrie Stott joined us in February 2004, first as Chaplain to Matthew Humberstone School then to St Andrew's Hospice as well as being Priest in Charge at St Francis. We lost several people who felt unable to accept the ministry of a woman but Terrie was able to lead us brilliantly into the future. She ran a Parish Foundation Course that led to John, Carole and me becoming Lay Ministers. She also started the plans to upgrade the building. After slow progress and many 'false starts' we had plans drawn up to remove the stage and open up the area to create a usable space. We worked really hard on a bid to WREN which was refused. We were actually relieved because we had realised how useful the stage is because of a splendid concert in aid of the building fund by Adele Dixon and friends. We then had more help with a new application, notably from Helen Howard at VANEL and Ben from WREN, and we were successful with a smaller scheme to provide new toilets and access. We also had a very generous grant from NELC thanks mainly to Colin Eastwell. For the fundraising we had many excellent events and the support from the hirers and many anonymous donors was brilliant. The 'spend a penny' campaign was brilliant using Hilary's ingenious toilet box and many other things like toilet rolls to collect in. We must thank the Guides and Rainbows for their help when we laid the pennies out and Bishop David for leading the service and everyone who contributed to the huge collection. We found out how banks deal with pennies; they give you big plastic bags to put in 20 one pound bags of either one or two pence pieces. Counting took ages but it was brilliant!

As Pat previously mentioned, the Revd Terrie Stott was licensed as Priest in Charge of St Francis in February 2004 and one of Terrie's first projects was to improve the front of the church. The idea had been around for a least a year but in 2004 finally came to fruition when the churches name was added to the cross to make the church more visible to the local community.





The Rev Terrie Stott at her welcoming service to St Francis taken by the Bishop of Grimsby the Rt Rev David Rosedale also shown is Pat Robinson who has been at St Francis since it opened.

Just after Terrie's arrival in July 2004 an event took place that devastated the Christian community of Grimsby and Cleethorpes. The Revd Dr David Peacock (who had replaced Tom Robinson as Rector of St Peter's in 2000) died in tragic circumstances. David's dream was to unify all the five Anglican churches in Cleethorpes under one banner namely, the Cleethorpes Federation of Churches but this was abandoned upon his death.

During early 2009 Bishop David asked Terrie to leave St Francis and after a short while, she moved to the West Grimsby Team Ministry as priest of St Nicholas' Church, Great Coates.

In June 2009 an extraordinary P.C.C meeting was held with our future very much in mind. It had been indicated by Bishop David that we were unlikely to get another priest in situ but it was agreed unanimously that St Francis Church must remain as "a worshipping presence" in the area and, a "Ten Points of Mission" plan was formulated. Once this had been decided, John Sharp organised a rota with the Deanery Clergy to try and maintain a pattern of two services a month offering Holy Communion, with the remaining services being a Service of the Word conducted by our own Lay Ministry team of Pat Ford, Carole Payne, John Sharp and Margaret Blades. Over the years we became overwhelmed with the level of clergy support we received and in the early days with the help of the Revd Derek Webster, Bishop John Brown, the Revd Louise Vincer and later with the help of the Revd Richard Holden, the Revd Paul Hunter, the Revd Daffyd Robinson and the Revd Nick Nawrockyi we were able to offer Holy Communion on most Sundays of the year.

On the 16th December 2011, St Francis celebrated its 50th Anniversary and a special celebration service was organised lead by the Archdeacon the Venerable Jane Sinclair and, included some of our ex-clergy and some special guests.



Archdeacon Jane Sinclair pictured at our 50th Anniversary service with ex-clergy the Revd Canon John Thorold, the Revd Julian Dunn, the Revd George Parrott and guests.



Elsie and Melissa, the oldest and youngest members of our congregation cut our celebration cake.

In 2015 the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Revd Christopher Lowson, introduced a new initiative within the Lincoln Diocese with aim of increasing the number of clergy. On Sunday the 17th January 2016, St Francis had a visitation from our new Archdeacon the Venerable Mark Steadman who wanted to review the parish and following this review, and a meeting with the P.C.C, were informed that after seven years St Francis could once again have its own dedicated priest.

On Monday 19th September 2016, after being possibly one of the worst kept secrets in Cleethorpes, the Revd Nick Nawrockyi was licenced Priest in Charge of St Francis by Bishop Christopher in the chapel at Edward King House which is next to Lincoln Cathedral.



The Revd Nick Nawrockyi at his licencing by the Bishop of Lincoln.



Nick with his two new churchwardens Margaret Blades and Nigel Mumby.

As a way of introducing himself to us and also for inclusion with the announcement on the Lincoln Diocese website, Nick wrote a short biography about himself which I have included.



The Revd Nick Nawrockyi



They say 'Once a Yorkshireman, always a Yorkshireman', but I don't really think that applies to me! Although I was born in York, I have lived most of my life in Lincolnshire and it is very much my home. I grew up in Barnetby and went first to the local church primary school (my first encounter with life in the Church of England!) and then on to Caistor Grammar School. It was during my late teens that I came to faith, in part due to the encouragement of my two best friends at school, and also because of the importance of 'belonging before believing'. I started attending the local Baptist church.

I read Classics at the University of Durham, and as my faith grew and changed in those years, I discovered for the first time that sense of sacred space in Durham Cathedral. As I became part of the cathedral community, I began to explore more formally a calling to ordained ministry. I remained at Durham for a fourth year, taking an MA in Theology. I trained for ministry at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, which opened my eyes not only to the importance of liturgy and music as being the heart of discipleship, but also to the nature of being part of a community. As a Companion of the Community of the Resurrection, those values are particularly important to my sense of ministry.

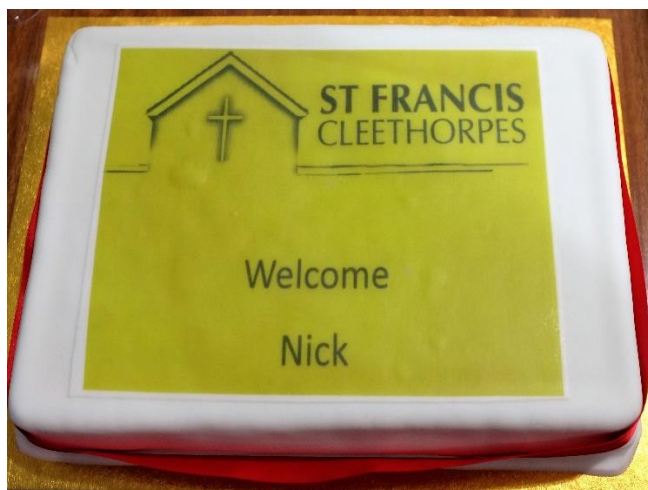
When offered the chance to come to Grimsby as a curate, there were no hesitations in saying 'yes.' It felt like I was coming home. I have had four blessed years as part of the town centre team ministry, with congregations and colleagues who mean a great deal to me. I rejoice that we're not going to be very far away from each other! My appointment as Interim Minister at St Francis is perhaps an unusual one, in that I've actually been working there for the past three years! What started as simply providing cover one Sunday a month has blossomed into a relationship of mutual trust and shared ministry between us all. There hasn't been a 'vicar' at St Francis for seven years now, and it is the perfect opportunity to begin a new chapter in our lives together as a community.

The Archdeacon of Stow and Lindsey, The Ven. Mark Steadman, adds: The Bishop of Lincoln and I are excited about Nick's appointment as Interim Minister at St Francis. During a long period without a priest, people at St Francis have done a wonderful job in sustaining and developing their life together. As part of the bishop's commitment to increasing the number of stipendiary clergy in the diocese, it is good to welcome Nick to his full-time responsibilities. The post has been designated as an Interim one. This is to be responsive to the particular mission needs and opportunities that exist on the Beacon Hill Estate, and in wider Cleethorpes, but also recognise that these are evolving. The appointment of an Interim Minister will assist in achieving a desire to see St Francis grow whilst enabling future conversations about ministerial deployment across this part of Cleethorpes at the same time as seeking to pastorally strengthen the church. The appointment is for an initial period of three years, which can then be renewed. Please join me in praying for Nick as he prepares for this exciting new role.

On Thursday the 20th October 2016, the Bishop of Grimsby, the Rt Revd Dr David Court welcomed Nick to St Francis at a special service.



Nick being welcomed by Bishop David at a special service held in St Francis Church.



Nick pictured with his special cake.



Nick pictured with Bishop David and colleagues who came to support him at his Welcome Service.

In early 2015 St Francis launched its first website provided by the Diocese of Lincoln in the hope, that by using modern technology we may be able to link better with our local community. The website may be viewed using the link <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/cleethorpes-st-francis/> . In October 2016 Nick took the idea further and launched our own website designed by himself. This can be viewed by using the link <http://www.stfranciscleethorpes.com/> and we also gained a presence on social media with our own Facebook page which can be viewed using the link <https://www.facebook.com/stfranciscleethorpes/> .

As we move into a new chapter in the history of St Francis I would like to finish with our Mission Statement which I think sums up what we have achieved over the past fifty – five years of our existence and hope to achieve in the future.

As God's family on this estate we aim to be an effective Christian presence by affirming our faith in the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and by committing ourselves to share his Good News.

In order to do this, we seek: -

to develop our own spirituality through prayer, worship, study and the Sacraments;

to develop our awareness of the needs of the community thus being enabled to offer support and encouragement;

to use the building to its full potential as a community resource;

to extend and develop lay participation in pastoral work;

to commit ourselves, by prayer and action, to the wider work of the universal Church.

To be continued

Appendix.

During a more thorough search of our parish archive I came across a box which had been placed there by Brian Robinson, one of our original churchwardens. It contained a lot of information about the early days of St Francis which I will include here.

Firstly, was a copy of a letter written by the Revd E. A Harrison which was handed out around the estate in early 1961 and explains how the new church was to be funded.

TO BEACON HILL RESIDENTS,

Those of you who trade in St Peter's Avenue, and elsewhere in Cleethorpes, will have seen the Collecting Boxes marked "St Francis Church, Beacon Hill". The name "St Francis" has caught the imagination, and the inspiration of the name for this Church came from the Vicar.

There was a meeting held at Beacon Hill School on Thursday 16th March; and many residents of the Beacon Hill Estate attended, but those that did formed themselves into a Committee, and intend to get moving without delay. Spiritually as well as financially they intend to go ahead. You, my reader, can help in both ways, for remember "movements of constructive thought" always come from the few. By the time you read these notes, an excellent poster will have been erected on the site. Go there and have a look at it, and go do something about it. Talk is cheap, but actions speak louder than words! You may think quite rightly, "What have you done yourself?". I am quite prepared to let anyone know, on condition that they themselves will do the same, since I have always held that if my religion costs me nothing, then it is worth as much. So this is a challenge to you, my reader. What I am concerned about this venture is that we have been compelled to borrow £3000 at 6% for 15 years, and this means that for the for 15 years we shall have to find a considerable sum of money each year in order to pay the interest and some of the capital. This could easily become a nightmare for any Vicar and Churchwardens, and surely there are parishioners and others who would be prepared to lend £10 or more, free of interest for 7 years. Your money is absolutely safe, and you would be helping forward God's work of "eternal worth". Either of the Churchwardens or the Vicar would give you further details, and likewise of the Covenant Subscription Scheme. I do trust and hope that as a Church we do not have to borrow any money for God's work at Beacon Hill. Let us each look at our Bank Balance and ask ourselves "What can I lend or give to God, for His work at Beacon Hill?". It is up to you!

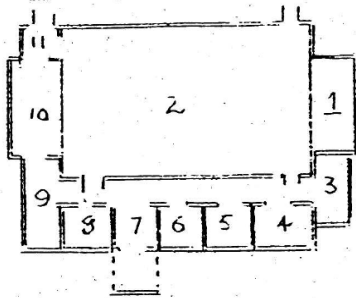
I shall be out with the Accordion on the Estate, and likewise on the foreshore this season. It will mean yet more extra work, but remember what God

has done for you, not merely in this world, but the promise of the world to come, to reign with all in glory. Can you ever do too much.

Also included was a page copied from the parish magazine which gives a brief outline of the proposed new St Francis Church.

SAINT FRANCIS. BEACON HILL

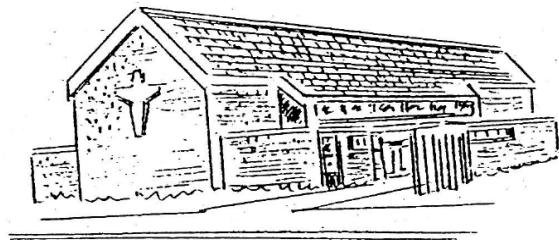
The hall is a dual-purpose building, serving as church and hall.



General Layout

- 1. Sanctuary 2. Nave & Hall
- 3. Vestry One 4. Vestry Two
- 5. Kitchen 6. Gentlemen
- 7. Main Entrance
- 8. Ladies 9. Committee Room
- 10. Stage 11. Committee Room

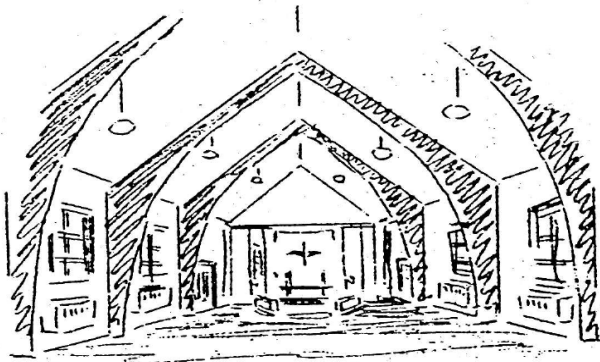
The nave/hall is 50 feet long and 30 feet wide. At one end is the Sanctuary, which can be closed off, completely, from the hall.



The Main Entrance

The Stage is at the other end and the Committee Rooms will be available as dressing rooms when required.

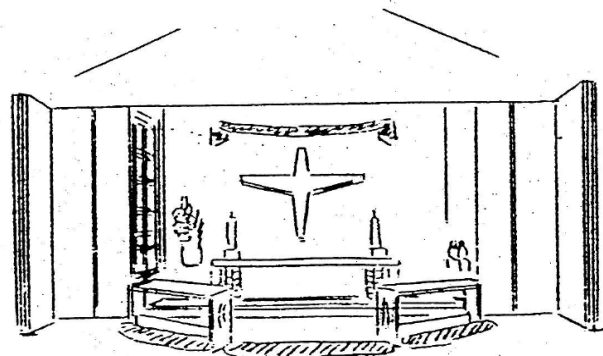
200 chairs have been ordered and the building will be well equipped, from the start, for both services and social functions.



The Nave and Hall

Washing and toilet facilities will be provided. The kitchen will have a cooker, water boiler, kettle and sink.

Heating will be by electric radiators, probably convector heaters.



The Sanctuary

(Page retyped with original drawings from the November 1961 edition of the parish magazine).

Brian had also included some personal memories of St Francis written by himself and his wife Pat who still remains an active part of our congregation to this day.

St. Francis' Churchwardens (December 1961)

In 1961 as a young married man, Canon Richard Crookes asked me to go up to St. Francis' along with Peter Braithwaite to be the first churchwardens. Young men for a young church was the idea.

So, together with our wives we went up from St. Peter's to St. Francis'. Canon Crookes also suggested that it would be a good idea to have a family and we should go away and think about it! Four years hence we were a family of four!!

Now it is 2001 and Pat and I are still here, Peter Braithwaite having moved with his family, because of his job as a teacher. After a few years, as each AGM came around the question was always raised about the election of churchwardens. Somehow or other I managed to serve for thirty-four years very happily most of the time.

Clergy came and went over the years; sometimes we faced problems together, but always in the end succeeded to overcome them. Even the building has seen lots of changes and has been vastly improved from the original.

I am grateful for the opportunity that God gave me to be allowed to assist in His work at St. Francis'.

Brian Robinson

Memories of St. Francis Church

Brian and I came to St. Francis when it opened. It seemed appropriate for a new church to have a young man as its first Church Warden. Thirty-four years later, I don't quite know how, he was still doing the job. So many memories in all these years.

Our congregation grew and Sunday School grew so big that at one time we had to hold it after the morning service. Brian's favourite story was how after talking about St. Francis and the animals and birds they came into church only to see a bird flying around. One little boy tugged at his sleeve and said, 'Uncle Brian, I think we prayed too hard ! We held Summer Fairs, Christmas Fairs, Pets Services, Easter Teas and our famous Harvest Suppers when we have had over 100 people on occasions, some having to sit on the stage. We even had soup then, made in a Burco boiler and stirred with a broom handle, new every year ! Ethel's trifles were delivered by wheeling them up Sandringham Road in an old pram. Friday night was Bingo run by Beryl – how could anyone forget Beryl , a real character and a law unto herself ! we enjoyed outings with Sunday School and families to Elsham and Normanby park, taking picnics and playing rounders.

Clergy have come and then moved on and we have somehow survived through long interregnums and hopefully we will continue to do so and have lots more 'memories' .

Pat Robinson

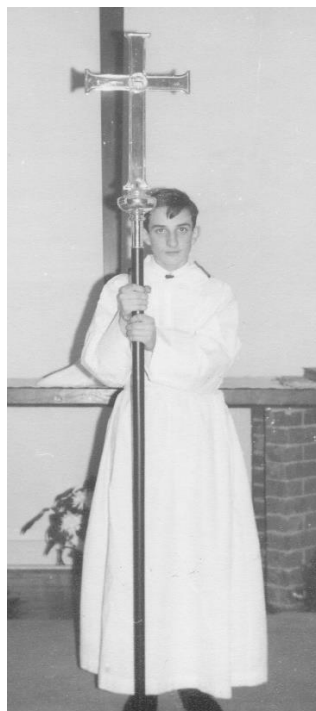
As Brian mentioned in his article the original building has seen lots of changes over the years one being the circles which decorate the wall behind the cross in the sanctuary. From a press article the origins of the circles are revealed.



Local artist Jim Easton was commissioned by the church committee to decorate the wall behind the altar as they felt it was rather bare and needed to be made a focal point of the church.

The pastel – coloured mural is intended to represent the Holy Trinity with the outside circles signifying Heaven, the sky and the Earth and within them are a yellow circle representing God the Father. A smaller circle based on the centre of the cross represents Jesus who was crucified and another smaller circle signifies the Holy Spirit, in front of which the wine goblet can be placed during Communion services.

The mural was dedicated by the Revd Julian Dunn before the wedding of his daughter Jane to Kenneth Perrin (pictured) on the 3rd of March, 1979.



The origins of the processional alter cross was also included in the archive by Brian. It was purchased by Marjorie Mason in memory of her parents and is seen here held by her 14-year son Alan who was a server at St Francis.

Also included in the box was a collection of articles and photographs which I also think are worthy of inclusion.



Christmas time at St Francis.



Father Edward Harrison standing in front of the newly opened church and a view of the early church garden.



St Francis's first choir stood in front of the altar with Father Edward Harrison.



The carols by candlelight service which took place in 1975 with the Revd George Parrott.



Our 25th Anniversary cake.



The gathering of clergy at our 25th Anniversary Service, from the left the Revd Canon Richard Crookes, Revd Julian Dunn, Revd Canon John Thorald, Lay Reader Roderick Clark, Revd Marie Thorne and the Revd Derek Webster.

Roderick Clark

I was a member of St. Peter's in 1980 when the Rector, Brian Wisken, asked whether some people might switch to St. Francis' to support it. This I did. My time there coincided with my membership of the Church of England General Synod.

I found a band of faithful church members – led by the incomparable Brian Robinson – anxious to increase membership from people living in the area but not knowing exactly how to do it (does anyone?). The Revd. Julian Dunn presided, also keen to make St. Francis' successful, but with ideas and a worship style which did not always go down well with the more 'ordinary' people there.

I remember helping with the Sunday School in the small side-room – along with outings into Lincolnshire. I took a major part in leading the small youth group – not with great success, yet I feel we did have a kind of fellowship which meant something to a number of the young people involved. Names which spring to mind include Iain and Alan Tomlinson, Rowena and Darrell Jones, and David Sharp, and events include a diocesan quiz competition and country walks. I was also allowed to take part in Family Services (now called all-age services by the politically correct); this is what inspired me to apply to train to become a Reader. I started to study under Deaconess (as she was then) Wendy Isam – now a member of St. Francis' I understand! I eventually became a Reader in the Coventry Diocese in 1987 (and am currently the Coventry Diocesan Secretary of Readers).

I particularly remember the informal second halves of Christmas Carol Services; a pageant I put together about the life of St. Francis' and Good Friday 'happening' for children one year. I am most grateful for the chances I had to develop as an organiser and leader. I wish you all tremendously well.



Our 30th Anniversary cake.



WELCOME: The Rev Ian Slater (third right front row) is welcomed to his first post at St Peter's, Cleethorpes, by the Bishop of Grimsby, the Rt Rev David Tustin.

Edward Ian Slater

Former county vicar

Born: 24.7.1931

Died: 22.10.2000

IAN Slater was a man of many sides but most people will remember him for his two very prominent careers.

The first, perhaps, was as the Senior Haematologist at the Lincoln County Hospital and then secondly as a committed Christian who answered the call and entered full time ministry within the Anglican church.

A testament to his work and the esteem in which he was held was shown clearly in the large congregation that filled All Saints' Church, Nettleham for the service of celebration for his life.

The service was conducted by the Rev Fordon Sleight, Vicar of All Saints, and the cortege was led into the church by the choir and seven robed clergy. These included the Rev Gordon Sleight, Vicar of All Saints, Nettleham; Canon John Thorold of Sleaford; the Rev Eric Horner, Kirton-in-Holland; the Rev Tony Kerswill, All Saints' Church, Lincoln; the Rev Alan Hayday, Brumby, near Scunthorpe and retired clergymen the Rev Richard Emerson and Canon Jervase Babington.

Ian was well known throughout the diocese of Lincoln for his work in the healing ministry. The lessons and Gospel were read by former colleagues in this ministry.

I first met Ian around 30 years ago through MENCAP - another project to which he devoted time and experience. He was a man who cared for those less fortunate than himself - a factor which showed through his wit and love of life.

And a very vital part of this life was his home and family.



OFF TO CHURCH: Rev Slater is pictured with his wife Maureen on their way to church.

so many parts in the Cherry Willingham and County Hospital shows. Perhaps the most memorable being as Widow Twankey," he said.

And it was through the friendship they shared that Ian followed the calling into the church.

"As churchwarden Ian was always helpful, always cheerful and a definite character. Your presence here in this terrible weather shows far more than anything I can say how we felt about him," he said.

To follow his calling, Ian studied over a period of three years whilst still working full time in haematology. To achieve this he travelled to and from Nottingham until he was finally ordained at Lincoln

Throughout our association Ian was unfailingly co-operative and my most endearing memory is of him with a donkey at an Easter service held in the Bassingham Methodist Church.

"Ian moved into the ordination situation from human blood through to the Lord's blood and his devotion was unquestionable" said Canon Thorold.

"But his social life was also very important to him. He loved a game of cricket - the Cherry Willingham Carnival, the County Hospital social life and the MENCAP events.

"And overriding all there was this lovely family atmosphere.

"Ian can best be described as a diamond. Every time he turned you saw a different light shining