

The Life
of the
Parish of St. Paul's
Norton Lees

HELEN BLABY

23rd Nov 1877
consecrated by
Bp. of Lichfield

Foreword

This small volume is being published to mark the centenary of this parish. In no small measure it is the fruit of much research on the part of my predecessor, the Rev. E. H. Cox. Nor, in saying this, do I detract from my appreciation of all that Mrs. Helen Blaby has done in writing this booklet. She has built on and added to the material which Mr. Cox passed on to her. It was a difficult history to write. Not for us the fascination of a 1,000 years chronicle, such as our mother church at Norton has; simply the 100 years record of an ordinary parish, at birth a rural one, now a suburban one. It is the record of ordinary people living ordinary lives. Yet it is to these people that we owe a debt of gratitude. In their day they were the Church, not only guarding the faith, but also handing it on to those who came after. Likewise we who now live our lives in the faith of Christ must seek to hand on this faith to a new and younger generation.

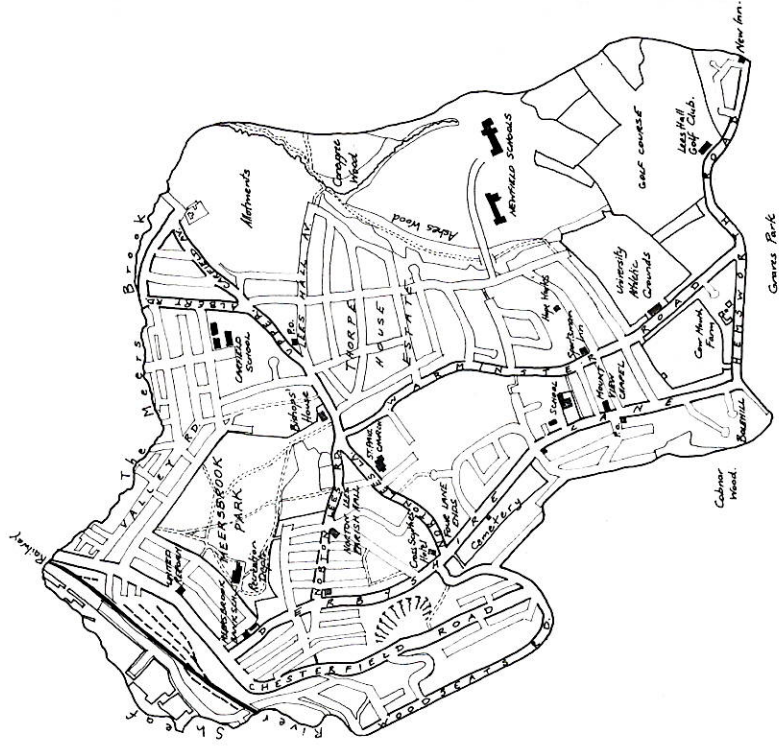
J. A. Bowering.

Acknowledgements

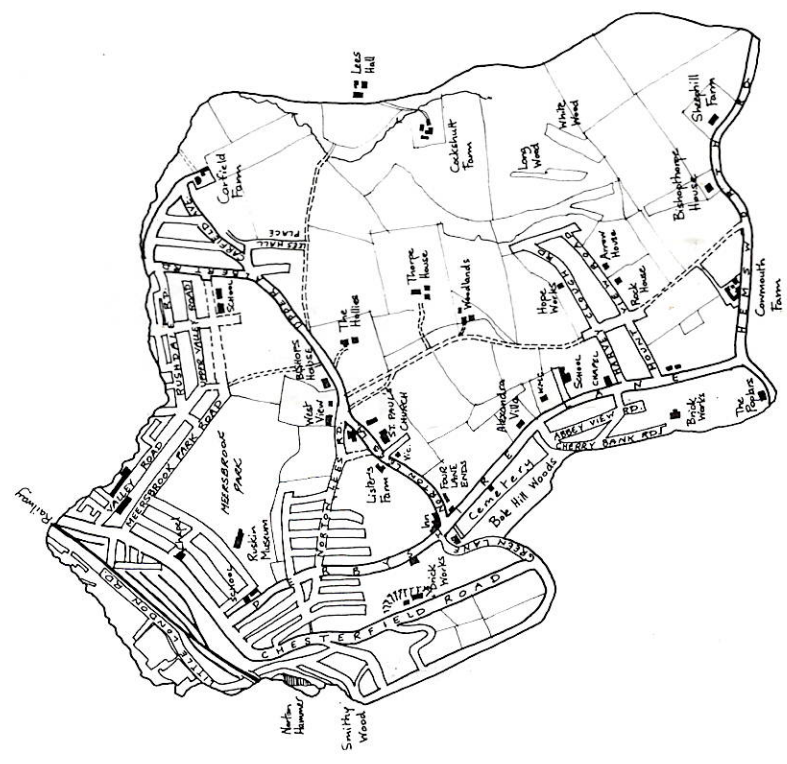
I would like to express my gratitude to all those people in Norton Lees, who welcomed me into their homes and patiently answered my questions about the parish. Without their help it would not have been possible to compile this booklet.

My thanks also go to Mrs. Ann Frith and Mrs. Joyce Bywood for typing the script and lastly and most importantly to my husband and the Morgan family for their unfailing help and support over the last few months.

H. B.



Norton Lees — 1974



Norton Lees — 1900

The Life of the Parish of St. Paul's, Norton Lees

In 1873 the Vicar of Norton, Henry Pearson, asked the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to authorise the creation of a new district from the ancient parish of Norton and a year later this was done. St. Paul's is therefore only a small part of the huge old Norton parish, which once included Hemsworth, Greenhill, Norton Woodseats and Bradway.

The Meers Brook has, since the very earliest times been a dividing line, between that part of Britain held by the Celtic tribes and that more or less subdued by the Romans, and later between the English kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. Then this was a sparsely populated area, inhabited by poor farmers and their Anglo-Saxon lords. The English name Norton or (Nor-Tun) is recorded in pre-Norman times and probably means north town referring to its situation north of Dronfield and Chesterfield. Certainly Norton had always been part of Derbyshire until very recently and was part of the diocese of Lichfield and the province of Canterbury.

At the time of the conquest, Norman lords replaced Saxon and the manor of Norton is mentioned in the Domesday book, partly as land held by the king and partly as that of the Lord Robert de Busli.

Robert FitzRanulf who founded Beauchief Abbey in about 1176 is given the credit of having built Norton church. FitzRanulf conferred a considerable estate upon the abbey extending from Chancet Wood to Greenhill; and in Edward I's reign Thomas de Chaworth, Lord of the Manor, added more land in Norton Woodseats and Bradway to the abbey. Until the dissolution of the monastery in 1537 the abbey

was responsible for Norton church and a canon always officiated there. Although Norton remained under the control of the Lay Lords of the Manor throughout the Middle Ages, the livelihood of those in the area depended greatly on the energy and industry of the canons themselves.

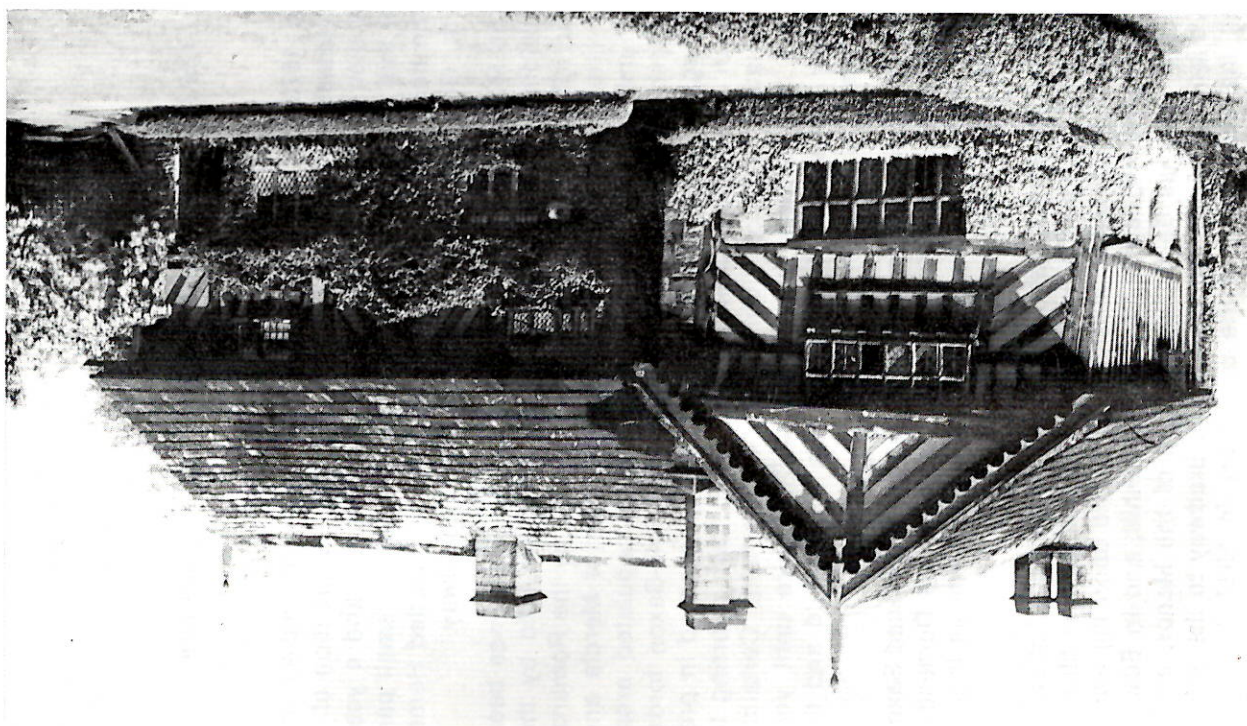
The first written mention we have of Norton Lees, often spelt Leys or Leis, is in the fourteenth century. In 1376 the Blythe family was given land here by William de Chaworth. Adam de Gotham was also given land and Peter de Leys is mentioned as owning land in the Cliff.

Although there is no documentary evidence for this, a strong local tradition has it that the Bishops' House * in Meersbrook Park was one of the homes of the Blythes and is so called because two of the Blythe family achieved fame in the Church - John Blythe who became Bishop of Salisbury in 1494 and Geoffrey Blythe who was Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield in 1503.

Bishops' House, owned by Sheffield Corporation, is now under the care of Weston Park Museum. Very shortly work will begin to restore the structure of Bishops' House, so that it can be opened as a small local history museum.

Much has been written about the affairs of the notables in Norton but we know little about the lives of the ordinary folk in the area, whose stories were not considered worthy of record. Such evidence as we can glean suggests that some of the locality was heavily wooded, some of it was farm land, with the occasional cluster of cottages at infrequent intervals. The earliest industry in the area was charcoal burning and forging. Our Bole Hill is one of many corners in Sheffield with this name, and was a place, usually on a hilltop, where iron could be smelted in the open, using the wind to fan the flames. Scythe, sickle and nail making have a long history in Norton as the parish records show clearly. The pub called the Nailmakers Arms on Backmoor Road is an indication of this.

By the eighteenth century life had altered a little. Norton Lees was still just a hamlet, a cluster of cottages where St.



Bishops House about 1910

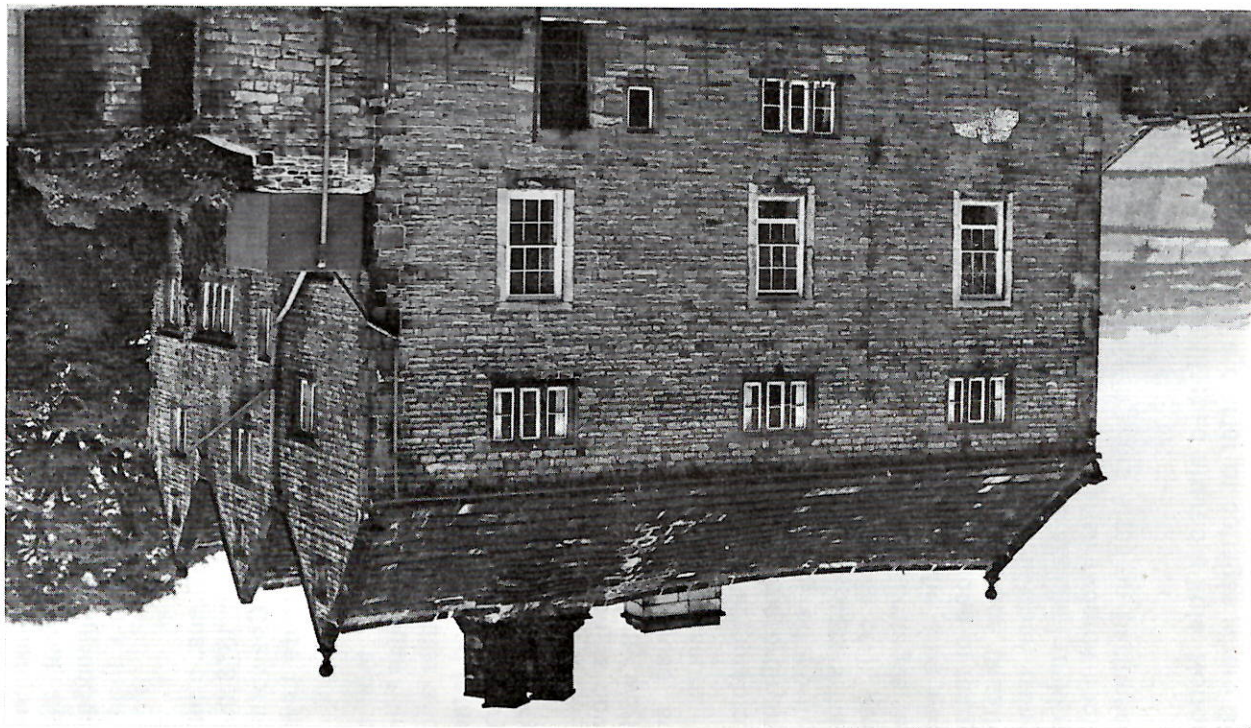
Paul's now stands, with a few more in Cliffe Fields, at Four Lane Ends (near the Cross Scythes) and at Bole Hill. The rest of the parish was a patchwork of fields and scattered farms.

The ancient and very beautiful Lees Hall, once one of the homes of the famous Parker family, but subsequently owned by many other people, occupied a magnificent position on the hill near where Newfield school now stands. This lovely stone-built house added great dignity to the pleasantly rural scene. Harold Armitage in his book "Chantrey Land" says, "When I try to recall the place, I think of its austere and solemn front and air of aloofness, of its gables with their ball finials, its pond where the ducks loved to swim and swattle in the mud, its old cart shed . . . its green croft and the lime tree near the stile under whose branches it was a delight to be through a long sultry summer afternoon."

The walls of the hall were two feet thick and the windows stone mullioned. Much of the interior was covered with oak-panelling and the glory of the house was the Adam staircase leading from the entrance hall. The stairs were so substantial that in 1931 Alec Parker led a Clydesdale horse up and down them for a wager. Behind one of the two huge 'inglenook' fireplaces was a secret room and it was believed locally that two secret passages once existed from the hall to Beauchief Abbey and Manor Castle. The outbuildings included a coach house with stabling for fifteen horses and a cruck barn thirty five feet long. These buildings were probably only a part of a much bigger complex dating from very early times.

It was a tragedy for the locality when the Corporation of Sheffield decided to demolish the hall, in spite of many appeals to save it, and in spite of the offer by John Earp, the last occupant, to pay for part of the necessary renovations.

Meersbrook House was built in the mid 1700's by Benjamin Roebuck, one of the four eminent sons of the manufacturer and cutler, John Roebuck. It was Benjamin



Lees Hall before demolition

who, in 1770, in partnership with John Shore, established the first Banking house in Sheffield in Church Street, which is now Williams and Glyn's Ltd. In 1778 Benjamin sold the house to Samuel Shore, father of his business partner, and later, after the collapse of the Shore fortunes Meersbrook passed to the Milner family, remaining in their hands until it was bought by the Sheffield Corporation. In 1890, it became the Ruskin Museum and remained so until 1953 when the Ruskin collection of paintings, precious stones and other treasures was transferred to the City museum at Weston Park.

Meersbrook Park was a very beautiful estate whose woods and fields extended from the present Scarsdale Road down to Rushdale and what is now Upper Albert Road. There were oaks, chestnuts and beeches, trout for the catching in the Meersbrook, water lilies and water hens on the pond and many unusual plants and birds to be observed. The ornithologist, Charles Dixon, is said to have written most of his first book "Rural Bird Life" published in 1880, from studies made in Meersbrook Park.

The magnificent view from Meersbrook across Sheffield and rural Abbeydale was a subject for many artists, but the most famous was Turner. Returning from a journey into Derbyshire he stopped to sketch a view of Sheffield from this wonderful vantage point. Derbyshire Lane, the road from Sheffield to Derbyshire, as its name suggests, then ran much closer to the present Meersbrook than it does now. It followed the old pack horse route along the Chesterfield Road as far as Meersbrook lodge, up Derbyshire Lane to Bole Hill and on across what is now Graves Park to Little Norton and Coal Aston. When this road was Turnpiked in 1756 it was one of the first in the Sheffield area, and there was a toll gate at the end of Well Road. Rates of toll levied there were as follows - "for every coach, berlin, landau, chariot, chaise drawn by six horses or other beasts, the sum of one shilling and six pence; drawn by four horse or other beasts the sum of one shilling; drawn by two horses or other beasts, the sum of six pence and for every chaise or chair drawn by one horse or other beast the

sum of three pence." No tolls were payable on election days! Later the road up Derbyshire Lane was sensibly abandoned and the Turnpike followed the Chesterfield road we know today.

The Meers Brook joined the Sheaf which babbled its way amongst elms, poplars and elders through the little village of Heeley. The hammering of the tilt at Little London or the noise of the Heeley corn mill did not essentially disturb the peace of this little community. This river, like the other rivers in Sheffield, had been harnessed from medieval times to power the local mills and forges. There were grinding wheels at Norton Hammer as early as the sixteenth century if not earlier, and a tilt forge at Smithy Wood. Norton Hammer was very busy in the days of its prosperity. As early as 1560, Miller says, there was "Iron Smeethies and grynding wheles" under the ownership of John Parker of Norton Lees. The Little London Wheels were used for Scythe making and knife making, Heeley mill for grinding corn and Heeley Wheel also for grinding.

These Wheels, except for Heeley Wheel, survived into the twentieth century, Heeley Mill until 1920 when it was powered by a gas engine and was a corn mill and mortar grinding mill, and the Little London Wheel until 1946 when it was still used for making scythes. These, then, were the small industries of the area which changed little over the centuries.

So, until well into the nineteenth century, the area which makes up the present parish retained its peacefully rural character. In 1841 there were only 1908 people in the whole of Norton, which then took in Hemsworth, Greenhill, Woodseats and Bradway.

But gradually it was bound to feel the effects of the great industrial changes which turned Sheffield into a rapidly expanding town. Many people came from the country to work in the iron and steel industry and between 1843 and 1873 the number of people working in the cutlery trades trebled. Cutlery was only a small part of the picture. There was enormous demand for iron for industrial steam driven

machinery, for ships, railways and armaments, and firms like Browns', Firths and Vickers flourished. Henry Bessemer's development of the converter method of making cheap steel was one of the first of many discoveries which ensured Sheffield's future as a great steel centre. As more space was required for expansion, many firms moved out of the city centre, to the north and north-west and also along the Sheaf valley.

Heeley was caught up by the development, the greatest stimulus being the construction of the Midland railway line from Sheffield to Chesterfield. After years of haggling and indecision Sheffield was to have a direct railway line south.

Building began in 1865, bringing large numbers of railway personnel into the parish. Imported navvies, Irish and English, did not always get on with the local people and differences of opinion were sometimes only settled by scuffles and fighting. The Rector of Norton, concerned about the addition to his flock, distributed Bibles to the railway workers and a new church school was built at Bradway. The Irish navvies also built Totley tunnel. Little Totley C. E. school had an extension built on it at the time to accommodate the additional children.

The railway inevitably brought industrial development in its wake. In 1876 Tyzack Sons and Turner, makers of saws and scythe blades in Rockingham Street, bought a site adjacent to the Little London dam for development. They built a crucible melting furnace and a large steam engine which drove four grinding wheels, a forge and general machine shops. Warehouses, packing shops and offices were erected parallel to the railway. In 1872 Hardy Patent Pick Company Ltd. began manufacturing next to Tyzacks on a similarly large scale. The beautiful oaks of Rushdale were stripped of their bark for use in nearby Meersbrook tannery and the pond used as a tan pit. Large scale manufacturing had come to Heeley and the rural beauty which Armitage loved was lost for ever.

Mass housing for the increasing number of workers spread from Heeley. The leisurely horse buses which had run along the Chesterfield turnpike were replaced in 1877

by the horse trams. The Turnpike trusts were being wound up and the toll bar at Heeley abolished in 1875. The new horse trams ran from Moorhead to Heeley terminus, which is still to be seen near the bottom of Albert Road. Beyond this there was no public transport and little housing.

The rest of the parish remained fairly rural, but inevitably began to feel some of the effects of Sheffield's expansion. Several wealthy manufacturers, business men and professional people built themselves elegant houses in Norton Lees, then still in Derbyshire. The Hall brothers, George and Joseph, partners in the engineering firm in Hereford Street, lived at Thorpe House and the Hollies. These two solid stone built houses stood opposite Bishops' house where Thorpe House estate now is. The Cockaynes of T. B. and W. Cockayne of Angel Street (now Schofields) built Lees House. The Aldersons, a solicitor's family, built West View, where West House flats now are. Cliffe House, on the corner of Derbyshire Lane and Cliffe Road was the home of the Ryalls family who were lawyers.

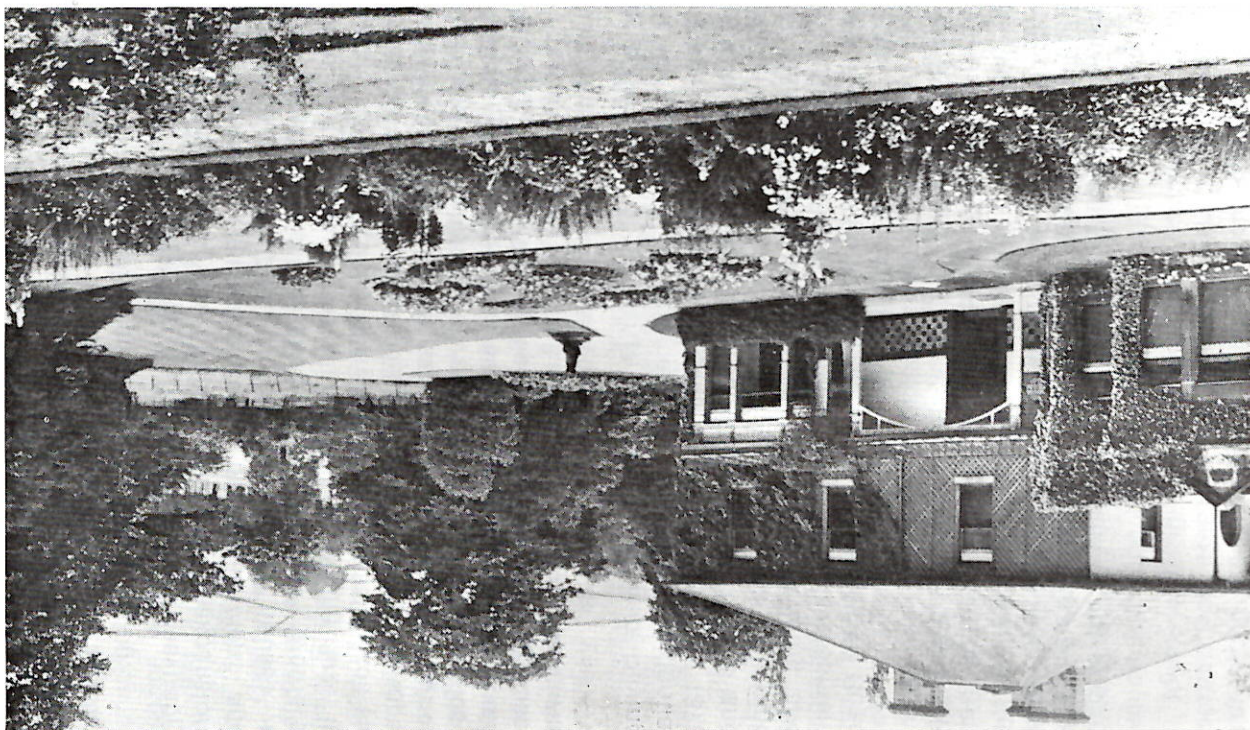
In another part of the parish Land Societies were buying land for planned development as pleasant residential housing. The Meersbrook Land Society formed in 1873 began to develop the area around Upper Albert Road and Carfield Avenue. There were a hundred and forty-nine plots of varying sizes to be sold for house building and strict regulations were imposed to keep the development to the highest standards. Shirebrook Road and Albert Road belonged to another Society.

All these changes, with their great social implications, inevitably led the Church authorities to re-examine their responsibilities to the increasing population of Norton parish. Ministering to so many people in such a large area in one unit was clearly no longer possible. Therefore a request was made that a new parish be made out of part of the old.

Norton Woodseats

As early as 1873 Henry Pearson, Rector of Norton, consulted the Ecclesiastical Commissioners about a scheme to provide a new district out of his own large parish. The London Gazette for May 15th, 1874, sets out the details of the Order in Council creating the new parish. The boundaries were to be the Meersbrook and Sheaf on the North East and North West, on the West the liberty of Beauchief and on the South a line running from the middle of Abbey Lane along to the Chesterfield Road, up to Bole Hill, along what is now Hemsworth Road, then turning North "along the public footpath leading past Cockshutts farm and Lees Hall to Upper Heeley and extending thence Northwards, for a distance of one mile or thereabouts, along the middle of the said footpath to the boundary at the Meersbrook." The arrangements were agreed by Henry Pearson, Henry Wilson of Westbrook, the patron of Norton, the Right Reverend George Augustine Selwyn, Bishop of Lichfield, George Pringle of Whitehall Place, Westminster and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England. Ground rents amounting to £149 9s. 0d. were to be set aside by the Rector of Norton to provide a living for the new vicar, to which the Commissioners agreed to add £50 a year, which provided an adequate living at the time. The patronage of the living was given to the Rector of Norton where it still lies. The new parish was to be named Norton Woodseats and remained in the diocese of Lichfield and the county of Derbyshire.

The next step was to appoint a minister. The Rector of Norton appointed one of his own curates, the Reverend William Mercer, who was thirty years of age when he came



Thorpe House before demolition

to Norton Lees. William Mercer had the responsibility of launching the new parish, his most obvious and urgent duties being to find a site for the new church, to draw up plans for its construction and raise funds to finance the building. While this was being done, services were held in the cemetery chapel on Derbyshire Lane.

In the early years of the new parish's life, it was fortunate that there were several well-to-do families to call on to help financially, and in the building of the church the Cockayne family were very generous. Mr. W. Cockayne gave an acre of land on which a church and vicarage could be built and on Monday, October 25th, 1875, the laying of the Foundation Stone took place. It is interesting to note that the stonelaying of Mount View Methodist Church on Derbyshire Lane took place four months later in February 1876, an indication of the general recognition of other churches as well as the Anglican of the spiritual needs of the area. At the stone laying of St. Paul's, Mr. and Mrs. Cockayne of Lees House performed the ceremony in the presence of a large company of residents of the district. Mrs. Cockayne was presented with a silver trowel and the ceremony was followed by a luncheon for about seventy guests at Norton Club room.

The plan was to build a church consisting of a nave and chancel in Early English style with sufficient accommodation for three hundred adults, allowing for easy extension at a later date if required. All seats were to be free and unappropriated. Mr. T. D. Webster of Sheffield was the architect, Mr. T. Rodley the mason, Mr. T. Badger the joiner, Messrs. Harrison and Chadwick plasterers and slaters, Mr. Corrie plumber and Mr. Hopworth painter. The estimated cost was £4,000. Of this amount £1,000 was raised by subscription and the rest was given by Mr. Cockayne.

The church was built in Dunford Bridge Stone, the steep roofs pitched with varied coloured tiles. The apex stones of the gable had richly foliated crosses, the stone carving being done by Mr. Hems of Exeter. The interior of the church was just over 100' from East to West, the nave 73' by 25' by 23'. A vestry, serving as an organ chamber, was built onto

the south side of the chancel and the bell turret below the spire at the North-West of the building was octagonal. The organ was built by Conacher of Huddersfield, and cost £300.

The carved pulpit together with the Caen stone font were given by Mr. Cockayne, Service books by Mr. Parker, the oak lectern by Mrs. Bagshawe, the communion vessels by Mr. Milner, the altar cloth by Mrs. Burnell and Mr. Lister gave the bell. The new "church on the hill", as it was known locally, was consecrated by Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield on November 23rd 1877.

The acre of land given by the Cockaynes allowed space for the building of a vicarage but this was not done until twelve years later in 1899. One wonders where William Mercer lived until that time. However, after a fund raising bazaar at the Cutlers' Hall and more generous donations from the Cockaynes an average-sized Victorian parsonage was erected, which cost the grand sum of £1,250!

Norton Lees, although only part of Old Norton, was still a very large area, and it was as well that the new incumbent was a young man, who had the necessary energy to walk round his parish. William Mercer worked hard among the parishioners to develop a worthwhile and meaningful community - perhaps one should say communities, for there were several enclaves of people in the parish, separated by extensive fields, and each small group was a community on its own. Early on the church had three main areas of activity: in the area round the church and down the hill towards the Meersbrook, another in Derbyshire Lane and another at Bole Hill and Woodseats.

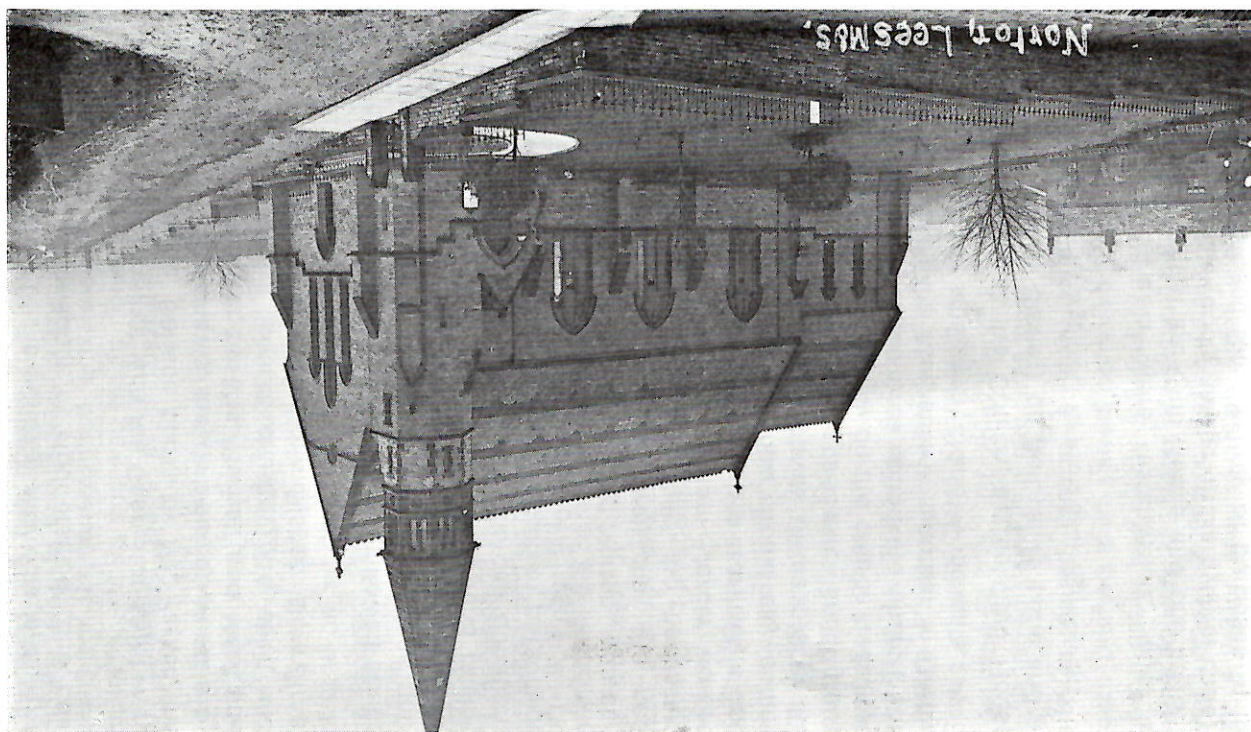
Services were held at the Church, at the Club House Mission (now Eyre and Baxter) on Derbyshire Lane and at Cammell's Board School (now a private house at the bottom of Cobnar Road).

Three Sunday schools were established: one at Cammell's school, one at the Club House and one in 1892 in Cliffe Hall (now Aizlewood's garage on Derbyshire Lane). Cliffe Hall has been used for a variety of purposes in its

life time and at least one member of the parish remembers attending the Dame school there, run by Mrs. Smith and her daughters. Apparently there was one large room with a stage at one end, with a backcloth depicting Norton Lees Lane which was suitable for school and Sunday school alike. Cliffe Hall was used by the Anglican Sunday School until it was moved to Meersbrook Bank School. Later in 1905 the Baptists had their first meeting there before setting up a Church of their own in this district, now Woodseats Baptists.

Sunday school attendances were large in the early years. Fifty children were enrolled at Cliffe Hall, two hundred at Derbyshire Lane and over a hundred at Woodseats, with twelve teachers. The hoped for Sunday school in Valley Road never materialised. The Sunday schools had a library attached to them and a sick and funeral club. Life was hard for many parishioners and one is painfully aware, from a glance at the burial records of these early years, of how necessary a sick and funeral club was for the children. Sunday school, a source of religious instruction, also added to the children's limited education, and it had its important social occasions, like the Scholars annual tea when the Bramall Memorial Bibles were given to those children with the best attendance, good behaviour and standard of work. Whitsun has always been a special time for children here and the tradition of a grand Whitsun tea party began early on. The Lister family, who owned the farm opposite the Church, invited enormous numbers of Sunday school children to tea and games on their land after the Whitsun procession and singing round the parish. New clothes were a must for the event, but it seems that these did not remain with their small owners for long. The following extract is part of an article in the Parish magazine of June 1892.

"... how sad it is to know that hundreds, perhaps thousands of Sunday school children will wear their new clothes on Whit-Sunday, Whit-Monday and perhaps the Tuesday, then never see them again. The new clothes, that give such abundant pleasure to their wearers will before



Early photograph of St. Paul's

the Whit-week has passed away be in the hands of the pawnbroker, for no other purpose than to gratify the craving of their parents for strong drink or gambling . . . May the Lord preserve all our Sunday School children's parents from such degrading vices, - and the children the unhappiness of returning to their tattered, patched, worn-out Sunday clothes".

One is made much aware of the important role the Church played in the life of the locality in the early years. As well as its spiritual task, it organised the cultural and intellectual life of its flock, its social life and even its welfare and insurance provisions. The church provided a provident and clothing club, a penny bank for savings, and a sick and funeral club. The Norton Christian Mutual Improvement Society held discussions on questions of national importance such as the nationalisation of the railways and "has civilisation increased human happiness?", and also had numerous lectures on colonial and mission subjects. The parish magazines, sold for one penny were filled with articles on politics as well as local news, church matters of all kinds and short stories. I have failed to establish exactly when parish magazines started, but they must have been fairly new in 1891 because there is an appeal to increase the circulation and subscriptions to put the operation on a sound financial basis. Also in the parish was a Needlework Guild, a children's Fancy Work Sewing Class, a Bible Class, a Men's Lodge, a Temperance Band of Hope, a Mothers' Meeting and a Cricket Club. In October 1891 the parish magazine reports - "The cricket club had their last match of the season "Married v. Single" on September 26th and afterwards with their friends took tea together in Mr. Cammell's Schoolroom and spent a most enjoyable evening in songs, piano-forte playing, recitations, and smoking (the gentlemen)".

The Hall family of Thorpe House gave tea parties for the older members of the parish and an annual parish tea was also held. At one of these in 1893, the need for some kind of parish hall was first discussed.

The church choir flourished under the leadership of Mr Poole and then Mr. Blakeley, who was also organist and honorary conductor of the very successful Norton Lees Choral Society until 1914.

Mr. Mercer, with the willing help of many others, had therefore successfully launched the new parish on its way. "Mr. Mercer's urbanity and kindly bearing causes him to be much liked and highly spoken of by those amongst whom he labours", said one who wrote of the church and its minister in the 1890's. "Mere perfunctory discharge of duty finds no favour with him. Both by his teaching and example he is real and earnest".

In 1884 Norton Woodseats parish passed from the diocese of Lichfield to the new diocese of Southwell.

During William Mercer's ministry alterations were made to the church from time to time. In 1893 Mr. George Hall gave the East window in memory of his parents together with the north window of the Chancel and the West window. The four lights of the East window represent the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Baptism of Christ, the Transfiguration and the Ascension. On the North window of the Chancel the text was taken from St. Paul's injunction to Timothy to pray "I will that men pray everywhere" (1 Timothy-Chapter 2, verse 8) but the reference was given as 1 Samuel, 2 - 8. Fortunately a stone was catapulted through the window in May 1965 which hit the reference, and it was then replaced correctly.

In 1893 a Gas corona was suspended from the Church roof "against the draft".

William Mercer died suddenly in the Church and the late Mr. Percy Shirtcliffe, then a choirboy, ran to tell the choir-master. After Mr. Mercer's funeral the parishioners bought a brass lectern in his memory.

In 1899 the Rector of Norton again used his patronage to appoint one of his assistant curates to the vacant living - Vaniah Odom, cousin of Canon Odom of Heeley.

The parish that Mr. Odom had taken over was still on the edge of the country, although by the 1900's the rows of houses had crept up the hill as far as the lower side of Norton Lees Road. A great deal of the Land Society development round Upper Albert Road was finished and the superior housing built by this society attracted residents from the professional, administrative and business groups. Gas lighting was installed on the Society land in the 1880's. The only real approach to the estate for vehicles was from Heeley and "the Cutting" (Carfield Road), which was a very rough road. Albert Road was fenced off by stone posts or stoops at a point fifty yards east of Kent Road, because the Shirebrook Building Society only permitted pedestrians and not vehicles from the estate to use the road. Later on, Dr Fordham, of Kent House, found it difficult to get his horse and trap from his surgery to the estate without going up to Heeley and down the Cutting and he was allowed to remove two stoops and fix a chain and lock, and take his trap the shorter way. Later, Rushdale Road was joined by cutting a roadway through two plots at the bottom of Upper Albert Road and this formed a better approach to the estate.

The boundary of the development on Norton Lees Lane was marked by a gate at the point where Lees Hall Avenue now turns off. From there on the lane was a rough unlit country road, just wide enough for two vehicles to pass. Mr. Harry Odom, the architect son of the one time Vicar, wrote to Mr. Cox in 1965, telling him of his first winter in Norton Lees, when the snow was so deep the road was impassable for horses. He also remembered the frequent sight of the funeral corteges passing the vicarage on the way to Norton Cemetery in Derbyshire Lane. The elaborate hearses were drawn by fine black Belgian horses with flowing manes and tails.

Opposite Bishops' House another track began leading up towards 'the Woodlands', the new house built by Mr. F. T. Walker. Mr. Walker owned the building works at the end of Cliffe Field Road (now Television Relay) and later in 1920 built a very new experimental kind of pre-fabricated

houses in Ketton Avenue, which were revolutionary at the time, and could be put up in a fortnight. Beyond the Woodlands the way to Norton lay through the fields by means of a footpath and stiles. A small section of Warminster Road existed at the top end, above "The Sportsman", but below that no road existed, only another track where Warminster Road now lies.

Just east of Bishops' House were two or three cottages at right angles to the lane, occupied by the Hall's employees. Anderson, Mr. Joseph Hall's chauffeur, lived in one of these and drove one of the first cars in the district, Mr. Joseph Hall's Daimler. Mrs. Alderson of West View, also employed a coachman, who lived in the cottage which still stands at the end of Norton Lees Road. Mrs. Alderson, mother of General Alderson of the first World War, was something of a personality in the district. Many people remember her driving around in a small open carriage in a dark bonnet and dress. I have been told that she rather resembled Queen Victoria in her later years. Mrs. Alderson drove to Church on Sundays just in time for the sermon and expected an unofficial reservation of her usual pew. She seems to have had rather more feeling for her horse than her coachman, who was instructed to walk and lead the horse when they came to a hill so that the weight should not be too much for the animal. The poor man can hardly have ridden much in this part of the country.

For those without their own transport there was no public transport further than Heeley. The trams, which had been electrified in 1896, only ran from Moorhead to Albert Road in 1900, to Woodbank Crescent in 1902, and to Chantrey Road in 1903. For both Vicars, Mercer and Odom, there must have been a great deal of walking, as there was for everyone else in the parish.

More and more people were moving into the area. The population when St. Paul's was built had been around 2,000. By 1900 it was over 10,000. This must have presented Mr. Odom with an increasingly hard task but during his ministry the work of the church continued and even

expanded. The lack of transport had its advantages, for life was inevitably localised and neighbourhood loyalties stronger. St. Paul's has always been able to call upon the energies of faithful helpers in the locality, some of whom have lived here all their lives, and their families before them.

The Sunday Schools flourished and in 1904 six hundred children sat down to tea at Lister's farm on the annual Whitsun celebration. The Club House continued on Derbyshire Lane, and in addition to the Sunday School already in existence, Sunday evening services began, conducted (from 1907) by the Licensed Lay Reader Alexander Hill. Sometimes these were held outside in summer.

There were bible classes and a Scripture Union, lectures, lantern slides and outings to the coast. The choir and choral society were also very strongly supported and in addition to organ recitals and choir festivals there was an almost annual production of "The Messiah" at Christmas time in 1908, for example, and in several other years, the Soloists were Miss Ethel Marshall - Soprano, Miss Annie Booth - Contralto, Mr. J. W. Broadhead - Tenor, and Mr. T. Woodcock - Bass. The conductor was Mr. Walter Ludgate, Mr. Blakeley accompanied them on the organ and the choir was of seventy voices.

There were concerts at Meersbrook Bank School and childrens Operetta productions in Meersbrook Vestry Hall organised by the Misses Booth, all three of whom were musical. A new bowling green was made at Derbyshire Lane and the Church Bowling Club hired a room in the Club House Mission. Mrs. Hart also started a Mothers' meeting there which soon had forty members.

The December of 1903 Parish magazine issues a time-less appeal for more Church workers. "Usefulness is the rent we were asked to pay for room on earth; some of us are heavily in debt!"

Vicar Odom examined the possibility of having a curate to help him and this was something the parish badly needed but could scarcely afford. When, in the few years before the first World War, two curates, Mr. Birks and Mr. Malaher, were appointed there were always difficulties in raising their stipends.

Improvements were needed in the Church itself by this time. In 1904, incandescent or gas mantle lighting was introduced and the heating improved. The church was redecorated but the colour washed walls and the texts round them were retained. In 1913 the reredos and communion rails of carved oak were given by Mrs. Joseph Lister, and Mrs. Cockayne gave new Church seats. St. Paul's remained simple in appearance and the pattern of worship was equally plain. It is significant that when the Ladies of the parish gave the brass cross to the Church in 1913, Vicar Odom commented on this in the parish magazine, saying he trusted nobody would object to the use of the central symbol of Christianity.

In these years, Mrs. Hall, whose husband was elected Master Cutler in 1904, gave garden parties in the beautiful grounds of Thorpe House to raise money for the church and for the "Parish Room Fund".

The need for some kind of community centre had long been recognised. Even before the laying of the foundation stone by the Bishop of Newcastle in 1903 the Ladies of the parish had been raising funds through concerts, sales of work, cake and apron sales and garden parties. They had raised the enormous sum of £500 over several years and the Guiding Committee, convinced that all the money could not be raised by the people, appealed to friends within the parish and outside it to help the cause. Mr. Dickinson of Woodbank Crescent gave the land and enough funds were collected to begin building. The Lord Mayor of Sheffield finally opened the Parish Hall and Institute in October 1909. The hall was put under the control of a committee of Trustees, of which Mr. Dickinson was the treasurer and Mr. Hart the Secretary. The Hall was a tremendous asset

to the community but in 1911 efforts were still being made to clear off the debt. A tablecloth, bearing the signatures of all those connected with the building of the parish hall was placed in the hall under a glass-topped table and this cloth is still kept.

In spite of money trouble the parish contributed what it could to the Colonial and Continental Church Society and the Church Missionary Society with which St. Paul's has long been connected. Collections for the Sheffield hospitals, which were all voluntarily run then, were taken on a special Hospital Sunday in January each year.

An attempt was made to extend the work of the Church more in the direction of Woodseats and in 1912 a Mission Church, known as the Broxholme Road Church Mission, met above the Co-operative stores on the Chesterfield Road. Several weekly meetings were also held in Coldstream Place, Olivet Road, and Underwood Road. Because of the hill, it had always been difficult to persuade people from Woodseats to come to church, even after the installation of gas lighting on the lane in 1907 and it became clear that another church was needed to cater for the enormous increase in the population of the Woodseats area. In 1910 Woodseats Baptists Church was founded, and the foundation stone of the new Anglican Church (St. Chad's) was laid in August 1911.

The Church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Southwell in July 1912 and the curate-in-charge and Vicar elect appointed was Rev. G. K. Cuthbert of New Whittington. Gifts for the new church came from all parts of the Old Norton Parish and the people of Norton Lees continued to help and support St. Chad's in every way possible.

In 1914 Sheffield became a new diocese and Dr. Leonard Hedley Burrows, Bishop Suffragan of Lewes, was appointed its first bishop. St. Paul's, Norton Lees, became part of the new diocese, and thereupon changed from the Province of Canterbury to that of York. Old Norton how-



Garden Party at Thorpe House 1908
The Clergyman on the far right is the Rev. Vaniah Odom, and on the far left is Curate Birk. The Lady in the centre is Mrs. George Hall.

ever, remained in Derbyshire and the Province of Canterbury until 1974 and is now part of the Diocese of Sheffield.

In 1914 - when the first World War began, the parish work continued much more normally than one would imagine. Perhaps people failed to realise how serious the struggle would be and felt indeed that the troops would be home for Christmas.

The 46th Sheffield (St. Paul's, Norton Lane) Scout troop was founded in 1914, meeting first at the Parish Hall and later in a cottage on Norton Lees Lane. It continued to meet during the War years and was run by Mr. Webster, Mr. Eaton, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hart. In 1916 Bertram Davies took over. He wrote and produced his own Scout concerts which became a great local occasion.

In 1915, the Rev. V. Odom was forced to retire because of ill health and representatives of the Church workers met to present him with an illuminated address and a purse of gold. It was a token of the regard of the parishioners for this quiet, scholarly man.

Another of Norton's curates, the Rev. David Green became Vicar and remained in the parish until the war was over. In 1916 the church was provided with dark blinds and the parish had to adapt to the many privations of war and the loss of life it brought. Fund-raising efforts for Belgian refugees and knitting for the British soldiers occupied those at home, though the usual parish activities were held whenever possible. In 1917 a special Harvest invitation was issued to allotment holders and the fruit and vegetables they brought were distributed to widows with children. In 1918 a meeting was called to initiate the renovation of the church and the founding of a war memorial to the fallen. "Welcome Homes" were held for the men returning from the Services.

The renovated and redecorated church was re-opened after a short closure on July 6th 1919, the day of National Thanksgiving appointed by the king and a war memorial tablet was dedicated in August. It had been a hard few

years for David Green and his wife, as it had for the parish as a whole. In 1919 he resigned to accept a living at Child's Wyckham in Gloucestershire. Thomas Barstow, twice curate at Old Norton, became Vicar of St. Paul's and was instituted on October 13th by the Bishop of Sheffield.

The Reverend T. Barstow was sixty five when he came to the parish and faced all the problems of the aftermath of war. His main claim to fame initially, as far as local people were concerned, was that he was a cousin of Leonard Barstow, husband of authoress Baroness Orzy, who wrote "The Scarlet Pimpernel". Mr. Barstow was amply able to share the sadness of the parishioners who had lost family or friends in the fighting, for his only son had been killed, and Mr. and Mrs. Barstow made a visit to Flanders in 1920 to find his grave.

In addition to personal troubles, there were debts all round. "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen sixteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery". Mr. Micawber's saying has often been relevant to St. Paul's finances, but never more so than during war years and the time shortly following.

The renovations of the church carried out by Mr. Green had not been fully paid for, the Parish Hall needed funds and the Club House was in a sorry state. The parish was also behind with its contribution to the Diocesan fund which prevented the appointment of a curate to help with parish work. The first few years of Mr. Barstow's ministry were therefore taken up with the business of getting the church back on an even keel and the debts were gradually cleared.

As a result of the Great War, a measure of democracy was introduced into the Church of England, with legislation providing for a National Assembly and Parochial Church Councils. In Norton Lees, voting districts were decided on and voting papers distributed. Those qualified to vote were required to be lay communicants of the Church of England of either sex and of twenty-one years of age and upwards. (After 1929 this was lowered to eighteen years). Residence

in the parish was not a necessary requirement for representatives, but they did have to be on the roll of the Parochial Church Meeting. The first P.C.C. was elected in May 1920 and consisted of the following :- Messrs. Faulkner, Whinfrey, Leighton, Cook, Richardson, Sheel, Hunt, Solesbury, H. Hill, W. Hill, Barber, Pitchford, Marks, Peat, Broadhead, Russell; Mesdames :- Barstow, Pitchford, Sheel, Brack, Wilkinson, Faulkner and A. Hill. There was plenty for the new council to do, and it was soon involved in plans for the installation of electric light in the church. In 1921 Sister Hutton was appointed from a Church Army training college to be Parish Worker, especially caring for the sick and poor. Mr. Beresford was licensed as a Lay Reader in 1924 but died shortly afterwards. Mr. Hattersley became Diocesan Lay Reader in 1927 and preached at St. Paul's for many years.

Apparently the number of people attending church in these years was not good and there were many occasions when the Rev. Barstow bemoaned the lack of support for services. There was criticism of church organisation, the services and the choir in particular. Discipline was slack and to encourage the boys towards better behaviour they were paid a quarterly honorarium of 4/-, 1/- was payable for each church attendance and no attendance meant no pay. Probationers had no cassocks and sat at the back in their Sunday best.

However, there was plenty of activity in the parish, and during Mr. Barstow's ministry many new organisations came into being, particularly concerned with the youngsters. In 1921 Norton Lees Young Peoples' Society was formed, the Rangers began in 1923, the Brownies in 1925 and the Guides in 1926 under the leadership of Miss Annie Kettle. The Scouts acquired a hut of their own which Mr. F. T. Walker later helped to move to Norton Lees Road because of the building development on the Lane. In 1923 the Old Norton Scout Group was started by Frank Miles and has met for many years within our parish at their hut on Warminster Road. Mrs. Barstow organised a tennis club at the Vicarage and in 1926 another attempt was made to

start a Church of England Men's Society. Mr. Ludgate's Bible Class put on operettas which became a high spot in the life of the parish, as were the Sunday School concerts put on by the Miss Booths. There were Whist Drives at the Club House and at the Parish Hall which was the scene of a variety of very elegant occasions. Church bazaars were often three day affairs at this time.

Mrs. Barstow was a woman of considerable energy and spirit in spite of her very poor health, and contributed much to parish life. There had been a Mothers Meeting for many years run by Mrs. Cook and it was decided in 1928 to start a branch of the Mothers' Union, with which the Mothers Meeting would merge. Mrs. Barstow was looking for someone to lead this group and paid Mrs. Pearson a visit to enlist her help. Mrs. Pearson was somewhat taken aback by the request for her assistance but Mrs. Barstow swept out with the parting shot, "I shall rely on you!" Mrs. Pearson was even more astounded when Mrs. Cook called some days later to say how glad she was that Mrs. Pearson had agreed to run the Mothers' Union. One wonders how many times in the history of our Church someone has found themselves running something before they knew it! The Mothers' Union included in their programme the usual social activities of the earlier Mothers Meeting but laid greater emphasis on deepening their understanding of Christian ideals through lectures and discussions. The group became a very strong element in all aspects of parish life.

The Club House continued its work and one of the boys who attended Mr. Hill's Bible Class was Leonard Jacklin. With the help and encouragement of the Barstows, Mr. and Mrs. Lister and Miss Whinfrey he went to Canada to Saskatoon as a Church Worker and was later ordained. At about the same time another young man from the parish, Harold Webster, once a Chorister and Scout in Norton Lees, also went to Canada on a Christian mission and later became Archdeacon of the Arctic. In 1955 he came home

on a visit and preached at St. Paul's. His brother Eric was a Canon in Nairobi and his sister Edith a missionary in Kenya.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Barstow were enjoying very good health when the Vicar resigned in 1929 and went into retirement. It was customary, in those days, for the incumbent to receive part of the endowment as a pension and for the next eight years Mr. Barstow received such a pension which obviously reduced the income of his successor. This very unsatisfactory arrangement had always existed and continued until 1930 when clergy pensions were provided for by contributions to a regular fund.

In 1929, the new Rector of Norton, Mr. Stanton Pegge, departed from traditional practice and invited the Reverend Ernest H. P. Rawlins, one time curate of Walkley and priest in charge at New Edlington to accept the living of St. Paul's. Mr. Rawlins was young, outgoing and had plenty of drive. On his first Sunday here, he called out his Church wardens, Messrs. Gott and Ludgate, and walked round the parish boundaries. An indication of the pace of things to come, perhaps!

It was the new Vicar's policy to visit as many families in the parish as possible and this personal approach brought many new people into the life of the church. As the years progressed, this contact became more and more important, for Norton Lees went through another era of building development.

Between the wars the parish altered considerably. Mrs. Cockayne had died during the first world war. Her daughter married Dr. Gale and moved to Woodseats. Lees house became flats.*

* It is interesting to mention another member of the Cockayne family, Leonard, born at Thorpe House in Norton Lees in 1855, youngest son of William Cockayne, a Sheffield merchant. In 1879 Leonard emigrated to Australia and taught in Queensland before moving on to New Zealand in 1881.

Here he started farming on a small scale and collected plants of all kinds. He later bought a larger estate in New Brighton, near Christchurch, and began to devote his life to the study of plants and flowers.

In spite of lack of any formal training in botany, he began to build a vast knowledge of the subject through his practical studies and correspondence with leading botanists all over the world. In 1903 he received a Ph.D from Munich University, the first scholar in Australasia to receive such an honour. Germany was at that time the centre of world studies in this aspect of the sciences. He wrote the first comprehensive book on New Zealand and Geography and the whole concept of the National Parks in New Zealand owes more to him than to any other single person.

Mrs. Alderson had died and her son and family moved out of the district in 1927. West House was bought by a businessman who lived in it for some years then let it as flats. Norton Lees Lane was built up in the mid 1920's, Upper Cliffeield Road and Crawford Road in the 30's and the houses started creeping up Derbyshire Lane. More building went on at the Hemsworth Road end of the parish.

The trams ran as far as Meadowhead by 1928 and a bus started running up Scarsdale Road to Derbyshire Lane in 1929.

In 1931 Mrs. George Hall and Mrs. Joseph Hall died within five weeks of each other and their extensive properties were sold to James Laver for re-development. This had the greatest implications for the parish.

The building of the Thorpe House estate started soon afterwards, the houses being sold for £360 each. Norton Lees had ceased to be semi-rural and was becoming well and truly suburban in character.

It was the prospect of the Thorpe House development which led the P.C.C. to take the decision to enlarge the church. In the early 1930's Bishop Burrows had launched a campaign to raise 100,000 guineas to provide churches for the new housing areas of the city and Mr. Rawlins managed to secure considerable funds from this to pay for St. Paul's extension. But he insisted that the parish was to raise £500 itself. This it did by means of Church bazaars,

whist drives, jumble sales, musical evenings and even the production of a Recipe book which contained instructions for producing such delicacies as Sussex Cheesecakes, Royal Bombay Chutney and Waffins pudding.

For ten months the church was out of action and services were held in the Parish Hall. Every Saturday night, sometimes quite late after social functions, the stage, then at the other end of the building, was laboriously turned into a sanctuary, and dismantled at the beginning of every week.

The enlargement involved adding two aisles which necessitated the removal of the Nave roof, leaving the west wall, bell turret and the Chancel intact. When the work was completed, the Nave roof was restored to its original height and tiled with Westmorland slate.

Provision had been made for the addition of a baptistry and side chapel but these were not built because of the extra expense.

The dedication and consecration of the enlarged church was carried out on October 10th, 1935, by the Bishop of Sheffield. The anthem "Praise the Lord", sung at this service was specially written by the Rev. Geoffrey Bernard and composed by Mr. Edwin Smith, the organist. The following Sunday was a gift day and the money received by the vicar virtually settled the account of expenses for the Church extension. Many beautiful gifts were presented to the church both by individuals and church organisations, including the white altar frontal still in use for festivals, and the first processional cross St. Paul's had ever had. The wooden cross and candlesticks placed on the altar in the new northern aisle was made by Vicar Baker of Handsworth and the oak came from parts of the old rafters of Handsworth church.

Mr. Rawlins placed great emphasis on youth work in his ministry. He was Secretary for the Weavers Guild and spent a good deal of time touring the city explaining the aims of the scheme to childrens' organisations of the churches. The plan was to build a Children's church, to be called St.

Christopher's with funds raised by the children themselves. The result was the church of St. James and St. Christopher on Shiregreen estate. The endowment of the church came from the blitzed St. James church in St. James Street.

In Norton Lees the Scouts continued their lively tradition as did the Guides who went on their first camp to the Cordwell Valley in 1930. Hilda Walker ran a very thriving Brownie Pack. Mr. Ludgate's Bible class continued to put on operettas and a new church Dramatic Society was formed. This very enterprising little group first put on two one-act plays at the Club House Mission but later embarked on full length productions at the Parish Hall, Plays such as "Café", "Hobson's Choice", "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Othello" were produced by Miss Doris Hall and were of a very high standard. In 1936, the men of the Society won the Shield given by the Sheffield Musical Competition for their scene from "Much Ado About Nothing".

At this time, there were football teams, a tennis club, choir rambles and a walk for parishioners of all ages on Easter Tuesday.

The Junior Sunday School at the Parish Hall increased in numbers, supervised by Miss Mackley and a new Senior Sunday School began in church led by the Vicar and helped by Miss N. Footitt and Miss A. K. Hill.

Each group was encouraged to write a report of its activities in the parish magazine and a children's corner was added to the usual items, amusing and challenging its young readers by turns.

The Whitsun tradition, with all its gaiety, remained a great occasion. The choir and the Sunday school children walked behind the processional cross round a chosen route in the parish, singing the Whitsun hymns. In the afternoon there were races and games in the park and tea at the Parish Hall. The Club House organised a separate sing and had tea at the Woodlands.

The Choir went carol singing at Christmas time, usually calling at Thorpe House kitchen and the Woodlands for refreshments. Nativity plays became a feature of St. Paul's Christmasses. At first they were performed in the Parish Hall, but later took place in the Church itself. As the performance of a play in church was something of an innovation at the time, special permission had to be obtained from the Bishop.

These were very vigorous years in the life of St. Pauls, although not always prosperous, for the early 1930's saw considerable unemployment caused by the slump.

During his ministry, Mr. Rawlins was helped by three curates: the Reverend Ronald Cherry Weaver, whose special interest was in youth work and scouting and who later became a chaplain in the Sudan, and the Reverend Geoffrey Bernard who was an enthusiastic supporter of the ideals of the Oxford Group Movement, influencing many young people in the Parish.

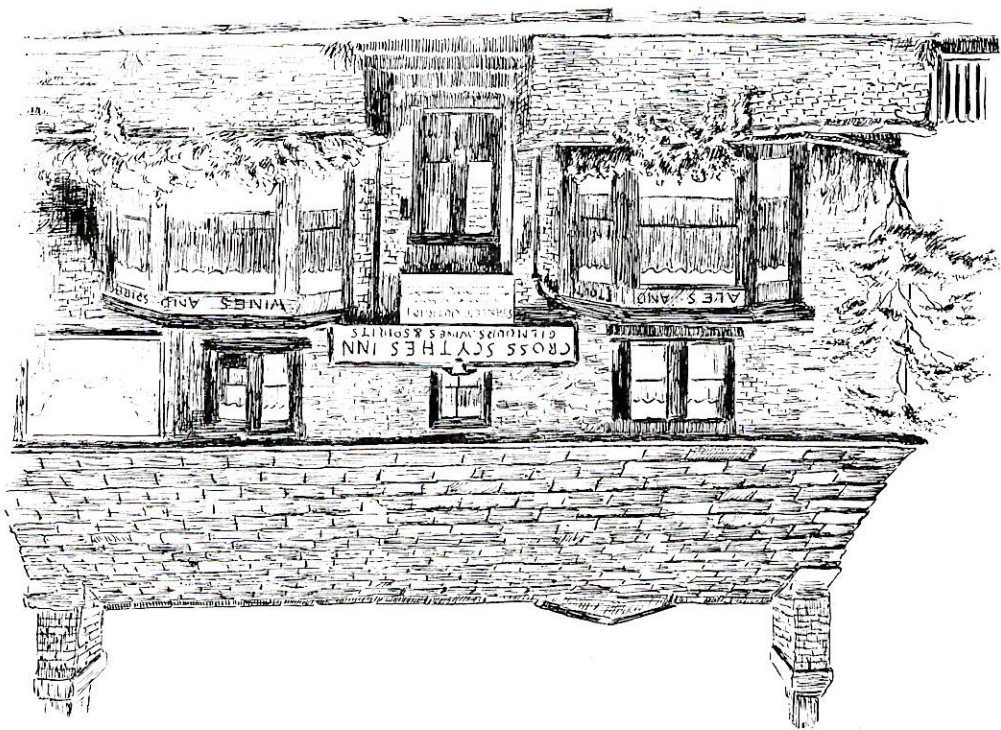
Geoffrey Bernard went on with the Vicar from Norton Lees to Mexborough and later became an army chaplain. He was killed on active service in Italy in 1944. The Reverend Hugh Lewis was only here a short time but made many friends in the course of his visiting.

When Mr. Rawlins had first come to the Parish, the Club House on Derbyshire Lane was renovated and electric light installed, but it had gradually become less important as the character of the area changed. Most of the small "nicker pecker" workshops of the hand file cutters on Harvey Clough Road and Mount View Road had already closed. The only one which remained was that of Mr. Moor on the corner of Mount View Road and Derbyshire Lane. Mr. Moor continued as an outworker for other firms until he was ninety and was eventually run over by a car on Derbyshire Lane at the age of ninety-six.

Up at Bole Hill the local craft tradition survived in the business of the Linacre family who lived at "The Poplars". The Linacres were connected with scythe and sickle

Sketched by E. Constantine

The Old Cross Scythes



manufacture for two hundred years. At first this was a cottage industry but in 1870 the firm of R. and J. Linacre was founded and occupied the Cobnar works which is now Hattersley and Davidson. James' son Hugh bought the fine seventeenth century house "The Poplars" on Cobnar Road in 1909 and made scythes and sickles there until his death in 1936. The business finally closed in 1960.

The only remaining example of any small works in that area now is at the firm of J. B. Rawlins, who still operates on Harvey Clough Road. This adaptable little firm makes letter openers and scissors for government contracts, steel pressings for British steel and electro static precipitators for smoke control. The place is a fascinating example of a mid-nineteenth century "little mester's" works. Tucked away in the middle of this residential area it is a most unexpected sight.

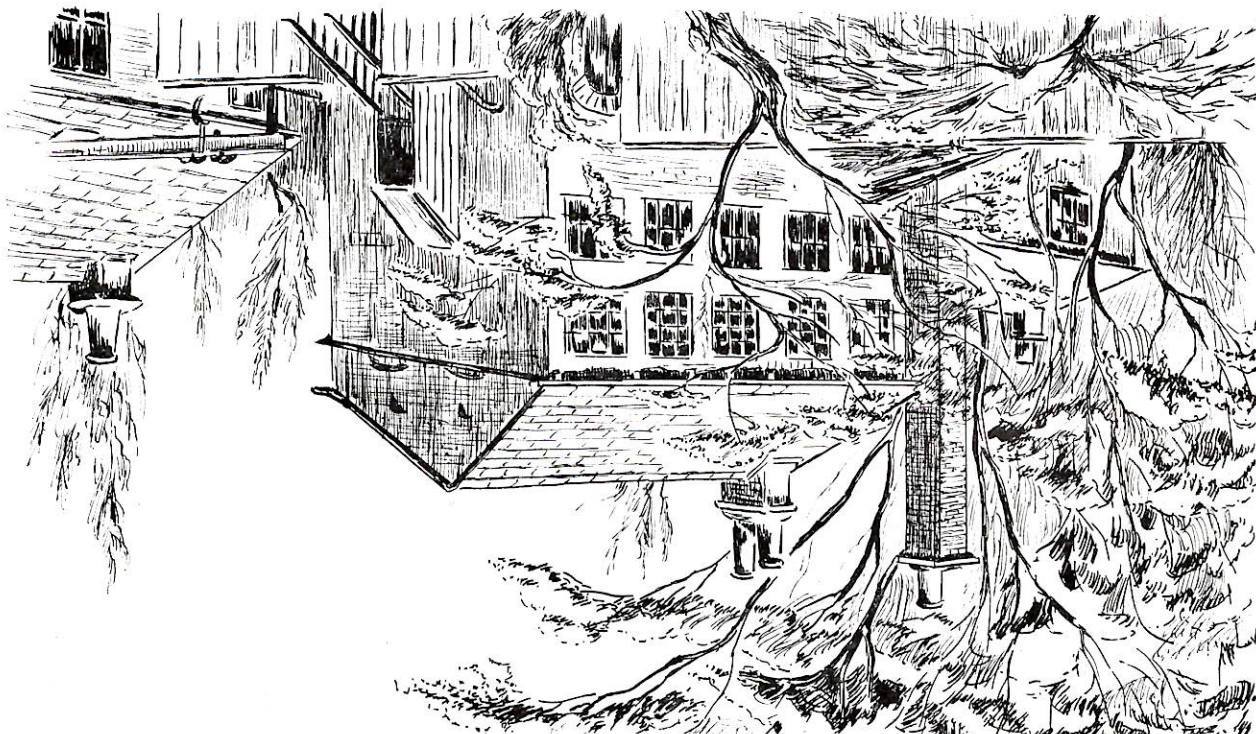
However even by the nineteen thirties the area I have just described had already become much more suburban residential and had ceased to be the isolated community it had once been. Buses ran to and from Derbyshire Lane and those people who wanted to could come to church much more easily, so that the Club House Mission was less used. During Mr. Rawlins' time it was sold, the money passed into the hands of the Charity Commissioners and a part of St. Paul's story went out of existence.

In 1937 Mr. Rawlins left Norton Lees to become Vicar of Mexborough. From there he went to Goole, during which time he became the Rural Dean of Snaith. Later he became an Honorary Canon of Sheffield and Precentor of the cathedral. In 1965 he officially retired, which he has done several times since, but still maintains his contacts with the cathedral.

It fell to the lot of the Reverend William Bingham to help Norton Lees through the war years. Mr. Bingham had hardly had time to settle into his new parish before the nation was busy building air raid shelters, evacuating its children from the cities, and making other preparations for the struggle in which Sheffield, as an industrial city, was bound to become involved.

Sketched by E. Constantine

J. B. Rawlins & Son, Harvey Clough Road



These were hard years and Mr. Bingham's quiet steadfastness and faithfulness to duty were valuable qualities indeed. All through the war it was "Business as usual" at St. Paul's though there were inevitable changes. Evensong was held at 3.00 p.m. instead of 6.00 p.m. because of the blackout, and the ladies of the parish were invited to join the choir for the first time to replace the men who had been called up. Every Wednesday, some members of the parish who were away in the forces, were remembered by name in a special service at St. Paul's. The Vestry of the church became an A.R.P. post and the Vicar and his curate Mr. Geronwin Jones did their share of Warden's duties along side the other people of the neighbourhood. Each church also organised its own fire-watching rota.

During the course of the war, the parish suffered considerably from enemy bombing. Shells fell on Norton Lees Lane, Norton Lees Crescent, Derbyshire Lane, Warminster Road, Cliffe Field Road, Meersbrook, Little London, Bishops court Road, Thorpe House Estate, Lees Hall, Carrfield Avenue and Abbey View. Altogether fifty-two bombs dropped within the parish boundary, bringing inevitable loss of life and damage.

In 1940, during the Sheffield Blitz, the windows on the South side of the church were blown out and the Vicar remarked that he hoped the parishioners would not be deterred from coming to worship because it was a little cooler than usual!

Mount View was much more damaged and the congregation there had to meet in the Scout hut on Warminster Road until 1942. When the local water mains were damaged, everyone had to wait for the water carts to come round. Horribly chlorinated tea was the result, I'm told! After the Sheffield Blitz, the Parish Hall was opened as a rest centre for the homeless, and Mrs. Bingham and her band of W.V.S. helpers collected clothes and organised meals for those whose homes had had to be abandoned. Everyone speaks of the cheerfulness and comradeship of the air raid shelters, one of which was in the vaulted cellars of Lees House.

The Parish magazine continued to appear regularly with its cheering messages, its record of prayers and fund raising activities for the war effort. The Mothers' Union appealed for funds to help bring five hundred Jewish children and five hundred Christian children out of Germany. The Scouts collected waste paper and scrap iron. There were efforts to raise funds for the Red Cross. The children's spirits were kept up in the absence of many of their usual activities by the Children's Corner articles in the magazine, particularly the stories written by Kathleen Stewart.

Norton Lees had for many years benefitted from the Norton Charities. This allowed for the distribution of lengths of flannel and flannellette to a certain number of needy parishioners every Christmas. Mr. Bingham had always endeavoured to dispose of this where it was most needed and appreciated, but during the war years when clothing coupons were required to purchase the material, the custom was altered and money, usually about ten shillings a head, was given instead. The practice continued until the 1960's and stopped in Mr. Cox's time.

Gradually the tide of war turned, the outlook became more hopeful and the prospect of peace a reality. St. Paul's rejoiced to see many former members return to their homes and comforted the families of those who did not. These were extraordinary times, and the Bingham's kindness and sympathy for the people won them lasting friends.

The parish began to pick up the threads of its usual activities, but what was the role of the church to be in the post-war years? Obviously it was a long time before the country as a whole returned to normal existence and many aspects of life had changed for good.

The introduction of the Labour Government's Social legislation after 1945 increased the responsibility of the central authority for social services to a level previously unknown. The Welfare State was to care for its citizens from the cradle to the grave, and took over many functions previously carried out by voluntary organisations. Up to

the present time state run services have never been able to cover all the aspects of community services that the planners perhaps envisaged. On a personal level the spiritual and practical ministry of the church was still of the greatest importance.

There was a good deal of discussion in Mr. Bingham's time over the style of worship at St. Paul's. Norton Lees had a low Church tradition, and non-conformity had always been strong in Sheffield. The Church Pastoral Aid Society who gave grants towards the stipends of our parish curates insisted on the observance of many Low Church practices. The priest was required to take the north position while officiating at Communion and candles on the altar were thoroughly disapproved of. Mr. Bingham, unused to these somewhat austere observances, sought to introduce a measure of colour into the pattern of worship. As always, these changes of detail and the principles behind them produced varied reactions in the parish which it took considerable discussions to resolve.

After the war, Christmas midnight Eucharist was introduced, and a new altar cross and candlesticks were given to the church, breaking with the simpler tradition. The servers adopted the red cassocks they still wear and the top of the reredos behind the main altar was picked out in colour, showing up the arms of the diocese of Southwell to which Norton Lees once belonged. Two new altars were given to the church in Mr. Bingham's time, together with a new font cover, two oak prayer desks, a book case for the prayer books, a case for the church altar frontals and a silver ciborium. Norton Lees has always been fortunate in having people who have given generously to their church.

After the war, most of the societies connected with the church re-appeared, with the exception of the Drama Group, and in 1943 a new venture, a Youth Fellowship was developed in conjunction with Mr. Hattersley's Bible Class. After Mr. Hattersley's death it was taken over by Mr. J. Walker. Initially this group was composed of church youngsters but later opened its doors to all comers,

following the command "Go ye out into the world and preach the gospel". A close link with the Bible Class was always maintained and many of those who came to Youth Fellowship were later confirmed. A wide range of activities was offered, from drama productions, discussions, dances, trips abroad, to the usual indoor and outdoor games and craft activities. The energies of the Youth Club often resulted in soundly practical contributions to church life.

The Sunday school continued to thrive with over a hundred children attending the Junior section at the Parish Hall. A senior Bible Class continued to meet at the vestry. A very active band of teachers including Mr. Morgan, Miss Johnson, Miss Gordon, Mrs. Stringfellow, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Woodcock helped the Superintendent, Miss Footitt, by leading classes, producing nativity plays and organising Whitsun and Christmas teas for the children.

In 1959 the parish organised a celebration dinner at the Parish Hall to mark the twenty first year of Mr. Bingham's ministry in Norton Lees, and in 1961 he moved to be vicar of Mortomley in the same diocese. It was tragic that within a few months of his move, he should have been suddenly taken ill and died. A memorial service was held at St. Paul's on August 31st, the feast of St. Aidan. It is doubtful whether those who arranged the service realised that the feast day commemorated the patron saint of the training college which had prepared Mr. Bingham for the ministry.

Mr. Bingham's successor was the Rev. Eric Cox. Mr. Cox's career had begun in the Church Army where he was trained as an evangelist, and during the war years he had served in Southampton, North Africa and Italy, and was awarded the M.B.E. for his work. He came to Norton Lees from Wheatley Hills, a new parish in which he had been the first incumbent, responsible for the building of the new church.

Mr. Cox was an energetic man with very considerable organisational ability and a flare for winning the co-operation of the people he worked with. Early in his ministry, he formed several working committees to involve

the people in the running of the parish: one for the buildings, another for social functions, a Missionary Committee, a garden Committee to attend to the general upkeep of the church grounds and a Stewardship Committee.

It was one of Mr. Cox's aims to build up a team ministry in the parish and early on the Parochial Church Council approved the policy of increasing the Church's staff. Miss Doriel Denman, who had worked with Mr. Cox in his previous parish, came to St. Paul's as a Parish worker in 1961, and was chiefly concerned with the church's work among young people. The Sunday School was re-organised, changing the name to Young Peoples' Church, and St. Paul's Guild for Young People was begun in the Meersbrook Vestry Hall. The latter produced some good work, but like all other attempts to establish meaningful activity in the lower part of the parish, it eventually foundered. It is perhaps one of the realities of life that the people who have lived below Meersbrook Park have found the hill an obstacle to church going. There has been a tendency to go down to church, to Heeley parish.

In addition to Miss Denman, a curate, the Rev. Graham Firth, was appointed in 1962. He and his young wife, teaching at Newfields, moved into the newly acquired Clergy house, 28 Warminster Close. Mr. Firth was an enthusiastic sportsman, specialising in shot-putting, and played a great role in developing the youth fellowship in Norton Lees.

The funds with which to purchase the Clergy house came from the sale of the Club House Mission in Mr. Rawlin's time. The money realised from the sale had passed into the hands of the Charity Commissioners, where it had remained over thirty years, accumulating interest. Mr. Cox initiated a long and involved correspondence with the charity Commissioners and the Diocesan Board of Finance which resulted in a scheme to release the fund for the benefit of the parish. A sum of money was obtained to purchase the house, together with another sum which through investment would yield sufficient interest over thirty years to restore the amount for the purchase to be

repaid without any expense to the parish. A further small sum became available for general parochial purposes.

When the Rev. G. Firth left Norton Lees in 1966, two more curates were appointed: the Rev. A. Vout, an ex-teacher at King Edward VII's Grammar School, Sheffield, and the Rev. Douglas Hilborne who had belonged to the Salvation Army before he entered the Church of England. Both made valuable contributions to parish life, Mr Vout staying on to maintain church services during the Interregnum of 1969.

As Mr. Cox had been Diocesan Adviser for the promotion of Christian Stewardship, it is not surprising that a Stewardship Campaign figured early in his ministry. The idea behind the Stewardship scheme was, and still is, simple. As stewards of the good things of life, given us by God, we are required to answer to him for our use of them "From those to whom much is given, from them shall much be required" - our time, talents and our money for the forwarding of the work of Christ. The first Stewardship Campaign in Norton Lees was launched in 1962 with two renewal gatherings later in Mr. Cox's ministry resulting in a significant number of people joining the scheme.

In 1963 alterations and renovations were carried out in the Church and Parish Hall. In 1962 the Church had been damaged by the violent storms which hit Sheffield, and extensive repairs had to be undertaken. The Church organ which used to stand behind the choir stalls on the South side of the Chancel was removed and given to City College. Its successor came from Burngreave Congregational Church, then due for demolition. This organ was originally built in Sheffield by Mr. A. Keates, and was partially renewed by Messrs T. C. Wilcock of Albert Road before being rebuilt at St. Paul's. The new organ was dedicated by the Bishop of Sheffield on February 26th 1964. At the service the Choir sang Purcell's 'Rejoice in the Lord Alway' and Mr. Bradley, organist of St. Paul's, played Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 6 in D minor. The installation

of the organ at the rear of the church involved moving the font from that position to its present position in the south aisle. A beautiful screen surrounding the organ was given in memory of Mr. Percy Shirtcliffe, a past chorister and Church Warden at St. Paul's. The church was finally decorated in a new and bolder colour scheme and the blue carpet, which we still have, was laid. In 1966, a new processional cross, made from stainless steel and designed by a member of the congregation, was also given to St. Paul's.

The 1960's was a time of great discussion over the question of Christian unity, and a number of joint services were held at St. Paul's with Mount View Methodist Church and Meersbrook Congregational Church. In 1964 a new Family Service was started and later Series 2 8.00 a.m. communion was tried for an experimental period but not continued.

The social activities of the church continued and were adapted as times required, with all the evergreen groups continuing and a Badminton Group beginning. An innovation for Norton Lees was the Parish holiday, of which there were four in Mr. Cox's time. These holidays, at Kirby Malham in 1963, at Rydal Hall in the Lake District in 1964 and 1966 and at Dunblane in Scotland in 1965 were an opportunity for parishioners of all ages to enjoy a holiday together, and social gatherings in the parish itself at Christmas, Shrovetide and Harvest continued.

1964 was a year of celebrations. The Diocese held its Golden Jubilee, the Parish Youth Fellowship enjoyed a Silver Jubilee dinner, the Scouts celebrated their fiftieth birthday and the Young Wives group met for the first time. But for many, the most important occasion was the inauguration of the Lees Club, the first organisation the parish had had to cater specifically for the over 60's. After consultation with the Social Services Department, Mr. Cox appealed to the Mothers Union for volunteers to start the new club and a band of helpers led by Mrs. Stringfellow soon came forward. Soon after the opening, the club had

a membership of over a hundred which it has more than maintained. It has been highly successful ever since, organising a weekly gathering for its members and arranging two Club holidays a year.

Mr. Cox was keenly interested in local history. His special study was Chantreyland and the famous Norton-born sculptor Francis Chantrey, a subject on which he wrote at length and gave many lectures. His considerable researches into Norton and Norton Lees as part of the old parish, led him to gather documents, photographs and papers which have been invaluable to the making of this present booklet. He also wrote the first history of our parish, which formed part of the basis for this piece of work. Without his care, much of interest would have been lost. Older churches draw the attention of many historians. The newer ones, like ours, which make tomorrow's history, are not always considered worthy of note.

In 1969, Mr. Cox moved with his family to become Rector of Corscombe in Dorset. As Mr. Cox said in his parting message in the parish magazine, he had tried to "think big for Christ" and make his parishioners do likewise. Certainly he is remembered as the inspiration behind the successful expansion of many aspects of church life in Norton Lees. In 1971 Mr. Cox returned to the Diocese of Sheffield to become Rector of Tankersley and Advisor for Christian Stewardship. He still maintains contact with St. Paul's

In January 1970, the Rev. John Anthony Bowering moved to St. Paul's Vicarage with his wife and two children. Although one of the youngest vicars to have come to Norton Lees, he had had a varied and interesting life. Born in Chile, he spent part of his childhood in Iceland and part in wartime London. After taking a degree in Economics at Cambridge, he was converted through Billy Graham's ministry, and as a result, studied for the ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. His career in the church took him to Hornchurch, Essex, as curate, to Chelmsford Cathedral as

Succentor and then Precentor and then as Vicar to Brampton Bierlow in the Diocese of Sheffield. From there he came to be Vicar of St. Paul's.

Mr. Bowering's aim has been to continue the policy of involving more people in the running of the parish, so that the Church should be thought of less as an establishment and more as a body of people carrying out their respective tasks in the fellowship of the Christian faith.

By the 1970's the parish contained nearly 20,000 people, presenting a formidable challenge to the churches in the area. Many of those moving into Norton Lees were young people with families, and Mr. Bowering with his own young family, realised the importance of making contact with these younger age groups.

In 1970 a Play group was begun in the Parish Hall, led by Mrs. Scarratt and Mrs. Herbert. This venture has been so successful that it has had to increase its activities to cope with the demand. About this time work began on renovations to the Parish Hall, and is still continuing. A Tuesday afternoon play session for children under the age of three was another innovation, providing welcome play opportunity for the children, and a valuable meeting point for young mothers in the area.

In 1972 the Go Club was formed. After an Open Youth Club had begun and died, some of the young people formed the Go Club. Much influenced by the 1972 Festival for Jesus at Sheffield Cathedral, the Go Club maintained its original aim which was to be a Christian orientated youth fellowship. Go Clubbers have discussions and Bible Studies, have been camping and organised the highly original God Squad weekend in 1973, producing their own Folk Opera for Easter, "Ichthus", and organising a concert by the nationally popular "Parchment" group of Gospel singers. Their energies have contributed a good deal to church life and very substantially to the Church Missionary Society with which St. Paul's maintains its long standing connections. Miss Gill Todd, for a short time resident in

the parish, and associated with Go Club, left England in 1973 to work as a missionary in Sri Lanka, and is the new St. Paul's missionary link overseas.

In 1970 the Sunday School was again re-organised becoming the Seekers. The Seekers are divided into two groups, the younger children from ages three to eleven, meet in the vestry during Sunday morning services, and a group of the older children meet at the Vicarage at the same time. The aim of this arrangement was to involve the small children in some part of the church Service and to accustom them to using the church building for their activities. Parents were also then freed to attend church services more easily.

In 1971, some important changes were made in services at St. Paul's. Series 2 Family Communion Service, authorised for use in 1967, was finally introduced regularly, and also used at the Communion Service on Tuesdays at 10.00 a.m. Both services, simpler in form and language, aim to present Church worship in a manner more acceptable to present day needs.

A Christian Stewardship Development Campaign was launched in 1973 and very ably organised by Mr. Jack Olivier of the Anglican Stewardship Association. Two standing Committees, the Christian Stewardship Giving Committee and the Christian Stewardship Service Committee, remain in existence to keep alive the aims and ideals of the scheme, and a newsletter is produced quarterly to keep everyone informed of what is being achieved. The income from Stewardship enables the Church to meet its own commitments and has also benefitted outside charities like the Church Missionary Society and St. Luke's Nursing Home.

Progress towards Christian unity in the parish was helped by the formation of the Norton Lees Christian Council, consisting of St. Paul's, Meersbrook Park United Reformed Church, Mount View Methodists and Meersbrook Bank Methodists. Contacts had obviously existed between some of the churches long before this. A Methodist minister

was first invited to preach at St. Paul's in the 1930's and many joint services had been held since that time, but in 1973 this was officially recognised in the establishment of the council. Co-operation is increased by regular communication between the participating churches, and discussions on questions of common interest. Out of this has grown "The Bridge", the magazine of the four churches, produced jointly.

More recently there has been considerable support from all Christian groups in Norton Lees for the Contact scheme. This was initiated by the Sheffield Council for Social Services and the Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care, and is an attempt to ensure that anyone in the community - but particularly those elderly people living alone, have the means of contacting help when and if they need it. Contacts are volunteers who act as link between the people of their immediate neighbourhood and the Social Services and they can be recognised by the orange Contact sticker displayed in windows.

In 1973, after three years in which the Vicar had worked alone in this large parish, Mrs. Kathleen Jackson came to St. Paul's as Parish Worker. She has quickly become a valuable part of the community, helping with the varied round of tasks that make up parish work, and, in particular, has created a new group for the over eleven-year-olds, the Questors.

So we come to the present day. And what of the future? The ordinariness of the life of the parish will surely continue, for we have no special claim to fame. But such is the rate of change in the manner of doing things that our way of life will, in the next hundred years, change at least as radically as in the last hundred years. God's love is however unchanging and constant. But the ways in which the Church presents the Gospel of Jesus Christ will have to change. The mission of the Church remains constant: "to preach, to teach and to baptise", but the manner in which it carries out its mission will have to be adapted with imagination and vitality to the ever changing shape of society.

Vicars of St. Paul's

The Reverend William Mercer	1877 - 1899
The Reverend Vaniah Odom	1899 - 1915
The Reverend David Green	1915 - 1919
The Reverend Thomas W. Barstow	1919 - 1929
The Reverend Ernest H. P. Rawlins	1929 - 1937
The Reverend William Bingham	1938 - 1961
The Reverend Eric H. Cox	1961 - 1969
The Reverend John A. Bowering	1970 -

Curates of St. Paul's

The Reverend Birks
The Reverend Malaher
The Rev. R. C. Weaver
The Reverend G. Bernard
The Reverend H. Lewis
The Reverend G. Jones
The Reverend G. Firth
The Reverend D. Hilborne
The Reverend A. Vout

62-68
66-68
1965-1970

Parish Workers of St. Paul's

Sister Hatton
Miss Doriel Denman
Mrs. Kathleen Jackson

Lay Readers of St. Paul's

Mr. A. Hill
Mr. R. H. Beresford
Mr. H. Hattersley
Mr. W. J. Bullock
Mr. D. Porter

Organists and Choirmasters of St. Paul's

Organists

1891	Mr. Brown
1892	Mr. F. G. Waterhouse
1893 - 1896	Mr. Poole
1897 - 1914	Mr. W. A. Blakeley
1915 - 1919	Mr. Strickland
1919 - 1924	Mr. H. Coombs
1924 - 1930	Mr. B. P. Kaye

Choirmasters

1897 - 1914	Mr. W. A. Blakeley
1903	Mr. H. Reynolds
1906	Mr. Crowther
	Mr. W. R. Lowe
1907 - 1915	Mr. W. Ludgate
1915 - 1919	Mr. Strickland
1919 - 1924	Mr. W. Broadhead
1919 - 1931	Mr. C. Solesbury

Organist/Choirmaster

1931 - 1935	Mr. G. H. B. Stafford
1935 - 1937	Mr. E. Smith
1938 - 1943	Mr. H. C. Wright
1943 - 1947	Mr. A. Watson
1947 - 1951	Mr. R. S. Bradley
1952 - 1953	Mr. H. C. Wright
1953 - 1957	Mr. J. Morrison
1957 - 1962	Mr. H. Parkin
1963 - 1974	Mr. R. S. Bradley

Church Wardens of St. Paul's

Pre - 1888?

1888 - 1889	Mr. Levick, Mr. Haslam
1890 - 1894	Mr. Ryalls, Mr. Wall
1895 - 1896	Mr. Cockayne, Mr. Wall
1897 - 1898	Mr. G. Hall, Mr. A. W. Cliffe
1899 - 1900	Mr. C. E. Houldsworth, Mr. A. W. Cliffe
1901 - 1902	Mr. T. Lister, Dr. O. H. Hudson
1903	Mr. T. Lister, Mr. G. E. Beverley
1904 - 1905	Mr. H. B. Leighton, Mr. G. E. Beverley
1906 - 1907	Mr. C. E. Houldsworth, Mr. H. G. Hart
1908 - 1909	Mr. W. Pitchford, Mr. W. H. Chambers
1910	Mr. W. Pitchford, Mr. T. Leech
1911 - 1913	Mr. T. B. Cook, Mr. W. W. Askew
1914	Mr. H. Padley, Mr. W. Walker
1915	Mr. T. Grant, Mr. W. Walker
1916	Mr. W. Webster, Mr. W. Pitchford
1917	Mr. W. Ludgate, Mr. W. Pitchford
1918 - 1919?	
1920	Mr. W. Ludgate, Mr. W. W. Askew
1921 - 1922	Mr. W. M. Whinfrey, Mr. W. W. Askew
1923 - 1926	Mr. W. M. Whinfrey, Mr. B. Lloyd
1927 - 1935	Mr. W. M. Whinfrey, Mr. H. Gott
1936 - 1940	Mr. W. M. Whinfrey, Mr. P. Shirtcliffe
1941 - 1942	Mr. S. Palmer, Mr. P. Shirtcliffe
1943 - 1945	Mr. J. W. Hanson, Mr. P. Shirtcliffe
1946 - 1949	Mr. P. Shirtcliffe, Mr. R. S. Easton
1950 - 1953	Mr. H. F. Leverton, Mr. J. W. Hanson
1954 - 1958	Mr. H. F. Leverton, Mr. E. W. Marples
1959 - 1960	Mr. J. S. Lloyd, Mr. E. W. Marples
1961 - 1966	Mr. J. S. Lloyd, Mr. H. F. Leverton
1967 - 1970	Mr. J. H. Hancock, Mr. P. L. Taylor
1971 - 1973	Mr. W. Morgan, Mr. M. Fletcher
1974	Mr. W. Morgan, Mr. D. Scarratt