
The St. Bartholomew's Gazette

60 years or so ago.....

In September 1945 English Martyrs, Streatham, and St. Bartholomew's, Norbury, launched a joint Parish Magazine called *The Strorbury Gazette*. Every issue had the legend 'A magazine for the youth and parishioners of Streatham and Norbury' emblazoned across the front cover, together with the papal keys across a backdrop of a hand-drawn outline map of the Streatham/Norbury area showing unnamed roads and railways and only two buildings - the two churches! Issue number seven of this august journal was dated November 1946, and for reasons not yet apparent, the issue dated February 1947 was again given the number one. The joint venture finished with issue number nine in June 1948, and in August 1948, after 16 bimonthly issues of *The Strorbury*, St. Bartholomew's 'went it alone' with the *St. Bartholomew's Gazette*, again with the papal keys on the front cover, but without the map or the legend. The new Parish Magazine lasted almost bimonthly until issue nine in February 1950 (does anyone have a copy of issue number seven 1949, dated September or October, they could provide to complete the parish archives? Was February 1950 the last issue? - ed.).

Our website arrived nearly 60 years after the launch of the first issue of the *St Bartholomew's Gazette*!! In that first issue, the then Parish Priest, Fr. Basil Miller (under the pseudonym of 'Parochus') wrote the introductory editorial, and it will no doubt fascinate many to see this introduction faithfully transcribed below.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S -GAZETTE

No. 1, August, 1948

Passing Parade

WE have to record the passing over, as our separated brethren would have it, of the *Strorbury Gazette*. Reading the editorial in its first issue in September 1945, we note that the objects of the *Gazette* were :—

First, to provide a record of what is done at the Youth Club and to stimulate the interest of parents and other people in the activities of the Club,

Second, to outline the principle events of the parish life of Streatham and Norbury.

We venture to submit, in all humility, that the *Strorbury* has fulfilled this twofold object. While we lament the passing of the *Strorbury* into the annals of the "has beens," we rejoice at the birth of the *St. Bartholomew's Gazette*, which we trust will be a worthy successor. We shall endeavour to maintain the objects of our predecessor, but with this difference: First, to record the principal events in the parish life of Norbury and second to continue to stimulate the interest of parents and others in the activities of St. Bartholomew's Youth Club.

So while the trumpets proclaim the birth of *St. Bartholomew's Gazette*, we bestow upon it our blessing and wish it long life and every success.

Though many parishioners have been away on holiday during the past two months, the parish has been very much alive as will be seen from the reports of the principle events, which will be reported under the separate titles of "Fatima"—"The Way of the Cross"—and "Walsingham."

It has always been my policy as parish Priest to get my parishioners financially interested in the Parish. This does not mean that I am forever begging for money, for in the words of Holy

Scripture, "I am ashamed to beg." Further more, the generosity of my parishioners, which is known throughout the diocese, has put me in a class above the clerical beggar. But it does mean that I take you into my confidence in all financial matters of the Parish. For this reason I give you the amount of the Sunday collections, and once a year a balance sheet so that you can see for yourselves how your money is spent. It is your money, and I am only your administrator. And just as I have to give an account of my stewardship to the Bishop, so I give it to you.

On my appointment to Norbury on the 12th June 1945, there was a debt of £4,000 on the parish. Soon after my arrival the property at the back of the church was on the market, and I was successful in the purchase of this property. It was vital for the future development of the parish, for it is hoped in the distant future to build a new Presbytery, possibly a Parochial Hall, and certainly the extension of the Church. This property cost £4,500. So in 1945 there was a burden of £8,500 on the Parish. Your generous support has enabled me to clear the original debt of £4,000, the last £500 having been paid this June.

To all I offer my grateful thanks, and I look forward to the liquidation of the present debt of £4,500 by the end of 1950.

We offer our congratulations to Mr. P.C. O'Neill, a well known parishioner, upon whom His Majesty the King conferred the Medal of the Order of the British Empire (Civil Division). His name appeared in the List of Honours published on His Majesty's Birthday on the 10th of June, 1948.

We also offer our congratulations to the following, who received their first Communion in St. Bartholomew's Church on July 2nd, the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady.

Celia Parkes.	Michael O'Meara.	Christine Robinson.
Sylvia Thorpe.	Cynthia Cassidy.	Laurence Philippon.
Patricia Cole.	Kathleen McGowan.	

Among the forthcoming events in the parish there will be the Feast of St. Bartholomew, our Patron Saint, on August 24th. It will not be possible to observe the feast with full solemnity. Sung Mass on the Sunday within the octave will not be possible as many of the Choir will be absent on holiday. But on Sunday evening the sermon will be preached by the Rev. Charles Byrne, Vice-Rector of St. Joseph's College, Mark Cross, and a former Rector of Norbury.

A Mission, which has become an annual feature of the Parish, will be given by a Jesuit Father, commencing on Sunday, September 26th, and ending on Rosary Sunday, October 3rd.

PAROCHUS

The total debt of £8,500 was huge, equivalent to over £250,000 in 2007. A conservative estimate of an equivalent property based debt at today's values is unlikely arrive at a sum any less than c.£750,000! The £4,000 Fr. Miller inherited in 1945 was largely the residue of the £4,800 cost of purchasing the site for, and building, St. Bartholomew's Hall at Pollards Hill. The Hall (as it came to be affectionately known as) was primarily intended as a Mass Centre. It was opened on Sunday 12th March 1939 with Mass said by Fr. Cyril Walmsley, and was used for a film show the following Tuesday. The floor of the Hall was specially constructed with dancing in mind, and the venue became a well known and popular centre for dances. Fr. Walmsley (previously of the professional staff of St. Joseph's Diocesan College (*Seminary*), Mark Cross) had been inducted as Rector (*Parish Priest*) at St. Bartholomew's the previous August.
