The Social History of St Nicholas' Church 1930-1952

Change, War and Remembrance

If the first decade of peace had been dominated by the lingering shadow of war, the second seems to have been dominated by other concerns. The Great War, while still the subject of yearly commemoration, no longer appears to have framed the terms of everyday life quite so insistently, while even late in the decade, any sense of the approach of a further conflict seems largely absent from parish records.

Tensions existed, however, and not always below the surface. The effects of social change were increasingly visible and emerged at St Nicholas' in sometimes surprising ways. In April 1944, looking back upon the nearly nine years he had spent at St Nicholas', the departing Vicar, the Revd A Hagan Gowe, obviously felt he had been faced with serious challenges upon his arrival, challenges he felt were only partially resolved by the time of his departure. In his farewell letter to the parish he described St Nicholas' in 1935 as "convalescent after the shock of recent turmoil". By 1944, however, despite half this period having been passed in war, he felt that "a measure of health" had been restored and he predicted that "the former vitality will come back if only all who love St Nicholas' will work and pray and worship with a deep sincerity".

Change:

At first glance, parish records for the second decade following the end of the Great War seem to present a rather muted impression of parish life. After the major enhancements of the church's early years and the significant addition of the memorial stained glass windows and bronze plaque in the years immediately following the War, such large-scale projects were no longer a prime objective. Two fine wall memorials, to Captain Charles Norman Brockbank and to twin brothers Lieutenant Geoffrey Bunnell Burton and Lieutenant Kenrick Hammond Burton had been erected in 1918 and 1919 respectively, while the presentation in 1930 of a carved oak screen to enclose the two windows of the organ loft on the North side of the chancel, completed any further significant commemorative additions until the work to commemorate the fallen of the Second World War in1952. In the same year, however, in an ominous foretaste of the structural problems which, later in the century, would threaten the very existence of the church itself, "dangerous decay" was found in the stonework surrounding the West Windows, putting the stained glass at serious risk and necessitating urgent repairs. The following year, repairs to the organ also proved necessary. Little wonder that, by 1934, the year of the church's sixtieth anniversary, the Vicar, the Revd B Selwyn Smith, decided that a letter should be sent to all those on the electoral roll urging the importance of regular giving, either by envelope or by yearly or half yearly subscription. Indeed, insistent claims upon increasingly stretched church income, and the apathetic response of the parish, seem to be recurrent themes throughout the 20s and 30s.

The church's Golden Jubilee a decade earlier had been the occasion of a magnificent Grand Bazaar, which had raised much needed funds for repairs and redecoration. In common with earlier such events, it had set itself an ambitious target, hoping to raise £2,500; previous bazaars, in 1878, 1892 and 1905 had also made large sums: £2,000, £1,500 and £1,870 respectively. In fact, the Grand Jubilee Bazaar, held over three days at Alexandra Hall, raised over £4,800. [The programme for this event, in itself a fascinating social record, is available as a PDF as part of "The Social History of St Nicholas' Church" on the St Nicholas' website.] There appear to have been no such ambitious plans for the Diamond Jubilee. PCC minutes for May record that a "sale of work" was planned, which it was hoped would raise a comparatively modest £750. A note from April 1935, however, does refer to the event as the Diamond Jubilee Bazaar. Copies of the magazine for this year are, unfortunately, missing, so we have no way of knowing any further details, or even whether it was successful in reaching its target, although the modesty of its ambition in this regard does perhaps reflect something of what the Revd Hagan Gowe was to refer to as St Nicholas' loss


ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH
BLUNDELLSANDS
Official Handbook and Souvenir
GRAND
JUBILEE
BAZAAR
ALEXANDRA HALL
BLUNDELLSANDS
THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
February 29th, 29th and March 1st, 1924
PRICE SIXPENCE

of “vitality” during these years, which contrasts markedly with the obvious energy expended on the event ten years before.

We do know, however, that, on 25th September, the Diamond Jubilee was celebrated by a special service in the presence of the Bishop of Warrington. A copy of the Order of Service still survives and, in it, the lives of three men in particular are celebrated: Mr Arnold Baruchson, Sir William Forwood and the Revd Charles de Blois Winslow: “Because Thou did’st put it into their hearts to build in this place a sanctuary to Thy holy name…” [For details of the roles played by these three men in the building and early enhancement of the church, please see “A Guide to the Heritage and Restoration of St Nicholas’ Church”, also on the St Nicholas’ website.]

Revd Selwyn Smith
1917 - 1935

The following year saw the resignation of the Vicar, Revd Selwyn Smith, who had served at St Nicholas’ since 1917 and had now been appointed by his old college, Trinity, Cambridge, to the benefice of Barnard’s Castle. It is interesting to contrast the speed with which matters progressed, from the Vicar’s announcement of his resignation in June, his departure in July, the appointment of his successor, the Revd A Hagan Gowe, in September and the new Vicar’s induction in November, with the much slower manner of such a process today, when it is difficult to imagine it happening in much under a year from the departure of the incumbent.

In the Revd Selwyn Smith’s final letter to his parish in July’s magazine and in the accounts to be found of the speeches made at the farewell presentation held in his honour, there are intriguing insights into the way his eighteen years at St Nicholas’ were viewed, by others and, most of all, by himself. His letter suggests a man who nursed a powerful sense of grievance at the difficulties he had faced during much of this time. He took the opportunity, therefore, to launch a scathing attack:


BLUNDELLSANDS VICAR'S FAREWELL

A group taken before the presentation to the REV. B. SELWYN SMITH, Vicar of Blundellsands, and MRS. SMITH, who left this week to take up the living of Barnard Castle, Durham. Mr. and Mrs. Smith are seated in the front (centre).
[Photo by One Day Photos Ltd., Alexandra-road, Great Crosby.

“From time to time, over-clever and dissatisfied people try to preach a new Gospel with new means of grace, very up-to-date and adaptable to the unique needs of the present generation. Some tendency of that sort has been observable locally during the last few years. But though the popular voice may claim it with acclamation and welcome its liberal broadminded

outlook, it will never make bad men good, nor good men better.... I trust that, whatever new methods and customs come to prevail at St Nicholas', one message will be as loudly and constantly proclaimed as it has ever been. For as a matter of fact the needs of one generation are no more unique than those of another, and the people who are always decrying the Church and the old-fashioned doctrines and methods, and proclaiming short cuts to the Kingdom of Heaven are only blind leaders of the blind. Conceit has a very bad effect on the eyesight".

The bitterness of the passage seems totally out of keeping with the usual conventions of such an occasion. While we know that, in 1928, there had been considerable controversy throughout the church on the subject of the proposed Revised Prayer Book, this feels deeply personal and suggests that he was referring to more than simple doctrinal or liturgical differences in the wider church, but rather to matters much nearer home. A similar, if more restrained impression is created in the magazine account of some of the speeches made at the presentation which took place in the church hall on the eve of his departure. On this occasion, Revd Selwyn Smith confines himself to describing his years at St Nicholas' as "difficult", albeit with some achievements of which he was proud. The words of fellow members of the clergy, however, create the impression of a man who had always done what he believed to be right, but at the cost of frequent unpopularity. The Rector of Sefton even admonished the assembled parishioners that, as time went by, "the people of St Nicholas' Parish would realise more fully what they had lost when the Vicar and his wife left them". Canon Sykes bore witness to his patience "in very difficult circumstances, when one could not but feel that he was entitled to kindness, sympathy and help from his brethren", and confirmed that he had been glad to support him during the "difficulties he has had to put up with".

Most members of the congregation gathered in the crowded hall that evening would have been well aware of the nature of their Vicar's difficulties and of the reasons for his obvious unpopularity with at least some elements of his parish. We, unfortunately, can only surmise. He was clearly a man of strong views and not afraid to express them, even at the risk of appearing out of step with those around him, and there is no doubt that some of those views, as far as they have come down to us, can sound pompous and unsympathetic. One remembers the forthright opinions he expressed in an edition of the magazine from 1918 on the temerity of the striking railwaymen and shipwrights, men whom, somewhat patronisingly, he calls, "generally speaking, good fellows", in demanding the "outrageous" sum of £5 per week, and his gloomy prognostications for the future if others followed their example: "...if this is a foretaste of what is to come when peace is declared, the outlook is not pleasant for Merrie England".

The Revd Selwyn Smith's capacity for disapproval of his social inferiors clearly did not diminish over time; one of the speakers at his leaving presentation, the Revd J Vaughan, spoke approvingly of how the Vicar had worked with him "...in promoting a better tone, and a more orderly behaviour amongst the crowds who now throng our shore at weekends and at holiday times".

The Place of "Charming Manners":

Then there is the role of the Revd Edgar Gordon Thomas in adding to the picture which emerges of Revd Selwyn Smith. The Revd Thomas is a character created by a short-lived St Nicholas' curate, the Revd Joseph McCulloch, who had found himself at the centre of scandal as a result of the publication in 1932 of his novel, "Charming Manners", rapidly identified by the outraged residents of Blundellsands as a thinly veiled satirical portrait of themselves and, above all, their Vicar. Finding himself described in print as the "loathed Vicar" and as a man who changed his smile as he passed over the railway bridge from Crosby to Blundellsands, he had the offending curate summarily removed. Nevertheless, it is all too easy to trace the resemblance between the character described as possessing a "genius for interfering...a proud and tactless man" and the man who had felt it his duty to promote "a better tone and a more orderly behaviour" among the weekend visitors to Crosby beach. It is not hard to imagine how this episode might have contributed to the angry and resentful tone of his final letter to the parish, or indeed the part some of his opinions might have played in the "difficulties" identified by his fellow clergy. [A fuller account of the "Charming Manners" episode can be found in "One Parish, Two Stories", also part of "The Social History of St Nicholas' Church" on the St Nicholas' website.]

The Vicar's character, however, unsympathetic although it was clearly capable of seeming, was not universally unpopular and his redeeming features seem to have included a genuine commitment to the wellbeing of St Nicholas' School. Indeed, the first part of his farewell letter expresses his frustration at what he interprets as Whitehall obstruction in blocking plans for the building of a proper playground, and also offering his own solution to the problems created by the clear need for additional premises. Many years after his departure, he was to be characterised warmly by the headmaster of the school during this period as "a pioneer of our better fortune".

Indeed, the Revd Selwyn Smith was not the sole target of "Charming Manners". The portrait which emerges of the residents of Blundellsands, the men and women who still composed the majority of his congregation, who constituted the PCC, manned the committees and managed the finances, who organised, in fact, the whole of church life, is equally unflattering, depicting them as complacent, snobbish and inward-looking.

Clearly, the social polarisation within the parish, identified in the first two articles of this series, was still much in evidence. The difference between the earliest years of the church's history and the nineteen thirties, however, was that, whereas in the decades preceding the Great War, the social gulf between the immense wealth of the owners of the great houses of The Serpentine, Merrilocks Road, Warren Road and the much more modest circumstances of the "labouring classes" who inhabited Brighton- le - Sands and whose needs would largely have been served by the Brighton Road Mission, would hardly have been a matter for comment, let alone satire. It is difficult to imagine men like Sir William Forwood or the Revd de Blois Winslow featuring in a publication like "Charming Manners".

War necessarily brings social change in its wake. Returning soldiers had been promised much but rewarded with little. The franchise had been extended, however, and, since 1918, parishes too had had to become more democratically governed, with the inclusion even of women as members of the PCC. Ordinary people were a good deal less deferential to their social superiors, more inclined to expect a fair reward for their labour and would certainly have expected to be allowed to enjoy their leisure time at the very least, unhindered by the disapproval of their betters.

Crosby Beach showing Burbo Mansions

The Parish Grows:

The most significant change to occur during the interwar years in St Nicholas' parish, however, was a surge in house building, particularly in the area to the south of the church, providing homes of more modest dimensions than the grand houses of Blundellsands, but significantly more prosperous than the terraces and cottages of the former hamlet which became Brighton-le- Sands. The population gradually became more socially diverse, numbers grew and we are reminded of Mr WE Tyson's description [quoted in "One Parish, Two Stories"] of the composition of the parish as resembling the three classes of railway carriage of the time:

"First Class, the inhabitants of the grand houses to the north of the church; Second Class, those who lived in the more modest houses to the south, in roads such as Harlech, Rossett and Cavendish and Third Class, the inhabitants of the roads around the former hamlet of Little Brighton…"

It was in the population of the "second class" that a substantial portion of this growth took place. In his own brief history of St Nicholas' School, the

former headmaster, Mr Henry N Davey, describes how this process affected the development of the school itself. After some highly critical remarks concerning the lack of interest in the largely poor “village children” shown by the well-to-do members of the congregations of prior decades, he describes the change which took place in the area, and hence the school itself during the period between 1925 and 1935, with the growth in the number of houses and the consequent addition of many more residents he describes as “upper working class”. Not only did school amenities improve, [and his description of the conditions for both teachers and children upon his arrival in 1925 is truly Dickensian in some of its details], so did the relationship with the church and he refers warmly to the Revd Selwyn Smith, whose foresight had, among other benefits, secured a plot of land upon which, in 1937, they were able to build a “fine schoolyard”.

The other improvement which Mr Davey describes with considerable pride, and which he attributes directly to the growth in the local population, was in academic attainment. From its earliest years, the school had served the population of Brighton-le-Sands, with the children of the growing numbers resident in the new suburb of Blundellsands being educated at more prestigious establishments elsewhere. Its children were, as he describes them, “mainly the sons and daughters of fishermen, gardeners, house servants, coachmen and other workers living in the immediate neighbourhood”. He had been able to find little trace of any kind of

examination success in the school records of the time and puts this down to a lack of intelligence brought about by the fact that Brighton-le-Sands was what he called a “close community”, with most of its inhabitants interrelated.

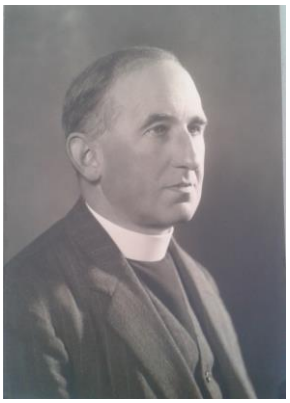
Modern educational practitioners would probably wish to take issue with parts of Mr Davey’s theory of human intelligence; nevertheless, there can be little doubt of the energising effect upon this largely static and inward-looking population of an influx of more socially mobile new neighbours. This development, combined with steady improvements in school premises and facilities which had begun to take place at the same time, had resulted in growing academic success for St Nicholas’ children at age 11+ in the Lancashire County Scholarship examinations. For Mr Davey, at least, there could be no doubt about the cause of what he calls “this Renaissance”, which he saw largely as the result of “the infiltration of new blood into the school family, one of the results of the building-up of the area and immediate neighbourhood of the school and parish”.

The inter-war years clearly did usher in an era in the life of St Nicholas’ Church and its surrounding community in which it was beginning more closely to resemble our own. An age of enhanced democracy, growing social mobility and some educational reform, however, also brought its problems for a church like St Nicholas’, not least, perhaps, a growing number of

parishioners who, while more likely to attend the church than the mission hall frequented by the poorest residents, were somewhat less likely to attend church at all and much less inclined than in former years to "know their place".

New challenges:

A suggestion that the Revd Selwyn Smith's successor might be about to adopt a slightly more conciliatory approach to some of the parish's perceived problems, particularly weekend visitors to the beach, came soon after his induction. A magazine entry from 1936 announces that, during the summer months and weather permitting, open air services would be held on the green at 7.15pm on Sundays, and that it was hoped that this would act as "Witness to the thousands of visitors to our shore".



Revd A Hagan Gowe
1935 - 1944

The first major challenge Revd Hagan-Gowe was to face, however, emerged not from internal conflict but from external reorganisation. A commission had been appointed by the Bishop to look into the boundaries of the parish of Sefton, which at that time included the district of Hightown. This inquiry recommended the district's incorporation into the parish of St Nicholas', arrangements for which began immediately with the appointment of a new Curate for St Stephen's in February 1936. Negotiations regarding the precise extent of the land to be transferred to St Nicholas' took far longer than expected and resulted in the parish's growth by a larger area than had originally been suggested. The new parish was very different in shape and extent from before. The additions were described in the magazine of June 1937 as including not only, "... the coastline from the battery to Hightown, but a large stretch of agricultural land and half of the village of Little Crosby". The result was, "a large and not very compact area, hemming in the parish of St Michael, Blundellsands, except where that adjoins St Luke, Crosby".

St Stephen's Church as it is today

[Hightown eventually became a "Conventional District" in 1966, and St Stephen's was served by a Priest-in-Charge rather than a Curate. In 1971, St Stephen's became a parish church and the first Incumbent was appointed.]

Although the parish of St Nicholas' now extended over a much wider area, the new land it included, about two and a half times the area of the original parish, was relatively sparsely populated, but interestingly, now included Fort Crosby, a part of Britain's wartime coastal defences which, while fairly

quiescent during the First World War, was more actively involved during the Second and its immediate aftermath. [A fascinating study of this part of our local history, "Forgotten Fort Crosby" by Alison Burns, was published in 2015 by the Sefton Coastal Partnership and is also available on the internet.]

No sooner had the newly extended parish settled into its changed shape, with all the adjustments this entailed, than the outbreak of war provided it with its first source of conflict between St Nicholas' and its newly acquired daughter church. The recently appointed resident curate for Hightown, the Revd James Wylie, informed the Vicar on 5th September that he had been accepted for a military chaplaincy, not only depriving St Stephen's of its own minister at very short notice, but also bringing down the wrath of many of the Hightown congregation upon the head of the Revd Hagan Gowe, who was forced to apply to the Bishop for a letter of support. The Bishop pointed out that, contrary to accusations being levelled against him, not only did the Vicar have no option but to accept this resignation, but that it was also accepted practice within the church for an Assistant Curate such as the Revd Wylie in such circumstances to lose both the living and any accommodation which went with it. The Bishop concluded with some asperity: "I hope that the explanation I have given is enough to show that a charge against the Vicar of harsh treatment of his Assistant Curate is entirely untrue and grossly unfair". The Revd Hagan Gowe wrote in similar vein to the St Nicholas' congregation that he trusted the Bishop's letter would "allay all doubt except in the minds of those who are too prejudiced to admit the truth as it is".

A sad footnote to this episode was to be the early death of the Revd Wylie, in April 1941, leaving his widow and young daughters without financial provision.

When war was declared on 4th September 1939, the response of St Nicholas' was swift. On a grimly practical level, fears for the building itself loomed large, as they had not done at the outbreak of war in 1914. Information was speedily conveyed to all churches that existing central funds could not cover war damage to churches; neither would any company be likely to insure against the risk to property. It was envisaged that some form of government compensation scheme would be set up in time and that claim forms would be available from local town halls. It was therefore imperative that any damage should be reported to Church House as soon as it occurred. Discussions began immediately, therefore, about the best way of protecting the stained glass from bomb damage. In 1940 agreement was also given for the construction of an air raid shelter to hold fifty people and, following an appeal by the Mayor, £5 was raised by a retiring collection towards a Spitfire. In the following year it was agreed that the proceeds of all Whitsuntide collections should be used to cover a new war damage

insurance which had finally been established. A fire watching rota was also set up, with older men being encouraged to join and support the teenage boys.

Concerns about the preservation of the church building clearly figured in discussions with much greater urgency than they had done in 1914, but it is also true to say that the building itself was much more central to the war effort than it had been in the earlier war. The Vicar immediately offered the church hall for use as a soldier's canteen, which duly opened for the first time on September 11th. He proudly estimated that it had been used by at least 800 men during its first week and expressed his gratitude to "the large band of lady workers who serve the canteen night by night". The canteen was still a hub of activity in 1944, when it was described in the magazine as having gone from strength to strength for four and a half years so far, during which time it had acquired "as its personal property a most excellent Radio Set, valued today at over £30 and also a very good piano, valued at a great deal more". The radio was in the care of "the lads of the Vicar's Class who act as "Musical Control" in charge of the radio week by week", while the ladies of the parish continued to give their support and "help to entertain the Troops by their presence at the dances". Troops stationed locally were welcomed at Sunday service and again the Vicar expressed his gratitude to members of the congregation who gave up their places to them.

To add to the sense of bustle and activity, under a government scheme, ninety day school children were served an "excellent" meal in the church hall every lunch time. There was a conscious determination throughout church life to keep morale high and provide support of every kind, from the spiritual to the frivolous, and for both adults and children, in the midst of the hardships of war. In 1940 the Vicar instituted the Epilogue; boys and girls were invited to the hall on Sunday evenings between 7pm and 9pm, "to make the blackout lighter" and to say evening prayers together. Indeed, the church seems to have made a particular effort to attract children and young people during this period and in the magazine for February 1944, the Vicar was able to report considerable growth in attendance for all the children's organisations. For adults, in 1941 a private tennis club with twenty members was formed, followed two years later by the formation of a hockey team. It may well be that the "measure of health" to which the Revd Hagan-Gowe felt that the church had been restored by 1944 had come not despite much of the recent time having been spent in war, but rather, because of it.

An unlooked-for consequence of war also came in the guise of one more miniscule step in the progress of women. In 1941, only 12 years after the election of the first female member of the PCC, St Nicholas' elected its first female churchwarden. The former warden having resigned on grounds of ill-health, Miss Mabel Crane had volunteered to fill his place and been

gratefully accepted into the role, for, as a perhaps slightly defensive entry in May's magazine pointed out:

"A Lady Churchwarden is quite common in some parts, tho' we have not had this distinction before at St Nicholas'. We are most grateful to Miss Crane and we know how efficiently she will fill the post".

If the war had begun with conflict between St Nicholas' and the congregation of the most northerly part of its newly extended parish, it would conclude with a painful dispute with members from the most southerly part, the residents served by the Jubilee Road Mission, descendants of the very same people for whom the original church of St Barnabas' had been established, but who had now been left behind by the tide of social change which had swept through the following century. As the population of the parish grew, that growth was not reflected by any increase in attendance at the mission. In his report to the parish in March 1944, the Revd Hagan Gowe commented regretfully:

"The Church in Jubilee Road is never used as we would wish it to be, the Church of England population in the street has considerably declined in the last ten years or more and apart from the Sunday School work there, it seems hardly to justify its existence. We remember the generosity of those who provided the site and buildings long years ago and we shall not easily close doors which were once so wide open; at the same time we must consider where and how the work of the church can best be done and its money expended".

Money, of course, needed to be spent; like the church building itself, the mission was in regular need of repair. It is sad to contrast the state of affairs described here with the thriving picture of the life of the mission contained in records as recent as 1926, when the second of two extensions, needed to accommodate a further growth in use, had been completed. During the subsequent eighteen years, unfortunately, the centre of gravity of St Nicholas' parish had shifted away from Jubilee Road. The growing school population turned to the church, not the mission and, when St Nicholas' wished to provide support for locally stationed soldiers in the current war, this, too, took place in the church hall, not, as during the Great War, at the mission.

Rev d Charles Nye
1944 - 1961

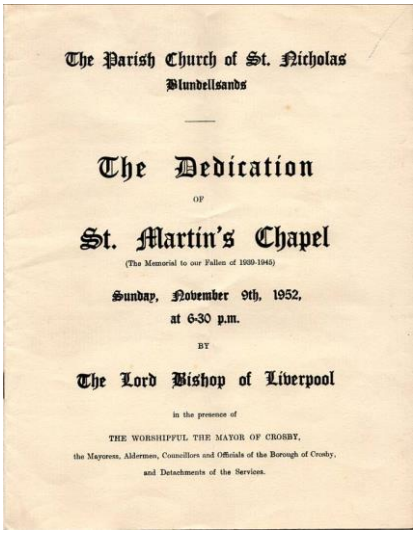
The Revd Hagan Gowe's successor, the Revd Charles Nye, inducted in September 1944, did not share the former's reluctance to close the mission. At a PCC meeting in January 1945, despite fervent testimony from a small deputation of Jubilee Road residents, the decision was taken to close it by the end of Lent. To them, it had more than justified its existence, not least because, as their words suggest, many of

them felt unwelcome and out of place at St Nicholas' [see "One Parish, Two Stories", cited above]. For those taking the decision, still in the midst of the upheavals and losses of a bitterly fought conflict which might well have persisted much longer than we now know it did, it was clearly seen as a practical necessity and little sentiment seems to have been expended on its end.

Remembrance and a lasting legacy:

Peace in Europe was declared in May and the June edition of the magazine contained expressions of "utter thankfulness" that the fighting was over. Throughout the year, the Vicar made particular efforts to make contact with all the young men and women of the parish who were "on leave or away" and to welcome home those who were being demobilised. In his Christmas message for that year, the Bishop of Liverpool commented that the words of the Herald Angels, "Peace on Earth and Goodwill toward men", now held renewed meaning.

Discussions about a suitable memorial began in 1946. Eventually, a proposal was agreed that a Memorial Chapel should be created from the little Lady Chapel on the south side of the church. Architects Quiggin and Gee submitted plans and it was accepted that the project for the Chapel of Remembrance, as it was initially known, would take six years to complete. Estimated costs of £1,000 were to be borne by collections and donations from families who had either lost loved ones or wished to express thanks for their safe return. "Simplicity coupled with good style was to be the keynote".



The Parish Church of St. Nicholas
Blundellsands

The Dedication
OF
St. Martin's Chapel
(The Memorial to our Fallen of 1939-1945)
Sunday, November 9th, 1952,
at 6-30 p.m.
BY
The Lord Bishop of Liverpool
in the presence of
THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF CROSBY,
the Mayoress, Aldermen, Councillors and Officials of the Borough of Crosby,
and Detachments of the Services.

The dedication of St Martin's Chapel by the Bishop of Liverpool and in the presence of the Mayor of Crosby and a host of aldermen, councillors and other officials from the borough, along with families of the fallen and detachments from the services, took place on Sunday 9th November 1952, at 6.30pm.

St Martin's Chapel

The dedication to St Martin, and much else besides, is explained in a foreword to the order of service:

"The dedication to St Martin of Tours (321-401) was suggested by the fact that the original Armistice Day in 1918 fell on St Martin's Day, November 11th, and that Remembrance Day continues to be observed on the Sunday nearest this date.

St Martin was, moreover, a soldier in the Roman army, whilst during his latter years as Bishop of Tours in France, he gave much help to the Church in Britain.

The Chapel is now divided from the Chancel by the iron screen which was removed from the front of the Chancel in 1950. The floor and woodwork of the Chapel is in oak – Austrian and Japanese – with a good deal of carving.

Above the altar on the reredos are the crests of the borough of Crosby and of the four Services, whilst the crest of Civil Defence is affixed to the iron screen beside the pedestal which contains the Book of Honour. Flags of the Services hang on either side of the altar.

On the south wall, above the panelling, a Lamp of Remembrance in the form of a ship's masthead light will be kept burning as a perpetual remembrance of our Fallen. The form of this lamp is specially appropriate to our Parish Church, dedicated as it is to St Nicholas, patron saint of mariners, and looking out to sea, as it does, across Liverpool Bay.

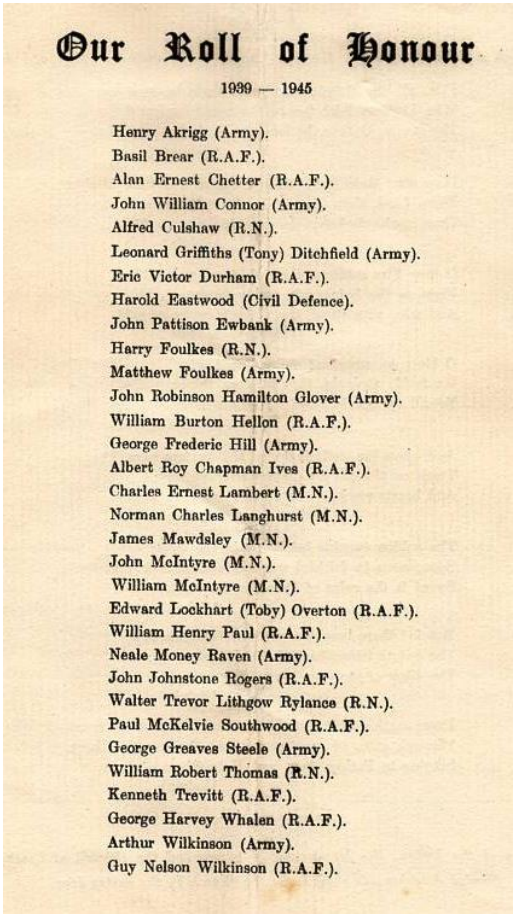
The woodwork has been made by Mr WR Burden, of Liverpool, to the designs and under the direction of Messrs Quiggin and Gee, FF. R.I.B.A., architects, of Liverpool".

Every detail of the design and naming of the chapel, from the choice of St Martin, celebrated on Armistice Day and himself a former soldier, the incorporation of military, civil defence and local civic insignia, the design and positioning of the lamp of remembrance, all reflect elements of the church's history and identity and retain a strong thread of continuity with its past.

The incorporation of the insignia and the prominence given to the roll of honour both echo significant features of St Nicholas' commemoration of the fallen of the first war. The Book of Remembrance is now situated against the south wall, under the lamp, and its beautifully illuminated pages, one for each member of the parish fallen, are turned regularly by members of the congregation. St Nicholas' continuing commitment to remembrance and commemoration was honoured in 1997 by representatives of the George Cross Association, who entrusted to the church the display of their standard, now housed permanently in St Martin's Chapel, from where it is paraded yearly on both Remembrance Sunday and Sea Sunday, in honour of the role of the citizens of Malta during the war and the heroism of the Royal Naval veterans who defended the island.

The recognition given to the church's seafaring heritage is also significant. This heritage extends back to the church's roots in the small fishing community of Little Brighton, with its clear views of the bustling River Mersey, whose busy shipping lanes carried the wealth and prosperity soon to be reflected in the grand houses of Blundellsands. It is also reflected in

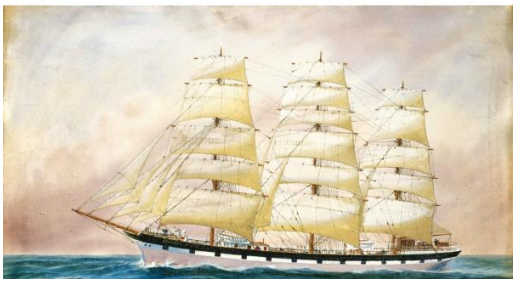
the donation, as recently as 1996, of the model of the sailing ship the Dalgonar, by a member of the congregation, whose father had spent three years on it as an apprentice.



Our Roll of Honour

1939 — 1945

Henry Akrigg (Army).
Basil Brear (R.A.F.).
Alan Ernest Chetter (R.A.F.).
John William Connor (Army).
Alfred Culshaw (R.N.).
Leonard Griffiths (Tony) Ditchfield (Army).
Eric Victor Durham (R.A.F.).
Harold Eastwood (Civil Defence).
John Pattison Ewbank (Army).
Harry Foulkes (R.N.).
Matthew Foulkes (Army).
John Robinson Hamilton Glover (Army).
William Burton Hellon (R.A.F.).
George Frederic Hill (Army).
Albert Roy Chapman Ives (R.A.F.).
Charles Ernest Lambert (M.N.).
Norman Charles Langhurst (M.N.).
James Mawdsley (M.N.).
John McIntyre (M.N.).
William McIntyre (M.N.).
Edward Lockhart (Toby) Overton (R.A.F.).
William Henry Paul (R.A.F.).
Neale Money Raven (Army).
John Johnstone Rogers (R.A.F.).
Walter Trevor Lithgow Rylance (R.N.).
Paul McKelvie Southwood (R.A.F.).
George Greaves Steele (Army).
William Robert Thomas (R.N.).
Kenneth Trevitt (R.A.F.).
George Harvey Whalen (R.A.F.).
Arthur Wilkinson (Army).
Guy Nelson Wilkinson (R.A.F.).



Dalgonar

The three-masted iron clad sailing ship *Dalgonar* was built in 1892 by the Southampton Naval Works Company for the Liverpool firm of Gracie Beazley & Co. She was 296 feet in length, 42 feet across her beam and had a 2665 gross tonnage. She had two decks and her holds were 25 feet deep.