

## WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

Is it really 50 years since Barthomley Village Hall opened its doors in June 1974? Is it really a quarter of a century since we celebrated the New Millennium with the biggest party Barthomley Village Hall has ever experienced?

New Year's Eve 1999 every household in the parish had received an invitation to join the party, replies were in and over 200 people of all ages were to be catered for. The Village Hall Committee had done an amazing job to pull the arrangements together. Funding had been obtained, a marquee hired, extended bar licence granted and disco booked, all was ready. Barthomley celebrated in style. A delicious buffet meal was served; once the New Millennium had been toasted everyone went into the candlelit church at 00.15am for a short service and on leaving were greeted by a fabulous fireworks display. What's more many turned up on New Year's Day to help clear up and listen to the church bells being rung as part of a national celebration. A fabulous, memorable occasion; none of us will celebrate another Millennium.

However the Village Hall is still in excellent condition thanks to the efforts of a small dedicated team of volunteers. Built originally with the proceeds from the sale of School House and many other contributions; built on church land but not the property of the church, thus enabling the Village Hall to qualify for grants, it is very much in the heart of the community.

During 2025 we hope to recall some memories of Barthomley over the past 50 years; also go back further to school days spent at Barthomley School. Please if you attended the school do let us know, share your memories. We shall hopefully use these in the Parish News and at Tea Set.

As Barthomley Village Hall celebrates its 50th Birthday a massive thank you to everyone who has been involved with the functioning of the hall; many names sadly no longer with us, but still there are an active band of volunteers who keep the place immaculate and are proud of their achievements. Use your hall, it is available to hire for private functions.

*Chris Bailey*

## From The Rectory

When a couple is expecting their first child the father and mother-to-be often discuss the changes that they will have to make in their pattern of living and the differences another person in the house will make. Yet, parents will tell you that when the child is actually born, it was not that they had to make changes in their lives but they had a totally different life.

The Visitation is an Advent reflection about the preparation for the coming of **THE CHRIST CHILD** into our lives as Mary prepared. The coming of Christ to us is not that we take on a different ritual or another code of behaviour or a certain set of beliefs – it is all that and more – for we take on a new life, as St Paul said “Now I live, not I but Christ lives in me.” Faith as the life of Mary shows is all consuming.

Mary undertook a journey into the hills, to visit her cousin Elizabeth – why we don't know. Perhaps she went as an act of charity to her cousin in need, or simply she went to stay with an understanding elderly relative until she had come to terms with what was happening to her – we simply cannot say. What was amazing was that both women found themselves in extraordinary circumstances. Shining out from the picture is a meeting of joy that has left the rest of humanity throughout the ages breathless and dumbfounded. We see both Mary and Elizabeth express a total acceptance of the situation that is almost beyond belief.

Mary faced many questions, it was not for her to answer and situations which were outside her providence to change. She realised she could not live continuously in the joy of The Visitation – yet it was a source of strength and it was out of this strength that she spoke the first great proclamation of the teaching of her Son – “My soul doth magnify the Lord.” Indeed it is true to say that Mary of the Magnificat was the first Christian preacher.

The mystery or unfolding of the Visitation is the story of each of our lives. Life is never the same once we have been honoured with such a visit. There will be sadness and joy but also, in hope, their will be faith and serenity.

The presence of Jesus inspired Mary to visit her cousin. Our reception of Jesus in worship especially in the Eucharist shows itself in our concern for others to share their needs and their joys.

This Advent and Christmas may we all be filled with the Spirit of God in peace and joy.

With Every Blessing  
Peter



**The PN front cover window is taken from Eglise St Pierre Leschelle Parish of Our Lady of the Near**

This is one of many fortified churches near the French Belgian border. It was originally built in the 15th /16th century but remodelled in the first half of the 18th century.

**Tea Set**

Everyone is most welcome to the Tea Set, it doesn't matter whether or not you live in Barthomley.

For the Christmas Tea Set we are having a Christmas Party. Instead of the raffle everyone is asked to bring a bagged / wrapped 'Secret Santa' gift, maximum value of £3.

There will be various Christmas themed items including carols and bingo, followed by Christmas Afternoon Tea, please put the date in your diary.

**Tuesday Dec 10th @ 2pm**  
£3 per person

**2025 - Tuesday 21st January, 2pm**

Paula White will be giving an informative and interesting talk about her work with Radio Stoke.

Admission £3 per person, including afternoon tea. Any raffle prizes welcome.



**Press Release for Barthomley WI following the November Meeting**

November is traditionally the month of our AGM and preparation for our Christmas Party; quite a mixed evening really. Members were welcomed to our 99th AGM, which inevitably means we will be celebrating our 100th Birthday next year!! It looks as if we're going to be really busy in 2025 planning an exciting celebration.

AGM over, we learned about the monthly news and future events planned by Chester including trips and meetings in the year ahead. Some of these are entitled "Is there such a thing as Super Food?", sessions of "Pilates" and even a "Camping in Fylde Trip!"

At this time of year we also receive details of the 2025 WI Resolutions choices which members will vote on in the new year. There seems to be some interesting ideas offered which should generate lively discussion including proposals such as "Join the Repair Revolution," supporting the adoption of a circular economy of clothing and fabrics in the UK.

However, at our next meeting in December the only debate will be how to arrange the best possible Christmas Party. We hope to enjoy a wide variety of food provided and prepared by the members themselves, a Christmas Quiz and a Secret Santa lucky dip, there may even be some carols sung! Our meetings take are held at Barthomley Village at 7pm, this party will take place on Tuesday 3rd December at 7 pm. Please feel to gate crash, we are looking for new members and I'm sure there will be mince pies left over!

**theWI**  
**INSPIRING WOMEN**



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