

A Short History of All Saints Church Anchorsholme 1931-1989

The following was written by a member of our parent church, All Hallows Bispham

Beginnings

The notion of a church in Anchorsholme was first sown in the will of Charlotte Sybilla Beaumont on 30 April 1931, which said:

“I direct my trustees upon the death of my sister to convey to the Vicar and Churchwardens of All Hallows Church aforesaid all that plot of land known as the Orchard situated on the sea side of Norbreck Road behind Bispham House aforesaid for the purpose of building a new church”

It was felt that the site was too far to the western edge of the area that such a church would have to serve and a more central site would be better. With the consent of the Charity Commissioners an agreement was made with James Penswick of Haddle House, Henry Penswick of Banks Farm, Longton and John Penswick of Tag Farm, Ingol to convey a plot of land bordered on the west by North Drive, to the North of Valeway, to the east by Neville Avenue and to the south by the property of Messers Hall Bros, for the sum of £795-12-6d

The sale was made on condition that:

- the Trustees were to fence off the North West and East sides of the site,
- the Church would re-fund any apportioned costs of the sewerage and street works that may be submitted for the roads,
- the use of the said plot of land for the erection of a church, Parsonage House and a Parish Hall and for no other purpose without the consent of the Vendors or their Trustees.

The Conveyance of the land was signed on 10 January 1937 and recorded in the Books of the Charity Commissioners on 2 April 1937.

On 1 January 1943 the Secretary of Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance informed Canon Henry Ward, the Rector of All Hallows Bispham, that the Board held as Custodian Trustees the plot of land conveyed to the board in 1937 by the Trustees of Mr James Penswick.

In 1950 the PCC felt that the site was too close to the Parish Church of All Hallows and that a more convenient site be selected. Although the Diocesan Pastoral Committee agreed, one of the other vendors refused to give permission and the third vendor who was living in Australia could not be contacted.

In 1955 as the population of the Norbreck area grew, Norbreck Infants' School was used for an afternoon Sunday School and evening service. Two years later, with the pressure from new housing in the Anchorsholme area the church applied to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee for a grant to build a Dual Purpose Pre-fabricated building on the site. Rev Stephen Ensor, the new Rector, stressed the need for both school and the New Building, and that Lay Readers were available to provide the services in both locations.

The Archdeacon explained that there was no possibility of a grant for an area of less than 5000 people. However, the PCC decided to go ahead on their own and on 19 July 1960 Blackpool Corporation granted permission for a Church/Sunday School on North Drive Blackpool.

The plans were drawn up by the architects, Leach, Rhodes and Walker, the site was consecrated by the Bishop of Blackburn on Saturday 28 October 1961, and the church built by R & B Fenton.

As a daughter church, All Saints came under jurisdiction of the Rector and services were conducted by Assistant Curates and others. Rev Arthur Whittaker was the first Assistant Curate appointed on 4 July 1960

and he undertook the responsibility for All Saints Anchorsholme in 1961. He was succeeded by Rev TB Smith in 1964, Rev ME Thomas in 1965, Rev K Palmer in 1968, Rev John Dennett in 1972, Rev Tony Old in 1973 and Rev Roger Evans 1977. Rev Arthur Moon was the last Assistant Curate.

Arthur was ordained Deacon in 1966 and Priested in 1967 as Curate at Christ Church, Blackburn from 1966 to 1971 when he came to Bispham as a Non-Stipendiary Minister. He continues:

“It was in May 1971, when my family arrived in Bispham to commence my ministry alongside the Rev Harold Wallwork. At that time I had been appointed to teach at Bispham Endowed School. For the next six years Mollie and I ministered at Bispham, and lived in Church Villa. Just before I retired from teaching, the Rector put me in charge of All Saints Anchorsholme and we moved to Church House in Neville Avenue.

“For the next ten years we worked there for the Lord. All Saints was a challenge for me, and indeed for Mollie. During those ten years the Rector retired, and the Rev David Maddock succeeded him at Bispham.

“It was a joy to have worked under both Rectors. It was June 1987 that my Ministry came to an end at All Saints, which was a sad day in some ways. We have fond memories of the Parish and we have made many friendships over the years. The Lord has indeed been good to us, and we were able to move forward in His Name.”

A Daughter comes of Age

When Arthur retired a successor was not immediately forthcoming until the Rector announced on 21 July 1987 that Rev Peter Nunn, who was the Curate at Bispham, was to take charge on a temporary basis. Prior to All Saints being given parish status, new uPVC windows were fitted, the interior of the church was re-decorated and a new electronic organ was bought.

The changing of status from a daughter church to a parish does not happen overnight and the first steps were taken when on 12 January 1988 after a series of All Saints Congregational Meetings the PCC passed the following resolutions:

“That the necessary steps be taken to create a separate Parish from that part of the Parish of All Hallows, Bispham in the Diocese of Blackburn that lies to the north of a line taken down the centre of Warren Drive, Russell Avenue and Shore Road in which is situated the daughter Church of All Saints, Anchorsholme, that the daughter Church of All Saints Anchorsholme should become a Parish Church of the new parochial area thus created. That the Rector of Bispham his successors and the Church Society Trust (the Patron of All Hallows Bispham) should jointly be appointed the patron of the new living formed.”

“That the firm of Architects Mr J Hunt of Tom Mellor and Partners, 23 Park St, Lytham be asked to draw up plans to bring Church House, 112a Neville Avenue, Anchorsholme up to Church Commissioners’ requirements for a Parsonage House”

“That the necessary legal and pastoral steps be taken to licence for weddings the Church of All Saints, Anchorsholme, which is the daughter church in the Parish of All Hallows, Bispham”

The architects did not consider Church House as suitable and a purpose-built Vicarage was then built on the spare land on Neville Avenue with money provided by the Church Commissioners.

The official scheme was announced on 26 January 1989. The PCC decided that Rev Peter Nunn be named as the first Incumbent of the new Parish and this was ratified by all three Patrons, the Church Society, the Bishop of Blackburn and the Rector of All Hallows Bispham. Peter who had been Curate-in-Charge from 19 July 1987, was instituted Vicar on 3 September 1989.