

No. 13: December – Men's Ministry

It doesn't seem a year since I first began writing this monthly blog to commemorate the time, two hundred years ago, between the laying of the foundations stones and the opening of Holy Trinity church.

I am looking forward to the Holy Trinity Men's curry to be held this month. Last year nearly 20 of us enjoyed a great night at Nawaab, to end the year on a high note, in addition to our bi-monthly Saturday morning cooked breakfasts and interesting speakers.

Sometimes there are links to history in the most unlikely of places, the photographed plate is one of a set that still exist (and are occasionally used) in the church kitchen. The crest in the middle reading Church of England, Marsh Y.M.B.C. refers to the Young Men's Bible Class which formed in 1873. Our current men's group follows in sound footsteps!

The bible class was really a self-improvement group and later a 'Working Men's Bible Class' was also formed. The class also organised a variety of social activities (although presumably not curry nights in those days!) Curates of Holy Trinity seem to have been important in the running of the classes – one, Rev C.M. Sharpe, being

presented with a wooden model of the church when he moved onto become Vicar of Elsecar in 1886. Another, Rev H Brownrigg, a popular figure who captained the class's cricket team, was presented with an oak smoking cabinet when he left to move to Sandal, Wakefield in 1895.

In 1897, the Parish Magazine reported that the Young Men's Bible Class continued to flourish – it had 71 members on its books and met weekly at the Portland Street school. The class was provided with its own pew in the church's south gallery and also had its own services, did fund-raising and various good works. A Benevolent Fund was maintained to support members

A quarterly church parade was attended and the class was affiliated to the Huddersfield & District Bible Classes Association. An annual tea was held and socials, including dances were held regularly. Ladies were invited to the dances. The class even had its own lending library. Prizes were given for good attendance. The class regularly visited the Infirmary and sang hymns on the wards. Many members also undertook first-aid training. On August Bank Holiday an annual visit was taken, - often to the seaside. The class had a representative on the church council.

The Y.M.B.C. was particularly active in the running of a number of church missions. Outreach was clearly an important part of men's ministry then, as it is now.

Being a member of the church family is enhanced by involvement in small groups, be-it men's or women's groups, a house group etc. Holy Trinity has always encouraged members of its



congregation to participate in more of church life than just attending its worship services. Maybe 2018 could be a time to try something else?

A couple of years ago, at one of the Heritage Open Days, we were presented with a bible dating from 1860 that belonged to Ann Smith. It has the following verse beautifully written out in its frontispiece –

*'Within this useful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries
Happiest they in human race
In whom their God has given grace.'*

In the back is pasted the rules of the Holy Trinity Church Union, which, I confess I have not discovered anything about (yet?)

The rules, though rather strict and Victorian sounding by today's standards, reinforce the point about the benefits of full involvement in the life of the church. Maybe we today take the gift of grace too lightly?

**Andy Barber
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