

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

### **St MARY the VIRGIN, PARISH CHURCH of KILVE with KILTON and LILSTOCK**

(Churchwardens Annual Report)

We are very conscious of the sameness of these church reports year by year, but possibly that is the reality of a small and very rural village church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Long gone is the day when each village had its own Rector, we are now a benefice of 9 parishes and share our Rector with some 11 communities; some villages in the area have no longer been able to keep their parish church open like neighbouring Kilton. However our own village church still remains; we have our ups and downs like any other organisations, our highs and lows as well. Yes we continue to be vulnerable and fragile and the future is very difficult to predict, and yet we still continue to be a sanctuary for not only our immediate community but for the many visitors who come through the door year by year. It is very difficult to look at our church in the above terms when it's stood there for over 600 years and would appear to be indestructible. So our congregation remains at 12 to 18, with greater numbers at the festival times and our electoral role remains in the lower thirties. Our service rota has remained the same and our fundraising activities have continued to provide much enjoyment and fellowship, and be financially rewarding. Of course our most successful event each year is the Antiques and Collectables Fair at Kilve Court, and this year was no exception and financially the best yet. As always we have to say a big thank-you to Kilve Court and the Village as a whole who year by year "pitch-in" and offer help in numerous ways. We are also indebted to the village for the way in which the church is maintained on a day to day basis; by the volunteers, who clean, arrange flowers and keep the churchyard neat and tidy; and of course a big thank-you to all who responded to our appeal for money after the oil loss at the beginning of the year.

The oil loss is turning into something of a saga and has still not been finally resolved. As you may recall from previous publications the pipe carrying the oil from the tank to the boiler fractured some time during the Christmas period and some 500 litres of heating oil was lost. Our insurance company was notified who in turn contacted an organisation called RAW who deal with such contaminations. Initial investigations seem to suggest that the oil had seeped into a void underneath the chancel of the church (this is the part which houses the altar). After more tests, laboratory work and the resolving of a few contractual problems the work was resumed at the church on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, when the chancel floor was opened up again to allow a camera to be inserted so that the void could be investigated further. The results had the archaeologist dancing in the aisles as a whole crypt / vault appeared containing four lead coffins; as well as a considerable amount of heating oil on the crypt floor. This void has again been resealed and vented to the outside of the church so that none of the oil vapours can permeate into the church. Unfortunately there was insufficient detail to get any dates from the coffins with a camera, but the pictures do seem to reinforce the notion that there may have been a tunnel between the church and the chantry in days gone by and that there may even be more vaults under the nave; but at this stage no proof. We are now waiting RAW to say what the final part of the process might be. (Photographs enclosed)

Last but not least is that in May 2012 our new Rector arrived in the benefice, the Rev'd Nicky Morgan who resides at Stogursey. Nicky is gradually getting to know our communities and like-wise we too are getting to know her. On staffing, the Rev'd Marion Hance retires at the end of April and advertisements are currently being processed to appoint a new House for Duty Priest.

So to conclude from my co-warden and myself we would like to express our thanks to the ministry team, our fellow PCC members, our congregation and our community at large for their continued help and assistance.

