

All Saints Forward: What has been happening?

The answer to this question is that a lot has been happening in the last few months though there may not be much to show for it yet in terms of final outcomes. The Core Group is still refining the design concepts proposed by our architect for the reordering of All Saints and considering how best to obtain the funding needed via the Heritage Lottery Fund to bring this about. The expanded Core Group met again after the summer break on 13th September and has two more meetings scheduled in October and November. Some of the last meeting related to details of the proposed re-ordering. But a priority for the Group at the last two meetings has been to clarify the heritage story which will be a central part of our bid for funding. A draft version of this story is told below.

All Saints: the story it tells of Winterton

The story which emerges is one of a largely open village which has developed over the centuries into a varied and independent community, influenced by some fascinating individuals and families but never dominated as many feudal villages were. In more modern times the way in which the town was enclosed in the second half of the 18th century reinforced the independence of many small landowners and made Winterton an attractive place for people from nearby villages so that in the 19th century Winterton grew at a much faster rate than most other local communities.

Pre-1066: A settlement can be traced back at least as far as the Iron Age and excavations at the Roman villa show that there was an important Romano-British farming community throughout the period of Roman occupation. Saxon occupation and Viking raids followed. The Saxon Winterton developed close to natural springs and it is probable that the springs feeding Wire Pond formed the spiritual focus for pagan worship and thus also for the 'new' Christian beliefs. Christianity clearly pre-dated the Norman Conquest because there is evidence of Saxon building in the present church tower. The earliest church may have been wooden.

Medieval Winterton: By 1100 there was a stone church tower, almost certainly built by Huge Lupus, the first Norman Earl of Chester, who was one of the chief landowners at the time of the Domesday Book [1086]. Domesday shows Winterton was a large settlement in the hands of several different landowners. Winterton was already a small town with market functions and a clear regular, possibly planned, layout. The town stretched east-west along the north side of the beck with a southern boundary aligned along Watery Lane/Low Street/Park Street and a northern boundary along West Street/Cemetery Road. All Saints was built in an isolated location, close to Wire Pond, within this large area of open green. As the medieval settlement grew in size, this large green was extensively infilled, even to the extent of crowding the central market area and, possibly, the larger original churchyard.

Between 1186 and 1195 All Saints, together with the great tithes, was given by John de Lacy to Malton Priory. It certainly does not seem that Malton Priory was hoping to benefit because the tithes were still dedicated to parish use and a building programme was quickly undertaken. The Priory was responsible for the enlargement of the building which was dedicated in 1203, and again in 1245, by which time the structure of our present church was clearly recognisable.

In 1456 there was an agreement between the Priors of Malton and the people of Winterton which included that the Priors "...shall yearly give ten shillings to the kirk masters of the kirke of Winterton, at the feast of the Purification of our Lady at Winterton". By 1334 both the town's market and annual fair were established. During this period there was no dominant lord of the manor and Winterton developed as a relatively free settlement, unlike some local feudal villages.

Changes in the 16/17th centuries: Winterton appears to have largely escaped involvement in The Lincolnshire Rising of 1536 which was a brief dissent against the dissolution of the monasteries. And, as in many places, the priest at Winterton seems to have kept his head down and survived the further changes to Protestantism under Edward VI, the return to Catholicism under Mary I and the Protestant settlement of Elizabeth I. However, in the 1560s there appeared to be some enthusiasm for Protestantism in Winterton when there were moves to 'put awaie all papistrie' and many items of church furnishing were destroyed. But in the next century, Winterton, though it seems to have had little active part in the Civil Wars of the 1640s, did suffer much destruction to the church which was left in a state of decay with the roof ruined and glass removed from the windows.

The eastern end of the parish [Ancholme Valley] was drained in the 1630s but according to some this made the drainage worse and Thomas Place, one time churchwarden, took the lead when more than a hundred townsmen constructed a dam to block one of the a new drains. Later there followed civil action by Winterton landowners against those who instigated the drainage scheme.

Restoration and prosperity of church and town: This was a time of rescue and renewal, coinciding with a time of increasing prosperity nationally and with the embedding of a broad Church of England in the heritage of the country. The fabric of the church building was restored, initially thanks to the generosity of Thomas Place. The roof was restored, the windows and floor repaired and new oak pews were made so that at the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688/9 the church was described as 'one of ye most beautiful churches in ye country'. In the 18th century improvements continued with the casting of new bells in the 1730s and the erection of the west gallery in the 1750s.

Clearly from that time music was important in public worship. We still have the original wind instruments, and manuscript music, which were played in the 18th and 19th centuries and an important aspect of our development plan is to conserve and display them appropriately.

At the end of the 18th century the roof was renewed again, thanks to the generosity of William Marris, who had won the vast sum of £10,000 in the lottery and spent much of his money building houses in Winterton. Winterton's Enclosure Act [1770] resulted in over 51 acres being allocated individually to the Vicar in lieu of tithes and just over 2 acres to the Churchwardens. One small field is still held and rented out by the church. More important was the large number of small allocations [40 owners with under 7 acres of whom 22 had under 3 acres, presumably small allotments in lieu of former common rights]. This had a profound effect on village development in the next century.

A century of progress and change: There were considerable social changes in the 19th century. In the earlier part of the century the visible social distinctions saw Lady Boynton in church with her own curtained box pew and heating. By the end of the century the church had its first proper heating system and the current pitch pine pews. The west gallery had been taken down, an organ installed and the 'beautifying' influence of the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement was clear in the church interior. The town gained Methodist and Independent chapels. Interestingly there seems to have been considerable co-operation between Anglicans and Methodists in Winterton at times in the 19th century with many families, not least the Fowlers, attending both churches.

Winterton in the 1840s was a fascinating town. The locally manufactured tower clock had been erected in 1834. The 1844 Tithe Rentcharge map shows the extent of all so-called 'ancient' enclosures, essentially the land within the medieval town boundaries. The schedule with this map locates every occupant and, together with the 1841 Census, this paints a very clear picture of Winterton at that time. It also shows how the town had already outgrown the old boundaries since the time of the 1770 Enclosures and was growing at a much faster pace than many nearby villages, largely due to the many small landowners willing to sell land for building.

Education became increasingly important. In the first part of the century there was a school room at the back of the church but in 1841 the National School was built by subscription [current Old School Hall] followed in 1845 by the School House [for the Master]. A gas works was built for the town and in 1861 All Saints was lit by gas. A new town cemetery was opened in 1876 with closure of the churchyard.

Modern Times: The first decade of the 20th century saw major alterations to the roof and external appearance of All Saints. Internally a new chancel screen was erected, showing the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement on church furnishings and decoration and many other changes were made to internal furnishings. The Church Institute was opened in 1903 but, sadly, sold in the 1980s. In 1908 Clarke's Almshouses were built in West Street.

In the second half of the century the biggest visible change has probably been the levelling and grassing of the churchyard in the 1960s and the relocation of the war memorial to the churchyard, where it has since been the focus of all Remembrance services. At the turn of the century the west end of the south aisle was screened off to form the parish room. This has meant that at the beginning of the 21st century small groups have been able to meet comfortably in church, refreshments have been more easily provided for functions, coffee mornings have flourished and the church has been better able to serve the community.

Winterton has continued to grow in size and has become a dormitory for large numbers who work in nearby towns. It still retains a strong community spirit which reflects the long history as an important focal point in our area with All Saints reflecting many of the changes.

There is full information about all the design ideas for re-ordering All Saints on our website at <http://lincoln.ourchurchweb.org.uk/winterton/>. If you would like to know more about this project, please enquire – in the first instance – to Robin Shawyer, Chair of the Core Group [tel: 01724 734285 or e-mail: rdshawyer@gmail.com]