

### The Church Website

When was the last time you visited the Church website? Even if you do not have a personal computer, the website is optimised for smartphone and tablet use, too.

Did you know that St. Bertoline's Church, Barthomley, actually has two footprints on the Worldwide Web: our own website, [www.barthomleystbertolines.org.uk](http://www.barthomleystbertolines.org.uk), of which I am the Webmaster, and there is also a separate Church of England: A Church Near You page, just like any other Church of England Church.

Although I may be the Webmaster, content is the key to making a website interesting and appealing to first-time browsers.

In partnership with Reverend Peter Ennion, the 'Weddings', 'Funerals' and 'Christenings' pages have all been updated, and refreshed for 2025. Weddings, in particular, are an important source of funds for the Church, and our website, with its ability to display text as well as pictures, is probably our best way of showcasing St. Bertoline's appeal to future married couples.

If there is anything that you would like to appear on the website, that isn't there at present, please let me know: [scarletfan-sim@barthomleystbertolines.org.uk](mailto:scarletfan-sim@barthomleystbertolines.org.uk)

Some time ago now, the Church website was upgraded to a platform which allows the website to be much more customisable, than the previous incarnation. For example, there is now a Calendar of Events, and when those events happen, they disappear, automatically, from the website's calendar, which reduces the time I need to expend on the website, and also reduces the potential for the website to appear out of date.

Please visit our website, make use of its content, and feel free to contribute ideas and suggestions as to how it may be improved.

**Simeon Bowen-Fanstone – Parish Webmaster**

### Tea Set

Tuesday 18th Feb 2025  
at 2pm in Barthomley Village Hall  
Entrance £3 inc. afternoon tea.  
Raffle  
All Welcome  
Margaret and Neil Holding describe how they came to open their garden during July & August each year for the national gardens scheme charity. Their 2 acre garden includes many attractions including a pond, stumpery, donkeys, orchard and well stocked herbaceous borders plus more.

### **From the PCC Treasurer.**

I think that Christmas at St. Bertoline's 2024 was rather special. Mind you, suspect I say that every year!

The church looked just wonderful with the vast and imaginative array of flower arrangements. There was such a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the Nine Lessons & Carols service, with the candles, readings and singing followed up by mulled wine, mince pies & sausage rolls. A great evening. This service attracted an attendance of **122** and there was a further **106** at the Crib service on Christmas Eve. Here it was nice to see lots of children in the church.

The Autumn social events were very well supported, kicking off with the Harvest Supper ( shared with the Village Hall ), the Cheese & Wine Quiz, the Christmas Fair. Just before Christmas, a small intrepid band of carol singers braved the elements to take Carols around the Parish on two nights. Our thanks here to our hosts at the end of each evening who provided badly needed refreshments. These events raised in total **£3,409** for our church, so a big thank you to all for your support.

The foregoing activities, of course, didn't just happen by chance. Much planning and hard work went on behind the scenes. St Bertoline's is blessed by a large number of talented unpaid volunteers who contribute so much to our church. Volunteering for church work is a labour of love often with material expenses added in and sometimes the feeling of being taken for granted inevitably creeps in. There is no easy answer to this but maybe an occasional read of the Visitors Book will confirm the scale of appreciation felt.

The upkeep of a Grade I listed medieval church plus striving to stay independent with our own resident minister and services every Sunday morning, means that finance is always high on the agenda at St Bertoline's. Some may well ask, where does all the money go? Well, the routine, day to day expenses for St Bertoline's last year averaged **£936** weekly. Of this, nearly half, **£431** per week, went to the diocese for parish share. Almost a third ( **£300** weekly ) went on electricity, insurance, routine maintenance & servicing. You can see the detailed church accounts on the church notice board by the north door and on the website. Finally, just a mention of attendance at St Bertoline's. For the last year, the average **Sunday morning** attendance was **39** compared to **35** for the previous year. An increase like this might prove difficult to repeat but it's worthy of comment.

**Len Griffin PCC Treasurer**

## REFLECTIONS

Thank you to everyone who supported the church during the Christmas period. It was a joy to see so many locals and those from further afield. To those who worked so hard with the numerous necessary preparations an additional thanks.

As I write this piece I sit huddled up in my electric throw (Christmas present) dressed for the outdoors, in front of a roaring open fire; reflections from the past when ice on inside windows was a common occurrence.

Time for reflection, soon my eldest son will turn 60 and recently I found a school project he did when he was 10 at Sandbach School (Prep Department) entitled "Barthomley 1975". How things have changed in 50 years. Although the Village school had closed there were 39 school aged children in Barthomley with the majority of the juniors attending the new Dingle School in Haslington and those of secondary age going to Alsager Comprehensive School. There were 27 active farms, a village shop and post office and the Smithy was active, even if not shoeing horses it was repairing farm implements. There was also a weekly bus service to Crewe, a mobile shop which also sold paraffin, a mobile library and a links man who kept the roads clean and cut the hedges by hand. Ernie Flann the milkman delivered milk daily. Mr John Nield was the first Mayor of Crewe and Nantwich and arranged for all the local children to visit him in the Mayor's Parlour. The newly opened Village Hall became the meeting venue for Barthomley WI which celebrated its 50th birthday in May 1975. The Royal Ordnance Factory was included in the parish which was of financial benefit to the parish. The White Lion was warm, inviting and open. The Church and Sunday School were active but we were struggling to find regular bellringers. Which of the proposed routes for the A500 to Nantwich would be selected, led to protests and interesting fundraising, remember camel racing? Everyone knew each other; no security gates, street lights or door cameras; a happy community.

Houses may be warmer these days but we have started 2025 with a very cold snap so just hope you all stay safe this winter. To those who have had recent spells in hospital we hope and pray you will soon recover. To those who have lost loved ones, our condolences.

Christine Bailey Churchwarden

## January Press Release for Barthomley WI

Due to the weather forecast for ice and snow on 7th January, which happened to be the first meeting of the new year, we were forced to take the decision to cancel to ensure the safety of our members and speaker for the evening. As Barthomley is a small village, accumulated snow also makes it difficult to access. Although members were disappointed when notified, they also agreed it was the safest decision.

Liz Benson, who is a Stroke Support Coordinator, was also due to visit us on that evening to explain the important advice and support they can offer sufferers and their carers. Liz was relieved when notified and happy to change her date and will hopefully be able to visit us later in the year. January is usually the month we consider our annual Resolutions options, making our personal choice of the four most popular ones put forward. Once selected many active members all over the country form campaign groups to stage demonstrations, write to politicians and research groups to highlighting the issues in order to put pressure on the government to take action. Since it was launched, the WI Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife Campaign called on members to form groups to test the water quality of their local rivers, more than 90 WI's took up the challenge. However, missing the opportunity to cast our vote for the 2025 Resolution can be carried over until our meeting in February. We meet in Barthomley Village Hall at 7 pm on the first Tuesday of every month. You are more than welcome to join us as a visitor and offer a warm welcome. We are more than happy to see new faces.

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN



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