

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ST MARY'S CHURCH BEACHAMWELL ?

St Mary's Church is at the west end of the Village Green providing the focal point and is at the centre of the village. The other community amenities – the Village Hall and the pub – are also built on the edge of the Village Green. This part of Beachamwell is a conservation area.



St Mary's is over one thousand years old, mentioned in the Domesday Book at a value of two shillings and sixpence. It is now considered to be worth somewhat more and is a Grade 1 listed building. St Mary's is mentioned in most guide books on Norfolk churches and therefore the church attracts visitors from all over the world.



St Mary's does not have a hall or any other church building. The PCC makes use of the Village Hall when extra facilities are required.

The village school, which used to be a church school until the early twentieth century, closed in 1996. Similarly the rectory in Beachamwell and the one in Shingham, were closed and sold many years ago.

The Village Green is surrounded by Georgian cottages and is the centre of the Conservation Area.



There is a rota of people who ensure that there are always fresh flowers in the church and that the brass is kept clean.

When there are Church Festivals or special events are held in the church, ie summer concerts and recitals, everyone on the rota helps decorate the church.



St Mary's is the only church within our parish. We welcome members of other denominations.

We participate in Deanery and Diocesan events whenever possible and a representative attends Deanery Synod Meetings and reports back to the PCC.

Before the interregnum there was a service of Holy Communion on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays in the month and on the First Sunday there was a Family Service. If there was a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month there was a Group Service with Barton, Boughton and Wereham.

	Baptisms in Last 10 Years	Weddings in Last 10 Years
1999	2	0
2000	0	1
2001	0	0
2002	2	0
2003	2	2
2004	0	2
2005	2	1
2006	7	2
2007	4	1
2008	2	9
2009 to date	0	1



Annual events arranged on behalf of the church include concerts, half marathon, open gardens, coffee mornings and souper lunches. Other events in the village are a horticultural show, country fete, regular quiz nights, yoga lessons, pilate lessons and a lively and active W.I.

**The Beachamwell Half Marathon** is a popular event each year. Participants are sponsored to run, cycle or ride (or even walk) a 13 mile course mainly along public footpaths through the fields of local farmers. A large proportion of villagers and almost all the congregation of St Mary's help in one way or another. The sponsorship money is donated to the church restoration fund. One of the

north windows was restored two years ago solely by the proceeds of one year's Half Marathon and now all money is going towards restoring the bells in the tower and all the associated work that is involved. An average of £1,000 is raised most years.



**The Open Gardens Day** is one of the biggest events of the year and is organised by the PCC with help from many people in the parish. This event is usually held at the beginning of June, the date being chosen so as not to clash with other parishes within our Group who also hold Open Gardens Days. Open Gardens Day in 2009 is on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June and there will be twelve gardens open in the village. In addition we have the Hilgay Silver Band playing on the Village Green, Organ Recitals in the Church and Molly Dancers performing at The Old Rectory. Ploughman's Lunches, Afternoon Teas and Strawberry Teas with the usual stalls and raffles make this a very enjoyable day. The profits all go to St Mary's General Fund and are usually in the region of £1,700.



A summer classical concert by **The Torriano Ensemble** is to be held in the church at the end of June. This year the concert will feature Jessica Lewis – mezzo-soprano and the programme will include Arias by Bach and Handel, Dvorak

'American' string quartet and Somervell clarinet quintet. The concert followed by afternoon tea at Beachamwell Hall kindly hosted by Mrs Bonning and enjoyed by all. Profits go to St Mary's Church Restoration Fund.

Arrangements for **Harvest Supper** rotate around the parishes of Barton Bendish, Beachamwell, Boughton and Wereham. This year Boughton will be organising the Supper which will be attended by members of all four congregations. The Harvest Service at St Mary's will be held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October and in the evening the Phoenix Singers will perform a harvest and autumn concert.

The **Carols by Candlelight Service** held a few days before Christmas usually completely fills the church and is followed by mulled wine and mince pies which sends everyone out warmly into the cold evening air.



**Quiz Evenings** are organised regularly, the most recent one in March being run jointly with the Hall's Committee.

During the year we also hold at least one **Souper Lunch** in the Village Hall when home-made soup, a roll and some home-made cake attracts a number of people and the profits made go into the General Fund.

We have also recently started monthly "**Drop in for Afternoon Tea**" afternoons in Beachamwell Village Hall on the third Wednesday of each month. These are non-fundraising events. The idea of providing somewhere for villagers to meet and socialise over a cup of tea and cake was suggested as part of our Mission Action Plan and we are hoping they will prove to be a success. There is no charge but a donation box is available to help meet ongoing costs.

We hold at least one **Coffee Morning** a year usually late in the autumn which again raises money for the General Fund.

Beachamwell is a very small village and events run by the Church, the Hall's Committee and the Horticultural Society are all supported enthusiastically by each other. (except, of course, until it comes to the giant onion competition!)

There are two hamlets within the parish with Shingham being the nearest as it nearly adjoins the eastern side of the village. St Botolph's Church in Shingham is now licensed to a local farming family but the churchyard is used for burials as St Mary's Churchyard is now full. A cremated remains area was established four years ago in St Botolph's Churchyard.



Drymere is two miles east of Beachamwell along the road to Swaffham. Drymere has an Equestrian Centre, a woodyard and a cattery and is situated within the northern edge of Thetford Forest.



**This “snapshot” of the parish of Beachamwell, was compiled in June 2009.**