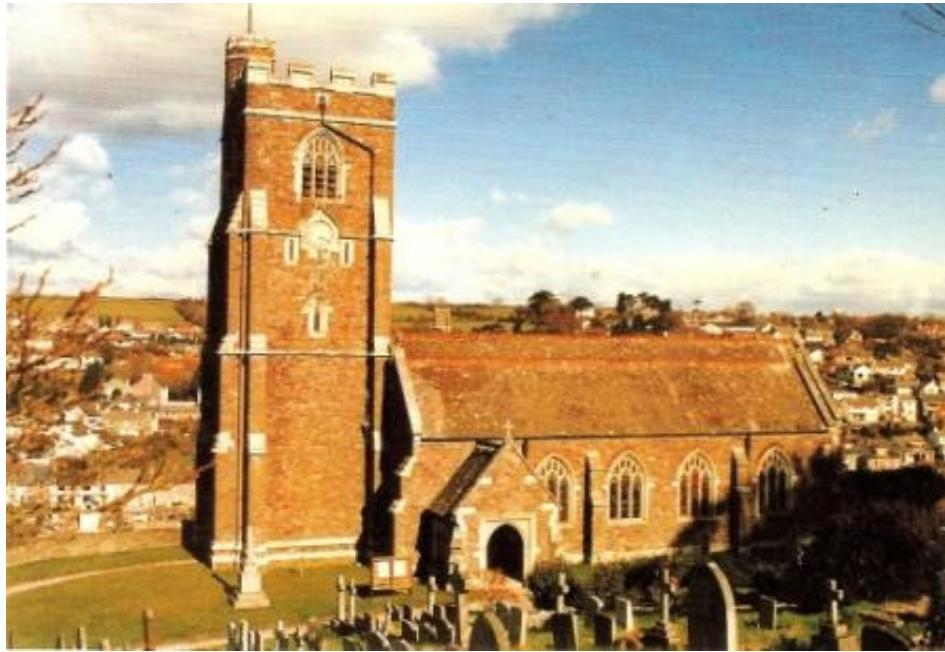


ST. PETER'S CHURCH REVELSTOKE



PARISH PROFILE

APRIL 2008

PART 1: ST.PETER'S CHURCH, REVELSTOKE – PARISH PROFILE

THE PARISH

This rural Parish comprises the village of Noss Mayo, the hamlet of Membland and the ancient coastal hamlet of Stoke. It has a long coastal boundary and is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The coastal strip belongs to the National Trust. (*See map.*)

There are about 600 permanent residents. They are a mix of retired, professional and tradespersons.

Housing is mostly privately owned with a just a few social housing units. The cost of housing is well above the national and county average. This results in younger villagers having to move away. Plans for affordable housing to be developed in Newton and Noss are being drawn up.

Although Noss Mayo is not in a deprived area, average wages in South Devon are well below the national average and do not reflect the high cost of housing. There is no large industry in the area apart from the Dockyard. Young school leavers from Noss who stay in the area tend to work either in the leisure business (waiters, bar staff etc,) or the construction industry.

Nearly one third of the houses are either second homes or holiday homes, and the figure is rising. There is a large static caravan site at Stoke which is closed between November and Easter. Because of this the population during the summer is considerably larger.

There are many day-visitors to the parish particularly in the summer and at weekends. These are mainly walkers and yachtsmen.

There are no shops in the parish, the nearest shops being in Newton Ferrers. There are two popular pubs in Noss Mayo.

THE CHURCH

The Church of St.Peter was built in 1880 under the patronage of Charles Baring later to become the first Lord Revelstoke. The entire village then belonged to his Membland estate. The church is a superb example of Victorian architecture.

The fabric is generally in excellent condition with no major maintenance projects in the offing. In recent years it has been re-roofed and has had central heating installed. Last year toilet facilities and a food servery were installed in the tower.

There is a fine peal of 8 bells which also have a chiming facility, and an excellent organ.

The patronage of the Church passed to the Bishop of Exeter when Lord Revelstoke left the parish in the 1890s.

CHURCH OF ST.PETER THE POOR FISHERMAN

The ruins of the original parish church are at Stoke within the grounds of the caravan site. One nave is roofed in and it is maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust and overseen by a local committee. Occasional services are held there, principally the annual Regatta Service in July, which launches the annual Yealm Regatta. An annual Camp Founders' Day service is also held. It was because this Church had fallen into disrepair that Charles Baring built the new church in Noss.

CONGREGATION

There are 93 on the Church Electoral Roll with an average church attendance of 35. About 50 parishioners could be considered “regular” churchgoers. The average age is fairly high reflecting that of the parish in general.

There are many social activities which regularly raise funds for the church. These are well supported and organised by all parishioners (not just the Church-goers,) and include jumble sales, coffee mornings, concerts, dances, lunches and a very popular annual Fete. There is no Church Hall, but the excellent Newton and Noss Village Hall is situated in Noss and regularly used for Church events.

During 2007 there were 5 burials, 3 weddings and 6 confirmation candidates. There were no Christenings. This reflects the current demographic status.

CHOIR

There is a well balanced but small choir which sings every Sunday at the main service. Practices are held with Holy Cross and the combined choirs sing at important events such as Patronal Festivals.

BELLS

The team of bell-ringers is shared between St.Peter’s and Holy Cross. They ring every Sunday and for weddings.

FINANCES

The financial state of the Church is healthy and it pays its Share. The Noss Mayo Church Heritage Trust is dedicated to acquiring funds and investing to meet the fabric maintenance expenses. Fundraising activities are supported by all sections of the parish, not just Church-goers.

Parish expenses are reimbursed. The three United Benefice churches share the expenses with St.Peter’s paying 30%.

The Stewardship Scheme is well supported and administered.

The Revelstoke Trust was established when a cottage belonging to the Church was sold. The proceeds were invested and the Trust formed. The last incumbent was one of the Trustees. Each year, depending upon the performance of the investments, funds are allocated to support activities and projects within the united Benefice. Importantly the Trust pays for the maintenance of the Church Yard. Examples of projects which have been helped are the Village Hall, local clubs, and the Toilet and Servedy in the Church. It is also the ‘umbrella’ fund for the recent purchase of the village Post Office (in Newton Ferrers.)

CHURCH GROUPS

There is a team of highly skilled and enthusiastic **Flower Arrangers**.

The famous beautiful carved woodwork in the Church is kept gleaming by a team of dedicated **Wood Polishers**, who also attend to the brass-work.

There are two **Bible / Study Groups** which serve both parishes.

The **Julian Group** is an ecumenical contemplative prayer group which meets monthly.

A series of **Lent Courses** begins on Ash Wednesday.

The Parish boasts several accomplished **Musicians** and a group of youngsters occasionally performs at services. A very popular annual event is accompanying the Christmas Day Family Service. This is something which should be developed.

Little Angels is a group for pre-school children and their mothers with members from Newton and Noss.

A very successful **Junior Alpha** course was run last year as a follow-up to the Confirmation.

OTHER GROUPS / SOCIETIES

Newton and Noss Parish Council covers the civil Parish which comprises approximately the same area as the parishes of Holy Cross and St.Peter's. Elected members are from both Newton and Noss.

The **Women's Institute** thrives and is based at the WIC Hall in Newton Ferrers. As well as usual WI activities they also put on a very professional Christmas Pantomime annually.

The **Yealm Yacht Club** (situated in Newton Ferrers,) has a large membership and is active both on the water and socially. (The Incumbent is granted free honorary membership.)

The **Tilly Institute** next to the Village Hall houses the village Snooker tables. This is well-used and also has a small meeting room which can be hired.

The **Yealm Regatta** is held in early August and is the largest and most popular event of the year.

The **Gig Club** owns two Cornish Pilot Gigs and competes around the South West in the summer. They provide an invaluable recreational facility for villagers of all ages.

The **Thursday Lunch Club** provides a twice-monthly lunch for the elderly residents in the Village Hall. Although not strictly a Church activity, it is run primarily by members of St.Peter's congregation and is much appreciated by all the older inhabitants.

The **Newton and Noss Amateur Theatrical Society (NNATS)** holds an annual spring Pantomime in the Village Hall and serves a valuable purpose in bringing the community together during the winter months.

A branch of the **University of the Third Age (U3A)** has recently been formed and a large number of residents are now involved in a variety of courses.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Noss Primary School (which was in what is now the Village Hall), closed in the 1960s and since then Noss children have attended the Primary School in Newton Ferrers. Recently this School relocated to a fine new premises and the old school buildings were developed as serviced flats for elderly people (Bishop's Court). The School caters for 82 children (2/3 from Newton and 1/3 from Noss.) Some children from the Villages attend the primary school at Holbeton or private schools in Plymouth. The majority of the local children progress to Ivybridge Community College, 10 miles away.

(Mary Wilcox to elaborate on the School)

ST. FRANCIS' PLAY GROUP

The thriving Play Group serves both villages is in modern premises (the "Revelstoke Room") at the rear of the Village Hall. The organisers would like to have more contact with the Church. This should be followed up and would be good a way to attract young families to church activities. It provides a most important facility for the young families, bringing parents together particularly for their regular fund-raising events. Currently it has 36 children of whom 7 live in Revelstoke Parish. The children occasionally attend the Thursday Lunches forming an important link between both ends of the village age spectrum.

GAMBIA LINK

The Parish has an informal link with The Gambia where a parishioner raised funds to build and ensure the continuation of a nursery school. Several parishioners "adopted" pupils to assist financially with their education. The project is a registered charity and is on-going.

LAY READER AND RETIRED PRIEST

The Combined Benefice is fortunate to have the services of Jennifer Townley, our hard-working and enthusiastic Lay Reader. She lives in Newton Ferrers and has given St.Peter's considerable support over the years. We also have Bob Campbell-Smith, a retired priest, who is very happy to assist when necessary.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS

The Noss Methodist Chapel closed a few years ago and was sold. Some of its small congregation now attend St.Peter's. The Roman Catholic parishioners usually attend church at Modbury or Plymouth.

There are a number of churches of different denominations in Plymouth.

CARE FACILITIES

There are no Hospitals or Nursing Homes in the parish. There is a Care Home for the elderly in Newton Ferrers. Bishop's Court (also in Newton Ferrers,) comprises a number of modern flats designed with special facilities for the elderly and infirm. There are resident carers on site.

PARISH MAGAZINE

The Holy Cross and St.Peter's Parish Magazine has a large monthly circulation (about 700). Although primarily a Church publication, most local societies and groups contribute to it, and it forms the main focal point for finding out what is going on in the Villages. *(Copy attached.)*

WEB SITES

A Combined Benefices Web Site was launched in 2007. This provides information on all three Churches and their activities.

www.combinedbenefice.org.uk

The Parish Council Website contains information on Newton and Noss Parish Council affairs, minutes of meetings, planning applications etc,

www.newtonandnoss-pc.gov.uk

The Village Website, sponsored by local businesses contains a wealth of information on Newton and Noss. It has links to other websites including the Holy Cross and St.Peter's pages of the Church web site and the Parish Council.

www.newtonnoss.co.uk

RECTORY

The Rectory is in the residential area of Newton Ferrers. It is a 5 bedrooomed detached building with attached office, a garage and pleasant garden. (*See attached details.*)

SERVICES

The main services are Parish Communion or Family services at either 9.15 or 11.00. There are occasional 8 a.m. communion services (BCP) and very occasionally a sung evensong. Traditionally the forms of service have been "middle church", i.e neither Anglo Catholic nor Evangelical. The principle services are sung, with a robed choir and crucifer. There have not been any servers or acolytes for several decades. The music and hymns are a mixture of traditional and 'modern'. There is a general preference for the 9.15 service. Particularly in the summer church attendance is affected by competing activities, especially sailing and other water borne activities.

PART 2: THE NEXT INCUMBENT

A well-attended Open Forum was held in the Church at the beginning of January 2008. A number of different ideas and preferences were put forward but the general consensus was as follows:

A preference was expressed for an open-minded person, who would get involved with not only church activities but also with other aspects of village life, thus getting to know all sections of the community. The ability to delegate and lead will be an essential element.

He or she should be fundamentally a person of prayer who will lead the parishes in prayer and from a basis of prayer.

Their leadership role will be of increasing importance in the developing setting of the Mission Community, as the united benefice is now becoming part of a group which includes the whole of the existing Deanery. We look forward to the next incumbent having new ideas which will appeal to the wider ministry.

The new incumbent should have an embracing outlook at the same time recognise the objectives of the Church in general. The Forum showed full support for a woman incumbent should the situation arise.

There are several challenges awaiting the new incumbent. There is a pressing need to make our spiritual church activities more attractive to a wider range of people.

Particular attention must be given to attracting young people. The new incumbent's involvement with the school-aged children and their parents will be very important. There is a strong on-going link with the Primary School, particularly with Holy Cross Church, but little on-going links with youngsters after they move to Secondary school. It is also important that stronger links should be formed with the St. Francis' Play Group in Noss.

With the large elderly population, visiting the sick and house-bound is extremely important; not necessarily just by the incumbent, but also by groups of willing parishioners.

Strong links must also be maintained with the small but important farming community. There is a thriving sailing community in the two parishes which would also benefit from links with the churches.

A major challenge will be satisfying the needs of all three parishes which have differing characteristics. By achieving this difficult balancing act the new incumbent should be known in each parish as "our Rector" and they will not be perceived as favouring one parish over the other. This is important, particularly as the Rectory and Office are situated in the middle of the largest of the three parishes.