

## **Passage taken and adapted from the book 'The Church on the Corner' by J Steel**

125 years ago most of what is now known as Newton was farmland and heath with Calday Grange Grammar School at the top of Grammar School Lane, a thatched cottage halfway up the hill with a cluster of houses at the bottom, and some properties at the end of China Farm Lane.

It was at the Annual Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1901 that the Rector of St Bridget's, Revd Alfred Blencowe reported that work was well in hand to build the Newton Mission Church. The land had been obtained and contractors appointed to build the church. The total cost was estimated to be £200 and already £151 had been raised.

In a document dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 1901, the Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Francis Jayne, placed the building's future in the care of the Rector of West Kirby.

One year later at the Annual Meeting in 1902 the Rector stated that the work on the Mission Church of St Michael's had been completed and that services had been held there for some time. The final cost was £212 11s 3d. There was also a note that a number of gifts had been made to the new Church.

By 1905 St Michael's had two Wardens, there was a weekly evening service at 6.30pm and a service of Holy Communion was held at 8am on the second Sunday of each month.

By 1908, 10 – 15 people regularly attended the monthly communion service, and 8 children were in the Sunday School.

An article written by parishioner Annie Parkinson, printed in the Parish Magazine in 1970 says:

*'As one who belongs to a very old family in this district I can recall many changes particularly in St Michael's Church, Newton. I remember the old tin Church with its coal fire, scrubbed white floor and little organ. On a Sunday night the village people would gather to sing and listen to the village parson. The Canon from West Kirby Rectory occasionally walked over the double rocks with his paraffin storm lamp, sometimes in bitterly cold weather, to the little warm church heated with wood when no coal was available. There were no Baptism, Marriage or Burial Services, these being taken at West Kirby Church. There was a Communion Service once a month and a small Sunday School. For Harvest Festival the church was decorated with produce from the local farms and Harvest Bread from a West Kirby bakery. The people crowded in and there was standing room only.'*

In the 2001 foreword to 'The Church on the Corner' the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster the then Bishop of Chester wrote:

*'People – the living body of Christ – are more important than the building in which they worship. Nevertheless, our church buildings bear eloquent witness to God, as 'sermons in stone'. They bear their own silent witness, alongside the human activity to which they play host. Churches are places where people gather for moments of sadness and joy, serious moments of every sort.*

*I join with all who are associated with St Michael & All Angels, Newton to give thanks for the work and witness of the congregation [in the past] and to pray for a renewed vision as God calls us into his future, towards the full manifestation of the Kingdom of Christ.'*