

# St Martin-cum-Gregory's Church, Micklegate

Saturday afternoon, 17 July

Some of us braved the pedestrian surge on completion of the marquetry presentation and were pleasantly surprised to discover the side door open to this redundant church. A team of glass enthusiasts was finishing a session. The church has become the Stained Glass Centre under the direction of a board of trustees with the founding member Mr. Keith Barley, who trained under the Minster's glass team and is currently regarded as one of the country's foremost stained glass experts; he is also working on Lichfield Cathedral's Herkenrode east windows. The centre is in its early days but the intention is to preserve the church windows as they are of considerable significance. The inside is in need of much TLC, but there are wooden fixtures and fittings that should also be preserved or, ideally, resited. This would appear to be a problem when a church is declared redundant. Who makes the decision on such items? Should the RFS step in? Naturally if we had a rep on the York diocesan advisory committee, it would help!

There were several items of special interest. The 'bread shelves' (Fig 1) are a slight mystery, but the possible explanation that food and drink could be left on the shelves for the destitute is not in dispute. The item is in need of repair and rather neglected. Should it be removed and displayed elsewhere with a fulsome explanation?

The font cover (Fig 2) has a ring bolt for lifting purposes, fitted through the carved back of a bird which swivels above an acorn feature with six neatly adorned arms attached to the octagonal wooden cover on the stone font base. The communion rail (Fig 3) is in good structural condition, with a pair of quadrant gates in the centre providing access to the sanctuary. They were made by the joiner Matthew Butler in 1753 and cost £8. The pulpit by John Harland (1636) is inscribed around the octagonal sides 'Preach the word, Be instant in Season and out of Season' and a plaque on the door says it was restored in memory of the churchwarden, Arthur Dodsworth, in 1930. The large reredos, maker unknown, is in good but dirty condition, and has the Ten Commandments and other biblical scripts noted on the vertical face. It was fitted in 1749 after negotiations by the churchwardens.

Although the church is in a very untidy state, the intention by the Stained Glass Centre to use the space and preserve the windows is most commendable, but begs the question concerning the items noted above.

*Peter & Ann Stone*



Fig 1 Bread shelves



Fig 3 Altar rails and reredos



Fig 2 Font