

Overview of Section G

Section page

FULL OVERVIEW
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Tracing a little of the History of the Parish

The Clergy who have served Bow Common

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Those who have served ...

Incumbents of St. Paul's, Bow Common:

Rev. Arthur Benjamin Cotton First Vicar 1858-1878
(son of William Cotton, benefactor and builder of the church)



This account from the East London Church Chronicle (ELCC) for 1908 has already been quoted earlier:

'... a magnificent church was built by the late William Cotton, the founder of St. Andrew, Bethnal Green, and was consecrated in 1858 by Rt. Rev. Dr. Tait, the Bishop of London. The Church stood in a lovely position in the fields, with the Blackwall Railway Extension in the background. On a dark night the good people might be seen picking their way across the fields with the aid of lanterns, and occasionally coming to grief in the gravel pits. Then roads were made and houses sprang up like mushrooms, and the great Church was filled with suburban residents during the incumbency of the first Vicar, Rev. A.B. Cotton, who resigned in 1878 after twenty years' work.

In the 'Retrospect' which Arthur Cotton also wrote in 1908 for the 50th Anniversary Booklet, he said this: *'During the incumbency of the first Vicar Rev. A.B. Cotton, the population rapidly increased from 1,400 to 14,000 souls, and the Church was filled to overflowing, but after twenty years of ever increasing work he effected an exchange of Livings with the Rev. Rowland T. Plummer, who became the second Vicar in 1878.'* This exchange was for the ancient parish of St. Leonard's, Hartley-Mauditt, Hampshire.

Work was hard but these were perhaps the most prosperous and 'successful' days for the church with good resources of finance and personnel to share the work. Things got harder very soon.

Rev. Rowland Taylor Plummer Second Vicar 1878-1900



The work of the new church was clearly exceptionally demanding and led to the first Vicar 'swapping' parishes with the man who then became his successor at Bow Common. As the ELCC noted, a lot changed for the worse during Rev. Plummer's incumbency, including over-strained finances and very inadequate staffing, which led tragically to his breakdown and retirement:

'During the incumbency of the second Vicar, Rev. R.T. Plummer, the population increased to nearly 15,000, but with the removal of well-to-do people, financial difficulties arose, and he was compelled to appeal to the E.L.C.F. to provide stipends for the Assistant Clergy. £135 per annum was granted for a second Curate, and with the help of volunteers, the parish was worked by a staff of five clergy and many lay-helpers, until disaster came in the utter breakdown in the of the Vicar's Health and his resignation in 1900.'



1890

Arthur Cotton also noted this in his *Retrospect*:

'In 1892, Church life was at its highest activity, the parish being worked by a staff of five priests. Communion on Easter Day, numbered 508, baptisms 330 for the year, nearly a hundred candidates were presented for Confirmation each year, and 1200 children were being taught in the various Sunday Schools, but since then the population has changed very much and work has suffered, and the second Vicar resigned in 1900, completely broken down in health, and was succeeded by the Rev. W. Forster, who had been Assistant Curate since 1885.'

He died in 1914 and on 7th April 1914 this very short report appeared in the local newspaper (EEM)

I regret to hear of the death of the Rev. Rowland Plummer, which occurred last week. After a two years' curacy at Folkestone he was appointed rector of Hartley-Mandytt, Hants, where he remained from 1875 till 1878. In the latter year he became vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common, which living he held until 1900, when through physical infirmities he was compelled to relinquish his church work, and retired into private life at Folkestone, where he spent the last years of his life. From 1891 to 1897 he served on the old London School Board, as a representative of the Tower Hamlets, on which body he did much solid work.

Rev. Walter Forster
Curate 1885-1900

Third Vicar

1900-1928

As we heard from Arthur Cotton, the parish was at perhaps its greatest peak around 1892 in terms of the size of the congregation, number of clergy, range of parish activities and, above all, financial resources with which to carry on all this work. Rowland Plummer saw both the peak of ministry at Bow Common as well, during his final years, the sharp decline of what the parish was able to do, with the prosperous parishioners moving far out and workers being harder both to find and to fund.

Of the four curates who assisted him, **Rev Walter Forster** who arrived in 1885 would also have witnessed both the rise and decline of the parish's fortunes. He is the figure on the right of the picture, taken around 1890. Rowland Plummer is at the centre and the other curate is un-named. On the left is an image from Walter Forster's later days in his 43 years spent in the parish, 15 years as curate and 28 years as Vicar.



Walter Forster therefore had no illusions about the job in hand when he was appointed to succeed Rowland Plummer in 1900 as the third Vicar. He oversaw the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1908, the same year in which the ELCC article above noted:



'Since 1900 difficulties have increased by the immigration of an alien population and the overwhelming growth of poverty. Again, the E.L.C.F came to the rescue with a further grant of £30 per year: but the parish has only a staff of three priests and a very few lay-workers.

This parish, like many in the East End, has buildings and everything needful, but lacks the necessary workers but must have gone under long ago, but for the E.L.C.F. A ship has been the emblem of the Catholic Church since primitive times, but in the East End it must be likened to a ship without a crew to man it. '

Alas, almost nothing has come down to us about these men who gave so much for the life of the church and their community.

On 19th October 1934 The Church Times had these few lines to record the passing of Walter Forster two days earlier.

FÖRSTER. — On the 17th inst., the Rev. WALTER FORSTER, formerly Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common (1885—1928), honorary Asst. Priest at St. Francis of Assisi, Gladstone Park (1929—34), aged 76 years.—R.I.P.

Rev. Ralph Jonathan Goodwin Fourth Vicar 1928-1938

There is no information about the third Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common in the church archive. In the section on St. Luke's, Burdett Rd., published a week after his Licensing as the third Vicar on 7th July 1928, the East London Advertiser surveyed the recent and past church life of the area as a glimpse of the world the new Vicar would be engaging with.



Rev. Cyril E. Carter Fifth Vicar 1938-1950

Revd. Cyril Carter (on the left) arrived as the fourth Vicar of the Parish in the dark days immediately before World War II and saw the parish and church through the even darker days of the Blitz and the destruction of his church. Really, he knew the building for only two to three years before it was badly shaken by the explosion of a land-mine nearby in September 1940 and then totally destroyed six months later by incendiaries in 1941. Thereafter, for the next nine years he and his congregation met and worshipped wherever they could and he must have held the church together through its most testing times. The whole of this account opened with those War-time days and the PCC records track Fr. Carter and his people in their movements & challenges.

Late in 1950 just one line in the Church Council Minutes states:

17 October 1950

'The Vicar stated that he had been offered and accepted the Benefice of Holy Trinity, Hounslow.'

The church now had no buildings and no Vicar and the Minutes are useful in following the steps and processes which led to the building of the most remarkable new church of St. Paul's, Bow Common, the likes of which could never have been imagined in those later post-War days.

There is a certain poignancy of this next photo which is perhaps the last one that we have of 'normal times' before disaster struck. It is a photo of the church choir captured on Sunday 7th April 1940.

Seated next to Fr. Carter is his curate Fr. Cobb who had been in the parish for about a year. Easter was now behind them and even with trepidation about how the War was going to develop, no-one could have imagined the relentless attacks and destruction which would come just 5 months later when the Blitz began on 7th September 1940.



The undamaged church can be seen behind the group, never to be used again after the collateral damage it suffered on 20th September of that year and then devastation on 19th March 1941, its days finally ended.

There is almost nothing in the record about any of that vast array of people who make up the majority of any church - its lay people! The view above however, unusually, identifies some of the laity and it is good to be able to name even a few. Extraordinarily, in my own ministry I came to know one of them personally, Henry Haywood, and had the deeply sad privilege of attending his death. The young Henry Haywood shown at the right end of the 2nd row was part of a solid St. Paul's, Bow Common family. They all moved from Bow Common and Henry came to St. Dunstan's where I got to know him very well as churchwarden in my first years of ordained ministry at St. Dunstan's, Stepney.



Harold Kingston's son Horace came to be churchwarden before Fr. Kirkby arrived and as my neighbour, still living in the School Caretaker's house right next door to the vicarage until his death, was the only person in the congregation who had known the old church and had watched it burn down. He was a truly good man and a real friend and neighbour and very sadly, I was also to attend his death. Harold is 2nd from the right on the back row.

Farewell Gifts to the Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common
The Rev. C. E. Carter is Leaving After Twelve Years
 After twelve years of devoted service, the Rev. C. E. Carter, Vicar of St. Paul's Church, Bow Common, has been offered, and accepted, the living of Holy Trinity, Hounslow, where he will be instituted by the Bishop of Kensington on Monday, December 4.

This tribute to Fr. Carter is from a local newspaper on 24th November 1950.

It is a glowing tribute to his ministry in perhaps the parish's darkest and most difficult days as well as, clearly, a much valued ministry, along with that of his wife, to children and in education.

The article continues on the following page.

The PCC Minutes recount:

16 November 1950

'The following Minute to be sent to the Bishop of London:

Many will remember the wonderful work which he and Mrs Carter have done, not only in their own parish, but also in a variety of ways in the East End of London, and to mark this appreciation of their efforts, two presentations have been made to them.

On Friday, pupils and staff of the Day Schools, together with managers, representatives of the parents and friends of the School presented them with a burred walnut coffee table and plate glass top.

Chairman of Managers

Reference was made to the affection and help which had always been shown to the School by Father and Mrs. Carter, to the heavy and worrying work Father Carter had had as chairman of the school managers and to the constant care and attention Mrs. Carter had given to her labours as secretary of the Children's Care Committee. The presentation was made by two of the youngest pupils in the School, Patricia Cornwall and Victor Copping. Previously, Mrs. M. Hinchliffe and the children given the Vicar and Mrs. Carter of the Infants' Department had a waste paper basket.

Past and present parishioners of the parish gathered in strength on Sunday to pay their tribute to the retiring Vicar.

During the Raids

Remembering the days and nights of the Blitz, when he was ready to comfort and cheer wherever needed and his untiring devotion at all times to his calling, Mrs. J. Nash as the oldest member of the congregation, presented a cheque on behalf of the churchwardens (Messrs. W. Haywood and H. Camp), the Parochial Church Council and past and present members of the congregation.

Albums, containing the names of contributors were given with each gift.

The work which Father and Mrs. Carter have done in their own church and in the service of education will long be remembered and they take with them the sincerest good wishes of those among whom they have worked in Stepney.

'My Lord Bishop, in accord with our privilege, we the Parochial Church Council of St. Paul's, Bow Common wish to make request to your Lordship that the vacancy in this Parish caused by the preferment of the Rev. C. E. Carter be filled by a priest who is Catholic and loyal to the Book of Common Prayer.'

12 December 1950

'Mr. W. Haywood introduced the Rev. G. Kirkby who addressed the meeting and stated his views. He was asked a number of questions and suitably responded. It was unanimously agreed by the PCC that a letter should be sent to the Bishop saying that we were pleased with the interview and would welcome Fr. Kirkby as our new Vicar.'



The vastly changed parish to which Fr. Kirkby came. This view, taken on 5th July 1950, shows temporary prefabricated housing on the site of William Cotton's fine town terraces, all now destroyed, with the 'trimmed' shell of the old church in the background.

Rev. Reginald Gresham Kirkby Sixth Vicar 1951-1994

Fifth Vicar of St. Luke's, Burdett Rd., and Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul's Bow Common, Sixth Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common and First Vicar of the United Benefice of St. Paul with St. Luke from July 1951

Without Fr. Kirkby's vision, persistence, genius, stubbornness and refusal to compromise on the unique and radical outlook which he held there would not be the remarkable building upon which this account primarily focuses and which is now recognised as the most significant post-War church in Britain. It was his instinct which spotted the gifts and shared vision held by Bob Maguire and Keith Murray and together they evolved the remarkable building which has been described here across many pages!

In what follows a few items from the small collection which exists about him in the church archive is gathered in tribute to this remarkable man.

Below perhaps are the earliest photos we have of Fr. Kirkby in 1951, having recently arrived in the parish and celebrating a Feast of St. Paul in the ruins of the old church, marking the news that a new church would arise on that spot – as indeed it would some nine years later.



Fr Kirkby in 1988



On the left, Fr. Kirkby is the figure by the altar and behind him are Fr. Whittaker, his curate, and Fr. Hordern, another priest.



Here is Fr. Kirkby very early in his incumbency, at the altar of St. Luke's, Burdett Rd. which was used after St. Paul's had been bombed out.

On the right is Fr. Kirkby in 1958 assisting the Bishop of Stepney, The Rt. Rev. Everard Lunt, in the laying of the Foundation Stone of his new church which would be consecrated in 1960.





The 1950's 'Skiffle' star Lonnie Donegan is seen here in 1958 helping launch the Appeal for the new building and also the new Stebon School nearby.



I read somewhere that Fr. Kirkby conducted Lonnie Donegan's first marriage without realising how well-known he was!

There are no photographs of Fr. Kirkby at the consecration of his new church but one of the first major services was a celebration in the church shortly after its consecration in 1960 to celebrate the Centenary of the Church School. He is seen at the altar with curate, Fr. John Rowe.



A glimpse of some of the congregation on 28th November 1965. Fr. Kirkby is at the right.



The Congregation assembles after the Christenings of Judith Zamore & James Rowe.

Back row, left to right

George Woodley . Ethylene Woodley . Esther Duberry . Horace Camp . Frank Jarvis . Mary McKenzie
 Barbara Fethney . Miss Brown . Terry Dible . Julie Spence . May Byers . Mrs Camp . Winnie Wyatt
 holding Kate Rowe . Lottie Steer . Eddie Rinhum . Laurence and Janet Gillam . Fr. Kirkby . Isabel Rowe

Front row, left to right

Robert Lee . Jack Rowe . Annette Rowe . George Steer, holding Judith . Mrs. Kingston, holding Jim . Paul Rowe . Margie Row



In 1968 Fr. Kirkby celebrated his silver jubilee of priesthood. The East London Advertiser featured the celebrations in this article. He comments on attitudes to the new church!

Bow clergyman's silver jubilee

A CLERGYMAN whose first incumbency was in a war-devastated parish in Bow last week celebrated his silver jubilee in the thoroughly modern church of St. Paul's, Burdett Road, Bow.

When the Rev. Reginald G. Kirkby came to the East End 17 years ago the scars of the blitz were still much in evidence. In his new united parish the original church of St. Paul's had been completely destroyed and St. Luke's, further along the Burdett Road, had been badly damaged by a land mine.

Services continued in St. Luke's until the building was demolished. "The whole thing was badly shaken up and couldn't have been restored," said Mr. Kirkby.

The building had to be abandoned before work on the new St. Paul's church—on the site of the original—had begun. A "broken down" hall in nearby Rowsell Street was then used for services until the church opened.

"We've used three different buildings for services and I've lived in three different houses!" said the clergyman.

ORDAINED IN MANCHESTER
Mr. Kirkby was ordained 25 years ago in Manchester. After some time in that city and Middle-

borough spent as a curate he came to London to become Priest-in-Charge of a church in North Kensington. He became priest at St. Paul's when the church was opened eight years ago.

The design of St. Paul's church is very much 20th century and not everybody's cup of tea, but the priest feels that a person's attitude to the building depends on whether he or she is a church-goer.

"The people who don't go to church," said Mr. Kirkby, "like churches to look Victorian. People who do go to church are much more advanced than that."

He agreed that when it was first built it did not blend with the neighbouring terraced houses but with subsequent developments it has come into its own. "It is now surrounded by the kind of houses it was designed to hold its own with," he said.

Last week a High Mass of Thanksgiving was held to celebrate Mr. Kirkby's jubilee. Preacher for the evening was the Rev. Harold Riley, vicar of St. Augustine's, Kilburn, and Mr. Kirkby's first rector in Manchester.

On behalf of the congregation and "all at the church," church warden Miss M. Byer presented the priest with a cheque for £75. Mr. Kirkby had already received a £5 gift from St. Paul's Infants' school where he teaches and where he is chairman of the school managers.



The Rev. Reginald Kirkby, of St. Paul's Church, Burdett Road, Bow, last week celebrated 25 years of priesthood. Here he is seen with guests at the informal reception which followed a special silver jubilee service.

In 1972 the new Church School (also by Maguire and Murray) was dedicated by the Bishop of Stepney, The Rt. Rev. Trevor Huddleston.

A Dedication Mass was held in the church at which Fr. Kirkby assisted.



In 1988 a real accolade for the church, and a national recognition of its importance just 28 years after it was opened, from the Dept. of the Environment as the church was granted Listed Status – not just Grade II but Grade II* - that ‘*’ meaning that the building was recognised so early on as being of ‘importance or more than special interest.’

The rules only permit a minimum of 30 years to pass before a building can attain such listed status and so that period had been applied to the design and first beginnings of the church in 1958 rather than its consecration in 1960.

The Independent newspaper had this article about this and other buildings granted listed status in April 1988

Modern medieval church stands the test of time

By Richard North
Environment Correspondent

A LETTER from the Department of the Environment dropped on the mat of the incumbent of St Paul's Church, Bow Common, east London, yesterday morning. It told him that his church, which he had helped to design 30 years ago, has just been listed Grade II*.

It was one of 18 buildings dating from 1939 to 1958 to receive the accolade of listing. It was only just eligible for inclusion under the department's new rolling 30-year rule, which supposes that three decades is sufficient to give an indication of which buildings will stand the test of time. It was completed in 1960.

The letter told him: "It would appear that the building is an ecclesiastical building which is for the time being used for ecclesiastical purposes...". The Rev Gresham Kirkby noted this passage, and said: "Well, I suppose it *could* become a supermarket".

Certainly, the building would be easy to render secure; Its few windows are set high in rather for-

bidding brick walls. From the outside, it seems a little bleak.

Within, it was one of the first churches to be "in the round". It also has the characteristic of any good church becoming old: there are two tin bath tubs to catch the rain drops from the lantern tower which lights the building.

"The roof needs an overhaul", said Mr Kirkby. The design, though very modern, was intended by the architects to reflect his passion for the openness of the medieval church at Thaxted, in Essex. But there are hints of the Greek Orthodox, and of Ravenna, especially in the mosaics which surround its interior.

English Heritage, the Government's official advisor on the aesthetics and importance of buildings, was smarting that of a list of 70 buildings which it was confident had merit, and which was partly the result of a public competition, ministers could agree on eighteen. Lord Caithness, Minister for the Environment, said yesterday that the Government had

hoped to list 50.

"But the task has proved difficult. In many cases, it is too soon to make objective judgements about the special interest of individual buildings. The quality of much post-war architecture is still the subject of fierce controversy, not least because it is now generally accepted that many fundamental errors were made in matching design to function which failed to give proper weight to the humane and aesthetic qualities required in good architecture".

Ministers dismissed Roehampton Estate, one of the most powerful statements of the high-rise housing ideal — some would say mania — of the late Fifties and Sixties. Although English Heritage felt strongly that it was a contender, at least as a classic of its time, the politicians' view seems to have been that it would be a pity to put the official seal of approval on buildings many would like to knock down — if it could be afforded.

The same sort of problem applied to the monolithic Bankside Power Station, on the Thames. Save Britain's Heritage, the voluntary preservation group, and English Heritage wanted it listed. Startling and impressive, it seems as though its genesis might have been at the hands of Albert Speer, rather than some more gentle English spirit. The Government balked at lauding it, and at implying that the site was other than ripe for redevelopment.

Yesterday's list is not final: ministers can add to it at any time. Listing is not a guarantee that buildings will not be knocked down, though permission must be sought to alter or demolish them. In the last two years, nearly 340 listed buildings have been demolished. They included no Grade I buildings, which are of "exceptional interest", and compose 2 per cent of the total. Two Grade II*, "of importance of more than special interest", were lost. The rest were Grade II, or of merely "special interest".

Honoured architecture

GRADE I: Coventry Cathedral; Royal Festival Hall, London, SE1.

GRADE II*: St Paul's Church, Bow Common, London, E3; Stockwell Bus Garage, London, SW2; TUC Memorial Building, London, WC1.

GRADE II: 20 Blackheath Park, Greenwich, London, SE3; 15-19 Aubrey Walk, Kensington, London, W8; The Pediment, Aynho, Northamptonshire; 1 Dean Trench Street, Westminster, London, SW1; St Columba's Church, Pont Street, Kensington, London, SW1; Exeter University Chapel; St John's Church, Newbury, Berkshire; Time-Life Building, New Bond Street, London, W1; Burleigh Primary School, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire; Hallfield Primary School, Paddington, London, W2; Cripps Hall of Residence, Nottingham University; Runcorn-Widnes Bridge, Runcorn, Cheshire; Three Standing Figures by Henry Moore, Battersea Park, London, SW11.

Church makes the grade

WHAT is the holy alliance between a Bow church, the TUC headquarters and Stockwell bus garage?

The answer is that architecture boffins have given them grade 2 listing along with 15 other post-war buildings.

Father Gresham Kirkby, the 71-year-old vicar of St. Paul's Church, Bow Common, was delighted when he heard the news.

SHOCKED

He said: "The church was built in 1958 and the time period for being listed was 1939-58, so we just got in by the skin of our teeth."

But he admitted that many locals turn their nose up at the modern church in Burdett Road even though experts come from all over the world to see it.

Father Kirkby said: "It rather shocked local peo-

ple when it was built to replace one destroyed in the war but it has lasted very well and good materials were used.

"The listing has given us a certain glamour which is nice, and it may mean we can get more grants in the future."



Father Kirkby inside St. Paul's



St. Paul's in Bow . . . monument to the Fifties

Six years later Fr. Kirkby retired after 43 years at St. Paul's, Bow Common, leaving behind him an extraordinary legacy in his remarkable building which, as I discovered during the 18 years which followed, had so much more to reveal in the future.

This article appeared in East End Life on 10th March 1994.

A service with smiles

Father Gresham Kirkby has been parish priest at St Pauls on Bow Common for more than 40 years. On the eve of his retirement, Sandra Heavenstone asked him about his East End life.

How long have you lived in the East End?

I arrived in 1951 at the time of the Festival of Britain. When I first arrived I tried to visit all the flats locally within my parish, but times have changed. With more working mums there's not always someone at home during the day so visiting isn't an option.

What are your roots?

I'm an imported Eastender. I'm a Cornish lad from Helston. I don't come from a family of vicars where the fourth son, always the simple minded one supposedly becomes a vicar.

Going to church was taken for granted in those days although it bored me stiff.

What is your impression of the people, of Eastenders?

People do seem to like a

good row. If you can give people as good as you get you've made a friend for life.

I think that there is in my experience, if people are made aware of a need they will come to your aid. I developed friendships with some of the Islanders who were tug and lock men and we

used to go drinking together.

Tell us about your parish.

The parish came into being in the 1890s. At that time it was supported by sunshine ladies and parish workers who held the parish together.



Father Gresham: a Cornishman in the East End

Pre-war my parish had over 21,000 members. Now there are 5,000.

It's sad that churches cannot stay open all day nowadays as they do in countries like Italy or Spain.

What kind of music do you provide?

I don't like any of this pop nonsense but I like good tunes. For me it's plainsong and Bach. I'm also very keen on Gregorian chants

Which people have made an impression on you?

Conrad Noel of Thaxted - the red vicar, as he was known. He was a libertarian socialist and a man of great holiness.

I have protested against things I feel strongly about in the past - racism and the bomb and did spend a week in prison after a ban the bomb demonstration in Trafalgar Square.

What interesting places have you visited?

I'd take a rucksack and disappear off to Paris in my youth, not knowing where I'd end up.

I spent time in Eastern Europe at the time of the Ceausescu regime. I liked

Bulgaria and Rumania.

When visiting Rome I watched the Cardinal of Palermo acknowledge everyone by name from the famous to the local peasant woman as she kissed his ring. Not to miss out I jumped in the queue and said, "I represent the Church of England."

What are your beliefs?

I believe in a society based on co-operation, not competitiveness.

The welfare state is rather like a nice rice pudding that is just not substantial enough. I really think we have made people too dependent.

Bow vicar quits

As women priests get the thumbs up from the Church of England, the East End's longest serving parish priest Father Gresham Kirkby says: "I resign."

Following the 'yes' vote for women's ordination, Fr Gresham of St Pauls, Bow Common is hanging up his cassock because he won't stay in a Church with women priests.

"This is my protest vote," he stormed. "Even during the times of St Augustine these heretics weren't allowed. There have always been heathen religions and sects but I do not believe that they should serve as priests."

Father Gresham who is 77 has been the local parish priest at St Pauls for over 40 years. He was trained at Mirfield College of the



Resurrection in Leeds, which is opposed to the ordination of women; Fr Gresham is famous for his protests - he once spent a week in prison after a Ban the Bomb demo in Trafalgar Square.

What remains of Fr.; Kirkby's final sermon ...

This church was created 3 1/2 years ago - several projects. The following day they I had the joy of celebrating the Dedication Service as I had not seen since 43 years ago not a word or hint in St Luke's - a few present then

1970: - early 60's hopeful times - thought of rebuilding every thing - nothing turned out just as we expected. Exciting prospect of a new church - No building means for me five years - good thing, time taken of the past. Instead time to look around & think how things regarded & re-orienting - Not so, private - room with a table in the middle. There are some ^{lovely} woodwork around the table, influenced by Thoreau's Dedication was in Eastertide, a reference to the Resurrection of O.L.T.C. near as possible to May Day, as a sign of God's New World which is to be a spite of all appearances to the contrary

2. Then of the Dedication that is the mystical Marriage between the church & Christ - the reality from the Apocalypse & in no sense what is mystical is real & deep. Deeper than appearance

The church ^{is living} sacrament is the Bride of Christ (Not my bride & Christ, but individually we are not). The Holy Church is the Bride of Christ, & Christ is the Bridegroom. I incidentally believe that the function of a priest is to be a sign of Christ the Bridegroom to the Bride-Church, as the church is a sign of Christ to the world

This idea of the church as the Bride, & Christ the Bridegroom is well biblically valid. The idea of the Dinner-table & the Lord's Supper goes back to the Prophet Hosea. It finds expression in the Song of Solomon, fragment of a wedding celebration in praise of sexual love. It is in the Bible because it is understood as God's ^{love} & ^{faithfulness}, & in a certain understanding as Christ's love & himself in the Gospel John the Baptist refers to Christ as the Bridegroom & himself as the Bridegroom's friend.

Paul in speaking of the mystical Marriage says that the two become one flesh & that this mystery is a sign for mystical union between Christ & the church. High feast of the church, & a high feast of marriage & of course the Apocalypse is full of the imagery of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb

3. However the church, like the church building itself, points to something & reflects that building is a sign of heaven on our earth. It is the Gate of Heaven, & a gate to for a two-way traffic in & out

The church is a sign & sacrament of the Kingdom of God. Who that is the R.C. Volmer written, all sorts of different views. The R.C. is what the Gospel is all about We pray the Kingdom come - on earth as in heaven. But what do we mean, & we mean anything at all. What do we mean by the coming of the Son of Man into his Kingdom. Not too much to say that Christ has hopelessly confused about that, & has been since early times. No easy answer in N.T. because the first century were fairly their way - nothing had turned out quite as they expected; they only knew that Christ was the key to the future

All the passages we see nearly 2000 years ago. Had not time to read the Bible. Read any serious writing of the subject, & you will see the problem still exists. Thoreau, & St Paul's Letter to the Romans had influenced me greatly. He wrote me that a more beautiful church, no more was the worship so lovely & colourful. It was like a breath of Heaven; it was a sign of the Marriage of Heaven & Earth, the joy & freedom of God's New World. I wasn't altogether convinced by St Paul's arguments, nor did I share his view that the Communist Revolution of 1917 was the Dawn of the R.C. (He had his doubts later on). My ready & thinking interest in it was so a solution of the problem. But I have said & done unusual things. It is because of this conviction that the Kingdom of the R.C. on earth as in heaven is what the Gospel is all about

4. And now it is time to go. I am sorry to be leaving after things are not good with church, nor in the community generally. Hope for the future is in short supply today. I have had plenty of disappointments here, but also lots of love & friendship is a good measure of fun. I pray that God will make sense of what I have tried to say & do, & I shall continue to pray as always for the People of this Parish

And his final letter to the church following his retirement ...

St. Paul's Vicarage,
7 May 1984

My dear friends,

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the splendid farewell you gave me last Saturday, also for the generous gift which with some other amounts sum to three hundred pounds. I have received other gifts from you at my various anniversaries - 25th & 50th Anniversaries of Ordination, & of stages in my long incumbency of this Parish.

I had exceeded the years of Vicar for ever, she was Curate for 14 years & Vicar for 29, but not quite the record of Dr Wallace at St. Luke's who reigned from 1865-1913!

It was a lovely Mass, & I enjoyed every moment of it and the Party afterwards. It was a joy to see some who were here when I came 1951, and those who were some afterwards, including some of the Youth Club of the 1950's. Afterwards when I was saying my prayers in church

in the evening it ^{helped} me that I was no longer Vicar. I felt very sad at that. I went to St. Mary's, Gosham Str. on Sunday morning, but that was a bit like being on holiday. Betty Richards' nice wife asked me to lunch, and I came back about 7pm & went to bed early.

Some of us have been together a long time. I am especially grateful to Mary & Terry, & to John & Gladys, but I love you all dearly, and shall always remember the love & friendship I have received over these 43 years. And now I pray that all my remembrance will be for the future of this Parish. It will be a difficult time, as it is for the church & society these days. There is so much more I would like to say, but I had been an unforgettable experience, and I shall always enjoy seeing you when I am established in Eastington.

Yours ever in Christ,
Gordon Kirkby

Twelve years later, on 10th August 2006 just the day before he would have turned 90, Fr. Gresham Kirkby died. Below are the obituaries which I have archived.

The Guardian | Tuesday August 22 2006

Obituaries

Father Gresham Kirkby

Restless, radical priest who built his ministry in a remarkable church

Father Gresham Kirkby, who has died a few hours before his 90th birthday, was the longest serving parish priest in the east end of London in recent years. An anarchist socialist, early supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and a member of the Committee of 100, he pioneered liturgical renewal in the Church of England and was a dedicated parish priest.

Born in Cornwall, he was influenced by Methodist hymnody (his mother and an aunt were Methodists), though he moved early towards Anglo-Catholicism, inspired by Fr Bernard Walke, a socialist priest at St Hilary. His musical abilities were memorable, and he was known to play the organ at services in his own church while another priest officiated at the altar.

After Leeds University in the early 1940s, Kirkby studied at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, west Yorkshire, during the time that (the later Archbishop) Trevor Huddleston was a novice. He regarded Huddleston, at the time, as rather conservative. Ordained deacon in 1942 and priest in 1943, Kirkby served his first curacy at the church of Our Lady and St Thomas in Gorton, Manchester. After three further curacies in Middlesborough, Becontree and North Kensington, he became vicar of St Paul, Bow Common, in 1951 where he remained until 1994.

The church had been destroyed in the second world war. One of Kirkby's achievements was the building of the new church, consecrated in 1960, and described at the time by the Architectural Review as the most important church built in the 20th century. He chose the architects – Robert Maguire and Keith Murray (obituary, November 29 2005) – and they asked the question: "What will Christian worship be like in the year 2000, and how can we build a church to reflect this?"

The liturgy at Bow Common followed



the Roman rite, but anticipated the reforms of the Second Vatican Council by at least 10 years. For many years the Divine Office was sung daily to Gregorian chant. "Rome will catch up with us eventually", said Kirkby, and to some extent this was the case.

As an anarchist socialist – he usually said "anarchist communist" before 1956 – he was influenced by Kropotkin and by Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic

Worker movement in the United States. The Bishop of London visited him in hospital two days before his death and reported that Kirkby had "proclaimed his undying faith in anarchy". He was one of the first priests to march to and from Aldermaston, and probably the first priest to go to prison for anti-nuclear activities, in 1961. He certainly livened up the worship in Brixton prison chapel during his time there.



Kirkby and the East End church he commissioned, St Paul's at Bow Common Photograph: Amit Lennon

He was the last surviving member of the League of the Kingdom of God (founded in 1922), and chaired the Socialist Christian League until its dissolution in 1960. He had no sympathy with reformist socialism, especially the Blairite version of it.

Kirkby's abiding vision was of the Kingdom of God as a hope for the transformation of this world. His essay, *Kingdom Come: the Catholic Faith and Millennial Hopes*, in *Essays Catholic and Radical*, edited by Rowan Williams and myself in 1983, accurately represents his thinking. (It is available at www.anglocatholic-socialism.org). He influenced thousands of people, was the best known priest in his area of east London, but remained a visionary thinker, always dissatisfied with his own thought, always restless and struggling, always moving on. Up to a few days before he died, he was expressing concern about the state of the world, the state of the Church of England, and the needs of individuals. He was at heart a local, grassroots parish priest, greatly loved, and incredibly inspiring and influential.

Kenneth Leech

Gresham Kirkby, Anglican priest, liturgical pioneer and anarchist, born August 11 1916; died August 10 2006

eastlondonhistory.com

2000 years of the people and places of the East End of London

It's quite a journey from Cornish Methodism to Anglo-Catholicism (a 'higher' church tradition within the Church of England, bringing in much of the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church). Father Gresham Kirkby (who died earlier this month) achieved it, along with a synthesis of his anarchist and pacifist beliefs.

He also became one of the East End's longest serving priests, one of the best known, and was the driving force behind the building of one of the borough's most-recognisable church buildings.

You'll recognise St Paul's, Bow Common as you drive west along St Paul's Way, crossing Burdett Road. There on your right is a petrol station, on your left a shimmering 'mural' of metal discs decking the church's west wall. 'Angel' with its 'O', colon, dash and a bracket is, in fact, a smiley face (on its side) with a halo. It's maybe not what you'd expect on the side of a church - but St Paul's is no ordinary church.

When Gresham Kirkby became vicar of St Paul's in 1951, he had very little church to be vicar of. Like so much of the surrounding area it had been largely destroyed by German bombing in World War II. His first job was to rebuild it. He chose the architects (Keith Murray and Robert Maguire) and the trio looked resolutely forward not back in their planning.

Murray and Maguire had already worked on the new chapel for the Royal Foundation of St Katherine in Stepney, alongside letter carver Ralph Beyer. St Paul's was their first church, and it turned conventional design on its head. Asking 'What will Christian worship be like in the year 2000, and how do we build a church to reflect this,' they put the altar in the centre of the church, rather than facing a long aisle flanked by pews. They used new, industrial materials (as much from necessity, as these were years of austerity), making a font of concrete, inlaid with copper. A central glass roof flooded the building with light. The partnership of Murray and Maguire would go on to design many more churches (and schools) but Bow was the testing bed for their new ideas. In the late fifties they would return to build the church school at Bow Common. On that occasion, a tight budget would see them using portal frames (adapted from barns) to give space and light.

The new church at Bow Common was consecrated in 1960, Architectural Review dubbing it 'the important church built in the 20th century' - largely because it pointed the way forward. Maguire and Murray were only too aware of that. They viewed another project of the time, the new Coventry Cathedral by Basil Spence, (another building necessitated by enemy bombing), and which employed a more conventional church design, as essentially a 'medieval building'.

And so Father Gresham Kirkby took charge of his new church, and was to stay there until 1994. Kirkby had been born in Cornwall, the son of a Methodist mother, though he moved swiftly to the Anglican Church, and to the Catholic tradition within it.

Leaving Leeds University in the early 1940s, he went on to study with the Community of the Resurrection in Yorkshire, an Anglican religious group which to this day aims to foster individual's talents within a communal life, while propounding chastity, poverty and obedience. The Community gained a reputation for encouraging strong personalities. A contemporary and friend of the young Kirkby was Trevor (later Archbishop) Huddleston, who was to play such a key role in the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Kirkby had strong views too. Moving through a succession of curacies in the North of England, he described himself as an 'anarchist communist'. He joined the (anti-nuclear weapons) marches to the Aldermaston air base, and was imprisoned for his pains, in 1961. Throughout his career, Kirkby maintained his concern with the world, and how the Church and politics was serving it and its people - he was a confirmed 'socialist anarchist' on his death bed. But he combined this world view with the hard work of a parish priest. He died a day before his ninetieth birthday, on 10 August. St Paul's, of course, lives on.

East End Life: 28th August 2006

Father Gresham Kirkby, who died this month, left a lasting legacy in the shape of St Paul's in Bow

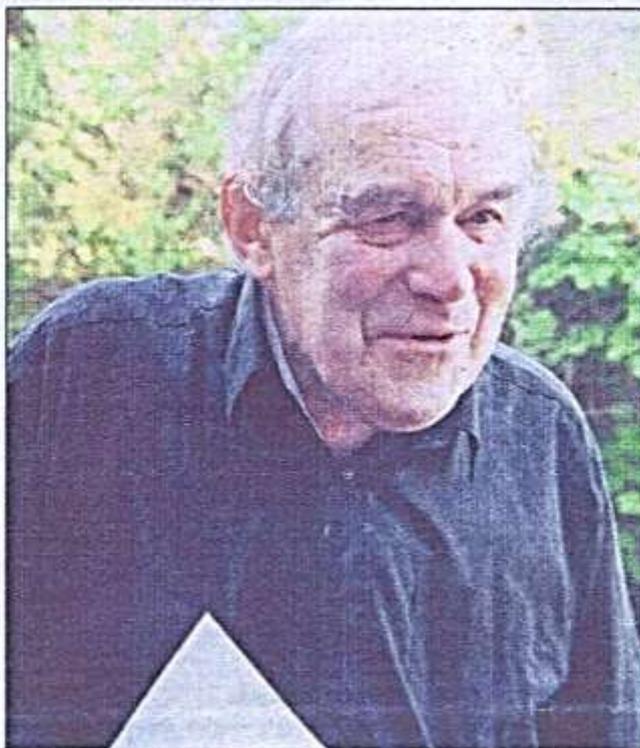
A church fit for a new Millennium

IT'S quite a journey from Cornish Methodism to Anglo-Catholicism (a 'higher' church tradition within the Church of England, bringing in much of the ritual of the Roman Catholic church). But Father Gresham Kirkby (who died earlier this month) achieved it, along with a synthesis of his anarchist and pacifist beliefs.

He also became one of the East End's longest serving priests, as well as one its best known, and was the driving force behind the building of one of the borough's most-recognisable church buildings.

You'll see St Paul's, Bow Common as you drive west along St Paul's Way, crossing Burdett Road. There on your right is a petrol station, on your left the church's west wall.

But St Paul's is no ordinary



VISIONARY: Father Gresham Kirkby

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The new church at Bow Common was consecrated in 1960, Architectural Review dubbing it "the most important church built in the 20th century" - largely because it pointed the way forward. Maguire and Murray were only too aware of that.

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Kirkby had been born in Cornwall, the son of a



(column runs from this to following page)
(and then back up again)



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The partnership of Murray and Maguire would go on to design many more churches (and schools), but Bow was the testing bed for their new ideas.

In the late fifties they would return to build the church school at Bow Common.

Eastendhistory

Going back in time with John Rennie



MODERN CHURCH: St Paul's in Bow

If you have a tale to tell about East End history, write to John Rennie, History, East End Life, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG. You can e-mail him on jrennie@gotadsl.co.uk or view past history features on his website at www.eastlondonhistory.com

Methodist mother, though he moved swiftly to the Anglican church, and to the Catholic tradition within it.

Leaving Leeds University in the early 1940s, he went on to study with the Community of the Resurrection in Yorkshire, an Anglican religious group, which to this day aims to foster individual's talents within a communal life, while propounding chastity, poverty and obedience.

The Community gained a reputation for encouraging strong personalities. A contemporary and friend of the young Kirkby was Trevor (later Archbishop) Huddleston, who was to play such a key role in the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Kirkby had strong views too. Moving through a succession of curacies in the north of England, he described himself as an "anarchist communist".

He joined the (anti-nuclear weapons) marches to the Aldermaston air base, and was imprisoned for his pains, in 1961.

Throughout his career, Kirkby maintained his concern with the world, and how the Church and politics was serving it and its people - he was a confirmed "socialist anarchist" to his death bed. But he combined this world view with the hard work of a parish priest.

He died a day before his 90th birthday, on August 10. St Paul's, of course, lives on.

The Church Times: (transcript, incomplete) by the late Rev. Ken Leech

"ALWAYS remember that the Kingdom of God is the regulative principle of theology." These were words uttered by Fr Gresham Kirkby to an ordinand in the 1960s (myself). They summed up his theology, and his life and ministry.

Gresham Kirkby, who died on 10 August, a few hours before his 90th birthday, was the longest serving parish priest in the East End of London. Catholic anarchist, he was an early supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a member of the Committee of 100, and a pioneer of liturgical renewal. He was also a faithful and dedicated parish priest in the Mile End area of London.

He was born in 1916 in Cornwall, and never forgot his heritage. His mother and an aunt were Methodists, and he was influenced by Methodist hymnody, though he moved early towards Anglo-Catholicism, inspired by Fr Bernard Walke, socialist priest at St Hilary in Cornwall. Gresham Kirkby's musical abilities were memorable, and he was often known to play the organ at services in his own church while another priest officiated at the altar - and sometimes would move from the altar to the organ

He studied for ordination at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, during the time that Trevor Huddleston was a novice in the order. (He regarded Huddleston at the time as rather conservative.) Ordained deacon in 1942 and priest in 1943, he served his first curacy at Our Lady of Mercy and St. Thomas in Gorton, Manchester, where many older people still remember him as "the Cornish curate". After three further curacies in Middlesbrough, Becontree and North Kensington, he became Vicar of St Paul's, Bow Common, in 1951, and remained until 1994.

The church had been destroyed in the Second World War, and one of his achievements was the building of the new church, consecrated in 1960, and described at the time by the Architectural Review as the most important church built in the 20th century. Gresham Kirkby chose the architects, Robert Maguire and Keith Murray, and asked them the question: "What will Christian worship be like in the year 2000, and how can we build a church to reflect this?"

The church was designed with a central altar, no altar rails, and no permanent structures: no pulpits, lecterns, stalls, and easily movable pew benches - except the altar. Everything and everyone was on the same level, with only the altar elevated. The liturgy followed the Roman rite, but anticipated the reforms of the Second Vatican Council by at least ten years. "Rome will catch up with us eventually."

He was an anarchist socialist - he always said "anarchist Communist" before 1956 - influenced by Kropotkin and by Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker movement in the USA. When the Bishop of London visited him in hospital two days before his death, he reported that he had "proclaimed his undying faith in anarchy". He was one of the first priests to march to and from Aldermaston, and probably the first priest to go to prison for anti-nuclear activities in 1961. (I was with him when he was arrested after celebrating the All Souls' Day requiem. He livened up the worship in Brixton prison chapel during his time there). He was the last surviving member of the League of the Kingdom of God (founded in 1922), and chaired the Socialist Christian League until its dissolution in 1960. He had no sympathy with reformist socialism, particularly the extreme Blairite version of it. He believed in "socialism from below". He had a wonderful sense of humour.

His abiding concern was the vision of the Kingdom of God as a hope for the transformation of this world. He spent much of his life writing and rewriting the same article. I read the first version, entitled "The earth shall rise on new foundations" (Socialist Christian, January 1956), at the age of 17. He revised it in 1977 for the centenary conference for Stewart Headlam's founding of the Guild of St Matthew at Bethnal Green, and he then called it "The Kingdom of God: The regulative principle of theology". I vividly recall Archbishop Michael Ramsey, sitting attentively, and saying "Yes, Yes, Yes" at virtually every sentence. The final version was his essay "Kingdom Come: The Catholic faith and millennial hopes" in Essays Catholic and Radical, edited by Rowan Williams and me in 1983.



Fr. Kirkby at his farewell party on 30th April 1994 with the then Bishop of Stepney, the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres, Bishop of London from 1995

THE NEW GRESHAM KIRKBY

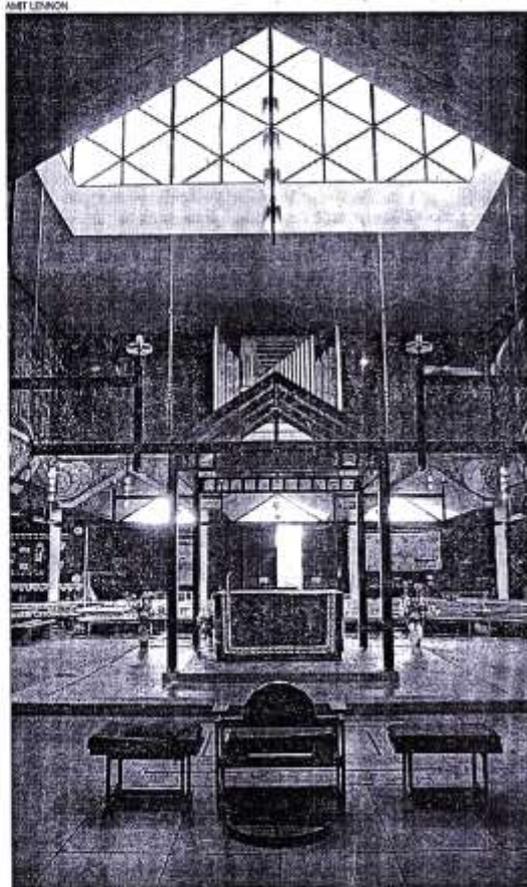
Radical priest whose beliefs were embodied in a visionary church in the East End of London

GRESHAM KIRKBY was an anarchist, socialist and pacifist Anglican priest whose abiding memorial is the church of St Paul, Bow Common, consecrated in 1960. The original church was blitzed and Kirkby determined that its replacement should anticipate the shape of worship in the 21st century, and proclaim the centrality of the Eucharist.

His ideas inspired the architects, Robert Maguire and Keith Murray, to design a church that was described by *The Architectural Review* as the most important of the 20th century. It was a church for a pilgrim people: other than the imposing central altar there were no permanent fittings, and everything, except the altar, was on the same level, symbolising that in the House of God all are equal. Simple Indian cottons served as altar coverings and the bare industrial brick walls suggested the world of work — fittingly, as Kirkby's long-serving curate, Father John Rowe, was one of Anglicanism's first worker priests.

The disapproving — among them Basil Clarke, who wrote in his notebook that it looked like "a rather seedy stableyard" — were in the minority. Ian Nairn, in his book *Nairn's London*, wrote: "Not one thing has come out of slickness or reaction or a wish to be original... It is completely fresh, the perennial force seen again for the first time. Purple brick, a top-lit cube on a long podium, with a porch almost detached with quivering letters on it: This is the house of God. And it is."

The Bow Common liturgy, the product of Kirkby's deep biblical knowledge, anticipated Vatican II, and as a result Roman Catholic clergy adopting Rome's reforms often sought his advice. Kirkby took an active part in the musical element as a skilled organist. As



St Paul, Bow Common, will be Kirkby's abiding memorial

well as High Mass he was happy playing *Come Ye that Love the Lord* (*Marching to Zion*), pleasing evangelical visitors.

Kirkby was influenced by Conrad Noel, "Red Vicar" of Thaxted, and by Pyotr Kropotkin, and was an early follower of the Campaign for Nuclear

Disarmament (he spent a short time in Brixton prison after a Committee of One Hundred "sit-down", a fellow squatter being Bertrand Russell). A founder of the Jubilee Group of Christian Socialists, he in turn influenced such fellow members as Rowan Williams and Kenneth Leech. His independ-



the last survivor of those who danced the 1924 Floral Dance.)

He said that for many years he propped up his piano with his only Book of Common Prayer — his protest against the savage response when the Cornish rose against the new edition in 1549 — but he knew it and its articles intimately. (He delighted in the fact that the Latin text of Article XXXVII only sanctioned "just wars".) His devotional discipline having been firm since his student days, he was unflinching in the recitation in church of the daily offices. He was not one of those Anglo-Catholics who follow every detail laid down by the Vatican, however: he disliked the feast of St Joseph the Worker, deeming it a diversion from the revolutionary May Day celebration.

For Kirkby, theology's regulative principle was the ideal of the coming of Christ's Kingdom to overthrow the kingdoms of this world. He continually preached, argued and thought about the revolutionary implications of it. He also spent many years writing and revising an article on the subject, never being satisfied with it. Nevertheless, his contribution to the theme of the Kingdom of God to *Essays Catholic and Radical* (1983, edited by Leech and Williams), despite his own reservations, is a perceptive explanation.

Reginald Gresham Kirkby was born in 1916 and studied at Leeds University and the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, before being ordained in 1942. After curacies in Manchester, Middlesbrough, Becontree and North Kensington he became vicar of St Paul, Bow Common, in 1951.

Although he adopted an Anglo-Catholic position — an influence being Bernard Walke, the Anglo-Catholic vicar of St Hilary, Cornwall — he treasured the great Methodist hymns learnt from his Methodist mother and aunt. One of his heroes was Billy Bray, the charismatic Victorian Cornish Methodist revivalist. (He never forgot his roots, and in his last year tried to discover if he was

Kirkby was a prayerful, pastorally concerned priest who, as well as a thinker, was a sympathetic listener. It was these qualities, as well as his 43 years of service in a single parish, that made Father Gresham one of the best known East End characters of his day.

The Rev Gresham Kirkby, Vicar of St Paul, Bow Common, 1951-94, was born on August 11, 1916. He died on August 10, 2006, aged 89.



Fr. Kirkby on the day of his final Mass and farewell celebration, 30th April 1994

One could not do better than to refer to the ³⁵ pamphlet written by the late **Fr. Ken Leech** in 2009 to gain a close understanding of what made Fr. Kirkby the remarkable man and priest that he was.

Rev. Prebendary Duncan Ross **Seventh Vicar** **1995 - 2013**
 Priest-in-Charge 1995-2002
 Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common 2002-2013



Rev. Bernadette Hegarty **Eighth Vicar** **2014 - present**
 Vicar of St. Paul's, Bow Common



Curates and Assistant Ministers at St. Paul's, Bow Common

(Some served simultaneously with others)

- | | |
|---|---|
| Rev. Hezekiah Martin | Rev Henry Salkeld-Cooke 1887 |
| Rev. Robert Graham (St. Mary Plaistow) | Rev. John Bullock 1890-1895 |
| Rev. Slater | Rev. Arthur Webb |
| Rev. Becker (St. James Ratcliff) | Rev. W. Wombill 1900 |
| Rev. Dr. Finch | Rev. Clarence Ingram |
| Anson W.H. Cartwright c 1860 | Rev. William M. Edwardes |
| (St. Augustine's Mission, Stepney) | Rev. R.E. Spencer |
| Rev. William Holmes (Whitechapel Infirmary) | Rev. William Christopher Edwards 1929 |
| Rev. W. Oakdew | Rev. F. C. Varley |
| Thomas Beavor Daveney 1868 | Rev. Baker |
| Rev. William Willan 1869-70 | Rev. G. M. Hickman |
| Rev. St. John Thorpe 1871 Manningtree | A. B. J. Cobb (also St. Luke's) 1939-46 |
| Rev. George E. Jackson 1878 | Rev. J. H. Whittaker Sept. 1946 - Jan 1953 |
| Rev. Bernard D.D. Shaw 1880-85 | Rev. John Goring Rowe 1953-1956 |
| Rev. Arthur Humphries 1882-83 | Rev. Irena Czerniawska-Edgcumbe 2000-2004 |
| Rev. Alfred W.B. Watson 1884-1885 | Rev. Diane Webb, Dss. 1998-2003, Priest 2003-08 |
| Rev. Cyril W. Holland 1884-85, 1888- | Reader: Simon Gordon Clark 1997 - 2004 |
| Rev. Arthur Strong Jervis 1885-87 | Reader: Christopher Morgan 2007 - 2012 |
| Rev. Walter Forster 1885-1900 (Vicar 1900-1928) | (ordained 2012: Curate, St. Dunstan's, Stepney) |

Incumbents of St. Luke's, Burdett Road:

Rev. Dr. William Wallace First Vicar 1865-1913

Rev. B. N. Switzer Second Vicar 1913-1926

Rev. Valdemar Lawson Third Vicar 1926-1928

Rev. Evan Bruce Murray Fourth Vicar 1929-1951

Rev. Reginald Gresham Kirkby Fifth Vicar 1951
Vicar of United Benefice of St. Paul with St. Luke 1951-1994



Curates at St. Luke's, Burdett Rd.
 (No details have been preserved before 1926)

P. L. Thorne 1926

H. W. Thompson 1927-29

Leonard Charles Gillam 1929-38

Evan Evans 1939

H. J. Johnson 1943-44

A. B. J. Cobb (also St. Paul's 1939-46) 1945-46
 Went to be Vicar at nearby St. Michael and All Angels, Bromley-by-Bow

C.A. Sutton 1946

J. H. Whittaker 1948-52

