

## St Thomas', Eaton

### *Angels in Eaton*



Within one of the smallest church buildings in the Diocese, there are reminders of the Church's role of hospitality and love to those we live among: beautiful wooden angels carved on nave pew end.

Prior to St Thomas' being built, inhabitants of the villages of Rushton and Eaton had to travel one and half miles to St Helen's in Tarporley. From 1873, parishioners met in the Mission Room (now a garage) at Church Cottage, opposite St Thomas and in 1895, villagers voted to erect a small church 'adequate for a centre of church life'. A year of fund-raising led to the necessary £2000 for the build, land was donated, and the simple, chapel-like building was opened in May 1896. When built it was known as " A Chapel of Ease" and only licensed for full services once the Baptistry and Altar were provided in 1936.

A feature of the church is the single bell in the bell cote salvaged from a scrapped Canadian Pacific Road engine by a former villager who had immigrated to Canada. It was sent it back to Eaton as he knew the existing one was cracked. The vestry was enlarged by the Hon. Marshall Brooks of Portal. As well as leaving a generous bequest to the church, Marshall Brooks bequeathed the wonderful wooden carvings and the stone font which has a very fine and intricately carved English oak cover. A Commemoration tablet to the Brooks family was incorporated in the dressed sandstone roadside wall leading to the church.

The villages of Eaton and Rushton and St Thomas continues to thrive on such examples of generosity. A fairly recent example is the beautifully embroidered altar cloth shown, made by local Daphne Ashby, a member of the Embroidery

Guild who has also passed on her skills to many, through her books and schools. Over the years, generations have continued their links with the church, and it is considered an important part of the small village.

The photo of the carved "Angel" was chosen as it is a good example of the beautiful wood carvings that are contained in our small church. It is appropriate in these times of Covid, as for the past 2 years we have had many "Angels" in our village and church who have volunteered to look after those who are vulnerable, and our calling as a church is to continue to minister that love, care and hospitality to the people of Eaton and Rushton. The picture showing the "central view of our Church" was chosen as it shows the beauty of design and also the lovely "altar cloth" made and donated by a local resident 'angel' Daphne Ashby.