Preface to the Rector’s Report

I had imagined that at this year’s Annual Meetings scheduled for March – and with the tower project finally behind us – I would begin with the words, ‘Well at least it can’t get any worse!’.

However! The onset of the Pandemic has served to intensify the financial fragility of the Parish after the Tower and it has been painful to preside over a closed church and withered programme; but it is not all bad news. We have discovered new skills and opportunities (together with most parishes) in streaming liturgy, although I have set my face against streaming the Eucharist which seems to me a nonsense. But regular streamed Evening Prayer on Zoom (by invitation to the bulletin list) has plainly been appreciated and popular and has drawn in not only those who are unlikely to be in the City for a while, but also members of the congregation whose City careers have come to an end. There is a significant sense of unity and warmth which I greatly appreciate. I have tried to keep in touch with as many as possible and apologise to any who may be feeling neglected.

It is impossible to predict the shape of life in the City across a number of professional and interest groups with which the parish connects and we may have a number of difficult and demanding decisions ahead. However the prevailing culture of the Parish and the church council is one of realism and faithfulness and those should assist us to navigate the days with some confidence. GRB
The Rector

To say that 2019 was a ‘bumpy year’ for St Mary-le-Bow is as delightful an understatement as in any more significant theatre of thought and action. Since the Tower Project had absorbed much energy in funding and planning (including one abortive tender round) it deserved to be delivered with confidence and care. However we were ill served (and I must say no more than that!) and the whole project spun out of control in terms of cost and time (pretty much double in both respects). It was hugely stressful, and my first duty is to pay tribute to the Churchwardens, who were towers of strength, and in particular Antoine West whose attention (in part only professionally) was beyond generous and always wise. Sincere gratitude is also owed to Victoria Russell, friend of the Parish and an expert construction lawyer, who also gave generously of her time and advice. The PCC repeatedly reviewed our position and unanimously concluded – with the aid of extensive advice – that we should defend our assets in a legal dispute which ultimately we lost (although happily because of legal expenses insurance, at only modest cost to the Parish). The fact that the PCC fulfilled its obligations without rancour, dissent or dispute was very encouraging.

Although, as I write, the Parish has suffered an extreme assault on carefully garnered reserves (with some avenues for recovery outstanding), this should not hide from us where we might have been in the original scenario. So demanding was the restoration needed that we had secured permission to sell (with the proviso to restore) some of our endowment. The generous – and unexpected – donation of £100,000 from Trinity Church New York meant that this was no longer envisaged, and although our reserves are denuded we have managed our affairs without any serious threat to cash flow. Michael Byrne deserves especial thanks for managing this with such attention and application. It is notable that our general operating costs generated a surplus once again and that some improved giving from the congregation was a not insignificant part of this.

It is to be hoped that major work on the Tower will not be needed for perhaps a generation, but it has to be absurd that the responsibility for such an important national monument should rest with a congregation. This pattern is of course replicated across the land and is one of the most intractable and unsustainable compromises of our national life. To ensure that we are always alert, the PCC will commission an abseilers’ inspection halfway through each Quinquennial Inspection regime. There are other buildings issues that await us.

Some years ago a report was commissioned by the Corporation on likely working patterns in the City which I only studied because asked to make a presentation to the Deanery Synod. The report was posited on changes to 2020 and I don’t know what evidence there may be that these prophecies have been fulfilled. But there is evidence that our weekly and festival attendances (December apart) are contracting (although those involved here are probably more involved) and that this may be a result of hot desking and hub working by which many in the City are here for perhaps two or three days each week. The effect of this is to reduce people’s leisure when actually here and to discourage interest in existing institutions. There are probably similar effects in Ward Clubs, livery and some hospital-
ity outlets (but not coffee shops plainly and indeed the original report suggested, as I seem to recall, that 40% of those working in the City by 2020 would be working out of coffee shops!). All of this is salutary for parish churches in a non-residential area.

Parishes which obsess about their ‘plant’ or their resources should certainly be watched; for despite all this, Parish life has continued at St Mary-le-Bow with its wonted shape. Of course I never imagine that we are doing enough, or enough that is original, faithful and excellent. But generously – and in this past year encouragingly – others often see us more handsomely than we deserve; with a programme that comprehends local engagement, pastoral care and formation, addressing the wider issues of the day, musical excellence, charitable activity, warm sociability together with faithful and supported weekday worship.

The twin peaks of our year have become the round of Christmas services throughout much of December (although this stretches into January and comprehends Candlemas and the Boyle Lecture) and the LIVE music festival which is a highlight of the Parish summer and which was especially full, diverse and successful in 2019. For LIVE our thanks are due to the Cheapside Business Alliance for financial support, to Sarah Mann for imaginative and tenacious leadership of the programme and to Tom Allery as Musical Director and for making the whole week gel together so well.

The Rectors’ and Deans’ Conference took place in Auckland, New Zealand where the prominent church of St Matthew thrives with liturgical worship on Sundays (and a very liberal take on traditional belief!) and as a venue for pretty much anything the rest of the week. It makes St Mary-le-Bow look as if it could do with a few more bookings! That said, a puzzling feature of 2019 was the complete absence of weddings (generally numbering 7-9 in recent years), but that looks to be at least partially – and happily – reversed in 2020.

It seems that in recent years quite a good number of now serving clergy have found springs of formation or support here. In late 2019 we were delighted to be joined by Graham Dale who is training at St Mellitus College for self-supporting ministry and who is now a regular part of the Tuesday morning congregation. He is a delight to have around.

So we won’t lose heart and who shall say that a slightly injured Parish won’t thereby be drawn to new imagination, initiative and faithfulness?

*The Revd George Bush*
The Rector’s other Responsibilities

As well as his Parish ministry, the Rector serves as Bishop’s Surrogate for Common (marriage) Licences. He is Warden of Licensed Lay Ministers (formerly Readers) in the Two Cities Area of the diocese.

He is Hon. Chaplain to the Britain-Australia Society and the City of London Club, as also the Arbitrators’, Firefighters’ and International Bankers’ Companies and as Master’s Chaplain of the Furniture Makers’ Company.

He is as a Trustee of the charity Community, Housing and Therapy and of the Red House Stepney, which he chairs and which runs a modest residential facility in Kent.

He is Chair of the Trustees of the City of London Social Investment Fund (Arcubus). He is a member of the Committee of the Ward of Cordwainer Club and a Board member (non-voting) of the Cheapside Business Alliance. He is a Trustee of the Arthur Phillip Memorial Trust, of the Thomas Carpenter Trust and of the Dewi Sant Memorial Trust (the St David’s Society). He is a Patron of the World Marmalade Festival.

The Rector’s Stipend in 2019 was £27,206. The parish continues – and generously – to provide heating, lighting and cleaning to the Lodging. GRB
The Provincial Registrar of the Southern Province reads the Queen’s Mandate and the Vicar General’s Court subsequently confirms the Election of the Rt Revd Libby Lane to the See of Derby in February. She was the first woman to be consecrated bishop in the Church of England when she became the suffragan Bishop of Stockport in 2015.

Confirmation of the Election of the Rt Revd Graham Usher to the See of Norwich, in June this year.
Staff and Volunteers

Matthew Power continues highly and warmly regarded, not least by members of the congregation for the excellence of his communication; under his care the website has bedded in and is now increasingly usable and on message.

Michael Byrne, has been taxed – well within his capacity and cheer – with managing the finances of the Tower Project as well as the day to day money affairs of the Parish. The waning of resources has been expertly managed and we have continued all our commitments without pause or reservation.

Shehana Udat continues happily as Just-Share Co-ordinator and during the year has secured additional funding as well as an improvement in audience size via Eventbrite.

Blaga Serafimova keeps the entire place bright and clean despite multiple users.

Richard Swann as Operations Officer is a reliable member of staff, well able to deal not only with the daily exigencies of the Tower Project but the irritation of contracts and the failure of parts of the plant. He has proven skill at attracting and handling new users. He is also the Verger with an amused take on the liturgy of the Church of England and the St Mary-le-Bow rubric, that ‘this is what we always do, except when we don’t’!

But St Mary-le-Bow depends also on the voluntary efforts of so many. Margaret Burtt is the most attentive of PCC Secretaries; alert to careful recording and patient of seemingly endless revision. Her despatch of papers is timely and a model of clarity. The PCC – whom we also thank for their attention to governance – are well served.

Simon Meyer as Tower Captain has been frustrated by the fact that the bells have been out of use for almost the entirety of 2019 as the result of a stonemason insisting that there was a risk of ringing interfering with the drying of mortar. All most unlikely but not worth the risk! The absence of ringing has assuredly made the heart fonder and we were cheered beyond measure by the return of the bells in time for the Parish Christmas Carol Service.

The Voluntary Rate remains a demanding area of fundraising – both as to policy (one major donor discontinued in the latter half of 2018) and administration. Many, many, years ago Andrew Goodhart, a Grocer, agreed to perform this twice yearly function for perhaps five years. We are hugely grateful that he remains efficient and effective.

In what was a stressful year it was a delight to witness and to be encouraged by such candour, unity and good heart. Thank you all so very much. GRB
In the last three years it is the works involving the renovation of the stonework on the Tower that has rightly been our priority. This followed incidents of falling masonry in 2017 and 2018, after which we installed a curtain of netting around the tower and undertook a comprehensive checking of the condition of stonework at high level and restoration and renewal of the stonework as required.

I am pleased to be able to report that the restoration works to the stonework have been completed satisfactorily and it has been possible now to remove the netting. It is reassuring to know that the masonry on the tower is adjudged to be in a good state of repair and has been made properly safe. The stonework renewal and repair has been performed to a high standard and the stonework from close quarters – for those willing to venture up to balustrade level – is pristine and beautiful.

The financial outturn of the project on the other hand has been less than satisfactory. The church has had to bear considerable additional cost not to mention six months’ delay due to a change in the scaffold design during the course of the actual contract works. Yet at all times the church has relied on independent professional advice, so the additional cost is most regrettable. Yet we take some comfort from the fact that the works were critically important given the safety concerns arising out of the previous stonework falls and that the works have been carried out to a high standard.

We continue to attend to maintenance and upkeep of the building. This includes repainting the stonework in the outer vestibule and in the side chapels to the church. It also includes matters such as repairs to the west door steps. We are grateful to all those who have provided funding to support the works to the fabric of the church and help repair our finances following the Tower repairs. This includes all those who responded positively to our appeal for funds following completion of the Tower project and also to the City Churches Grants Committee and to Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York City.

*Clerk of Works*

Below Eroded stone on parts of the Tower led to an extensive restoration project throughout 2019.

Opposite The new stonework was all carved on site at high level.

*Tower photos courtesy of Robert Shaw*
Walkers of all ages joined in the annual Circle the City walk to raise money for Christian Aid in May.

The Beadle of the Furniture Makers’ Company escorts Master-Elect Dids Macdonald OBE to her Installation Service, also in May.

The Lady Mayoress inaugurated the water tap installed on the Churchyard as part of a City-wide plastic-free initiative. It has worked infrequently since!

In April, following a Ward Mote hosted here, Tracey Graham became elected Common Councilman for the Ward of Cordwainer.

In July, the preacher at the Grocers’ Election Service was the Most Revd and Rt Hon. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.
The current members of the PCC are: the Reverend George Bush (Chair), Oliver Boundy, Aaron Burchell, Margaret Burtt (Honorary Secretary), William Dempster, Giles French, Daniel Hedley (Churchwarden), Robert Hancock, Alan Hovell (Deanery Synod Representative, Environmental Champion), Ian Hawking (Deanery Synod Representative) Daniel Ryan, James Sanders (Treasurer), David Saunders, Victoria Snow, Michael Wainwright and Antoine West (Churchwarden, Clerk of Works). The PCC usually meets on the third Thursday of alternate months to consider Parish business. Major items on the PCC agenda during the past year have included:

**Tower works** – Reports on the major works to the Tower have been a regular feature on the PCC agenda. Originally planned to finish in the Spring of 2019, a series of setbacks and delays meant that the works were finally completed and bell ringing restored in the Autumn of last year. The PCC recorded its sincere appreciation of the huge amount of work done by the Rector and Church Wardens in their oversight of the Project.

**West Steps and Disabled Lift** – a further building project has been necessitated following damage to the stonework of the West Steps. Expert Advice is being taken and it is hoped that the damage may be repaired in early Spring.

**Church Finances** – at its meetings the PCC regularly receives Cash Position Reports and Income and Expenditure Reports. This year two new initiatives have been:

**Fundraising Strategy** – at the outset of the Tower works the Church received very generous and much appreciated donations to support the funding of the work but the final cost of the Project outstripped the original estimate with the result that funds had to be taken from the Church Reserves. In September, the PCC therefore approved the adoption of a fundraising strategy under the direction of the Rector and Ian Hawking. This has resulted in increased Congregational giving and increases in Voluntary Rate contributions which have meant that as of the beginning of 2020 the Church finances are now back on track. The PCC recorded its appreciation to all donors.

**The ‘Good Box’** – also at the September meeting, the introduction of a contactless payments box in Church, to sit alongside the donations box, was approved.

**Environmental issues and Sustainability** – The Church is working hard to strengthen our green credentials. At its November 2019 and January 2020 meetings the PCC considered and approved a revised Environmental Policy. Regular reports on environmental issues have been provided throughout the year by the Rector and the Church’s Environmental Champion, Alan Hovell. In early 2019, the Church signed up to the Plastic Free City Campaign and received a gold award. Links have recently been established with the City employee responsible for sustainability issues and it is hoped that this will lead to closer liaison in future. In house, a review of the Church’s use of plastic and the resulting ecological impact was conducted and one result has been the installation of refillable soap dispensers in the toilets. In 2020, having already received an Eco Bronze award, the Church plans in accordance with one of our Mission Action Plan targets, to aim for...
an Eco Silver award. The PCC also plans to bring forward the target of achieving an Eco Gold award to 2021.

**Mission Action Plan 2018 – 2023** – the PCC has reviewed progress during 2019 on achievement of MAP targets, the emphasis being on building teams and encouraging a wide range of activities to bring members of the Congregation together and enable them to get to know one another better. Amongst the areas of success highlighted was the Academy of St Mary-le-Bow and its varied programme of concerts, and building on the past pattern of lectures and debates.

**Church Policies** – during the year the PCC reviewed and approved church policies relating to: Safeguarding, Church Concerts, Conflict of Interest, the Risk Register, Payment of Staff, Disciplinary and Appeals, Grievance and Appeals, Resilience, Use of Social Media, and Privacy. In addition, as the church requires bodies using the building either to adopt the church’s own Safeguarding Policy or have their own, the PCC approved the AA’s own Safeguarding Policy.

**International Bankers’ Stall Plate** – the PCC approved plans to install the Stall Plate in church, agreed to early in 2019, during the summer.

**Deanery Synod Representation** – At its July Meeting the PCC ratified the appointment of Ian Hawking who had been elected at the Extraordinary Meeting of Parishioners held earlier as one of the church’s two representatives on the Deanery Synod. He joins Alan Hovell who is the other Deanery Synod representative.

**Appointments** – the PCC was delighted to confirm the appointment of Richard Swann as Operations Officer and Verger at its May 2019 meeting, noting that Richard is also now the Church’s Health and Safety Officer. The PCC was pleased to hear at its September meeting that Graham Dale, an Ordinand from a neighbouring Parish, would be doing a placement at St Mary-le-Bow.

*Margaret Burtt*
Steeple Keeper

This year has been a very quiet one, literally, in the Tower with the major restoration of the stonework silencing the bells for seven months.

Prior to this we rang for all the major services and occasions including a half-peal for the London Landmarks Half Marathon. The route for this run aims to take in many major landmarks around London and it is pleasing to know that, on the day, the bells of St Mary-le-Bow were rated the top attraction. We have been in the planning stages for the 2020 event since the early summer.

In March we hosted one of the National Twelve Bell eliminators. We are grateful to the Rector for allowing the judges to use his lodging. The day was a great success.

During the downtime we have been active in finalising the specification for the new carillon mechanism, as well as working on a design to replace the sound control. My hope is that we can move into implementation of these two items before long.

The bells happily came back on-line in time for the Lord Mayor’s Show, with the Middlesex Association once again providing the ringers. Since then we have had a steady flow of practice ringing, peals and quarters – the ringing fraternity are clearly pleased to be able to ring here again.

We have a full schedule lined up for 2020 and I am very much looking forward to that.

Simon Meyer

Opposite page, from top The Revd James Milwain (a former member of our congregation) was made Deacon by the Bishop of Derby in her Cathedral at the Pentecost ordinations in July.

The Revd Dan Warnke celebrates with the Rector after presiding at his first mass at St John's Hyde Park, where he is Assistant Curate. Dan was on placement at St Mary-le-Bow while an ordinand.

Rehearsing for high mass and the roles of Priest, Deacon and Sub-Deacon.

Fr Dan pictured with the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon. Dame Sarah Mullally, who ordained him to the priesthood this July.

This page As part of the National 12-Bell Eliminator Competition in March, a 'mini ring' was installed in the vestibule for demonstration purposes.
The Academy of St Mary-le-Bow have had a busy season with concerts here and at other churches around the capital. Imaginative programming combined with innovative lighting effects have proved increasingly popular with audiences.

*Photos and artwork courtesy of Alex Fryer*
Concerts & Lunchtime Recitals

This year the church has continued with a varied programme of musical performances including many Thursday lunchtime recitals. We also continue to have regular ticketed events here at St Mary-le-Bow and have good working relations with several chamber ensembles who hire the building throughout the year. Our Lunchtime Recital continue to provide performance opportunities for established musicians and those early on in their careers. Audience numbers at these recitals are mixed and could often be better attended.

The Academy of St-Mary-le-Bow
Alex Fryer continues leading this talented young orchestra and we remain steadfast in our support of their work through offering free use of the church for their rehearsals and concerts. They are part of parish life here and have some exciting ideas in the pipeline for the coming year.

LIVE in the Churchyard
Last summer saw another great festival of live music! A varied programme full of local talent resulted and we were pleased to be joined by bands from the City of London School and the City of London Academies of Islington and Highbury Grove. 2019 also saw the debut performance of the Cheapside Chorus who following its success at LIVE in the Churchyard sang carols around the parish during December.

Statistics
Concert attendance 1,035
Income from Concerts £2,255
Academy grant in kind £2,875

Richard Swann
Christian Hospitality
(Use of the Building)

St-Mary-le-Bow is a busy place with many regular users of our beautiful building. Our normal worshipping schedule aside and the Tower project complete, we are able to welcome back our friends from the many bell-ringing bands for practices and peal attempts along with the programme of JustShare events.

The Crypt Chapel has a busy diary with local firms using it for choir rehearsals. There are six 12-step fellowship groups meeting weekly: Alcoholics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Co-Dependents Anonymous; we were pleased to welcome the Recovering Man group back in the autumn.

Throughout the year the church plays host to a number of livery company services, along with our marathon of Christmas carol services in December. These raise significant amounts of money benefiting charitable organisations including the St Mary-le-Bow Young Homeless Project and Bow Food Bank. All these events continue to build on the reputation of this parish church. The vestry continues to act as our parish hall and provides a welcome meeting space for the PCC and our other committees. This Parish remains the London home of the Coptic Orthodox Church under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos and as always the church continues to offer a peaceful sanctuary in the midst of the City.

Money raised
- Young Homeless Project £3,889.51
- Bow Food Bank £260.55
- Diocese 2019 Lent Appeal £1,344.36
- Christian Aid – Circle the City £28,713.00
- Other Charities £4,497.35
- TOTAL £38,704.77

Richard Swann

Right ‘Torn Landscape’, a painting from an exhibition by Anne Leaver, which took place here in June
Music

In addition to the music provided by the choir for high masses and livery company services throughout the year, a number of events were presented by the resident musicians in 2019.

An early music series by Ensemble Hesperi throughout January featured members of chamber Ensemble Hesperi performing in different combinations: solo harpsichord, trio sonatas, music for two recorders and continuo, and J.S. Bach’s violin sonatas.

A service of Choral Evensong marked the eve of Candlemas on 1 February. The service was sung by the choir of Worcester College Chapel, Oxford and featured Herbert Howells’ setting of the Magnificat ‘Collegium Regale’, Fleming’s ‘Kindle a light’ and music by Victoria and J.S. Bach.

Two collaborations between the church musicians and the Academy of St Mary-le-Bow took place in May and November. A concert entitled ‘Flavours of the Baroque’ took place on 11 May. This concert was guest directed from the harpsichord by Thomas Allery and led by baroque violinist Magdalena Loth-Hill. The programme opened with Henry Purcell’s ‘Chaconny’ for strings. The resident orchestra’s conductor Alex Fryer was joined by Zacharias Wolfe to perform the solo in Antonio Vivaldi’s Concerto for two oboes. The orchestra played with baroque bows for this project, opening up many musical possibilities for the players. For the second half, recorder players Mary-Jannet Leith and Alderman Sir Roger Gifford joined the orchestra for Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto no. 4 in G.

On 1 November, high mass featured music for choir and orchestra, including Mozart’s Missa Brevis in C (K. 220) Spatzenmesse (Sparrow Mass), a Laudate Dominum by Monteverdi, and a Postlude for strings and continuo by Cazzatti.

The Cheapside Chorus made its debut in the summer at LIVE in the Churchyard. The choir of 45 people performed a programme of works associated with Coronations (Parry, Handel, Vaughan Williams). Members attended four rehearsals before the day of the performance. The choir attracted people who might have sung in the past but no longer have the time to commit to a regular choir. It was also excellent to see members of other local choirs such as the City of London Choir and the Grocers’ Company Choir in the group. The Chorus will perform again in the LIVE festival in 2020.

A group of singers from the Chorus met for some informal Christmas carol singing in December, singing around the parish (with venues including Zizzi, Bow Wine Vaults and Watling Street).

Organ recitals took the form of a successful Bach series in September. Recitals were given by Jeremiah Stephenson of All Saints, Margaret Street, Charles Andrews of Temple Church, Colm Carey of Tower of London, and Thomas Allery. Thomas Allery also presented a programme of organ works as part of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music (14 May).

Thomas Allery
Clockwise from top left In August we were delighted to celebrate the Baptism of Frederick Dempster, whose parents William and Joanne were married here in 2014.
In September, despite rain, the Costermongers’ Harvest Festival was well attended by Pearly Kings and Queens and Mayors from London’s boroughs. Early in the year, Ensemble Hesperi (including harpsichordist Thomas Allery) performed a series of lunchtime recitals here as part of a residency. Professor Norman Doe gave the Court of Arches Lecture to an appreciative audience, almost entirely composed of clerics and ecclesiastical lawyers. The ancient Court of Arches has its home at St Mary-le-Bow and we hope that further lectures of this kind may be presented in the future.
Treasurer

I normally start my report by saying that I am pleased to report that St Mary-le-Bow’s finances remain in a satisfactory state. Had I been writing this report in February I would happily have said that since, as you can see from the accounts, our financial performance for 2019 and financial position as at 31 December 2019 were entirely satisfactory. However, we are now operating in very unusual circumstances and I cannot give the same reassurance. We are still not sure how our finances for 2020 will work out but suffice it say for the present that they don’t look rosy! We must also appreciate that the direct effects of the present situation will extend well into 2021 and the indirect effects for many years after that.

However, this report is in respect of 2019 and, as mentioned above, our financial performance in 2019 was, in general, entirely satisfactory. The endowment fund continued (and still continues) to assist in funding the salaries of our staff and we continued closely to monitor our ongoing expenditure to ensure that we covered our costs. Before gains/losses on revaluation and expenditure on the Tower Project we made an overall surplus of £21,000.

During 2019, we received £43,000 of licence fees from local businesses. In addition, we received voluntary rate totalling £46,000. However, £17,000 of the voluntary rate is restricted income meaning that we can only use it for fabric-related expenses. Together these two sources of income contribute approximately 44% of our unrestricted income and shows how important these fees and rates are to the finances of the parish. As always, we are extremely grateful to those businesses which supported the work of the church by paying the voluntary rate. For obvious reasons the income from these two sources has collapsed in 2020 and we hope and pray that these businesses are able to start up again in due course. Since we usually need money to fund spending on fabric-related matters, the restricted nature of some of the voluntary rate does not cause us any problems, although your Treasurer would be very pleased if such expenditure on fabric-related matters was not necessary. We must also record our thanks yet again to Andrew Goodhart (a member of the Worshipful Company of Grocers, one of our Patrons) for the time and effort that he contributes in converting the records held by the City of London Corporation into the requests for voluntary rate payment. The smooth running of the levying of the Voluntary Rate is an essential part of our financial stability and gives us continued confidence in our income streams.

Our ordinary expenditure was very much in line with 2018 (£260,000 compared to £255,000) Our direct contribution to the Common Fund increased to £72,100 from £69,825 which equates to the full cost of one stipendiary priest in line with the Diocese’s guidelines that parishes should bear the cost of their incumbent and the proportional share of Diocesan and other expenditure. We have paid the full cost for many years. In addition, although we are entitled to income from the Dame Margaret Slaney Fund (c.£1,000pa), we direct that this is paid to the Diocesan Stipend Fund for use to pay stipends in poorer parishes in the diocese.

Although our ordinary expenditure was very much in line with 2018, our expenditure on the Tower Project was anything but ordinary as we spent £346,000 on this during the year. In last year’s report I said “If this project comes in anywhere near budget your Treasurer will give a great sigh of relief.” Regrettably, I was unable to give a great sigh of relief but rather groaned at the costs that fell upon the parish. The Rector’s and Clerk of the Works’ Reports both address the Tower project and Note 1 to the Accounts provides the financial details. This shows that we had to spend £164,500 of our own funds on the project. We received generous support from a number of sources but unanticipated costs meant that these were not sufficient to fund the project. I must express our gratitude to all our supporters particularly Trinity, Wall Street and the City Churches Grants Committee especially given the support that the latter recently gave to the Vestry Project.

The Clerk of Works’ report also refers to some other important, albeit less expensive, matters which were dealt with during the year. The old adage of ‘a stitch in time saves nine’ is well applied to dealing with the fabric of an ancient building such as St Mary-le-Bow and all these small items are just as important as the big eye-catching ones.

As always, we must thank the Worshipful Company of Grocers, one of our patrons, for their continued and continuing support of the Parish both financially and non-financially. The former includes their paying for the insurance premium in respect of our silver which is kept securely for us at Grocers’ Hall. We must also thank the City Churches Grants Committee for paying the insurance premium in respect of our wonderful and historic building.

Finally, I cannot finish this report without expressing my thanks to Michael Byrne for his hard work in running our finances and producing the accounts.

James Sanders
Hauptwerk

Borrowing its name from the German term for the principal keyboard on a pipe organ, the Hauptwerk Virtual Pipe Organ is a concept that has grown exponentially in the organ-playing world over the last decade. It enables those with a suitable digital organ console at home to download virtual sound copies of historic and renowned organs and (with the right audio equipment) create a startlingly realistic impression of the actual instrument.

Following many hours of painstaking digital sampling, Lavender Audio released two ‘sample sets’ of the 2010 Tickell organ of St Mary-le-Bow. One is of the organ exactly as it is; the second is a carefully extended version, based entirely on the sampled pipework, which virtually enlarges the instrument to a three-manual instrument.

There were 64 purchases in the last quarter of 2019; the church receives worthwhile licence fees reflecting sales.

www.lavenderaudio.co.uk/organs/smb/

Matthew Power

The Boyle Lecture

The Boyle Lecture has been an annual event at St Mary-le-Bow since its reestablishment in 2004. Each year a distinguished scientist or theologian considers some aspect of the relationship between theology and science. Over the last fifteen years the Boyle Lectures have gained a strong international reputation. They are referred to regularly (and approvingly) in leading academic journals and are published each year in the academic Journal Zygon. From 2004 to 2018 the lectures were convened by Michael Byrne, to whom we are most grateful. The task of convening them has now been taken on by the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR), and this year’s Lecture was the first to be convened by them.

The 16th Boyle Lecture was held on 18 February 2019. Our lecturer this year was the Revd Professor Michael Reiss, Professor of Science Education at UCL Institute of Education and President of ISSR, who spoke on ‘Science, Religion and Ethics’. A vote of thanks was proposed by Professor Janet Soskice, Professor Emeritus in the University of Cambridge. The lecture was followed by a reception at Grocers’ Hall and we record our sincere gratitude to the Master and Wardens of the Grocers’ Company for their kind hospitality. We are also grateful to the Mercers’ Company and a number of individual funders for their very welcome financial support.

Fraser Watts
The 2019 Boyle Lecture was given by the Revd Professor Michael J. Reiss. A reception followed at Grocers’ Hall, courtesy of the Master and Wardens. The Earl of Cork and Orrery presented Professor Reiss with the Boyle Medal.

*Photos Harris Wiseman*
Our annual summer music festival in June has grown each year and this summer presented its most ambitious programme of entertainment on the Churchyard and indoors.

Opposite page, top Bands from local schools were centre-stage, including this ensemble from Highbury Grove London City Academy.

Left A highlight of the week was the debut of the Cheapside Chorus - a new choir based at St Mary-le-Bow with the aim of performing occasional concerts preceded by a small number of rehearsals. The choir numbered over 40 singers and performed a programme of English Coronation music.

This page, top A concert of performances by young organists from London schools, curated by Tom Daggett, was another innovation this year.

Above The Choir of Fidelity International, our near neighbours, performed a rousing concert of popular choral works.
JustShare

JustShare is a coalition of churches, charities and other organisations committed to equal global development and social justice. JustShare uses its base in the City of London to drive discussion and promote change, always actively seeking to promote a just share of the world’s resources for everyone.

In 2019 JustShare had an excellent line up of events for the year. We welcomed high-level expert speakers that came from a range of backgrounds and led discussions that were informative and engaging for our audiences.

Aid and Development Post Brexit
20 February 2019
The UK is a development superpower, one of the most generous countries in the world. In its own right, as well as the third contributor (after Germany and France) to the EU’s aid budget. As for the EU, it channels more than half of the world’s ODA (Overseas Development Assistant) annually, something that constitutes a key political asset of the Union in its external relations.

How will Brexit impact UK aid and development? What does Brexit mean in terms of aid? Will the EU development policy change after Brexit? Will the global poor suffer as a result of Brexit?

Claire Leigh, Director of International Development, Save the Children
Dr Sophia Price, Head of Politics and International Relations at Leeds Beckett University; Chair: Richard Burge, former CEO of Commonwealth Enterprise & Investment Council and Wilton Park

Mental Health: A Global Challenge
19 June 2019
In what ways does mental health effect the physical and economic health of nations? How can we address the tremendous inequities in access to affordable mental health in middle- and low-income countries? What are some of the cost-saving solutions to the ‘treatment gap’? Why is international investment in mental health so vanishingly small? What are the next steps for global mental health?

Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft, King’s College London; Chair: Dr Julian Eaton, Mental Health Director, CBM International, Co-Director-Centre for Global Mental Health at LSHTM

Fossil Fuels and the Climate Emergency
29 October 2019
The fossil fuel industry is unequivocally driving us towards a global climate crisis and public health emergency. How can corporations be held to account, and

Tax for the Common Good
10 April 2019
Few people like paying tax, but it’s how we pay for the kind of society we want to build. So what’s the relationship between tax law and ethics? How much tax should individuals and corporations pay? How can we ensure that the tax system is fair, efficient and transparent? What does the Christian tradition say about the Common Good, and what can be expected from individuals and businesses?

This JustShare event was organised together with the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, Church Action on Tax Justice, and London Churches Social Action.

Fr Simon Cuff, Tutor and Lecturer in Theology, St Mellitus College; David Haslam, retired Methodist Minister, Chair of the recently-launched ‘Church Action on Tax Justice’; Anne Fairpo, Temple Tax Chambers, Past President of Chartered Institute of Taxation
their business models made to be in line with the Paris Agreement? How can we get them to comply with the greenhouse gas targets? What are the approaches we can take to move away from Fossil Fuels? How can we ensure that people enjoy prosperous and healthy lives in the future, not the past?

Adam Matthews, Church of England Pensions Board; James Buchanan, Operation Noah; Katherine Kramer, Christian Aid; Chair: Deborah Colvin, Churchwarden and Eco Champion at St James’s Piccadilly

Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Development
21 November 2019
The speaker the Revd Dr Malcolm Brown looked at some of the ethical challenges associated with advances in Artificial Intelligence and robotics, and suggested some theological perspectives for understanding these developments. The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown, Church of England; Chair: The Revd Katherine Hedderly, Rector, All Hallows by the Tower

Shehana Udat

The JustShare Forum considering ‘Tax for the Common Good’ was followed by a seminar in the vestry to discuss the topic further.
Top left: The Rector presents a cheque from Arcubus (the City of London Social Investment Fund) to Rachel Lindley, CEO of Five Talents, a microfinance charity supporting small business entrepreneurs in rural areas of East Africa.

Top right: We had a surprise visit from Michael Carter, who decorated (and gilded) the sanctuary and the Sacrament House in 1964.

Above: In December, members of the Cheapside Chorus and friends ventured out on a rainy night to sing Christmas carols around the Parish.
Press & Publicity

March
Jane Hasell-McCosh, Founder of the World Marmalade Festival, was interviewed on Saturday Live (BBC Radio 4). The Rector (a Patron) received a mention as he preached at the Festival again this year.

April
The International Banker, journal of the Worshipful Company of International Bankers, ran an article in its spring issue about the St Mary-le-Bow Young Homeless Project, which it supports.

June
The Corporation of London’s magazine Cityview featured the water refill point in the Churchyard. It was flagged as the first in a City-wide initiative of the Plastic Free City Campaign. By the end of August, a total of 17 points were installed throughout the City. It should be noted that the refill point on the Churchyard hasn’t worked reliably since last October!

Writing in the June issue of Country Life magazine, the Master Grocer Rupert Uloth alluded to St Mary-le-Bow as one of the Company’s patronages. (The Grocers’ Company have one of three turns with the Archbishop of Canterbury in nominating the Rector and will next have an opportunity to do so for the one after next.)

December
Cordwainer (City of London Ward News) reported on the success of our summer music festival LIVE in the Churchyard, which attracted hundreds of people to hear live music from school bands, local choirs and London musicians.

Matthew Power

Left In November we welcomed Fr Laurence Freeman OSB to talk about his recent book ‘Good Work’, which explores meditation for personal and organisational transformation.
The St Mary-le-Bow website (launched in spring 2018) has undergone some improvements and refinements in response to comments sought from some users. It is proving faster and more easily navigated on smartphones, while still being responsive across the range of desktop and mobile devices. It links to our events posted on the Diocese of London website and enables our email bulletins to provide more information, ticket sales and event registration via Eventbrite.

Our email bulletin subscription list is up 3% on last year at 394 subscribers (this reflects those who unsubscribed as well as joined). New subscribers can either complete a form in church or, as most now do, sign up via the online form on our website (click the ‘welcome’ option on the home page). We continue to review our data collection and retention regularly and delete any records which are unnecessary from both print and digital archives, in compliance with GDPR.

Website statistics reveal the following, though this information should be treated as an overview and not as completely representative:

www.justshare.org.uk
Last year saw a further decline in the number of visitors to the site. Part of that is probably explained by the increased use of Eventbrite as the go-to link for JS events, rather than the website, which is showing its age. During 2020 a new ‘mini’ JustShare site will be developed within the main St Mary-le-Bow website as a cost-effective and efficient solution.

www.stmarylebow.org.uk
Over the last year (January to December 2019), the estimated number of visitors has been 21,120 (an increase of 16% compared with the previous year); returning visitors were up on last year at 21% (compared to 15% in 2018). The ‘bounce rate’ is up slightly to 73%; this represents visitors who reach the home page but do not have further interaction with other pages. However, that no longer suggests that visitors are moving away from the landing page as the new site contains most of its primary information on the single home scrolling page.

Visitors are still mainly from the UK (75%) followed by US (12%), Australia (3%), then, countries in continental Europe, Canada and China. Referrals from other websites are most often from our own bulletin and Wikipedia. The use of mobile devices to view the site accounts for nearly half of our visitors: desktop 57% (53% in 2018), tablet 6% (12% in 2018) and smart phone 37% (35% in 2018).

Search paths reveal fairly constant browsing and interaction patterns.
In order of popularity, visitors browsed: home / ringing times / Boyle Lecture / organ / resources (documents to download) / debates and lectures / other. Our You Tube channel which hosts video recordings of our events at [www.youtube.co.uk/stmarylebow](http://www.youtube.co.uk/stmarylebow) generated 166 views for Michael J. Reiss’s 2019 Boyle Lecture; and in the last 12 months, 1,455 views of Alan Wilson’s Toccata on ‘Oranges and Lemons’!

@BowBellsChurch
Social media in the form of our Twitter account continues to grow followers steadily (we hope to top 1,000 in 2020) and proves a useful way of flagging up events, mutually promoting others and generating live comment. Since its launch in October 2014 we reached 966 followers by the end of 2019, (13% up on 2018); numbers for @justshareUK now reach 640 (up 1.5% on 2018). St Mary-le-Bow and JustShare events posted on the Diocese of London website are also tweeted by the Diocese, reaching an audience of over 10,000. Twitter continues to help us schedule alerts about upcoming events, post links to recordings and other media, and develop a parallel audience to those already receiving our regular email bulletins. Take a look at our twitter feed here: [twitter.com/BowBellsChurch](http://twitter.com/BowBellsChurch).

James White continues to manage our IT remotely with occasional visits to the church when necessary to deal with hardware issues. We plan an upgrade to our network in spring 2020 which will make our internal connectivity more reliable in the long term. James is always cheerful and efficient and we are grateful for his continued support.

Matthew Power
The Young Homeless Project

Thirty years ago we began this work, the office based temporarily in the tower of St Mary Aldermary. The Peabody Trust gave us flats, so much better than hostels where there’s not that much training for life. We had four large flats and some 12-14 young people at Shadwell. Having no idea of what to do with young homeless people, I gathered them together and asked, ‘What would you like me to do?’ and they said, ‘Nothing’. It had all been done to them. That taught me what I needed to know.

An excellent colleague was found to help with the work and the Project moved to an office I had as part of another charity. We are one of the very few charities operating in the City, and the City likes us: small, understandable, useful, results.

The young people we housed had no history of society. In the flats, they learned to live together, to behave, to look forward. They may stay for as long as they need to stay, usually a year; we decided we weren’t in the business of making them homeless again.

Since the start we have moved our flats about London, always being given new ones by the Peabody Trust and always finding something new and usually alarming about our young homeless people. One ex-prisoner stole a washing machine we had put in his flat on the fourth floor and forgot to turn the taps off, so flats below were filled with water. Then he couldn’t manage it down the stairs and it bounced down a few flights into the arms of his drug dealer, no longer worth what the dealer wanted. Years later, he rang to apologize and told us that crime is now a foreign land to him, and that he is a window cleaner. Others continued their paths of violence and drugs, loneliness and no confidence.

We learned that occupation and a bit of money helped solve this behaviour, and started an apprenticeship scheme with Pret a Manger, whose MD was as enlightened about reality as we had become. We started them off on three months’ probation. If they behaved – and few knew what that word means – they were taken on permanently. It has been a success. 80% lasted the first three months, and 60-65% are still there for between six months and five years, because they like the work, the managers, their colleagues, the customers.

One young man, addicted to drugs and alcohol, wanted to come clean. I wrote to a captain of industry across the road from the church, saying he wanted to clean himself up, go to university and with a degree, teach. The first year’s money was forthcoming and he subsequently paid for the next three years; the young man did come clean, and does now teach.
Another wanted to be a chef and the chef from Grocers’ Hall taught him how to go about it. Now he’s been a chef at the Landmark Hotel, and in Luxembourg at an equally glamorous place. Another had a two-day trial for drugs, got off with a two-year suspended sentence and is amazed as she sits in one of our flats. One learned all there is to know about coffee and repairing the machines, and is content. One ran away and came back when he found the real world too tricky.

One wanted to drive an articulated lorry; he thought this was fantasy. City grant makers gave him the money for the licence. Since then, perhaps 25 years ago, he has had a good driving job, got married, has a mortgage, has two children and plays golf.

One got stuck on spice, a filthy artificial marijuana that turns you (more) into a zombie and gives the worst hangover. He soothed the spice with vodka and put his – our – flat on Gumtree. Two boys came to see the rooms and paid him £600 each as deposit and some rent. They were surprised when my colleague came and told them it was not his flat to let. We gave them back the money this enterprising boy had taken from them. Perhaps he will turn his considerable talents – no one had thought of Gumtree before – to better use, if he lives.

When they’re ready, we help them to independence in their own shared flats. They can come back to us if they fail. The kids – I suppose 250 of them – have been the greatest fun over the last thirty years. Scared, uncertain, desperate, sad, brash, violent, rude, aggressive, silent, cocky, drugged, climbing up, moving to their own flats and working and surviving. No longer depending on the State – you and me. And none has reverted to being homeless in thirty years.

Michael Kenny