

Forward

Welcome to St. Hilary's Miniature Church Year Book!

How St. Hilary's All began.....

St Hilary's miniature church began life as a Dollshouse Direct kit sat under one of our spare beds in the spare bedroom.

I had always wanted a miniature church and, when I saw a special offer for one in either kit form or ready built on the "Dollshouse World" magazine website I HAD to order it!

I purchased the kit in the full hope and expectation that Andrew, my husband, would find both the time and the talent to put it all together!

Unfortunately the kit languished under said bed for quite a long time. We bought all of the recommended materials and glue to put the kit together but the daunting number of pieces in the kit never inspired us with enough confidence to ever begin such a gigantic task.

Fortunately a chance encounter with expert model maker, Vic Newey, at one of the bi-annual Miniatura Dollshouse Shows held at the NEC, Birmingham, changed everything. He immediately agreed to both put the kit together AND decorate it to make it look every inch like a REAL ancient village church.

He even went a stage further and agreed to widen the building to 13 inches in order to make it more realistic to a full scale church.

Family tragedy changed everything.....

St. Hilary's was originally going to be called "St. Trinians" in honour of those old films featuring Joyce Grenfell. However, a family tragedy changed everything, and eventually transformed the project into something so special and unique even Andrew and I could never have imagined.

My mother became very ill after many years of disability caused by strokes, arthritis and cancer in the year of 2003. It was pure luck that Hilary, my mother, managed to cope with coming over to our home in the August of that year and was able to see the church fully made up and decorated but yet to have, furniture.

She fell completely and immediately in love with it. Unfortunately she never saw it again and passed away on 26th November of that year.

The name "St. Hilary's" suddenly became completely right for our little church.

Porcelain dollshouse dolls collected by Hilary during the last years of her life have formed the basis of "St. Hilary's Sunday School" because they really ARE "Hilary's Children"!

Furniture arrived from America made especially for St. Hilary's by Mark Stockton of "Stockton Miniatures". Rachel Fritz in Australia was responsible for making the Reverend Gyles Ponseby-Smyth, the vicar of St. Hilary's!

St. Hilary's quickly became a website too, (www.miniaturechurch.co.uk) which attracts many admirers from all walks of life throughout the world including Christians, children and miniaturists.

St. Hilary's expands.....

I soon decided that our “congregation” was growing at an alarming rate and that the church would soon be overcrowded. I therefore surmised that we MUST have a church extension.

Fortunately Vic Newey was prepared to do this job for us. John Cheal, who has made us the brass lectern, processional cross, paschal candle, tea trolley and new altar was delighted to draw up plans for us as we had no real idea HOW big to make this extension which was to include a new chancel and sanctuary. All we knew was – it MUST be big enough to house a new little organ complete with two manuals and full pedal board! John was happy to make us our new organ and you can view it within these pages. We now also have a beautiful new wood and brass altar rail too courtesy of John Cheal.

The church complete with new extension can be seen on various pages in this book.

I really hope that you all enjoy perusing through this book. As with every time honoured miniature project it has been impossible to include everything and the situation will always be that of “work in progress”!! However, therein lies the secret. The day this work is ever considered completed by myself, the project will be well and truly dead and buried!

Sarah Jane Price

27 December 2006

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Priscilla Jane loves the new prayer desk made out of a McQueenie kit by Catherine Davies who also embroidered the kneeler too!



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The Reverend Gyles Ponsenby-Smyth writes.....

Dear Friends of St. Hilary's!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to our wonderful St. Hilary's of Poitier Church Year Book!

I have been most privileged to be invited by our bishop to become the vicar of St. Hilary's. I am delighted to have been allowed to come here in my retirement having spent many years in the outback of Australia where I used to have charge of many small churches. Whilst I was in Australia I used to take one service a month at my different churches so I used to have to travel many many miles to do so. It is with great pleasure that I can now spend all of my time shepherding the flock of St. Hilary's. The Sunday School children and congregation have made me most welcome.

I am sure you will be all interested to know how I came to arrive in England and become vicar of St. Hilary's. Well I was fortunate enough to meet Sarah whilst out in the Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park which is in the Barossa Valley, South Australia. You can see our chance meeting here!

We both posed for Andrew to take our photograph! It was Andrew and Sarah who chatted to the bishop and suggested that I may be interested in becoming the vicar. In retirement, before arriving in England, I always enjoyed a long morning stroll in the Kaiser Stuhl Conservation Park so it was no surprise for Sarah and Andrew to meet me there. The bird song is wonderful at that time and it is with joy that I would watch the kookaburras dancing and laughing in the trees. In deed I love to tell the St. Hilary's Sunday School children all about my time in Australia and also about all the different birds and animals that live there.



Since arriving at St. Hilary's I have been most happy and hope to remain there for many years to come. I do so hope that you enjoy your visit to St Hilary's!

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Gyles Ponsenby-Smyth,
Vicar of St Hilary of Poitier's Church

St. Valentine's Day

The vicar has been asked by the bishop to hold a special service in St. Hilary's to celebrate love and marriage on the Sunday after Valentine's Day this year. The vicar has already sent invitations out to all of the couples who have been married in St. Hilary's over the last few years and also those couples who plan to be married in St. Hilary's too. He HAS enjoyed planning this service.....but it has also brought back memories of his dear late wife and so he has been feeling a little bit sad too because she won't be able to be with him for this special service. However he doesn't want to let it upset him too much.

The children have been told by Esther, their Sunday School teacher, that the vicar has been feeling a little sad as he has planned this service. So when the vicar invited them to join him on Valentine's Day itself in order to prepare the church for this special service the boys hatch a plan to cheer the vicar up.....all is revealed below.....

Esther is the very first to arrive on Valentine's Day.

She has a key to the church and has secretly agreed to open it a little early so that the boys can arrive before the vicar and surprise him with something they want to cheer him up with.....

Ambrose has been SO good and carried the heavy bucket of red and white roses she will use to make an altar flower arrangement for the very special service to celebrate love and marriage.



Ah.....here is Robert Alexander and Ben. What a beautiful bouquet of roses Robert Alexander has brought with him.

Georgie wants to give them a really good sniff.....



Tom has brought a Valentine's Day card.....wonder WHO he wants to give it to today?

Sepp and Syd want to know too.....

Robert Alexander has already put the bouquet of roses on the pulpit....and Tomare YOU giving the vicar a Valentine's Day card?

Belle is really jealous.....SHE would like a bouquet of roses too but she doesn't think anyone special loves her enough to give her one THIS year.....poor Belle!



Can you see another little friend who is perched on the pulpit.....it is....of course, Sepp!

Tinker has always thought that Magnifi-Cat is TOP cat so she has brought HIM a Valentine's Day card.....especially chosen because it has.....guess what.....CATS on of course!

Magnifi-Cat, being the cool cat he is, takes this hero worship from Tinker in his stride.....he KNOWS she will never be as good at catching rats and mice that plague the churchyard as well as him!



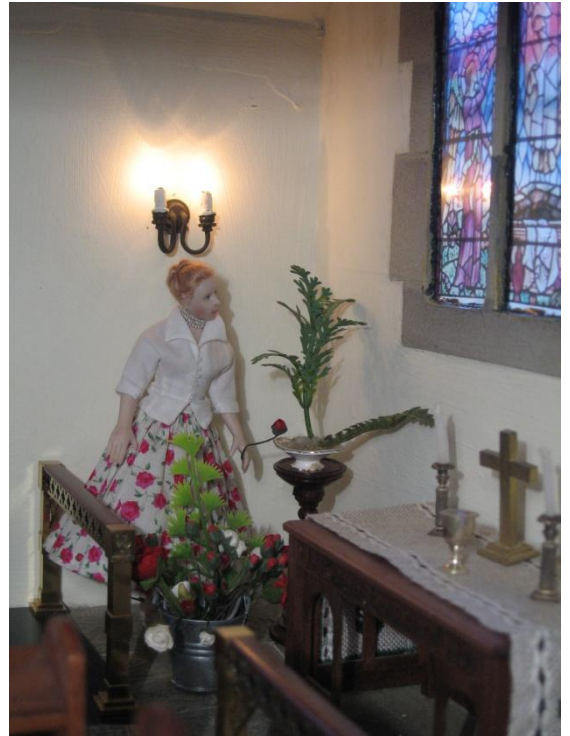
Oh dear..... Esther looks a little bit sad as she arranged the flowers in the sanctuary.

She has only just had a phone call from Stephen, her husband. He has been working overseas and was due to fly home today. However he now has to stay a few days longer.

Esther is upset because she was looking forward to him being with her at this special love and marriage service to be held tomorrow.

The vicar has now arrived.....and he has found the bouquet and card on the pulpit left for him by the boys.

Can you see a little person hiding?



It is Tom....he was so excited as he wanted to see the vicar's reaction to their special "cheer up" surprise!

Tom tells the vicar that he knows how much he misses his dear wife but he must remember that ALL the children and congregation love him very much and wanted him to know that!



Love is certainly in the air.....Ambrose has finally plucked up courage and is giving Alice his card and a rose bud.

They both dream of marrying in St, Hilary's when they are older and are also looking forward to the special service celebrating love and marriage tomorrow.



The children are all sitting down and having a little rest so the vicar is talking to them about Valentine's Day and the meaning of love.

He tells them that he is thrilled that they gave him the bouquet of roses and card and that it has really cheered him up!

The vicar explains that our loved ones cannot always be with us. Esther, their Sunday School teacher, is a little sad because Stephen is away from home on business and he, the vicar, is missing his dear late wife as she is no longer with him. However he tells the children that they must NEVER forget that there is a greater love than our love for each other and that is the love of God. God NEVER leaves or forsakes us even if our loved ones cannot always be with us.

Look what Adele has brought.....a home made Valentine's Day cake made out of her very favourite sweets.....dolly mixtures!



She has brought some paper plates as well so that they can ALL enjoy a nice cup of tea, coffee or juice with a piece of cake after all of their hard work preparing the church for the special Love and Marriage service tomorrow!



Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is always celebrated in St Hilary's with mountains of daffodils that the Sunday School children take home to their mothers.

Ben and Priscilla Jane have grown some daffodils in pots to bring this morning on Mothering Sunday.

However.....Priscilla Jane has spotted something wrong..... oh dear.....a leaf has accidentally been broken off as Ben carried them to church from the car.

Can you see the odd one out here? It is a red tulip. Ben thought that it was unfair that tulips are NEVER given out on Mothering Sunday so he chose to grow just one to make a change! Belle always loves to check out what is going onshe never likes to miss even ONE trick in church.



Ambrose is now here. He has grown loads of daffodils at his and his father's farm this year. The old rusty bucket is SO heavy with the daffodils in that he has wheeled them to church in Ernie, the gardener's old wheelbarrow!

Phoebe and Emily have been asked by the vicar if they would put the daffodils into bunches when they came to church.

You can see here how they are doing.....but do you think they are doing very well?

Oh dear.....poor Rev Ken is having a little chat to them as they seem more interested in talking to each other than putting the flowers into bunches.

The two girls were so busy talking that they didn't notice how many daffodils have fallen on the floor. Esme and Ernest the two local ducks are trying to help but they are not strong enough to pick up all those daffodils. Tinker too has decided to see if SHE can help.



Tom has brought daffodils HE has grown in his garden at home. He is a little upset though.....see these flowers close up and guess what has happened.

Oh dear.....SOMEONE forgot to give these poor daffodils some water last night and they don't look very well now as a result do they? The flowers have started to wilt as they were thirsty for water but had none.....poor poor daffodils!

Poor Tom.....he tried SO hard to grow some lovely daffodils to bring to church this morning so



that they can too be given out to the ladies and girls in the congregation.

Sepp the rat, Syd the pigeon and Snowy, the little white mouse friend of Nunc Dimittis, are all upset too.....

The vicar is sad to see poor Tom upset about the poorly daffodils. He is also sad that some leaves have broken off some of the other flowers too. He explains to the children that it doesn't matter how broken anything is because God loves all things living however broken they are.

Someone is VERY happy this morning. It is Esther!

Can you see why?
Her baby daughter,
Rachel Ann, has
bought her a lovely
new handbag with a
pretty gold butterfly
on it! (*Of course we
KNOW that her
husband, Stephen,
has REALLY
bought it because
baby Rachel Ann is
too young to go to
the shops herself!*)

Priscilla Jane is a
VERY observant
girl. Can you see
what she has
noticed? The tulip
that Ben has grown
in a pot is red and so it matches Esther's pretty new handbag.



Esther is particularly pleased with the butterfly on her new handbag because it is a symbol of new life.



Ambrose is trying to supervise the children placing the flowers on the altar. Even with him supervising there are STILL some daffodils which have gone astray and fallen out of the basket.....and on the altar too!

