



The Friends Quarterly



Welcome to the Friends Newsletter

An event not to miss! This October, St Mary's will be hosting an all-day Symposium on our renowned medieval wall paintings. This image features on the flyer that will promote the Symposium widely. Read inside for speakers, ticket application details and more.

August 2021

Issue 39

FRIENDS UPDATE

There is mixed news about the Friends events that we were planning and looking forward to at the time of the May Quarterly. The Plant Sale in June was a huge success, and raised £800.60p. No costs were incurred, thanks to generous donations of lots of plants, the time and energy of all who volunteered to help on the day, and the support of the Parish Council. Good weather was the cherry on the cake, as it encouraged many to come and browse, buy, and chat to friends whom they hadn't seen for some time.

We have been encouraged by many people to "do it again next year"; look out for news about this in 2022 Quarterlies!



Browsers and buyers at the successful Plant Sale in June.

Sadly, we were less fortunate with the weather predicted for the Strawberry Cream Tea, which was due to be held on 27 June. Although all was in readiness at 2pm apart from hulling the fruit, whipping the cream and making the tea, I decided to cancel the event as the forecast for the afternoon from 3pm onwards was dire – heavy rain, and possible thunderstorms – and Covid restrictions required us to be outside. To my immense frustration not a drop of rain fell until 8pm that evening, and if anything the weather improved as the afternoon wore on. All I could do was apologise to all who had planned to come and thank all those who had helped me to prepare for the event.

Thinking about future events, 11 and 12 September are Heritage Open Days, and the Friends committee will be discussing how we can support this in St Mary's in ways that are Covid 19 compliant.

Heritage Open Days, 11 and 12 September

Fortunately, good weather will not be a requirement for an event in the church on 16 October. St Mary's will be hosting a day-long Symposium on the wall paintings. The Friends will be there in support and to look after the "front of house" arrangements. This promises to be a fascinating day, so do read the Heritage Feature later in this issue to find out more about it. It is a ticketed event with full catering provided; we will look forward to welcoming all who decide to attend.

See the Heritage Feature on page 8 for details about the Symposium.

And finally, if you haven't already done so, do look at the church website, www.chalgrovechurch.org. It contains news of events and services as well as documents you can download, such as the Friends Quarterly, Pews News and St Mary's Yearbook. The Friends section of the website contains information about the Friends scheme in general as well as a membership application form to download, and one-off donations can be made here too. If you could encourage your friends, family or neighbours to enjoy exploring the website, then that would be great!

LYNN BAKER
on behalf of the Friends committee

CHURCH NEWS

At the time of writing this Father Michael and his family are away on holiday, and we hope that they are all having a great time and enjoying a good break. We look forward to their return and to including a contribution from him in our next newsletter.

In his absence we have put together some brief reports on general church news. Three items of news are also featured separately in more detail.

SERVICES

All are warmly invited to our services, which continue as listed on the church website, www.chalgrovechurch.org and in *Link*. Sunday worship is at 9.30am in St Mary's, Chalgrove, and 11.00am in St Helen's, Berrick. In St Mary's, Holy Communion is celebrated on Wednesdays at 11.00am, and St Helen's is open for private prayer from 10.00am to 5pm. Please look in *Link* or on the church website for the details that will connect you to the recorded services on the Benefice YouTube channel.

How to find the recorded services online.

Indoors the Covid restrictions have eased a bit. As of Sunday 8 August adults are still requested to wear masks, sign in on

the Track and Trace list, sanitise, and not to sing. However, one-way systems for entering and leaving the church are no longer necessary, and arrangements for socially distanced seating are more relaxed. There is designated seating for anyone who needs to continue to socially distance from others indoors. We hope of course that over time some of the current restrictions can be eased further.

Outdoor worship is enjoyed whenever weather and circumstances allow. Experiencing this together in the lovely setting of St Mary's churchyard below the East window is both a delight and a real blessing. We hope for more to come before the weather precludes it.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Harvest Thanksgiving is on Sunday 26 September. St Mary's morning service and the church parish picnic will both be wonderful opportunities to celebrate, praise and give thanks for life and shared fellowship. More details will be announced on the church website in due course.

BELLRINGER AND CARETAKER REPORT

Andrew Davis hopes that bell ringing will resume in September when all the team are vaccinated and back from their holidays. He and Barry Spicer have given the church clock its annual service. Happily, it is keeping good "Chalgrove time", either gaining a minute each week or losing it, depending on weather changes!

FAREWELL TO REV. JOHN ANDERSON

Rev. John has retired from his ministry to St Mary's, and we wish him well for the future. We hope you will enjoy reading more about this in the special feature below. We look forward to meeting John's Methodist colleague, Rev. Stephen Spain, on Monday 23 August at 7.30pm, when a service of welcome for him and his wife will be held in St Mary's.

OXFORDSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST RIDE AND STRIDE

The date for this event is Saturday 11 September. Please participate if you can – the money you raise from sponsorship is divided equally between OHCT and the church of your choice. See the OHCT website for all the information about this event.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

This event takes place over the weekend of 11 and 12 September. The Friends committee will meet soon to discuss how to support it in St Mary's despite Covid 19 restrictions.



The congregation and Fr Lakey enjoy a sunny open-air service.



See the special feature about Rev. John on page 6.

CHURCHYARD

We hope you will enjoy reading our separate item about churchyard improvements (below).

WALL PAINTINGS SYMPOSIUM

This all-day event in St Mary's will take place on Saturday 16 October. Please read our Heritage Feature for more details.

See the Heritage Feature on page 8.

LYNN BAKER

CHURCHYARD WILDLIFE GARDEN

As you may know, there is an area that is designated a wildlife garden in St Mary's churchyard. It is the roughly triangular piece of land immediately to your right as you enter the churchyard via Chibnall Close. It extends as far as the path leading to the recreation grounds. Over the last year it has become untidy and overgrown, and a recent wildlife survey revealed virtually no insects or wildlife there. Clearly we needed some expert advice!

Thanks to the help of a local friend and neighbour, Mark Oldbury, we contacted Stephanie Wilson, Natural England Reserve Manager (Thames Solent team) and her colleague Nigel Adams, an expert on land management with strong links to Natural England. On Friday 23 July we held a site meeting attended by members of the volunteer churchyard working group, Father Michael, Stephanie and Nigel.

Strimming has already begun in the churchyard.

The meeting proved extremely useful, with lots of excellent advice coming from Stephanie and Nigel. To establish a sustainable wildlife area for the future the churchyard volunteers have committed to following the recommendations of our two experts. The whole area must be strimmed down to the ground, and the site cleared of all the detritus. Our photo shows that this has already begun! Once the ground is clear they advised us to apply an environmentally appropriate weedkiller. I know a lot of people are opposed to using any sort of weedkiller, but sometimes we have to hurt before we can mend. When the grass starts regrowing it will need a second application of weedkiller. The ground will then be ready for us to sow the recommended wildflower seeds.



This is obviously going to be an ongoing project, so please be patient with us. We hope that you will also enjoy watching the project advance towards our final objective of having an area of the churchyard rich in plant and wildlife diversity.

Ironically the new extension graveyard had not been mown for a while. Consequently, it had turned into the perfect wildlife garden with butterflies and insects everywhere! Stephanie and Nigel suggested that although this has to be kept tidy, we should consider leaving an uncut border around the edge during the summer months.

Our thanks go to Mark, Stephanie and Nigel for enabling and advising us thus far. We feel encouraged and well set up to progress the project well. If you or anyone you know would like to join our band of volunteers, we meet in the churchyard every Wednesday, weather permitting, 2.00–4.00pm. All you need to bring are a willing pair of hands and your own gardening gloves!

MARIAN KUYPER
on behalf of the churchyard working party

SPECIAL FEATURE

Farewell tributes to Rev. John Anderson

I was delighted when Lynn asked me to write a farewell article for the newsletter on John Anderson, our Methodist Minister. However, in conversation with Jennifer Thompson, we thought it would be best to get some responses from other members of the St Mary's congregation. Here are a few of the many contributions we received.

St Mary's is the first church in which I have served in which there has been an ecumenical welcome in place. I am grateful to John for his warm, sensible, and friendly introduction to ecumenical ministry. I am particularly grateful to him for his companionship during the pandemic, his hard work, and all his encouragement. He will be sorely missed.
Fr Michael J. Lakey

John arrived at St Mary's during an unsettled time for the congregation, and immediately became a valued member of the PCC and the clergy. He has provided an enormous amount of experience, stability and wisdom with a lovely sense of humour all based in a strong faith. This has been so positive for the House Group and the PCC as well as in services. With Covid restrictions he has been a sounding board for decision making, using his knowledge of other local churches and wider experiences. He will be much missed.
Heather Topping

I have probably only attended about three or four Methodist services but have found him easy going, have enjoyed his sense of humour and his sermons.

Margaret Molloy

John's consistent and regular contact throughout the pandemic has been important. He shared in getting online services started early on, when we couldn't meet in person, helping people to stay grounded in their faith at a worrying time. He has continued online Morning Prayer on Tuesdays, which has given people a Christian focus each week, and has been a wise support for people who have run into problems. We will miss him!

Nick Bates

John has been a real asset to our worship at St Mary's, both in the interregnum after Rev. Ian Cohen retired, and in the time he has worked with Father Michael. He is always gentle and humorous – I still laugh when he greets the congregation with "Good morning, how good to see your smiling masks!" John is a gentleman and a gentle man. My memory of John derives from our origins in the north east of England. John is from County Durham, I am from Northumberland. There is a continuing dispute about who belongs on the wrong/right side of the River Tyne. The day of Michael's interview in April 2019, I asked, having recognised another kindred spirit, where he was from. Another one from Durham, so I pointed out it was the wrong side of the Tyne; a voice to my right declared, "No, it's the right side!" It was John, of course. I will miss him, as will we all, I am very sure. All my best wishes.

Judith Bennett

I am a non-conformist, a baptised Baptist – not a Methodist (sorry!) but I took to John's style immediately. His easy, often humorous, delivery of serious matters resonated with me. I felt at home. I hope his going will not diminish the Methodist content in our services which I believe strengthens the outreach of St Mary's, helping our congregation to grow and prosper in God's work in Chalgrove. Incidentally, I have never been bothered about which side of the Tyne he grew up in because I grew up in Buxton which is why I'm "strong in the arm & thick in the 'ead"! I will miss you, John.

Christine Smith

John's time with us was a great blessing. He provided boundless enthusiasm for God, wise and encouraging teaching, dry and wry wit and humour, and a capacity to embrace and adapt to the challenges of the last 18 months. His encouragement and enthusiasm has hugely



Fr Lakey and Rev. John Anderson.

helped us at St Mary's, and also those in his other churches at Watlington and Great Milton, to navigate the constantly changing pandemic regulations. We will miss him.

Jennifer Thompson

We will miss him too, for the warmth of his manner and his direct, thought-provoking preaching often delivered with gentle humour. His ministry has enhanced and strengthened the bonds between all members of the congregation. Thank you John, for your generosity of spirit and for leaving a legacy that will support all of us as we continue to witness to the value of the ecumenical ministry in St Mary's church. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Charles and Lynn Baker

I have very much enjoyed John Anderson's ministry amongst us and in particular his northeastern sense of humour. He has reminded me of how exciting being a Christian is and how much fun it can also be.

David Turner

As for Bob and me, there is only one thing left to say: John Anderson is the best Methodist minister we have known in over 46 years of being Methodists!! Thank you, John.

MARIAN KUYPER

HERITAGE FEATURE

WALL PAINTINGS SYMPOSIUM AT ST MARY'S

It was almost three years ago that Miss Sommer Halquist, a graduate at Cambridge University, visited St Mary's church to gather information about the church and its wall paintings to help with her MA research project. That research has blossomed into a PhD and she is currently working on her final thesis.

Whilst developing her thesis, Sommer has also been working with me and our wall paintings conservator Madeleine Katkov to put together a day's Symposium about the medieval wall paintings. We are delighted that this work has also born fruit and the Symposium will take place in the church on Saturday 16 October.

The programme includes talks by Professor Paul Binski, whom some of you may have seen talking about the paintings in his Channel 5 series "Divine Designs", Professor Miri Ruben, author of the book *Mother of God*, a history of

the Virgin Mary, and Dr Ellie Pridgeon, an expert on Oxfordshire's medieval wall paintings. There will also be short talks given by me and Madeleine, and Sommer will be telling us what she has discovered during her research.

The Friends of St Mary's will be busy on the day looking after the 'front of house' arrangements, and Jeanette Barrington and her team will be providing the catering.

This promises to be a fascinating day, and I would urge you to consider coming to it. Tickets to non-parishioners will cost £20 each, whereas parishioners are eligible for a £5 discount. Any profit will go towards the work and life of the church. Numbers are limited to 60. Tickets can be obtained from Eventbrite at this URL address: bit.ly/2VPQyG8. To obtain the discount, parishioners will need to put in a promotion code at the Eventbrite check-out. To get this promo code please contact me at llm@chalgrovechurch.org.

To make a weekend of it, there will also be some events for the parish on the following day, Sunday 17 October, including cream teas.

We look forward to welcoming you.

BOB HEATH-WHYTE

Details of Sunday's events will be on the church website in due course.



St Mary's wonderful wall paintings will be explored during the Symposium.

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 11 September OHCT Ride and Stride

Oxford Historic Churches Trust annual fundraising event.

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 September Heritage Open Days

St Mary's will be open on Saturday from 10.00am to 5pm, and on Sunday from 11.30am to 5pm. We hope the resource for visually impaired visitors will be available for demonstration and use. Do come – members of Friends contributed generously to this resource; its touch-sensitive images and sound recordings will enable more people to enjoy and understand the heritage and history of St Mary's.

Sunday 26 September Harvest Festival

Harvest Thanksgiving and the church parish picnic. Please look in *Link* or check the church website for details – www.chalgrovechurch.org.

Saturday 16 October Wall Paintings Symposium

An all-day event in St Mary's Church – see the Heritage Feature for full details.

Sunday 17 October Cream Teas – and More

Weather permitting, St Mary's will be open for afternoon cream teas and other activities. Please look in *Link* or check the church website for details.

EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome your contributions (up to a maximum of 500 words) to the newsletter but we reserve the right to edit them. We should also point out that the views expressed in *The Friends Quarterly* are not necessarily those of the editorial team, the incumbent, or the PCC of St Mary's Church.

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