

The Friends Quarterly



Welcome to the Friends Newsletter

Music returns to St Mary's: in early April the Rob Terry Jazz Trio delighted an enthusiastic audience with its original blend of classical and jazz.

May 2022

Issue 42

FRIENDS UPDATE

Since our last newsletter we have successfully resumed our concert events in St Mary's. In February and April the OCCAM string quartet and the Rob Terry Jazz Trio, respectively, delighted their audiences with the quality of their music. We have included a separate report on each concert later in the newsletter. Together the concerts raised a modest profit of £630. We hope to offer another jazz concert in the coming months, as well as the return of OCCAM before the end of the year.

See concert reports on pages 3 and 4.

Thanks to the Chalgrove May Day Festival committee, the Friends enjoyed representing the church and offering generous and free hospitality to many visitors to St Mary's stall. Members of Friends were also in church to help welcome visitors to the Lockdown Art exhibition there. We hope that you enjoy reading the brief report about the exhibition later in this edition.

See Lockdown Art report on page 6.

So far this year Membership numbers have increased slightly to 51. The amount in our account is approx. £4000, which represents the annual membership donations plus profits from this year's events. With this in mind we have invited the Parochial Church Council to provide the Friends committee with a list of suggested items that Friends money could pay for, either fully or in part, with a view to identifying a target for our fundraising activities.

Our next event will of course be the Friends Plant Sale on Saturday 28 May. Please note the slight change of timing since your previous Quarterly. The Sale will be open from 9.30 am until 12 noon, and the location is the car park behind the Crown pub. The sale was extremely popular last year, and we expect it to be this year too. However, if the weather is against us we will delay the sale until Saturday 11 June; the timing and location will remain the same.

Friends Plant Sale will be held on Saturday 28 May.

Finally, all members of Friends are warmly invited to the Strawberry Cream Tea on Sunday 26 June, from 3 to 5 pm at The Great Barn, 20 Mill Lane. We will send out a reminder nearer the time, but do put the date in your diary. It will be lovely to see you and to enjoy your company.

Friends Strawberry Cream Tea on Sunday 26 June.

LYNN BAKER
on behalf of the Friends Committee

See page 12 for details of all our future events.

PAST EVENTS

OCCAM PLUS ONE CONCERT

What a treat, what an afternoon. On Sunday 27 February the Friends welcomed a large audience to the first concert in the church since before the pandemic. It was a truly celebratory occasion, made even more special for me as my oldest friend – who had travelled from Ealing and had invited me, knew the “plus One” musician. We are so lucky to have such a beautiful historical building that hosts such a diverse range of events and I’m so glad I was there!

OCCAM is an international ensemble renowned for their playing of Beethoven. The group comprises two violinists, a viola player and a cellist. The concert started with the cellist, Bertille Mas, introducing the first piece, the C Minor opus 18 no.4 by Ludwig van Beethoven. Composed in 1800, it was dedicated to Prince Joseph Franz von Lobkowitz. She quoted Beethoven’s words: “Music is the wine which inspires one to new generative processes, and I am Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind and makes them spiritually drunken” – a perfect description of what the audience was about to experience.



*OCCAM plus One
rehearse in St
Mary's.*

The opening movement of this quartet is a wild ride with a sense of urgency where the triple stop chords really grab the listener’s attention and made me sit up and take note of the superb musicianship and execution of the opening. I hope others in the audience felt the same way, as we were then taken on a journey in the second theme with all the complexity of countermelody interest with a move to the

minor key, before swiftly moving on to the next section. With ease and elegance the performers continued with the 'joke', as this is often referred to due to its complexity and academic aspects. Listening, I was transformed to another place by the rhythmic texture and movement back and forth between the players and their instruments, just delightful, before setting off on the final frenetic refrain which is mischievous and whimsical all at the same time, coming to a timely, if not uncertain, ending.

After tea and cake (thank you, Friends!) we all resumed our seats for the next treat. The "Stadler" Clarinet Quintet in A major K.581 was composed by Mozart in Vienna. While there, Mozart befriended the clarinetist Anton Stadler, who was famous for his lyrical tone. Helen Smith, the "plus One" clarinetist, just exuded energy as the piece unravelled with a lyrical tone and cheekiness that I felt Mozart would have approved of. There was an elegance of dialogue between the clarinet and strings and for those who may be familiar with this piece, the two themes were clear to hear. The clarinet was the true voice in the Larghetto with the strings complementing gently, with a slight interruption of a little chat between the violin and clarinet half way through. The next section shows the influence of folk music, where Helen played the *Ländler* (German shepherd's dance) with zest and energy. The whole group came to life and it was astounding to know that they have not practised a huge amount together. In true Mozart style the last movement is a set of variations, where the clarinet floats above the elegance of the strings lyrically, followed by the wonderful mournful viola solo, returning to the busy virtuosity of Helen playing the arpeggios leading to the reunification of all the instruments. This brought to an end a truly special musical afternoon.

I am sure I speak for all who were there in thanking both OCCAM plus One and the Friends of St Mary's for a spectacular concert, and we all look forward to OCCAM'S next concert in Chalgrove.

WENDY PULLIN

JAZZ CONCERT

My husband and I were very happy to hear that there was going to be a jazz trio playing in the Church on 2 April. We both have eclectic tastes in music, and jazz is definitely a favourite genre for both of us. The Rob Terry Trio did not disappoint us. The fusion of Jazz and classical music was

Dramatic lighting enhances the jazz concert atmosphere.



wonderful. Rob's arrangements were lovely and suited the church setting very well. We thoroughly enjoyed the event and bought one of the CDs on offer by the band, which they happily signed for us! We look forward to more musical events being offered by the Friends of St Mary's church.

KELLY POTTER

CHURCH NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

The baptism of Aneurin Hines

St Mary's Easter morning celebrations were made even more special by the baptism of Aneurin (Nye) Hines. The congregation was delighted to welcome Aneurin Robert Charles Hines into the fellowship of St Mary's and of the worldwide Christian community. We look forward to enjoying his company and those of his parents, Emily and Rob, and sharing the Christian journey with them all.

LYNN BAKER

BELL RINGERS' REPORT

While practice nights have been lively, we continue to struggle to make up a full team on Sundays. Shift work, health issues and a shortage of ringers mean we rarely ring all six bells at St Mary's.

On a brighter note, our newest recruit, Annette, is learning fast. We have a silent practice before everyone arrives on Wednesday evenings. This is done by fitting a wooden silencer to hold the bell clapper centrally. Annette has also experienced what happens when the bell's 'stay' breaks, something that's happened to all good ringers. The 'stay' is a safety device that breaks if the bell is bumped too hard against the slider. Trust me, it's easier to explain in the bell tower than here! Paul, who was also making good progress, is due back soon after an accident at home curtailed his ringing activities for several weeks.

As Steeple Keeper I have recently hosted a bell maintenance session for two members of a local tower, to allow them to keep their bells serviceable.

ANDREW DAVIS



A warm welcome to Aneurin Hines (above) and a bell ringers practice session (below).



CHALGROVE LOCKDOWN ART EXHIBITION

What a good idea to share things created in the last two years, over a time of the suspension of normal life! From this notion, Lockdown Art brought forth seven exhibitors willing to display what they had spent time on during lockdown. Among the exhibitors were Andrew Davis and Bob Heath-Whyte, who shared their working in wood: Andrew's on a large scale, with a mix of the decorative and the practical; and Bob's small, intricate hand-carved chains symbolising the constrictions of lockdown.

Sue Ilbury and Jeanette Barrington shared their handicrafts, both having created beautiful cushions and bed coverings. Jeanette's patchwork quilt was a particular favourite with visitors. There was also poetry from Bob and a lovely piece of needlework begun by Carole Heath-Whyte's mother, discovered during lockdown, and completed by Carole. Finally, there were paintings – watercolours and acrylics – from Jim Robinson and Judith Bennett, and a little lockdown photography.

During its opening hours over the Bank Holiday weekend, people from the village and further afield came to view the offerings, with a resounding 80 visitors on Festival Monday. It was a delight for those of us on duty to welcome everyone in to share the display of exhibits – and often the history of St Mary's, in response to questions about the church's past.

JUDITH BENNETT



Art on display in the Lockdown Art exhibition (above and left).

ST MARY'S BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

Progress report on new Wildlife Garden

Spring has always been my favourite time of the year, and this spring had the added anticipation to see if any of the wildflower seeds sown last autumn in the new Wildlife area would appear. The ground looked rather bare all winter, the only decorations being the CD disks threaded on wool across the area to try and deter birds from feasting on the seeds.

We are delighted to report that following the ground clearance last year the first flowers to appear were snowdrops and primroses, quickly followed by clumps of different beautiful flowers that have sprouted from the seeds. Yes we do have some weeds and other unsavoury plants which will have to be removed but progress is being made.

Even more exciting has been the planting of the new Jubilee Hedge. Andrew White gave us several very helpful suggestions for native hedging plants that benefit wildlife and improve ecological value in many ways such as food and habitat. Hawthorn, privet, guelder rose, field maple, dog rose, rugosa rose, hazel, wayfaring tree and blackthorn have been planted alongside the railings on the east side of the old churchyard and garden, totalling some 50 metres. The same native species have been planted along 10 metres of the new boundary fence along the north side of the churchyard.

The Jubilee Hedge consists of 140 plants, kindly donated by a member of the Church congregation. Many thanks to all the volunteers for working so hard to dig holes, plant and water over a planting period of two days.

MARIAN KUYPER



*Full of promise:
plants are thriving
in the church's new
Wildlife Garden.*

HERITAGE FEATURE

THE IVY LEAF BORDERS – PART 2

In my previous article I mentioned that there are three paintings of foliage above the windows on the south side of the chancel of St Mary's church, here in Chalgrove. This article will discuss two of these, taking them in the chronological sequence of the stories, i.e. from west to east.

The first of these is over the east side of the west window, adjacent to the scene of the Virgin Mary's funeral procession to the east and the General Resurrection to the west, and above the painting of St Lawrence in the window splay.



Foliage over the west window (left); two samples of rue (below).

It is not easy to discern exactly what shape they are, looking as if they have just suffered from the first frost of autumn and will soon be reduced to leaf mould! There are clues, perhaps, in the sequence of the leaves on the branch but matching the shape is difficult. My guess is that they are rue leaves.



This set of rue leaves (*right, above*) is quite similar, with the exception of the ends of the leaves being rounded rather than pointed. This is a modern photo, but our painting artist was possibly drawing from a copy book or herbal.

This is a photo of rue carved in the main boss of the lower chapel of Sainte Chapelle in Paris (*right, below*), which matches better to our painting.



So my best guess for what these are is leaves of rue, a symbol of the Virgin Mary. Rue for repentance, sorrow, regret, possibly mourning, which again would be appropriate for the funeral scene.

We are told by Petrus Berchorius in the 1340s that "... the Madonna was also signified by rue, the unique healing powers of rue represent the virtues of penance, the chores of the people striving for perfection, the healing and affirming power of the holy scripture, and, because it is evergreen, the resurrection of Christ and faith. The strong unpleasant smell and bitter taste reflect the anti-demonic powers which are associated with it... Because rue does not have any particular external features it also counts as an image of poverty and humility." This seems to be very appropriate for these leaves, situated as they are between the Funeral of the Virgin and the General Resurrection, or Day of Judgement, and above St Lawrence who was grilled alive on a grid iron at his martyrdom.

Moving across to the east window on the south side of the chancel, there is a bunch of foliage on the west side of the arch, adjacent to the picture of the Conversion of the Jews and above the image of Saint John the Evangelist on the window splay.



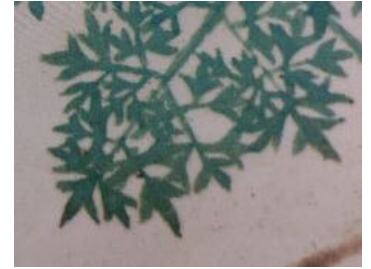
Foliage by the arch of the east window on the south side of the chancel.

There is an image in the medieval herbal, the *Tractas de herbis*, which I mentioned in the first article, that matches these leaves exactly, and leads me to the conclusion that they are leaves of *Circuta*, also known as cowbane or hemlock. This was the draught taken by Socrates on his death-bed, the symbolism of which is Death, “an attribute of Treason and Death personified” as it is described in the *Illustrated Dictionary of symbols in Eastern and Western Art*. There are two possible interpretations of this. The first concerns St John the Evangelist, because in the Golden Legend we are told that John was challenged by the High Priest of the Temple of Diana in Ephesus to drink a cup of poison, which John did but suffered no harm. As a result of this story, John was given the symbol of a golden chalice in medieval art, and we see him holding it in the painting of the Ascension on the east wall.

The second interpretation is a more sinister one, that it is perhaps yet another anti-Semitic comment, referring to the picture of the Conversion of the Jews, and perhaps hinting at their falsely rumoured “treasonous evil practices” such as the poisoning of wells.

The third and final article in this series will look at the last set of foliage and also at the six-petalled floret that is used as a space filler throughout the wall painting scheme.

BOB HEATH-WHYTE



An image from the Tractas de herbis (above), and the depiction of St John the Evangelist under the bunch of foliage on the south side of the chancel (below).



FRIENDS PLANT SALE



Seedlings flourish in Pat and Mike Hougham's greenhouse in preparation for the Plant Sale – see Future Events on page 12 for details.

FUTURE EVENTS

*(Friends events marked with *)*

Saturday 28 May: Plant Sale *

Sale will be from 9.30 am to 12 noon in the village car park behind the Crown pub. Plant donations welcome from 8.45 am. Flower and veg plants available, so come and buy!

Saturday 25 June: Village Progressive Supper

Organised on behalf of St Mary's, this much enjoyed event is back! Please contact Jeanette Barrington for enquiries – phone 890607 or email barringtonjeanette@gmail.com

Sunday 26 June: Friends of St Mary's Strawberry Cream Tea *

All members are welcome at The Great Barn, Mill Lane, 3.00–5.00pm. It's a lovely afternoon of friendship and feasting so do book the date and come; we'll be delighted to see you. Contact Lynn Baker on 400402 or email friends@chalgrovechurch.org

Saturday 10 September: Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride fundraising event

Please contact Carole Heath-Whyte for enquiries: email bobncarole@heath-whyte.net

Sunday 11 September: Heritage Open Day *

In St. Mary's Church, 2.00-4.00pm. Teas will be available.

Saturday 8 October: St Mary's Quiz Night *

The new date for this popular Friends event! Doors open in the Village Hall at 7pm and quiz begins at 7.30pm. Bar and light supper refreshments available. Book the date and make enquiries with Judith Bennett on 890958 or email judith.bennetts@outlook.com

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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