



# The Friends Quarterly



## Welcome to the Friends Newsletter

The annual Strawberry Cream Tea was as popular an event as always – an opportunity to thank all the Friends of St Mary's for another year's support.

**Autumn 2024**

**Issue 51**

## FRIENDS UPDATE

Since the May newsletter there is a lot of good news to share with you, as well as some reminders about both church and Friends events to come before the year ends.

Firstly, a big 'thank you'. With Friends' financial support, the screen and projector are now installed in St Mary's and in use. During Heritage Open Weekend in September it will be used to show a short film, created by Bob Heath-Whyte, to inform visitors about St Mary's wall paintings. Good news indeed – and more of that anon...

The three events that took place between May and July were all very successful and in their different ways fulfilled the purposes of Friends, both to raise money and to promote St Mary's as a welcoming community space for all to enjoy.

In June we welcomed a new group of members of MyVision to use St Mary's Touch Tour resources. Do remember that **your** money contributed to the successful completion of the audio/touch resources!

*Please see page 6 for the report on the Touch Tour.*

During July we enjoyed welcoming members to the annual 'thank you for your support' Cream Tea. We also organised and ran a new (to us) Friends event, a home grown and locally sourced Gardeners' Question Time.

*Please see pages 4 and 5 for reports on these events.*

Our remaining 2024 event and hospitality occasion are both happening in September. St Mary's Heritage Open Weekend dates are Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 September. Friends will be helping to welcome visitors by joining a rota of Welcomers and by providing refreshments for the two days. **Please help us to provide this hospitality.** Even if you can only help for an hour or so, or provide a cake, it will be greatly appreciated. There are a lot of hours to cover between us and members of the congregation. The bonus for all volunteer Welcomers is that you will be able to enjoy a free viewing of the new film previously mentioned!

*Details of the Heritage Open Weekend, and how to let us know if you can help, are in Future Events on page 8.*

On Saturday 21 September the popular annual Friends Church Quiz Night takes place in the village hall. This is a major fundraiser for the Friends, and Judith Bennett is already taking table bookings.

*See Future Events on page 8 for details of the Church Quiz Night.*

Thank you – and our good wishes,

LYNN BAKER  
on behalf of the Friends committee

## **A NOTE FROM THE VICAR**

Dear Friends,

I think it was the great 20th-century wit W.C. Fields who said, “Never work with children or animals”. This summer at St Mary’s we have managed the first, and plan to do the second in September.

In July, we hosted our third Children’s Community Concert, at which we welcomed local children from Mr Chamberlain’s music classes to sing and play a selection of pop and rock songs. One group of young people, from Nai’s House, a suicide prevention and holistic mental health charity in Bicester, performed songs they had themselves composed with him.

The concert was a success, and it gave us a chance to try out our new piece of kit –the projector and screen. It was fabulous to be able to turn down the lights and to put a video background on the screen as the bands performed.

In September, we will host our second outdoor (fingers crossed!) pet service during the Messy Church slot (3rd Sunday at 10.30 am). Last year, we had lots of doggy congregants, along with their owners. If you would like to bring your animal (which doesn’t have to be a canine!) to be blessed, do join us.

All this makes me glad and thankful for the beautiful building and fabric here at St Mary’s. I think we are very blessed. And, of course, maintaining and improving this would be so much harder without you—so thank you!

God bless you!

FR MICHAEL

## WE REMEMBER

### MICHAEL BAILEY, OCTOBER 1953–JULY 2024

When Michael died on 7 July, we lost a familiar and popular figure from the village. He was a member of Friends through Age Concern, which he attended for several years. From his birth in 1953 Michael lived a carefree childhood until a serious accident caused the injuries he lived with for the rest of his life. Michael became well known to everyone in Chalgrove as he cycled around on his three-wheeler. He was always happy to chat to others, and was famous for his drawings – and his desire to sell them to anyone within reach! He is missed by all who knew him.

JUDITH BENNETT



*Michael Bailey, who died in July.*

## PAST EVENTS

### FRIENDS STRAWBERRY TEA

The weather was quite kind to us on 30 June when we gathered in Lynn and Charles Baker's lovely garden for the annual Strawberry Cream Tea gathering for members of the Friends. There was a large number of Age Concern members present, which was the result of running the minibus for them (thank you, drivers and escorts!), and a good number of other members too who had assembled there.

There was an enormous selection of tea and cakes, scones, strawberries and cream and other such delights all provided by our Friends' committee and their helpers. The lawn was bedecked with an array of chairs for the guests to sit upon and also a croquet pitch that garnered a modest amount of interest, until a young lady presented herself and professed to know the rules. On hearing this a foursome was selected and we thrashed about waving the mallets and slamming the balls. I can't remember who won!

The occasion was a treat, and we offer our sincere thanks to our hosts and their helpers for the amount of work they did in arranging this event.

JOHN MOLLOY

*Editors' note:* the Tea is our way of thanking all our members for your generosity and loyalty; it's a real pleasure to welcome everyone who comes.



*Croquet in full swing during the Strawberry Cream Tea.*



## GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME

This was a new Friends event – a chance to ask your fellow gardeners what's going wrong.

How comforting to discover that the slugs have not just picked on me, but on everyone without a hedgehog. And to discover that I had done everything possible – apart from going out in the dark to pick them off individually. Obvious, but yuck! Even yuckier – pick them off, cut them in two and feed them to the birds. Oh, but so satisfying. Well, somebody suggested slug pellets, but I don't trust the packaging promises. Maybe I should. But I don't want to take a chance of poisoning a hedgehog or a bird. Maybe next year I'll try the wildlife-friendly pellets.

As for the rhubarb – well, just asking about it worked, because by the time I got home it had started to sprout...it just wanted to know I cared!

And a plethora of other problems from the audience – either dealt with satisfactorily, or at least the gardener in question knew nothing obvious had been missed. Obscure diseases remained obscure, but sources of information were helpfully provided.

When I got home, I walked round the garden and found all the questions I hadn't asked. Next time...and I hope there is one!

ANTHEA DUDLEY



*Our four panel members and their chairman were generous with their helpful advice, and all present enjoyed the afternoon, which ended with ever-popular teas and time to chat. Feedback tells us that we should run another GQT next year – perhaps not on a Wimbledon and European football matches weekend!*



## AGE CONCERN'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

It is 25 years since the late Shirley Pate gathered people together to form Age Concern Chalgrove Area, in 1999. The Day Centre, which we now call Chalgrove Tuesday Club, prospered for many years, until the pandemic had its impact. However, we are growing again and are apparently the only fully functioning independent day centre in Oxfordshire. For some years we have held corporate membership of Friends of St Mary's, and our members look forward to reading *Friends Quarterly* – and to attending the Strawberry Tea. Always ready for 'a bit of a do', in June we celebrated the anniversary with a special lunch, balloons, prosecco and cake. And, as an added delight, we also celebrated Betty Farrell's 101st birthday.

JUDITH BENNETT



*Judith and Gerry Davidson with the splendid 25th anniversary cake.*

## CHURCH NEWS

### TOUCH TOUR

As a charity that supports visually impaired people across Oxfordshire, we were so excited to be involved in this project of making St Mary's church accessible. With a small group last year, we were able to experience at first hand the accessibility features they have implemented. After the visit we had a lot of positive feedback. From the feedback we gathered, we decided to bring back a bigger group, of ten people, for a second visit on 3 June.

During this visit the group were given a sighted tour, storytelling with an audio/touch device, object handling and a general chat about the church and its history. It is fantastic for MyVision Oxfordshire to be included in such an amazing project, and to be able to give recommendations to encourage more visually impaired people to enjoy such a wonderful church and all who are part of this project.

DEVANTE CLARIDGE  
MyVision Community Engagement Worker



*The Touch Tour in full swing.*

*Editors' note:* It is a privilege to welcome and to act as a guide for these occasions; we would warmly encourage you to take part, and ideally to become familiar with the simple audio/touch equipment that enables our sight-impaired visitors to gain such amazing insights into St Mary's heritage features.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO CHARLOTTE AND BEN

The sun was shining; the church and assembled guests looked splendid; and the atmosphere was one of eager anticipation for the marriage of Charlotte Jacques and Benjamin Sugden.

The bride entered the church to *Pachelbel's Canon in D Major* and everyone had the first sight of Charlotte's beautiful wedding dress.

The wedding service was full of joy. Fr Michael gave the address, and the congregation sang with great enthusiasm in support of Ben and Charlotte. One of Charlotte's bridesmaids, Ellie Bernard, sang Mozart's *Laudate Dominum* and Schubert's *Ave Maria* beautifully while the Register was being signed.

A very happy bride and groom left the church to Handel's *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, the bells were ringing out and the sun was still shining.

JANE REEVE

## BELL RINGERS' REPORT

Practices continue to be busy, and while the Watlington bells are being rehung their team join us every three weeks.

Our most recent recruit, Naomi, is doing well, and almost handling a bell on her own. We're all concentrating on our striking and moving on, be it Plain Bob or Grandsire, even Reverse Canterbury. However, Sunday ringing is still a struggle, so we do need more ringers! For further details about bellringing practice and training please contact [bells@chalgrovechurch.org](mailto:bells@chalgrovechurch.org).

Thanks to all those involved, we have managed to keep the bells ringing at St Helen's. We were delighted to ring a couple of quarter peals there, one being 1260 changes of Grandsire Doubles, the other 1260 changes of Bob Minor.

ANDREW DAVIS  
Tower Captain and Steeple Keeper



*Charlotte and Ben process down the aisle after their wedding service.*

## FUTURE EVENTS

(Friends events marked with \*.)

### **Saturday 7 September/ Sunday 8 September: Heritage Open Days \***

Saturday opening is from 10.00am until 4pm, Sunday opening from 11.00am until 4pm. We anticipate that the new short film about the wall paintings will be shown at intervals during each day. Friends are responsible for providing refreshments so if you can support this by offering a cake or traybake **please** contact Lynn Baker on 01865 400402 or by email to [friends@chalgrovechurch.com](mailto:friends@chalgrovechurch.com). If you can help with welcoming on either or both days **please** let Lynn know, or contact the rota organiser Bob Heath-Whyte direct on [heathwhyte@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:heathwhyte@yahoo.co.uk) with details of when and for how long you can help.

### **Saturday 14 September: Ride and Stride for Churches**

Oxfordshire Historic Churches' Trust annual fundraiser. Please contact Matt Clark on [matthew.clark5@btinternet.com](mailto:matthew.clark5@btinternet.com) if you can help by offering sponsorship, welcoming 'riders and striders' to St Mary's or for 'riding and striding' yourself.

### **Saturday 21 September: Friends Church Quiz Night \***

From 7pm in the Village Hall. £10 on entry. Bar and light supper provided. Raffle. For table bookings and more information contact Judith Bennett on 01865 890958, text 07811 656597, or email [judith.bennetts@outlook.com](mailto:judith.bennetts@outlook.com).

### **Saturday 12 October: St Mary's Autumn Banquet**

For more information contact Jeannette Barrington on 01865 890607 or email [barringtonjeanette@gmail.com](mailto:barringtonjeanette@gmail.com).

## EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome your contributions (up to a maximum of 400 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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