

Past and Future Events



We have held off this newsletter for a couple of months, until we had more 'news' about forthcoming projects for the Friends. We have several exciting events coming up for 2009 and thought we should at least tell you about them. You will have seen the posters for the Pontarddulais Choir, and by the time you read this, we shall have had the pleasure of hearing them again in Holy Trinity. **We are very grateful to them, and to our Mayor, Cllr Mrs Joyce Taylor, who made all the arrangements for us.**

Our AGM was held on Thursday 16 April, when our architect, Ian Stainburn, spoke to us about the principles of restoring ancient buildings, his work on the restoration of the tower and spire of Holy Trinity and his plans for the clerestory windows.

Holy Trinity Choir, now over 30 strong, is flourishing under its conductor, Andrew Jones, and is one of the relatively few robed church choirs that sings both morning and evening services on Sundays. It was a real pleasure to hear them sing a programme of Bach and Handel with the Orchestra of the Swan at the beginning of May.



The Orchestra of the Swan will be with us again in the autumn – Saturday 26th September – when they are presenting a full orchestral programme in Holy Trinity. This will be a joint fundraising venture between ourselves and the Friends of Orchestra of the Swan

The 'Consensus' theatre group has very kindly offered the Friends the proceeds of a performance of 'Whose Wife is it Anyway' – a musical farce based on a play by David Garrick on Thursday 11 June in the Town Hall. And we are hoping to welcome back the **Oxford Waits, who provided one of our very first fundraising events, later on in the year.** Other events are in the pipeline, and we will let you know about them in due course. But we urge you to put dates into your diaries.

The post of Clerk to the Trustees of the Friends of Shakespeare's Church will shortly be falling vacant. This position, based in the Parish Centre, involves running the membership of the Friends, raising funds, organising events, providing newsletters and reports. Computer competence is essential. It is a part-time, paid position, but hours can be flexible. For initial information, please contact the present Clerk, 01789 290128, or at the Parish Office

— THE FRIENDS 2009 —

Events Diary

Do put these forthcoming dates in your diary!

Consensus Theatre Group
Whose Wife is it Anyway
Thursday 11 June 2009
Town Hall, Sheep Street
Tickets: £10
available from the Church Shop

Orchestra of the Swan
with Sarah Williamson and
the Choir of Holy Trinity Church
Saturday 26 September, 7.30 pm
in Holy Trinity Church

Put this date in your diary for a joint fundraising concert for Friends of Shakespeare's Church and Friends of Orchestra of the Swan.

A selection of British and American classics including works by Samuel Barber, Gerald Finzi and Aaron Copland as well as a surprise premiere

Full Programme and ticket price to be confirmed

Tickets will be available from end of May at the Church Book Shop, Parish Office and directly from Orchestra of the Swan

www.shakespeareschurch.org
email: friends@shakespeareschurch.org

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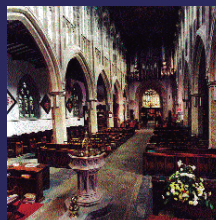
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Friends of Shakespeare's Church

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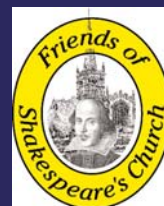
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OUR MISSION

Delivering the means to preserve Shakespeare's church for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

2010 is the 800th anniversary of the building of the church. Could much of our restoration be completed by then?

Stop Press

Generous grants have been received from the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust, who have been major supporters throughout the past six years of restoration, and The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust



A registered charity

The Friends of Shakespeare's Church gratefully acknowledge the generous support given by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust

Spring 2009

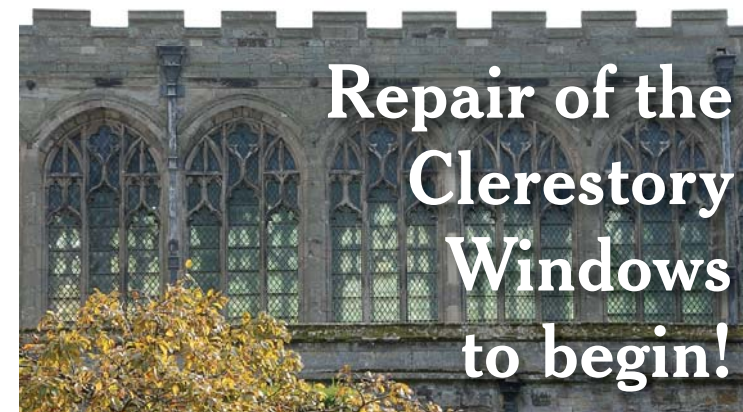
"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends"

Richard II, William Shakespeare

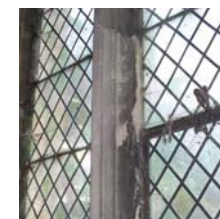
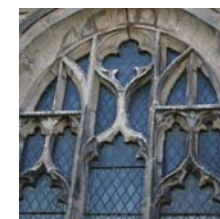
Will's Quill

ISSUE ELEVEN

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHURCH



Repair of the Clerestory Windows to begin!



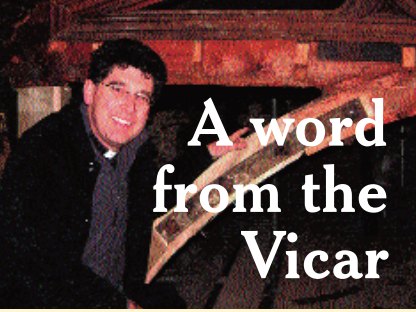
Despite the financial 'challenges' you will be delighted to learn that restoring the Clerestory Windows is set to take place over the next ten months. As I write this, scaffolding is being erected. This will enable all twelve windows to be repaired by the end of the year in readiness for the 800th Anniversary Celebrations in 2010.

The Friends have been able to commit £120,000 towards this restoration, drawn from the funds we have raised during 2008. In all honesty this is slightly less than 50% of the entire cost but we have undertaken to raise the rest during 2009 and 2010. The PCC is taking the plunge and committing its own funds to "bridge the gap".

Once again we are indebted to the Friends and many others for all their efforts in supporting evening events – an evening with The Archers, the Pontarddulais Choir, an evening with Patrick Stewart and Harriet Walter. In addition funds flow steadily from the so-called Fish Tank in the Church where people make small donations and from our scheme of "sponsor a clerestory window". When all those funds are added to subscriptions and to major donations – we have a number in the pipeline – then we managed to raise the funds to make the gift to the PCC of over £100,000.

Please join us on this new journey...

Brian Follett



A word from the Vicar

Have you ever counted the number of pillars in Holy Trinity nave? Or the number of archways, or the number of clerestory windows, let alone the sides of the font or the crossing... If so, do those numbers have any significance for us?

Well, there are ten pillars supporting the nave, the same number as the ten commandments which support our lives under God. There are twelve archways in all, the same number as the twelve disciples. Above them are again twelve clerestory windows on each side. Twelve apostles again, along with the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Well there are
ten pillars supporting
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These numbers are picked up again by the lime trees along the church path, with twelve on each side. Then there is the font, and the Crossing under the tower, each carefully constructed this time with eight sides. This is not just random, but a common motif in medieval fonts in particular. The eight sides represent the seven days of creation as told in the Old Testament, with the addition of an eighth day for the New Creation brought about through the resurrection of Jesus as told in the New Testament.

There always seems to be something new to discover at Holy Trinity. Let's hope that by the time you read this we are well on our way to restoring and conserving twelve of those great clerestory windows from the 1490s, and paying for them too!

We're on our way ... It's a long road

The work on the next stage of the restoration of Holy Trinity Church starts soon!

The tenders for work on the clerestory windows have come in, and the PCC has accepted one from D A Cook, a firm from Winchcombe that has done a good deal of church restoration work throughout the Cotswolds and North Oxfordshire. The windows on the north side of the nave will be removed, the stonework re-carved, the metalwork replaced, the glass cleaned, and piece by piece, it will all be put back together again. Internal scaffolding will run along the north aisle holding a walkway from which the work will be done and it is anticipated that the work will have been concluded, and the scaffolding removed, by the beginning of the Christmas season.

It is splendid news that this can be achieved before 2010, the 800th anniversary year of the building of the present church.

Romeo and Juliet ran the Stratford marathon in aid of the Friends.

The Revd David Banbury, one of Holy Trinity's clergy team, and Mrs Alice Crane ran the marathon cross-dressed as Juliet and Romeo. Despite the difficulties of running in costume, they achieved a creditable time of four and three-quarter hours and raised the splendid sum of over £3,000 for the Friends.

Shakespeare's Birthday came up trumps!

During the lunch in the marquee by the river, Sir Donald Sinden, President of the Birthday Celebrations Committee, made a heartfelt plea for help for the church through which the Birthday procession passed. Indefatigable supporters shook buckets outside the marquee at the end of the lunch, and diners responded magnificently, raising over £1200 towards the clerestory windows.

Friends Conference

Your Clerk attended the Fourth National Conference of the Friends of Cathedrals, Abbeys and Greater Churches at Lincoln Cathedral. 27 Friends' groups were represented; a wide range of organisations: some established for 80 years and with sizeable incomes to be spent on enhancement of their buildings, choral scholarships, or clergy robes; others in inner-city cathedrals with multiple InterFaith commitments. Four representatives from diverse groups were asked to share their experiences. I spoke about the crumbling stonework but also the supportive community and the lively events. At the final evening session, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt Reverend John Saxbee, asked us, among other challenging thoughts:

- Are we Friends of Christian sacred places? OR
- Are we Friends of sacred places which happen to be Christian? OR
- Are we Christian Friends of sacred places?
- Are we 'Friends' on the basis of Faith, or Theology, or Archaeology?

It was a very worthwhile event and fascinating to hear how other Friends groups operate.

Looking Back To Our 2008 Events

The Friends were fortunate to be able to present two major events in the autumn. First, members of the cast of *The Archers*, the long-running BBC Radio Four drama, brought an evening of poetry, prose and music on countryside matters, called '**Come Rain, Come Shine**', devised by Malcolm McKee. They included a spoof extract from the drama, which involved the Vicar and Eddie Grundy, to the amusement of the audience.



From left: Moir Leslie (Sophie Barlow/Janet Fisher), Malcolm McKee (deviser/Graham Ryder), Sunny Ormonde (Lilian Bellamy), Vanessa Whitburn (Editor), Robert Lister (Lewis Carmichael), Trevor Harrison (Eddie Grundy), Brian Hewlett (Neil Carter)

Ten days later, we had the pleasure of an evening with Patrick Stewart, Harriet Walter and Joe Millson, in a programme devised by Roger Pringle. '**Thanks to Shakespeare**' contained verse and prose about Shakespeare, his plays and characters, and his life in Stratford.

Patrick Stewart arrived straight from the Courtyard Theatre, where he had been playing Claudius in 'Hamlet', and with consummate professionalism and charm led the trio in a performance which enthralled the audience.



from left: Roger Pringle, Joe Millson, Patrick Stewart and Harriet Walter, sitting by Shakespeare's grave.

from left: Harriet Walter, Joe Millson and Patrick Stewart.



It's a long road, but the journey will be worth it!

2008 was a year of consolidation and fundraising for the enormous project ahead – the removal, restoration, and return of all twelve of the north nave clerestory windows. Scaffolding will go up inside the church around each of the piers of the north aisle; a walkway will be erected at window level; and one by one, the windows will be removed. The stonework tracery will be re-carved, where necessary, the glass will be cleaned and conserved, and the leadwork will be replaced. Then each window will be removed. It is a big job, and one that must, if at all possible, be completed by the end of the year. Because 2010 is our 800th anniversary year, and we really don't want scaffolding in the church while we are celebrating.

You can see from the photographs on the front page, how much damage the stonework has undergone. It will be a relief to have the windows securely in new tracery.

It is proposed that, at the same time as the windows are being restored, leadwork on the roof of both the south nave aisle and the north chancel will be repaired. Rain is creeping in under the lead, softening the underlying wood and plaster. In 2008, two errant squirrels which had got into the roof brought down a part of the ceiling in the south nave aisle. Luckily no-one was underneath, but the episode led to an inspection of the roof, and the discovery of water damage. So while the lead of the windows is being repaired, the craftsmen will deal with the roofs at the same time.

