

Events Diary

We are currently organising a range of events to help raise funds for The Friends. Details will be available on our website: www.shakespeareschurch.org

If you have any suggestions for future events or wish to advertise your fund-raising event, please contact the office on 01789 290128 or email: friends@shakespeareschurch.org

Forthcoming events: do put these dates in your diary

7 July 2007 Summer Fete

The vicar, the Revd Martin Gorick, is kindly allowing us to use the Vicarage garden for a big summer fete on 7th July. This will hopefully involve all sorts of different groups from the Friends, the church congregation, and the neighbourhood. If wet, in Parish Hall!

Summer event

The grand event for the summer is the garden party on 7 July at 2pm in the Vicarage garden. Don't miss this typical English summer festivity which will be opened by the Mayor. All the classic traditional stalls will be there - books, crafts, tea and cakes, bric-a-brac, plants as well as pastimes, games and a jazz band. Just down the road, in the church, students from Yarborough School, Lincoln, will perform short excerpts from Romeo & Juliet and Twelfth Night at 12 noon and 1.45pm. (*The school was recently selected from all schools in Britain to perform on behalf of the Shakespeare Schools' Festival at Middle Temple, London for the Minister for Culture and Cherie Blair to attract government and private funding.*) The events on 7 July are all in the cause of Holy Trinity Church. So please come and give your support.



Yarborough School in performance

13 September 2007

Cruise the Grand Union Canal in fine company!

We have been given the opportunity, thanks to the generous kindness of Ashley Simons, of an early evening dinner cruise on Prince Regent II, to take place on Thursday, 13 September. The cost will be £30 per head.

We were sold out last year, so do please book early!

AGM

The 2007 AGM was held in the Shakespeare Centre on 29 March. The general business of the meeting, as usual, was dealt with quite briskly and there were some interesting and useful comments and suggestions from the floor about how to fundraise more effectively.

After a break for extremely good refreshments, the company gathered again to listen to Ms Vikki Heywood, Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (pictured above), giving a most informative and interesting talk on the current state of play at the Theatre, and the planned developments in the next few years. We are very grateful to her for generously giving her time.

Pontarddulais Welsh Male Choir

The Mayor, Cllr Dr the Revd. Roy Lodge MBE, most generously nominated the Friends of Shakespeare's Church as one of his chosen charities for his mayoral year. He and his wife, Gina, arranged several fundraising events for us. One of the most notable events ever arranged for the Friends was a visit to Holy Trinity by the Pontarddulais Welsh Male Choir on 31 March. The evening was a sell-out, the church was packed to the brim, to hear glorious Welsh singing, together with some more local talent: Rimma Sushanskaya (violin), Keith Hopkins (tenor) and the 4x2 Ensemble.

We are so grateful to Roy and Gina for their support. A sum of £6,000 was raised by them both. Well done!



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Friends of Shakespeare's Church

The Parish Office
Holy Trinity Church, Old Town
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwickshire CV37 6BG
United Kingdom

Tel: 01789 290128

Tel/Fax: 01789 266316

Email:
friends@shakespeareschurch.org

www.shakespeareschurch.org

Registered Charity No. 1097403



OUR MISSION

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

If we do not act rapidly we could see the end of Shakespeare's Church as we know it.

Stop Press

See inside for new sponsorship initiative ... Sponsor a Misericord



Stratford-upon-Avon
TOWN TRUST
A registered charity

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

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

Richard II, William Shakespeare

Will's Quill

ISSUE EIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SHAKESPEARE'S CHURCH

From the Chairman

Shakespeare's church is an extraordinary place, thanks to the commitment over many generations of many people. A few weeks ago, thousands of flowers were left on Shakespeare's gravestone as part of the annual Birthday Celebrations. Of course they are reminders of the Bard. But they are reminders too that visitors, historical researchers, Christian worshippers and many other groups form part of the colourful jigsaw that is the life of this wonderful building.

In 2002, when the Friends charity was formed, the crisis of restoration was evident. I wrote of the support needed. Work followed to raise the awareness of the crisis, to identify all the essential repairs, to consider future developments and to develop a strategy to raise the necessary funds. Since then, and thanks to the Friends' support, we have been able to make funds available to start on the most urgent repairs: the chancel roof, the spire and the tower.

Five years on, we now know the total of what needs to be done, but costs are high. We face a crossroads. One option is the most direct route: to complete the essential repairs as fast as possible. The alternative is more gloomy and is the less direct route. This assumes that funds will take a significant time to raise and thus the programme of work has to be scheduled over many years. This latter route would have implications for the life and use of Shakespeare's church.

So, a choice has to be made. But, there is one thing on which the worshippers, visitors and Shakespeare lovers, who may never have visited the church, can all agree and that is the need to conserve this magnificent piece of our heritage. It

is always difficult to know the exact repair costs for a building of such an age. More evidence of decay is likely to be uncovered as scheduled repair work proceeds. The architect's present estimate for the

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The detailed schedule and repair plan for the church are given on the newsletter insert. However, with the present on-going repairs to the tower and spire already

costing 50% over budget, a total figure of £5.0m will perhaps be closer to the final total.

With figures like these it would be easy for the Trustees to be uncertain of the future for Shakespeare's church. As I wrote in the last newsletter, we set a target to raise £500,000 over this year. It is ambitious. £100,000 in the first half

year suggests that our target is very ambitious.

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However, what has happened over the past six months has given confidence for sights to be set high. The wonderful local support over Christmas with the spire and tower appeal has been followed by some very generous support from our Friends in America. It has been tremendous to welcome so many new Friends from around the world and our office team has enjoyed the interest shown by so many in the newly-crafted

grotesques. We hope to keep you all posted on a regular basis about the progress of the repair schedule.

Finally I must pay tribute to our office team, to our volunteers and to so many Friends who give generously and without whom the vision of a fully restored Shakespeare's church would be impossible.

Thank you all for your support.

Philip Cheshire



A word from the Vicar

Firstly I'd like to say a very big thank you for your continued support of Shakespeare's Church through the work of the Friends. The steady income stream that comes from annual subscriptions is the bedrock on which everything else is built. That support is not just financial because we know that you, the Friends of this great building, are also its best supporters and advocates in the wider community, whether by inviting your friends to 'Be part of it' too, or by helping with events, or by raising with your MP or local councillor the perilous state of this priceless piece of national heritage and challenging them to help us find ways of conserving it for future generations to visit and enjoy. So thank you for all you do.

The task is great as we know but I'm very positive about all that we've already done with your help, and all that we will go on to do. We continue to focus on vital high level exterior repairs, but we are also keen to see other improvements in the coming years. Environmentally sensitive flood lighting for the tower once it's repaired, better heating and lighting inside whilst always trying to use more environmentally friendly alternatives. Opening up the north transept that is at present totally hidden from public view, improving facilities for visitors and congregations alike, finding a way to display some of our historical treasures, making that beautiful space above the porch a place of quiet beauty once more that people can use perhaps for quiet prayer and contemplation, rather than as the forgotten junk room that it had become over the ages. That latter project would only cost around £15,000. I say 'only' even though it's a lot of money. I certainly see a lot of cars driving past Holy Trinity that have cost a great deal more than that and think of the lifetimes of value that could be bought for that same investment at Holy Trinity. Even the £4 - 5 million that I'm told the entire restoration will cost should not be beyond our grasp. My old college raised almost twice that amount from a single person of means who really got hold of the vision, with the rest from people like you and me who gave what we could.

Philip Cheshire writes elsewhere about Legacies, which has reminded me that it's a long time since I last reviewed my will. It's really very simple to do and I've seen how comforting it is to relatives or friends to know that they are able to carry out someone's stated wishes. Many people now are what they call 'asset rich but cash poor', perhaps living on a pension but in a house that is now worth a lot of money. It's always good that those assets will be put to good use in due course in ways that we would have wished, helping people and causes that we feel most deeply about. I've even convinced myself! Now where's the phone number of that solicitor...

With every good wish and blessing

Martin Gorick. Vicar



New Sponsorship Initiative

After the success of 'Sponsor a Gargoyle', arrangements are currently being made for a new initiative, 'Sponsor a Misericord'.

Among the many treasures surviving in Holy Trinity, surely the Misericords are some of the most fascinating.

Did you know that in the early mediaeval church seven services a day were said by the priests, who were usually standing with uplifted hands?

Misericords are small wooden shelves, elaborately carved, underneath folding seats in the chancel. The seats themselves were turned up during a service.

In this position, the undersides provided a small shelf - the misericord - which allowed those who were old or infirm to lean against it during long periods of prayer, thus providing some form of comfort.

Here at Holy Trinity we are fortunate in having a very fine set of 26 carved



misericords dating from the 15th century. Not only do they illustrate the painstaking craftsmanship of the middle ages, but, more important still, they give us a true picture of mediaeval social history. Mediaeval wood carvers, like their contemporary craftsmen, the stone masons, were proud of their skill and ingenuity which enabled them to decorate the most inaccessible features of architecture and furnishings. The carvers were also endowed with an irrepressible sense of humour - there is ample evidence of this in the subject matter of the misericord carvings.

misericord carvings.

Your sponsorship will help us to ensure that these treasures are protected for future generations to come.

If you would like advance information regarding this latest "sponsorship initiative" please contact the Friends Office.

Phase II

Work has now started on Phase II of the restoration of the tower and spire. This has been made possible by substantial help from the Friends, and from the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust. Enormous cost savings have been gained, as we shall not have to re-erect the expensive scaffolding at a future date.

The new work will concentrate on the lower tower elevations, and will involve some replacement of stonework, together with repairs where appropriate. Overall, the face of the tower will be treated with a thin 'slurry', which will consolidate the crumbling stone to form a hard surface.

The current contractor, Croft Building and Construction, will carry out this additional work as a continuation of the existing contract, at a total cost of around £140,000.



Grotesques

As part of one of the earliest projects in the current restoration of the church, five deeply eroded mediaeval grotesques were re-carved on the south side of the chancel. A sixth, this time on the tower parapet, was added in 2006.

As a way of fundraising, we suggested that potential donors might 'sponsor' a grotesque, and we publicised this as widely as we could. At first, hardly any interest at all! Then, this spring, there was suddenly a burst of enthusiasm for grotesques. Schools, individuals, families, all took up the idea. A group in America, representing members of Mensa, took it upon themselves to raise funding to cover the total cost of 'Touchstone', the tower grotesque, and the magnificent sum of \$5,000 was sent to us.

They all need help. We are not asking for a specific sum, but so far the sponsorship has ranged from £10 (\$20) to £2,500 (\$5,000).

People have sponsored a grotesque for their grandchild, or for a birthday present, or just because they thought it was a funny thing to do. Sponsors receive a photograph of their chosen grotesque (not gargoyles, these ones don't have water spouts) and a certificate.



Touchstone The Bear
The Boar The Dog The Bat

America

In January, an Associated Press article about the challenges faced by Holy Trinity Church was syndicated throughout the North American press. As a result, the Friends received a wave of warm and generous support from Alaska to Florida as well as Canada, with individuals and groups keen to help us. From \$20 to \$5,000, people gave generously, sometimes with letters saying how much the senders had loved Holy Trinity when they had visited, others from Shakespeare enthusiasts. Schools, Shakespeare Clubs, colleges, and individuals from cities and those in tiny rural communities all got in touch with us to send good wishes and contributions. So, we felt we would like to send our thanks to them in return.

Over \$10,000 has been received from the United States this year in outright donations. Another \$8,000 has been associated with sponsorship of grotesques - 69 individual sponsorships so far. We are so grateful to you all for your support.

Among countless others, we should like to express our appreciation to:

- The Parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, Luverne, Minnesota
- Matthew McCrone and Project Shelter Shakespeare
- Students of Maclay School, Tallahassee, Florida
- Shakespeare Round Table of Bowling Green, Ohio
- The Shakespeare Club of Bangor, Maine
- The Shakespeare Club of Belleview Elementary School, from Englewood, Colorado
- Northshore High School, Slidell, Louisiana
- Staff from the English Department of Pocono Mountain East High School, Swiftwater, Pennsylvania

eBay

Did you know that old Boy Scout and Blue Peter badges have a sale value on eBay? This is just to remind you that Rob Craven is doing wonders on eBay on the Friends' behalf. So, if you have some badges, or indeed other items that you would be prepared to sell on eBay for the Friends, do get in touch.

A Gift for the future

It is never easy to write an article about legacies. There are too many ways in which it is possible to upset the reader unnecessarily. So, we hope that Friends will be understanding when reading these few words put together on this very important issue for Shakespeare's church.

Have you made a Will? Whether the answer to this is yes or no is unimportant. What is important is that legacies can provide a vital source of income for Shakespeare's church. A fine example of this is the stone cross that adorns the east end of the chancel roof. This was erected, entirely restored, thanks to a legacy. It could not have happened without this generous bequest.

In the coming years we have some big challenges to face. As a charity, we rely on the support of the Friends to allow Shakespeare's church to be restored. If you have not yet made a Will, please consider

the Friends of Shakespeare's Church when you do. If you have already made a Will, perhaps it is time to bring it up to date. Financial situations often change. For this and for many reasons you might be considering making a new Will.

If you would like to leave a legacy to the Friends of Shakespeare's Church but are otherwise happy with your Will, then you might wish to add a codicil; a less expensive option than a new Will! Leaving a legacy to the Friends of Shakespeare's Church will help us continue with our mission of restoring and saving Shakespeare's church for future generations.

If you would like a legacy leaflet or any help or advice about legacy-giving then please do contact our office directly. We will be very happy to help.

Telephone: 01789 290128

Email: friends@shakespeareschurch.org

An Idea from the Charities Aid Foundation

To paraphrase what they say:

Over the past ten years, the value of property has trebled. This provides an opportunity to benefit charitable causes. Owners of second homes that have risen steeply in value frequently find themselves facing a huge Capital Gains Tax bill when they come to sell their property, but if they sell their second home to CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) for less than its market value, they can reduce their Capital Gains and Income Tax liabilities for the year at a single stroke.

They quote the case of Mr X who realised that he no longer needed his holiday home

in Dorset. He decided to sell, but wanted to use some of the proceeds to make a gift to a local charity. He arranged to sell the house to CAF for £195,000. Having obtained Charity Commission approval, CAF then sold the house for its true market value of £255,000 to an agreed buyer, and placed the £60,000 profit into Mr X's CAF Trust. By selling the house to CAF at less than its market value, the seller was able to support his local charity, reduce his Capital Gains Tax bill by £20,000 and wipe out his Income Tax bill for the year entirely.

CAF's website is www.cafonline.org