



Friends' Newsletter

Autumn
2006

From Our Chairman, Julie Galliard

As the days grow shorter and the leaves turn, it seems a very long time since our Friends' Day in early May and my first Annual General Meeting as Chairman of the Friends. Discussion at the meeting was sympathetic to the slow negotiations and lack of definite information on the restoration of the Kempe window; a second report has now been received but it was decided to pursue other projects until such time as we could proceed with the window.

Therefore, we are currently funding the provision of three choir frontals – sort of free standing pew fronts – two for the choir, to stand in front of their chairs, and one for the clergy when they sit in the body of the church in front of the pulpit. These have been designed to match the recently purchased choir chairs but will be easily moved to positions elsewhere in the church if necessary.

Other projects currently in progress include the 'beautifying' of the organ. Rather a grand phrase that I know has been used before. It

involves painting the woodwork to improve the look of the wooden casing surrounding the pipe organ, which has looked increasingly neglected since the repainting of the church. I have recently 'splodged' some paint samples on the wooden doors so that the Fabric committee can choose the colour they think most befits the organ. (A Chairman's job isn't just leading meetings, you know!).

Projects referred to in the Spring newsletter are also moving forward. Designs are in hand for the wrought iron gate and arch to be placed at the entrance to the church from the car park. Some of the steps have been re-laid in an attempt to prevent water collecting on the top one. Unfortunately, water appeared elsewhere so further work will be done to try to prevent this. Once this work is completed we will look into lighting the steps in some way.

Our last Friends' Day followed its usual pattern, although the service of Evensong was slightly modified to include more hymns and a short address by Rev Pam Thorn.

Forty two Friends and guests shared the usual feast; thanks as always to the Friends' committee, those who contributed many mouth-watering delicacies and to James Morgan for organising the drinks. The speaker, Dr Stella Panayotova, gave an engaging and, at times, humorous talk on Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts housed in the Fitzwilliam Museum; the wonderful marginal illustrations, combining devotional imagery with charming depictions of everyday life, were vividly explored.

Finally, I offer my thanks to all of you for your continuing support of the Friends of St John's. The projects described above would not be underway without you. We would like to extend our membership – do you know of anyone who might like to contribute to the preservation of the historic village church? £10 a year, less than one pound per month, makes it possible. Contact the membership secretary, Cecily Beeton, on 01223 860604 or pick up a membership form from the church.

from the Revd Nick Moir

One of the books I read during my sabbatical was Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*. It is perhaps the most significant book on English church history to be produced in the second half of the twentieth century. As it is quite

long, and was not around in my theological college days, it has taken me a while to catch up with it. Its significance lies in the fact that the author is a Roman Catholic, and my generation of trainee clergy, and all before me, learnt our Eng-

lish Reformation from a Protestant perspective.

We're not talking about Ian Paisley Protestantism here but it was the Reformation written up by the 'winners'. Eamon Duffy's book gives a very different perspective – and I found it to be a very moving

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from David Adamson

After leaving King's College, Cambridge, and spending a few months on a Norwegian glacier, I went directly to north east Thailand. One morning, swimming through that delicious state of half sleep, half wakefulness, I heard a ragged chorus coming from the British and Thai guards of our camp: "Happy Birthday to You, Happy Birthday dear Jesus, Happy Birthday to You." Then it dawned on me: it was Christmas morning, being celebrated in a very "Royal Engineers" manner.

The following Christmas Eve (1968) after Christmas night dinner with German friends, driving along the winding roads through the rubber plantations, suddenly worrying about how much sherry and snaps there had been in the trifle. Midnight mass was sung in a clearing beside the simple church, the palm trees waving in the moonlight.

Then suddenly posted at a few days' notice from our home on Palm Beach, Malacca, to down-town Gravesend - what a thought. The flu epidemic left but a few celebrants on Christmas Day in

the barracks (and reduced the guests for the Christening of daughter, Joanne, from 20 down to 2).

Then back a few miles south east - to the Snowy Mountains in Australia for 2 years doing research into water-flow through high dams. We spent "Chrissy", as the Australians call it, with distant cousins over a steak barbecue. I had a strange experience that Christmas Eve: popping into a backstreet pet shop, I heard from the back the strains of a choir I thought I recognised. The shopkeeper asked what was up and I said I was just listening to the choir from the radio. "Ah yes King's College 9 Lessons; he said". It turned out his time at King's had overlapped with mine and he had worked with Desmond Morris - before parting because he thought Desmond was being too commercial!

From Oz, and after 6 months in what were the "troubles" in Ulster, back to Christmas by the Medway. Then the next few Christmases in Waterbeach from 1975 - memories of the wonderful Christmas-mass services, the Vicar, most

of the choir and much of the congregation arriving all together two minutes before the start of the service having been eating and drinking punch in 2 Pieces Lane: anybody left in the house had to do the clearing up. I also remember the Christmas Light celebrations on Advent Sunday evenings. Then off to Germany and very happy memories of great Christmas eve parties, largely fancy dress, and then off to the Weinachtzeit. Two more Christmas-masses in Waterbeach while CO of 39 Regiment, and then a couple of Christmases in the NATO Headquarters in Belgium - usually a quiet Christmas eve dinner with our Jewish friends before they flew back to us the next day.

Then out of the Army and to Somerset into Higher Education; Christmas Light celebrations grew and grew, going round each of the 4 churches in the Parish on the 4 Sundays of Advent for evensong (or evensnog as it was once regrettably misprinted).

Now back near Waterbeach at Girton - thinking of past Christmas Lights and wondering ...

from Nick Moir

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one. Yes, there were lots of abuses that need sorting out in the pre-Reformation church and yes, there are many things that were great victories of the Reformation, but what Duffy reminds us of is what was lost.

It was not the case that most English people couldn't wait to be rid of the tyrannies of Rome and all its popish practices. On the contrary, the Reformation forced upon a largely unwilling people a new way of doing religion. Out

went the image, in came the word; out went village processions and outdoor celebrations, in came sitting in pews; out went drama, ritual and symbolism, in came listening to lots of words. That dramatically changed the way our buildings were used, were decorated and were ordered.

I believe that younger people today look for a combination of word *and* image and desire an active participation in worship that is more than joining in words. I suspect that this may lead to a new appreciation of the sacred space bequeathed to us by our fore-

bears. Now that we have re-decorated the church and have completed the remedial works, it may be time to think more about the use of image, symbol, candles, lighting and even smells to accentuate the spiritual and lead individual visitors and congregations more deeply into a sense of the spiritual and the Divine Presence.

This would not be an attempt to recreate the past, but rather be an endeavour to harness all the insights of the traditions we have inherited to shape a spiritually richer future. Ideas are welcome!

The Revd. Patrick Jones, Vicar of Waterbeach from 1975 to 1979 writes ...

At the end of last February, my wife Pam and I entered into retirement. (I can't really believe it. It still feels as if we are on holiday!) Packing up our belongings, I came across a photograph of St John's choir - Michael and Jane Williamson with a large number of youngsters and adults; and what memories it evoked!

It was the winter of 1974 when as curate at St. George's Chesterton, Cambridge, I received a telephone call, summoning me to Ely for an interview with Bishop Edward Roberts. On arrival at the Bishop's House, I was met by his secretary who ushered me upstairs to his bedroom, where Ted Roberts lay propped up in bed, suffering from influenza. He greeted me warmly, and after inviting me to lay hands on him and offer prayers for his healing, he explained the reason for the summons. The parish of St. John's, Waterbeach, were in state of interregna, and he invited me to consider filling the vacancy by becoming priest-in-charge. He gave me a week to think and pray about it. Pam and I were excited at the prospect, and within the week, be-

lieving it was a call of God, I had gladly accepted the invitation.

I was almost a local lad, having been born and educated at Impington. It came as no surprise therefore, to discover I already knew a number of my new parishioners, not least Robert Stripe, who at that time was St. John's assistant organist - we were in the same class at Impington Village College!

What a welcome we received at our first meeting with the churchwardens and PCC.

Their love and acceptance quickly dispelled any doubts or uncertainties we may have had.

We were thrilled and privileged to move into the new vicarage on The Green in January 1975 - such a lovely house in so central a position.

I was young and inexperienced, and had so much to learn, but I just loved St. John's.

It wasn't long before Pam and I had that wonderful sense of belonging; belonging to a loving, caring Christian community. I inherited an amazing Licensed Lay Reader, Jack

Harding - what a kind, loving and holy man! He was such a support to me.

I knew very little of army life and yet I was the chaplain to the Barracks. I knew even less about children's work, and was invited to lead assemblies at Waterbeach School and be involved in many of their activities.

Pam and I still recall the wonderful adventures we had with the Youth Club, camping in tents or church halls. They were a great bunch and were so good with our own small children.

Then the building of the new Church Room with kitchen and toilets. What a blessing that was, and what fun we had in it too!

Although we were only at Waterbeach for four and a half years, how grateful I am for all that we shared together. It was such an important time for us. Our own love of God and sense of vocation was nurtured and grew incredibly. It was a tremendous grounding for the rest of our ministry.

To those of you who remember us, thank you so much. May God bless all of you.

Brigadier Tony Kendall writes ...

It's hard to believe that 21 years have passed since we said goodbye to the military life on leaving Waterbeach in autumn 1985. Elizabeth and I both hail from the West Country and those two and a half happy years in Cambridge-shire introduced us to a completely new part of England - East Anglia. Yet now, after 10 years working and a further 11

in 'retirement' in West Norfolk, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

I was extremely fortunate in getting a job shortly after leaving the Army. Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, whose charity already included 250 Cheshire Homes worldwide, wished to create a holiday hotel for disabled people and their carers, family and

friends. Thus a new venture was born at Park House, Sandringham, a Victorian manor owned by the Queen and famous as the childhood home of Diana, Princess of Wales. I was appointed project director by the Leonard Cheshire Foundation to convert it into a suitable hotel and then become General Manager. We

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sold our Salisbury house, bought one at North Wootton near King's Lynn and after a year's preparation the hotel opened in March 1987. A demanding but fulfilling 9 years followed as General Manager, with 80 members of nursing and hotel staff on the payroll and an average occupancy of 85%. Being under continual pressure to reduce costs, I made maximum use of volunteers. Elizabeth (as a volunteer herself) played a huge part in this by organising 60 local people to run Special Interest Weeks, drive minibuses, take guests on outings and make their stay as enjoyable as possible. Due to hotel commitments at weekends I was unable to play much part in our village church, but on Sundays we squeezed up to a dozen guests into the morning service at Sandringham, wheelchairs and all!

After retiring from Park House

I became churchwarden at All Saints, North Wootton and the following year felt called to be a Reader. Following a 3 year course similar to non-stipendiary ordination training I was licensed in Norwich Cathedral in May 2000. Our benefice is not large by national standards (population 6500 and two churches), but it's extremely active and we have a wide range of services ranging from 1662 to informal worship more suited to younger people. I lead services or preach two or three times a month, while Elizabeth is a member of the Pastoral Visiting Team and distributes the parish magazine. We've enjoyed hosting four Alpha Courses at home and study groups in Lent. 2005 was unduly busy with a 9-month interregnum, but the pressure has eased a little recently as our new Rector settles into the job. Currently about 100 people attend Sunday worship, but we are anticipating more

as his new initiatives feed into the community.

Otherwise I have my hands full as chairman of a charity which fundraises in UK to support an inspiring medical project in Bangladesh specialising in the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of people paralysed by spinal cord injury. I've visited twice this year and always return uplifted by the dedication of 250 staff and the results achieved. Locally, my interest in conservation and the environment is kept active as Secretary for CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) in West Norfolk. Meanwhile Elizabeth chairs a charity named Gardening with Disabilities (Norfolk) which gives her a fruitful outlet for her love of gardens and working with disabled people. We still keep in touch with several friends from Waterbeach days and send our very best wishes to all who worship at St John's.

April 28th, 2007

AGM and Annual Dinner

Speaker - Caroline Gohlin

from the Cambridge Preservation Trust