



From our Chairman, Julie Galliard

The months since the last newsletter have seen the completion of yet another Friends' project. The whole church has been enhanced by the provision of pew cushions, which were installed and dedicated at the end of January. Not only do they provide uniform look to the church, they also make the seating more comfortable and warm. The colour has blended well with the existing furnishings in the church and almost everyone who worships regularly at St Johns has expressed their appreciation at this new addition. Indeed, a senior resident of Waterbeach has mentioned the fact that it would have been wonderful to have such cushions when he attended services as a lad in short trousers!!

While the church and its congregation benefit from the cushions, the Friends' funds have been depleted by the decision to provide cushions for all the pews in the Nave, meaning major projects will not be undertaken in the near future. The exception to this is the provision of the gate and archway into the car park at the rear entrance to the churchyard. This is under construction, and we hope to have an act of dedication at the end of the service on Friends' Day.

This newsletter contains what is becoming a usual mix of current news and memories. I am sure there are many Friends who have news and memories – or both – that would be of interest to others. Please do contact me or one of the committee

with a contribution, however small. News from those Friends who have moved away would be especially welcome.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Friends' Day and Annual Dinner on 10th May. The format remains as always – see details elsewhere in this letter. Evensong will be led again this year by Reverend Pam Thorn. Sherry will be at 6.30 pm. Tickets for the dinner are available now. Please contact me or Ros Wright for tickets (contact details appear with the Friends' Day information). This year, we are again inviting you to bring your own wine. Sherry and soft drinks will be provided as before. There will be a light musical entertainment after the dinner.

Canon Brian Macdonald-Milne writes

2007 was quite a challenging and fruitful year for me. My appointment as Advisor of the Melanesian Brotherhood in 2005 has meant carrying out the wishes of the Brotherhood Council, and especially of the Father of the Brotherhood, Archbishop Sir Ellison Pogo of Melanesia, which last year involved visiting Households of the Brotherhood, as well as Companions and Chaplains in Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) and Solomon Islands.

I also attended the Great Conference of the Brotherhood, held in October, at which its new leaders were elected and I received from the Archbishop formal permission to officiate in his Province of

Melanesia, which covers those two independent countries and also the French territory of New Caledonia.

As Regional Chaplain of the Companions in Europe, as well as Advisor, I was present also at the Great Conference of the Companions, of which there may be as many as 15,000 throughout the world. We have over 100 in Europe, mostly in England.

This new work in a voluntary capacity has changed the pattern of my life, but I continue to help in the parishes of Waterbeach and Landbeach, to be Trustee of three charities, and to assist in other organisations connected with the Pacific Islands or the Church. I was

delighted to see my goddaughter, Sharon, and her family in the Solomon Islands.

In 2008 I hope to be able to visit the Papua New Guinea Region of the Brotherhood, and some other countries. I have recently been elected an Honorary Canon of the Provincial Cathedral of St Barnabas, Honiara, Solomon Islands, and expect to be formally installed there in 2008 by Archbishop Pogo before he retires on December 9th.

Please pray for the Brotherhood and Solomon Islands as it emerges from a period of 'tension,' and for me as I do what I can, by the grace of God, to serve Him both in the UK and in the Pacific.

Martin Jones recalls his early life

I was born in Waterbeach late in 1930 at 3 Station Road where my aunt, who was a First World War widow, lived. My parents lived in Chittering Fen. When I was due it was felt prudent that my mother move up to the village to be nearer the District Nurse/Midwife for prompt attendance when needed as at the time the good lady travelled the village and district on her bicycle.

During the 1930's Waterbeach was a very rural area with the majority of residents employed in farming and market gardening; the Railway Company LNER employed a number. A few cycled to Cambridge to work. The roads were not as busy as they are today.

As a very young boy I can remember the village having two cycle shops, a draper's shop, three grocery stores, two bakeries - one of which delivered by pony and trap, a post office and a blacksmith who doubled up as a farrier.

Along the High Street, and elsewhere in the village, there were grass verges between the pavements and the road itself. Water supply was by way of 5 hand pumps situated around the village. Sturdy iron railings, similar to the ones around the telephone box, surrounded the village green.

During the 1930s and early 1940s most of the residents had a vegetable garden or allotment - sometimes both - to grow fruit and vegetables for their families, friends and neighbours. I can remember quite clearly how people helped each other. Times were not quite as affluent as they are today!

I attended the infants' school on Cambridge Road, which is now the IT training centre, and later the senior school, which is now the Guest House.

I can remember the area, which is now the airfield and occupied by the Royal

Engineers Regiment, being farmed by a number of people on County Council smallholdings, but in 1940 the tenants were asked to vacate them to facilitate the building of the RAF Station to a wartime footing. By now, I was living down Waterbeach Fen which meant cycling to school; once the RAF Station was operational I often observed the aircraft coming home from a bombing raid, many of them shot-up and not all engines running. Also at the beginning of the war, there was a number of army personnel billeted within the parish that ran two searchlight units - one was situated in Bannold Road on the edge of the village and another in Waterbeach Fen, four miles from the village. At nights, when air raids were likely, these lights would be switched on powered by a self-contained generator. As a boy, I found all this very exciting.

... as does Jo Adamson, some years later

Time never seemed to stand still growing up in Waterbeach and I have nothing but fond memories of the village and its people

I think one of the best things was the variety of activities I could, and did, get stuck into! The Annual Feast was a prime example as it provided a forum to unite all of the village elements - one year I started the day on the Brownies' float, then helped out on a school stall, later on competed in the fancy dress contest with my brothers and our donkeys which were always the winning ticket - the donkeys, not my brothers! My final role of the day was 'starring', in my opinion, as a squirrel on the jury in the performance of Toad of Toad Hall.

Weekends were also a flurry of activity, with my best friend Miranda always by my side, and began with the Saturday morning choir practice for us to brush up on that week's hymns and psalms while Michael Williamson pounded the small wooden piano. After that we were free

to spend our pocket money, usually on ¼'s of sweets displayed in huge jars on the post office shelves. Next it was out and about on our bikes - roaming everywhere and nowhere - tearing fearlessly along the roads, the footpaths along the Cam, playing at friends' houses and, for a time, excavating the area by the brook near the railway line where we dug up weird and wonderfully shaped and coloured Victorian medicine bottles.

My time at school was particularly enjoyable, probably because of all the opportunities for creativity such as learning the violin, acting in the annual plays and taking part as a member of the 'Fen' house team on Sports Day which unfailingly offered both the traditional and some unconventional races and events. Even though I don't remember much of the academic side, I do recall loving all of the projects and compiling each one into a book with marbled covers and braided bindings which, at the time, made us all proud.

The army barracks, where my Dad worked, were also part of my life as it was where the donkeys lived, apart from when they occasionally fancied a change of scenery and somehow got past the security guards to escape to the prime grazing spot on the village Green. I personally appreciated the barracks for its extra play space with the huge pool, swing-park and the indoor firing range, although one visit there and the resulting sore shoulder was enough to discourage me from joining the forces! However, I was most grateful for the vast airfield, fortunately disused; because I could test my Dad's patience as I got behind a wheel of a car and attempted to slalom around the 2 litre Coke bottles he'd laid out that I could barely see, let alone avoid!

Choosing to return to Waterbeach many years later to get married in its church and to teach in its school really sums up what happy memories I have about this village.