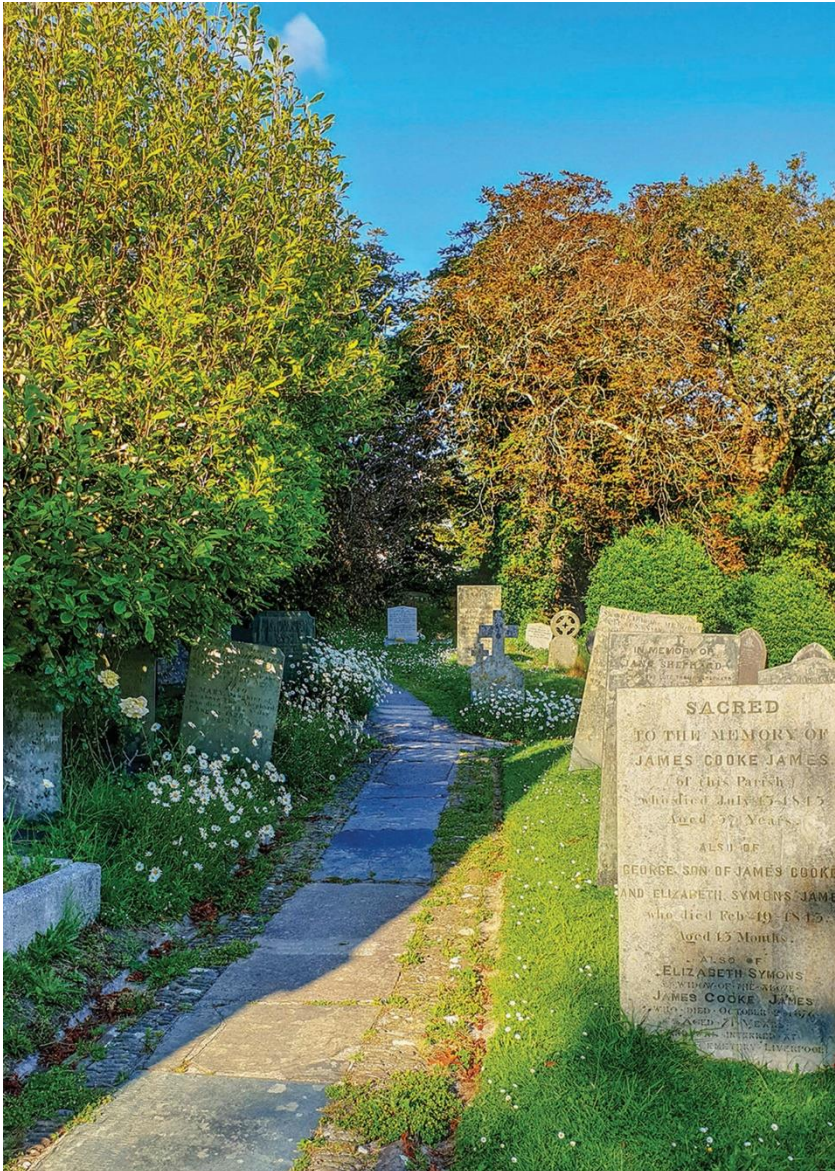




Friends of St Andrew's Church,
Stratton, Cornwall
Newsletter Autumn 2023
Volume 15 Issue 2





St Andreas

Detail from a stained glass window in

St Andrew's church

Dear Friends of St Andrew's,

Recently St Andrew's featured in the Bude and Stratton post and on Truro Diocesan website under the title "catching the Creation Care bug", which you can read in full if you use the following link <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/2023/8/catching-the-creation-care-bug/>

As ever, so much of what we are able to do at St Andrew's is supported by and contributed to by our dear friends for which I thank you.

Specifically, FoStA has helped in our venture by funding the regeneration work of part of the churchyard boundary, when we planted a hawthorn hedge and filled other gaps with shrubs. Also the garden area near where the Darley oak was planted and the wall that needed repairing was funded by FoStA.

One of our members, Alan McIntosh, made and installed the nest boxes and roofed the seat recently placed at the top of the churchyard.

In this letter, I thought I would share with you some of my reflections: -

It is just so good to see the positive work that St Andrew's is doing in caring for creation and for its close work with Stratton Primary School. It's so good to see "good news" in the newspapers and on-line. As "Good news" is what those of us who believe in God, who are followers of Jesus and who are inspired by the Holy Spirit are all about.

We are thankful for this beautiful world that God has created, we are inspired by the Holy Spirit to take good care of it and one another, and we follow Jesus because we know that Jesus is the greatest sign of God's love for creation and each one of us.

As we look at creation's story, we see humanity's story being told as well.

We see that creation was created good. Beautiful, diverse, intricate, vast, interconnected and mutually dependent. And yet it has become spoiled, through our lack of tending and keeping, and by our excess of greed and ignorance. It is in a sorry state. But despite the groaning of the earth under

the weight of harm, there is still great beauty to be seen, and we are continually inspired by the grandeur of trees, and vistas, the sky and the sea and the creatures that inhabit them and the tiny ant at work or the delicate flower and dew drops. The spoiled and the beautiful co-exist. It is the same with humanity. We were created good, very good and in God's image. Our delicate inside and intricate outside, were woven together in our mother's womb. We were made to accompany and to love one another; made to know and love God, even as we are fully known and fully loved by God; made to enjoy and to care for creation, made to nourish and be nourished by creation.

But we have become spoiled, through our lack of attending to God and to His ways, by not caring for one another, in our greed and power seeking, for journeying on a path that takes us away from God and therefore one another.

And yet despite humanity groaning under the weight of war and famine, of injustice and harm, there is still great beauty to be seen; in compassion and care, in sharing and serving, in peacemakers and eco-justice seekers.

The spoiled and the beautiful co-exist.

And so the "good news" is that in all this madness and mayhem, chaos and confusion, destruction and disaster, there is love and there is hope and there is faith. Not just for the future, though it's there as well, but here and now, for you and me today.

We are so utterly loved by God, that he came to dwell among us in His Son, Jesus. To show us his way of being, and doing, and loving, and healing, and forgiving, and showing mercy & compassion. Of having faith in Jesus, and being enveloped in his faith in us. And affirming bright hope for tomorrow, bright hope for today, that we will not perish, that we will not crumble under the weight of harm and that we will have an everlasting home in him.

It's so good, to see and hear "good news".

Yours in Christ,

Teresa

Reverend Teresa Folland

The Church at the End of the World

It is generally known that New Zealand has a North Island and a South Island, but less well known is its third island, Stewart Island. Situated 18 miles from the tip of South Island, it was 'discovered' in 1809 when a sealing vessel circumnavigated the island. Captain Cook had sailed past in 1770 assuming it was the tip of South Island! It was named after William Stewart, the first officer of the sealing ship, but was known to the Maori of the region as 'Rakiura' (Glowing Skies), a reference to the southern lights observed in the southern latitudes (*aurora australis*). A small and hilly island measuring 650 square miles, 85% of which forms the Rakiura National Park, it is a bird sanctuary of international repute, and one of the few places where you might be lucky enough to observe kiwi birds in the wild. During the nineteenth century coastal settlements were established where the small populations were mainly engaged in boat building, fishing and fish-curing. Today, the economy relies on tourism and fishing. The island has a population of just 400 people, most of whom live in Oban, the only settlement on the island.



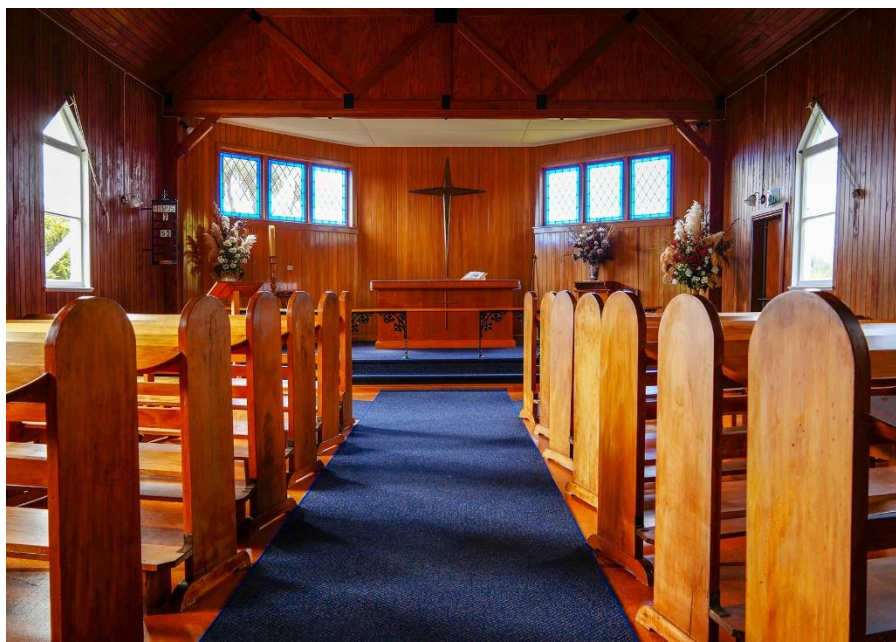
Nevertheless, there is a Presbyterian church as well as St Andrew's Anglican Church. Needless to say, neither has a resident incumbent so services are announced on the community noticeboard as and when they are due to take place.

St Andrew's is in the Diocese of Dunedin, although the city of Dunedin is 150 miles away! In 2012 the diocese announced it was on the brink of financial collapse but somehow it has weathered the storm and survives as the smallest diocese in New Zealand. The diocese has 18 stipendiary clergy supported by an even smaller number of non-stipendiaries. Nevertheless, on Stewart Island there is a small and energetic group of people who ensure that the church continues to function as a place of worship and manages the maintenance of the building and its church hall.



The church was established in 1900 and nestles at the top of a hill in Oban overlooking Halfmoon Bay. It is a somewhat curious wooden building resembling an upturned boat and which, unlike the Presbyterian church, does not have a spire. Consequently the 'bell tower' containing two church bells is situated in the garden adjacent to the church.

Nearby is the Church Hall which, in 1909, was established in a different part of the island as a community church. In 1933 it was uprooted and moved to Oban where it served as the Sunday School until, in 1990, it was moved up the hill and sited next to the church. St Andrew's is the oldest building in Oban and has been restored many times, most recently in 2010 when it started a four year heritage buildings plan designed to 'restore' both the church and the church hall as well as the bells.



On his visit to New Zealand in May 2015, Prince Harry made a trip to Stewart Island to experience the flora and fauna in Rakiura National Park. Photos show he visited the newly restored St Andrew's church but nothing else is recorded about the visit. Nevertheless, as the furthest south of all parish churches in the world, with only thousands of miles of sea to Antarctica beyond, it is quite something to visit the church at the end of the world!

Meryll Goodwin FoStA Minutes Secretary

CHURCHYARD TREES

Our parish churchyard is a very special place, quiet, peaceful, a source of memories, happy and sad, for many people. It is a slice of local history of interest to visitors from afar as much as to generations of neighbours and has links to people from nearby churches and chapels going back several centuries.

The trees in the churchyard that you see now are predominately those planted in a scheme in 1992 following the removal of many trees damaged in storms in the late '80s as well as several decayed and dangerous. The new 18 trees were planted by parishioners under the guidance of the County Forrester and they were the gift of the Cornwall County Council planning department.

Horse Chestnuts each side of the Lych Gate completed a line planted some years earlier and a glorious Monterey Pine on the left hand side is one of 3 originally planted, intending for the best one to be the survivor. On the boundary of the new ground at the top, now nearly full of graves, are a Wild Cherry, a Whitebeam and a Sycamore on the left and a Silver Maple and Whitebeam on the right.

The woodland north of the new wall surrounding the new ground was planted by members of the local Young Farmers Club and is willingly maintained by the owner of that land.

Each side of the central wall are a Norway Maple, a Sycamore, a Wild Cherry, a Rowan and a Hornbeam and lower down on the right-hand side of the churchyard is a Turkey Oak and a Wild Cherry. In the last few years two old and decayed Horse Chestnuts have had to be removed from that corner by Sanctuary Lane Gate and in this area the

new Darley Oak sapling has been planted to commemorate 600 years of the Blanchminster Trust.

Over the years all these trees continue to need careful control as many branches overhang the underlying graves. Being all under Tree Preservation Orders this management requires permission from time to time from Cornwall County Council and the Diocese of Truro.

In the southeast corner of the churchyard by Diddies Road there are 3 Yew Trees bordering the roadside wall and pavement. They all have high branches through which electricity and phone cables pass. The Vicarage was in that area until 1840 and it is thought these Yew trees were present in the Vicarage Garden for many years before that. The area was subsequently incorporated into the churchyard. The Electricity authorities over many years have trimmed branches away from their lines leaving these Yew trees to slowly grow in a very distorted fashion. Careful reduction of the height away from the wires and re-shaping is being planned for this autumn subsequent to PCC, Diocesan and Council approval. A 30-year-old London Plane Tree, one of 3 originally placed there, has also reached the wires so will be suitably curtailed.

The roadside wall has a slight bow in it which is possibly damage from tree roots. It is being carefully monitored. Correcting this if necessary will be an even greater challenge!

Ian Barker Fabric Committee Secretary

It hasn't gone un-noticed that jobs are being done in the churchyard – weeding and suchlike - by a secret volunteer.

Thank You and God Bless. *Ed*

RAISING the FLAG

As in all parish churches there is a raft of people who volunteer to 'do jobs' and without whom we would be in dire straits. One of these jobs which is not only of great importance to St Andrew's but also to the surrounding community is the Flag Raiser and it is by no means an easy task.

When I started to think of items for the newsletter I was compiling Job Descriptions and Health and Safety documents and I suddenly had the idea of asking Paul Davy, who very often does the job of hoisting the flag on the Tower, to write a piece for me about flags in general. He has done this but it will probably need to be published in two parts. The first offering is a rather fictional, 'tongue in cheek' and writer's license Job Description which I found hilarious as did the retired former flag 'putter upper'. *Ed*

*I must go raise the flag today, the lonely flag on high,
and all I need is a tall pole and a wind to fly her by.*

With apologies to John Masefield

Instructions for Flag Raiser(s) Average age 70+

Ab ovo usque ad malus

The incumbent will have drawn the short straw and sworn allegiance to the Hands and Knees Society.

1. Brace yourself.
2. Fumble for the key to the entrance of the tower - in the dark.
3. Stand at the door and with serendipity locate the keyhole (which appears to change position each time

it is required), insert the hand forged key and wiggle it approximately ten times before it engages.

4. Ensure your triangular boots are securely strapped to your ankles and shins.
5. Using your shoulder give the door a hefty barge.
NB The door may or may not open, if the latter, perform the key ritual again until successful.
6. Find the light switch, it *is* there. Flick the switch to turn the light on. Once ignited, the bulb, which is situated some distance up the tower, will provide 1 candlelight of minimum illumination to discover the rope with which to steady yourself for the ascent.
7. Once your eyes have adapted to the gloom, ascend!
NB Stages 1 to 7 will be accomplished much more quickly with years of hit and miss success.
8. After approximately 60 inconvenient steps you will arrive at Apartment 1. A largish room with a high ceiling accommodating machinery which regulate the clock and the chimes. It all looks rather Heath Robinson and something out of a museum, but it is very professional and functional.
9. Scrabble in the large box and identify within the flag to be hauled, there is no system, so every flag has to be unravelled as quite a few are very similar, apart from St Piran's.
10. New skills have to be applied for the next stage. A keen sense of balance and stability is necessary as both hands are now in use for holding the flag and hand rope. Any slip of the foot may result in injury.
11. After several more steps arrive at Apartment 2, the Bellery (often mistakenly referred to as the Belfry).
NB Never hover around the bellery when the bells are about to strike. A midday encounter may result in permanent loss of hearing.
12. Continue at pace if you do not wear a timepiece or find that you are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

13. Eventually, after approximately 60 more steps arrive at a rabbit hutch sized door with an awkward latch. You will now need both hands to open the latch. Contort your body into its smallest configuration and inch through the hole flag first.
14. WOW! Feeling like an escaped prisoner, engage in the freedom. A few yoga exercises may be useful to straighten the back before the next stages.
15. Before looking over the battlements to check if you can still see your house or if Mrs Jones has mowed her lawn yet ... scan the lead roof top for trippy-up-bits, they are everywhere, the roof is fragile supported only by a salvaged 700-year-old piece of timber from a sunken vessel and held in place by lobster pot sinews. There are lightening conductor strips, knobbls of lead repairs, slippery areas, uneven places. BEWARE. Now you know what a Jack Daws perspective of Stratton looks like. You are higher than any Robin, Blackbird or Thrush has been. Only the Buzzards and Seagulls can trump you. Take the time to wonder at your privilege, it is fantastic to be up here.
16. Wake up! Better get on with the flag things. This procedure should only be attempted with the guidance of an experienced veteran and although written instructions are available the nuances involved are not easily translated into practicality. The flag is at the mercy of the wind so great care and dexterity is needed to avoid getting it caught on the prickly bits of the weathervanes which are unforgiving once snagged. If unlucky enough to fall foul of the vanes you will spend a night down in Apartment 2. If all goes well, you can look forward to a proper hot Cornish pasty and a nice cup of tea on arrival at the church floor. (Don't forget to lock the door and re-hide the key in the secret place and

hang your triangular boots in the miscellaneous room within the cellar.

17. Descent is far easier and once successfully grounded and the flag is flying free ... JOB DONE!

To be continued

Val Barker writes –

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that Summer is nearly over and that we are all beginning to think about Harvest Thanksgiving, Autumn tidy-ups and the coming Winter Fuel bills which are such a worry for so many but, it is also that time of year when there is so much to look forward to in the Church's liturgical year and family life in general. Happy times ahead.

I have been fortunate this Autumn in that I have received several offerings for the Newsletter which has been very gratifying. Thank you all - it certainly makes life easier and gives added interest for our readers.

As has been said in the Newsletter in a previous edition, we aren't doing the Calendar this year as the sales were rather poor so we decided to give it a break this year. Surprisingly I have already had several disappointed members. We also decided to try and sell the stock of Christmas cards with the addition of a new version of an old favourite and then maybe next year we will produce something new and different but keeping to the religious theme as that is what Christmas is about after all.

If you would like to order some cards from the FoStA stock please visit the website www.fosta.org.uk and go to the FoStA Shop page and you will find the cards we have all beautifully set out by the Webmaster for you to see. Do take a look and please remember that this is the only specific fund raiser we are doing this Christmas.

As David says on his webpage –

All cards shown are for £4.00 for five with envelopes. There are also mystery packs priced at £4.00 for six.

Please order direct from Val Barker using email:

ianandvalstratton@hotmail.co.uk or phone: 01288 353435

We have also recently had a new printing of greetings cards which will be coming online shortly including two old favourites and three completely new designs. Do take a look.

Thank you to everyone who has continued with their membership over all these years – we are in our fifteenth year now and the interest and support is as strong as ever. Our heritage which is this very special, holy place here in Stratton is so important to so many and the firm affiliations show no sign of diminishing. Long may it continue.

We are grateful and although never see many of you face to face, you are remembered in our prayers and we thank the Lord for you all.

Keep well, be safe and God bless you.

Val

Dates for Your Diary

Sat 2nd December St Andrew's GIFT DAY and Craft Fayre from 10am until 4pm.

The online monthly calendar is kept up to date by our Web Master with services and events so do check for further details at www.fosta.org.uk

Items for Sale

Please remember the online FoStA Shop

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Members are sent a copy by post and
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www.fosta.org.uk

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This exquisite wooden cross appears on one of the new
Greeting Cards mentioned above

All photographs courtesy of David Goodwin JP