

**Friends of St Andrew's Church
Stratton, Cornwall**



Newsletter Autumn 2009

Volume 1 Issue 2

Dear Friends,

Thank you all for your continued interest in St Andrew's Church in Stratton. With over a hundred friends now, it is quite astounding to see to how many different parts of the world our membership extends. It is also humbling to think of the number of people, both locally and further afield, who are taking an active interest in our parish church and what we do here.

Since I wrote last time, we have had a very successful Flower Festival on the theme of Old Stratton. Brilliantly masterminded by Val Barker and her team of willing helpers, this was a real joy for all who came. As a relative newcomer to Stratton, I found all the information about how Stratton used to be quite a revelation. Alongside that, we had an excellent talk from Joan Heard, a well-known resident of Stratton, who was able to fill in the details of the displays with her own personal reminiscences of life in Stratton fifty years ago. It was certainly a vibrant place to have lived, with a great deal going on, centred around Church, Chapel, shops and the Market. Nostalgia for the 'Old Days' was rife during the weekend – even amongst those who didn't remember what they were like!

The other important event that has happened this year was the revival of the Summer Fete. Although the old Fete field had been sold and built on, we were still able to use part of it, by kind permission of Bill Kneebone, whose garden it now is. We were also loaned the use of Peter Stephen's field on the opposite side of the river, access to which was over a very handy bridge. The day was a great success: Bishop Tim, the new Bishop of Truro, came to open the proceedings and remained to judge a few events. He was also able to stay for the last event of the day: the Tug of War across the river, in almost exactly the same spot as it had been in past years. Everyone who attended thoroughly enjoyed the whole day and I personally received many comments as to how good it was to have

the Fete back in Stratton, after almost twenty years absence. Most especially, there was a general consensus that the whole event had been a wonderful occasion for bringing together the whole of the Stratton community – just like it had worked together in former times.

The church's final big event of the year is to be our Patronal Festival Weekend, an invitation to which you will find enclosed with this newsletter. This will be the weekend of 28th / 29th November, when we shall have Gift Day and the Annual Ringing Competition on the Saturday and our Patronal Festival Mass on the Sunday evening. It is hoped to have a display of archival material in the church over the weekend, some sales tables, selling cards, church goods and produce, and also there will be refreshments available. This is to encourage people not just to come to the church on Gift Day, but also to come inside and enjoy its peace and beauty.

Thank you again for your support of St Andrew's and we look forward to it continuing for many years to come.

With the love of Christ

Fr. David Standen



**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HYMN BOOKS**

St Andrew's has a fine set of new 'Common Praise' hymn books which were carefully selected after much discussion and all those now in use were donated by families and individuals in memory of a loved one. Each one has a bookplate at the front with the name of the person to be remembered, their date of birth and death and a short dedication.

There are approximately 25 books remaining – each costing £10. If anyone reading this Newsletter would like to be involved and purchase a hymn book, please send a cheque, made payable to St Andrew's PCC and addressed to the FoStA Membership Secretary, for the appropriate amount with the details to be entered on the book plate/s.



Membership Secretary's Report

The Friends of St Andrew's Church, Stratton is now just over a year old and it has been very heartening to realize just how many people have a genuine and supportive interest in our parish church and churchyard. There are, to date, 104 members with a good spread of all the membership categories. We have added Joint Life membership to the list after the recent review and updating of the FoStA leaflet and membership application form. If you happen to be one of those who have taken out an individual life membership and would like to add your wife, husband or partner please contact me to arrange this.

One of the committee members, John Gimson, has done sterling work with the FoStA website. Do visit at www.fosta.org.uk and see for yourself. Any feedback offered will be gratefully received.

St Andrew's Flower Festival, Stratton in Times Past, was extremely successful this year and I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the Friends who came to the Festival and/or to the Talk and Concert & also to those who were unable to come but sent donations. It was all much appreciated.

May I also thank all those who have already kindly renewed their annual memberships for another year and those who continue their standing orders. Membership renewal reminders are going out where this is appropriate.

Thank you all.

Val Barker
FoStA Membership Secretary

A report on the Fabric

As is always the case with a beautiful medieval building, such as ours, the Fabric is in need of almost constant attention. However, we have a willing team of people who do all that they can to keep the church in the best condition possible – too numerous to mention individually, they deserve our thanks for all the hard work they put in.

Over the last few months, we added two new brackets in the chancel, one to hang a lamp on and a matching one for the thurible during Mass. These were designed and executed for us by Adam Varley, the son of Deirdre and Rob, who both play an important role in the life of the Church. These were needed because the decision was taken by the PCC to reopen and begin to use again the Easter Sepulchre. Up until now, the Blessed Sacrament has been reserved in the Lady Chapel in the aumbry, which has now been given over for the keeping of the Holy Oils. The Sacrament has now been

moved to the Easter Sepulchre, a more fitting place, as it is visible upon first entry into the Church, providing a focal point, and is closer to the High Altar. It is now less likely to be ignored by worshippers and visitors, as it is not now on the main thoroughfare to the Upper Room.

Other minor works have been undertaken: the Jocelyn Nicholls Memorial, on which the enamel had sadly deteriorated, underwent restoration and is now sited in a protective cover in St Andrew's Chapel, fittingly above the Chantry Book. There has been replacement of some slates on the roof of the Upper Room, some minor work in the toilet area for Health and Safety reasons and some work in the Churchyard for similar reasons.

Ongoing, long term projects include a possible re-ordering of the West End of the Church, to provide a more welcoming space for entertaining and for work with children, conservation of the Civil War relics, internal redecoration, especially in areas where damp has got in, replacement of the Bird Gate on the South Porch, to provide something a little more substantial and the restoration of the East Window.

The major project which we are undertaking at the moment is the lighting, as mentioned in the last newsletter. Currently, through the money raised, we have been able to replace all the lights in the nave area and are about to start the north and south aisles. Once these lights are in place, we shall then assess with greater clarity what is needed in the side chapels and in the chancel and when we have the money to do these areas, they will follow. The total we need is almost raised, and it is hoped that the shortfall of something in the order of £2,000 may be able to be provided out of the funds raised by FoStA. Once this is done, we shall have better light in the Church, illuminating the roof bosses as well as the worshippers, which will use energy-efficient light-bulbs. These will save us great expense (and save people climbing ladders to replace the bulbs as often as they do now!)



Patronal Festival

Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find an invitation to join us for our Patronal Festival Mass on the 29th November this year.

As last year, we shall be joined by the St Andrew's Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes and the Bude Town Band to make the evening go with a swing, as it were.

Archival material will be on display in the Church and there will be refreshments afterwards to meet with friends and parishioners from Stratton and also from our sister churches in the area.

Please do make this a date in your diary to come and support our work in spreading the Gospel in this part of Cornwall.

St Andrew's Chantry Book

On St Andrew's Day 2007, we received from a grateful parishioner, a Chantry Book, which was dedicated at the time to the service of God and His Church.

In this beautiful book, on display in St Andrew's Chapel, are the names of departed loved ones, which are then remembered on the anniversary of their death every year. The book is kept up to date by John Bilsland, a parishioner, whose calligraphy makes the book a joy to behold and also a lasting memorial to those whose names are inscribed therein.

If you would like a loved one to be remembered in this way, please pass on details of their full name and date of death, including the year, to either Fr David or the Membership Secretary.



Recent Developments in Stratton

Until 1989, Stratton was in the (now) privileged position of being a single-church Benefice, with a priest of its own. Then it joined with Launcells to become a United Benefice, sharing a priest with one other church. In 2007, after Fr Richard Stranack left, the Benefice was suspended, meaning that when Fr David Standen came, he was not the Vicar, but the Priest-in-Charge of the two churches: this was done so that reorganisation of all the churches in this northern part of the Stratton Deanery could be undertaken. So, on 30th September 2009, Fr David was licensed as Priest-in-Charge of Stratton, Launcells, Budehaven & Marhamchurch, to look after the pastoral needs of the people in all four parishes. In the fullness of time, it is likely that all four parishes will be constituted as a United Benefice, being looked after by a Rector, rather than a Vicar.

You may be wondering what the importance of this is: other than the Benefice being bigger and the Vicar now being the Rector, how does this affect those of us who support FoStA? Well, it doesn't directly, and nor would it if it weren't for an accident of history. From its foundation as a parish, the

Vicar of Budehaven lived at Ebbingford Manor, an old and rambling 14th Century pile. This became too unmanageable for the priests at Budehaven and so, at some time in the recent past, a swap was effected with the owner of 'The Squint' in Falcon Terrace in Bude, which is now the Rectory. In addition to the swap, a covenant was placed on the new Rectory which ensured that whoever was the Parish Priest for Budehaven Church became obliged to live in the Rectory. What this therefore means is, despite there now being four churches in one Benefice, the covenant on Budehaven Rectory continues to apply and also that Fr David will have to move out from Stratton Vicarage and live in the Rectory in Bude.

Whilst this is very sad, not only for all the parishioners but also for Fr David, who is happily settled amongst the people of Stratton, it must not be seen as a calamity. For the people of Stratton will not be losing the Vicarage, nor the presence of an ordained person in the Vicarage and in the town itself. For the parish has been given the honour of being selected as a training parish for a curate and so, in June 2010, a curate will be joining the Christian family here and living in the Vicarage. This will be the first curate that Stratton has seen since the Rev'd Jean Marshall left here twenty years ago.

Of course, this is not the same as having the Vicar (or Rector) living in the Vicarage, but it should be taken in the context of all the new developments which are taking place in the life of the Christian Church in the Stratton Deanery. For as the Church increases the size of the Benefices which it expects one person to look after, so it becomes less important exactly where the priest lives, for he, or she, will be ministering to a much wider area. In a Benefice of four, six or eight, as some are, the priest can only live in one house, which can only be in one parish. What is more important is that the spiritual needs of all people in all parishes are looked after by a priest who can treat all as his (her) family, regardless of where he (she) may live.

