



Spring 2009 Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 1

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

Dear Friends,

At the outset, I would like to say thank you to you all who have joined FoStA. It has proved, in a short space of time, to be an enormous success and it will continue to go from strength to strength over the next few years. Val Barker and the late Hilda Rodd's germ of an idea has certainly blossomed into a great tree – even if, like all trees, it has taken some while to reach maturity!

Since the launch of FoStA on St Andrew's Day 2008 (about which, two reports appear elsewhere in the newsletter), life at Stratton continues to be as vibrant as usual. Our Christmas celebrations were well-attended and it was good to see some old and some new faces over that period. One event of particular note was the Stratton Primary School holding their Carol Service in the church after an absence of many years. It was noted by many that it was good to see the children walking through the town once again.

The start of 2009 has seen the beginnings of our preparations for our two big events this year: the Flower Festival, on the theme of Old Stratton, which will run from the 22nd – 25th May and the resurrected Summer Fete, scheduled for 4th July. These two events will represent the major fund-raising activities of the parish and it is hoped that they will draw the wider community into a deeper relationship with the Church. All members of FoStA are warmly encouraged to attend either or both of these events – the latter may indeed have been one of the things about Stratton which you remember from years gone by! As an added draw, the new Bishop of Truro, Bishop Tim Thornton, will be present at the Fete, on his first official visit to the Benefice.

I hope that over the course of the year, I shall have the opportunity to meet many more of you and I pray that the efforts made by FoStA to support the Church of St Andrew's will continue to bear good fruit.

With the love of Christ

David Standen

Membership Secretary's Report

After a great deal of preparation the first wave of the membership packs were mailed on the 5th September 2008. 85 envelopes were posted - mostly to UK addresses and a few to addresses abroad. After just 17 days there had been an encouraging return - 4 Life and 16 Annual memberships had been taken out and now, at the time of writing this report and following further mailings, FoStA has a total of 78 members.

The distribution of membership is geographically very wide-spread involving New York and Ohio in the U.S.A.; Cyprus; Scotland; Buckinghamshire; Oxfordshire; Yorkshire; Shropshire; London; Hampshire; Wiltshire; Devon; Somerset and Cornwall.

The members are made up of ex-choirboys and ex-servers; people who were baptised, confirmed or married at St Andrew's; former church members who have moved away; an American novelist; people who have relatives buried in the churchyard; those who have no religious affiliation but who have great regard for the building and those who are rarely able to attend for whatever reason but who consider St Andrew's their spiritual home and a heritage that deserves to be supported and preserved.

It has been a great pleasure for me personally to have had correspondence with so many old and new friends who wish to be associated with this recent endeavour. We simply must help maintain this beautiful church at Stratton to the Glory of God, for the edification of the generations to come and in gratitude for those who have gone before.

Val Barker
FoStA Membership Secretary

*Do you know someone who might like to
become a Friend of St Andrew's?*

*Make sure you put them in touch
with Val Barker!*

St Andrew's Day Celebrations

On most Sunday afternoons, St. Andrew's is empty and quiet before Evensong at 6 pm: not so on this occasion, for the church was busy with preparations for the Patronal Festival Mass in the evening – and what a joyous and exciting service that was!

The congregation was joined by the St. Andrew's Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (the Buffs), to which Fr. David is Chaplain, Bude Town Band and many visitors from near and far. Instead of a sermon, Fr. David introduced Michael Swift, Stained Glass Adviser to the Diocese of Truro, who gave a most interesting illustrated talk on the East Window, depicting the Four Evangelists, which was installed by the William Morris Company in 1874. Enthusiastic applause indicated how well Mr Swift had captured the audience's attention.

Two more events followed: the blessing and dedication of a beautiful Altar Frontal for St. Andrew's Chapel, designed and made by John Standen, with significant help from several clever needlewomen in the parish. Also, the launch of the Friends of St. Andrew's Church (FoStA), a group of people, most of whom live away, but who regard St. Andrew's with a special affection and which is, for some, a place where they and their families have worshipped and are buried.

Music from the band and a plentiful supply of food (provided by our parish cooks) and wine rounded off the evening and everyone was encouraged to enjoy the display of photographs of events in the life of the church, viewed with recognition, surprise and enjoyment. Our thanks go to Philip Jackson, the Buffs and all others who provided photographs.

A truly wonderful and happy end to St. Andrew's Day: may he protect and watch over us all for many years to come.

Barbara Blood

A report on the Fabric

The terms of reference of FoStA, as it is currently constituted, are that any funds raised will be "used solely for the purpose of maintaining and conserving the Parish Church and its churchyard."

It seems appropriate therefore to keep all members of FoStA up to date with the state of the fabric of the church.

The churchyard is well maintained by Grenville Martin, who works throughout the year to ensure that the grass is kept trimmed and that the graves

are all accessible and inscriptions are readable. He does admirable work, for which he is to be commended. Whilst on the outside of the church, the floodlighting of the Tower recently reached the end of its life. The fittings were old and the bulbs, under new regulations, were no longer obtainable. A local firm (Safe and Sound Electrical) were able to replace all fittings and the Tower can now be seen in even better light at night. The cost of this was some £180, and has been paid for out of the FoStA funds: thank you, members.

Internally, the church remains in good repair, although there is a problem with internal lighting, again due to the obsolescence of current bulbs and deterioration of fittings. The church is looking at various different types of fitting and the local firm who fitted the floodlight outside seem to be providing us with the best deal. The total cost of this project is in the region of £7,500, £3,800 of which has currently been raised to complete this. We look forward to being able to have the church much better lit, as the new lights will light up and down and thus it will soon be possible to see the roof bosses in all their glory.

The other major project which is underway at the moment is the conservation and restoration of the East Window. At the time of writing, there are no firm estimates as to the cost of this project, but it will certainly not be cheap. On a positive note, there are various sources of funding for such projects, which are being explored, however some of the burden of the cost will inevitably fall on the shoulders of the parishioners.

We shall keep you informed of developments in both of these areas, as we have more news to impart.

WILLIAM MORRIS IN CORNWALL

Based on the presentation at the Patronal Festival at St. Andrew's Parish Church, Stratton on Sunday 30th November 2008

Today, William Morris is chiefly remembered as a designer of spectacular wallpapers. Between the 1860's up to his death in 1894, he was renowned as a poet (short listed for the Poet Laureateship), an expert on tapestries and medieval illuminated manuscripts, a pioneer conservationist and environmentalist, and the founder of one of England's first socialist parties. He also founded his stained glass firm in 1862, using the combined talents of artists such as Rossetti, Madox Brown and Burne-Jones, which revolutionised stained glass making in the mid-Victorian period.

Compared to many other counties in England, Cornwall is somewhat disappointing territory for admirers of the stained glass of William Morris. Ladock parish church has two early Morris windows and one from the Firm's late period. St Germans has two late period windows. Single examples were

inserted at St Michael Penkevil (early), Flushing (a First World War insertion), and Stratton, making a grand total of only eight accredited windows for the whole county. The early windows are very pre-Raphaelite in style, reflecting in their settings, costumes and artistic poses Morris' absorption with medieval influences. By the mid-1870's the Firm's designs fell entirely on the shoulders of Edward Burne-Jones, and increasingly reflected his own Aesthetic artistic tastes. For many, they represent the pinnacle of Victorian stained glass design and manufacture.

The Chancel East window at Stratton is unique in the county in being the only example of the Firm's middle period. It was inserted in 1874, which was the last year of the old firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. In the following year the firm was dissolved and became Morris & Co., with Edward Burne-Jones and Morris himself as the sole designers. The Stratton window is the sole representative in the county of the decades of the 1870's and 80's when the firm produced much of their most important work. These immensely productive years, full of experiment and rich in creative enterprise, may thus be regarded in some sense as the firm's best period: Morris's own participation in the work of the studio, especially as colourist and designer of backgrounds, was still active and intimate; Burne-Jones's powers as designer had reached maturity.'

The window is of four lights with tracery. The overall design layout echoes those of Philip Webb with richly coloured panels and inserts set in patterned plain quarries to ensure that sufficient direct light is supplied to the choir and sanctuary whilst the coloured panels are displayed to contrasted effect. All of the panels (tracery, main lights and evangelist emblems) are of very high quality in terms of artistic design and colour.

It was the custom of all the main mid-Victorian glass studios to reuse existing cartoons in designs for new windows, and all of the elements in the Stratton design had been used in earlier windows. William Morris was a pioneer in using photographic enlargement / reduction of cartoon designs to fit the dimensions of new windows.

Three designers were involved in this window. Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris and Philip Webb. Edward Burne-Jones' tracery 'Christ in Majesty' was first used in 1865 at Guernsey, and was a popular design that was repeated nine times before its use at Stratton. The main evangelist lights were first used in 1873/4 for the prestigious commission at Jesus College Cambridge ('certainly among the best products of the period'). Each evangelist is portrayed in a quite revolutionary way when compared to the usual staid aged figures in Victorian windows. Here Burne-Jones envisages them as wild, poetic, aesthetic figures penning the greatest story ever told, each with their own colour scheme which is reflected in their symbols below. Stratton was the first time that these immensely impressive designs were re-used in a parish church.

The designs for the tracery censuring angels by William Morris were taken from a composition of three angels of 1868, and selections from this group were used in six other churches besides Stratton.

The quatrefoil emblems of the evangelists were designed by Philip Webb for the firm's first full church commission at Selsley in 1862, and this was the first time they were reused. The St Matthew emblem was not part of the Selsley designs, and is elsewhere attributed to Morris himself. All four are very striking designs.

The Stratton window – a summary. Impressive as Ladock's early Morris Chancel East window and St. German's late Morris Chancel East windows are, and they are two of the best in the county, Stratton's window is hard to beat. Through its theological content, artistic design, and the effect of sunlight through coloured glass into the Chancel, it is not only a wonderful artistic creation, but, in its position above the main altar, it remains a source of spiritual inspiration as relevant to the twenty-first century as it was in the nineteenth.

Michael G. Swift
Stained Glass Adviser to the Diocese of Truro

Summer Social

Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find an invitation to join us for our Flower Festival this year, the theme of which is to be 'Old Stratton'.

In recognition of this, the organising committee are planning a talk in the evening of Friday 22nd May, the first day of the Festival, and a concert on the Saturday evening.

We would love you to join us for the concert and to attend a reception afterwards. There will also be ample time to view the displays of flowers and some archival material related to Stratton and the church.

It should be a joyful trip down Memory Lane for all.

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