

Friends of St Peter's Church

Chairman's Review of 2008

Where would St Peter's be without the Friends? Each year our indebtedness to those who brought the Friends to birth increases. We were established in 1996 to advance the Christian religion in particular by the preservation, repair and maintenance of the fabric of St Peter's, its monuments, furnishings and its churchyard.

During 2008, we paid the Church Council some £16,000 and loaned them £10,000 to help pay for the new heating system, the notice board, the improvements to the choir vestry, repair of pinnacles on the porch, provision of the step into the Lady Chapel, updating the incumbents' list and pruning the yew tree in front of the church. When in the course of introducing the new heating system, it was found urgently necessary to remove dangerous asbestos, the Friends were able to advance the money. The PCC has managed to obtain grants enabling it to repay part of that loan, but the remainder may need to be converted into a donation in the course of 2009. The Lady Chapel handrails, which were provided during 2008, will be chargeable to next year's accounts.

The Friends' Committee has also agreed in principle to support financially the extensive re-ordering of the west end: that is replacing the pews with chairs, which will make possible a more flexible use of this area; the provision of a bookstall, cupboards and exhibition boards in the side aisles, and the creation of a permanent Winchcombe Abbey exhibition on the west wall of the choir vestry [as illustrated by Ronald Green on the front cover]. It is also looking sympathetically at the modernization of the main electrical switch board and its incorporation in a new cupboard within the proposed improvements in the south aisle; and also at the replacement of the flood-lighting system and the provision of security lighting on the roof of the church. It has also been agreed that the Friends should commission the drawing up of an over-all plan for the improvement of the churchyard, which subject to the necessary authorizations, could be implemented in whole or in part as funds became available. At present, we are seeking ideas and suggestions from within the church and the town, so that we can tell a professional designer what we have in mind. For some years now replacing the missing pinnacles on the church has been on our wish list, and the churchwardens have been seeking competitive estimates for these. In the meantime, we have paid for the repair of several in the last few years. These agreements in principle are needed to justify the expenditure of time, effort and costs in drawing up plans, getting estimates and authorization. Nothing of course may come of some of these projects: they may prove too costly, other more urgent work may take priority, or when the plans have been developed they may not be approved by the local church, the diocese, English Heritage or, in the case of some of the proposals for the churchyard, by the town. But without the Friends' agreement in principle to support these projects financially, many of them would never even be considered.

All this work has been made possible by the generosity of individual friends of St Peter's making bequests and donations, and by those investing their energies in fund raising events and in supporting the events. Those of you, who have contributed in these ways, should be able to take enormous satisfaction from what I have been able to report above. Your contributions really have made a difference: a difference that will last for years, may be for a century or more.

As you can see from the Accounts, despite donating £16,000 to the PCC, we have ended with about the same balance as last year, though if our loan to the PCC has to be converted into a donation, this will reduce it significantly. Given the work we have approved in principle and the present economic climate, we all need to keep up the good work. What better way to start than booking the dates listed later in this letter in your diary now, and buying the tickets for yourself and encouraging your friends to do likewise?

John Stevinson

Friends of St Peter's Church

Highlights of 2008

Pudfest

The Pudfest was held at the beginning of February and was again a great social occasion and well supported. Not least, the success was due to the generous gifts of delightful and imaginative creations and the hard work of our supporters. We have decided not to hold a pudfest this year but to support the Mediaeval Feast in aid of the restoration of the chime-machine. However, it is likely that we will hold another in 2010 if our members wish.

Open Gardens

Once again, Leo Doyle organised a very successful Open Gardens in June with sixteen gardens open. The amount raised was the highest ever.

Pig Roast at Sudeley Lodge

A change of date and indifferent weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of participants at this annual event. The event was held at Sudeley Lodge for the last time; the Friends are extremely grateful to Angela Wilson and her family for their hospitality over the years.

Cotswold Police Male Voice Choir

Members of the audience were treated to a very varied and enthusiastic performance by the choir.

Sue Crownshaw

Autumn Lecture

The Autumn lecture was given by Alan Brookes on "Updating Pevsner". Nicholas Pevsner produced comprehensive guides to every British county which are regularly updated. Alan described how he had revised and expanded the guides to the Cotswolds and Gloucestershire. We heard about his extensive research into the architectural history of the buildings and his many visits which included castles, manor houses, mediaeval churches, Cotswold villages and towns. He also described some Victorian masterpieces with special reference to the stained glass in some 19th century churches. It was a fascinating lecture which stimulated everyone to learn from his guides more about our county and visit more interesting, historical places.

Kitty Gore