

THE FRIENDS OF SAFFRON WALDEN PARISH CHURCH

St Mary the Virgin

EIGHTH NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024

Welcome to the Eighth Newsletter from the Friends.

As you know we have a mission to fulfil the duty that is ours of preserving this Church in all its beauty for those who come after and this year we have continued that work.

This year saw the largest project I think we have ever undertaken, that of an Open Day in September to both celebrate 90 years since our foundation but also to remind our congregation and to inform the town and surrounding villages of the work previously carried out by The Friends and what our plans are for the future. We did a lot of advertising and had hoped that we might attract 100 visitors, as it was we had well over 300 which was amazing. Fortunately the ladies on refreshments had made sufficient cake to offer some to everyone.



Photo courtesy of The Walden Local

You will notice that in the photo we have some of the Bell Ringers who really kindly rang for us to “invite” people to come along. Also a few of the many Friends members who helped with stewarding and refreshments all day. Oli King played the organ for us during the course of the morning. Many thanks to everyone

We had archive displays showing the Church Annual reports back to the late 1800’s and many archive documents relating to the Friends. The Ladies of the Sewing Circle had a beautiful display of their kneelers and banner work over the years which proved to be very popular.

The Church was decorated with display banners, (made especially for the event) attached to the columns, plus the beautifully intricate banners used at different times in the Church hanging from the Rood Screen.

Our new Friends Noticeboard was in place and started it's task of informing the congregation and visitors of our ongoing work.

The event raised sufficient interest for us to enrol lots of new members, some are still trickling in which is great.

This will not become an annual event but we have purchased a display box for Canon Chris Bishop to continue to display his archives every first Sunday of the month. They are there all morning until the end of coffee time so do come along and see for yourselves.

Recent Projects completed

As mentioned above the new **Friends Noticeboard** is now in place and will give updated information throughout the year.

Future Projects

New Lighting Scheme. In the long term we are still holding funds to contribute to this huge project as soon as it commences. Preliminary discussions are taking place and are progressing well with a good team in place. I am sure you all agree that this is a much needed project to bring our lighting in the Church up to modern standards.

Ongoing Projects

Kneelers. Anyone can commission a kneeler to commemorate a loved one or an occasion and can choose a central design. We charge £40 per kneeler to cover the cost of the canvas and the wool. Work has commenced on a kneeler for the Friends so watch this space!

The Ladies Sewing Circle are again meeting every Monday morning at 9.30 until 11o'clock at The Priory, Common Hill. Should you be interested in a kneeler or in joining the Sewing Circle please contact Tessa Hawkes. Tel No 01799 523888

'St Mary's Saffron Walden, A History & Guide'

This book continues to sell well on our Bookstall along with the posters and post cards. Hopefully this summer will bring more tourists and sales will blossom again. As we were almost out of copies of the book we have just taken delivery of another 200 copies so it will be interesting to see how quickly they sell.

"This is the Only Moment"

A relatively new book for our stand. A selection of "Poems from a Journey" written by Paula Griffiths who is kindly donating the proceeds of the sales to The Friends. These continue to sell well. Thank you Paula.

Easter and Advent Candle holders.

The candle team had been finding the wax removal from the candle stands increasingly difficult. To that end we commissioned a new drip tray to be installed on the Easter Candle Holder which should greatly improve matters. The current Advent Candle has proved to be even more difficult and cumbersome to clean so that is being replaced with a new, easy clean compact stand which will come into use this year, we were pleased to be able to help with these two issues.

Events

Cathedral Visits

This year's visits were firstly to the stunning **Southwark Cathedral** on Tues 25th July and included a lunch which we all enjoyed together. The afternoon was free to explore everything that the area had to offer like The Golden Hinde, The Tate Modern, The Clink Prison Museum, The Globe Theatre and of course Borough Market; plenty to choose from.

On November 17th we visited **Norwich Cathedral**; it was a cold but dry day. We were greeted by 2 very knowledgeable guides. Norwich has the biggest collection of masonry Roof Bosses in the world telling stories of the Bible from Creation to the Last Judgement. Edith Cavell was buried there and there are some interesting displays about her life. After lunch together, we had free time to visit the Castle or the Museum or to start the Christmas shopping.

On 8th April we are off to **Rochester Cathedral**, Britains second largest Cathedral so we are in for a treat. We will be lunching together and then free time to explore the town. Rochester stands on the Medway and has a Norman Castle and connections with Charles Dickens, so lots to explore.

On 30th August we are off to **St Albans Cathedral** for a morning tour and then to Ware for lunch and a trip on the river in the afternoon, something relaxing. Book early !

Newsflash Summer Event

We will be holding a **Bring and Share Welcome Lunch on Sunday 30th June** in the Parish Rooms after the 10.30am service. Please put this date in your diary, and watch out for more information in due course. This lunch is to welcome and get to know all new members so please do attend if at all possible.

Joining the Friends

Over the years there have been numerous major and minor projects taking place in the Church and many of those have been assisted or totally funded by the Friends and we hope to be able to continue that work well into the future. As a member you will feel part of that process and can have a sense of pride in the work we carry out. The AGM is an ideal time to come along and offer your ideas and Council members are always around and will be happy to hear your thoughts and take them to their next meeting. We do hope that you have found something of interest in our eighth newsletter and maybe, if you are not a member already, **then perhaps you would like to join?** There is an application form on the back of our updated leaflet, or you could check the Church website and find us under 'Groups' or ask one of our Council Members. *A gentle reminder to all our members that subscriptions are due by 31st March.*

Legacies

During the last few years we have received several legacies for which we are most grateful especially as there are still large projects which we would like to help fund. If you are interested in making arrangements for a legacy to the Friends please speak to one of the Council officers who will be pleased to assist. A new Legacy Leaflet is available on the Friends Bookstand.

Message from our Chairman

Dear Friends

What a year it has been. We had our very successful Open Day in September and it was a start to opening up The Friends to increasing our membership, by welcoming people from the town as well as from St Mary's.

We are excited about the two trips this year and the Bring & Share lunch in June which will give us the opportunity to meet our new members face to face.

With best wishes

Denis

The Friends' Prayer

We thank Thee O Father, for the precious heritage of our Church of St Mary the Virgin, and for the privilege of Enrolment as Friends of Thy House of Prayer.

We pray that, increasingly, we may value, and use this sacred trust, and with loving reverence, care for Thy House.

May it become more and more, a spiritual home, and a means of blessing to this town and neighbourhood.

Guide us as Friends of the Church, in all our efforts for the promotion of Thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AGM We look forward to seeing you all at the Patronal Service , followed by the AGM in the Parish Rooms in September; date to be confirmed, watch the website and Grapevines

Sad news

During this year, as many of you will know, we lost Robin Betser, a valued member of our Friends Council for many years. Robin made a great contribution in many areas of Church life at St Mary's and is greatly missed. He was also an active member of his home Church, Hadstock and is where his funeral service was held with a packed Church. Our condolences go to Irene at this difficult time.

Who's who?

Patron: Lady Braybrooke

President : The Rector Revd. Jeremy Trew

Chairman : Denis Tindley, Secretary : Pamela Mugliston, Treasurer : Sandra Marsh

Council Members: Tessa Hawkes, Joe Hordern, Gill Lovegrove, Robin O'Neill, Chris Knight.