

The Friends of St. Andrews, Bemerton.

Annual Report 2007

We passed our new constitution last year, and have a smaller committee. We were pleased to welcome Tom Clay as our new treasurer, and thank Jill Maple for her many years of dedicated labour. Marjorie Reigen stepped down from committee, having stepped aside as secretary last year, and we acknowledge her unstinting service to the little church in the village.

a) The upkeep and repair of the fabric and fittings of St. Andrew's Church, Bemerton, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

This year saw the Loop system and sound reinforcement system finally installed. The greatest complement is when people say they can't hear it, can't see it and don't notice it! The speakers are well camouflaged and it gently reinforces the sound in the small space, rather than blasting it out. It has the facility to play CD's and record talks, but that is as yet untried. The main reason for its existence is the loop system which we have been told works very well.

With the worry about the electrics getting damp or being unsafe, we had a surveyor look over the building and were dismayed when he found a large section of wall plate (the wooden beam that holds the roof to the wall) to be quite rotten. How this was missed by the last 2 church quinqueniell's is a concerning question. Apart from a minor repair the electrics were found to be fine, but we need a new porch roof and various stonework done as well. This has stopped my dreaming about chairs and heating for a while, and we have started a small appeal to raise more money for the repairs.

b) The promotion of St. Andrew's Church, Bemerton, as a place of pilgrimage, and as a memorial to George Herbert, priest, pastor and poet.

The transatlantic conference between Sarum College and North Carolina went very well. Some 40 delegates came out to Bemerton and spent an enchanting afternoon experiencing St. Andrews, the Old Rectory, singing some new hymns, and having tea in St. Johns. Some said it was a highlight of the conference. The second half is being held this year in America, though I'm not sure how many of us are going!

The first new tunes to George Herbert's poems were produced in a hymnbook called "Another Music" at the end of the year. Some 19 poems and 9 different composers make up this handsome book which we hope will popularise some more of Herbert's poems and re-awaken choirs and congregations to his writings.

Finally we are working hard on a new website. Currently St. Andrews is covered under the church website, but its a bit obscure and we want to have a dedicated site. This will allow people to find out about events, to contact us, and to buy books and cards.

Rev Simon Woodley, Chair of Friends of St. Andrews Bemerton, Rector of Bemerton

5th April - Feast of St. Vergil of Salzburg (d. 784)