

## A Word from the Chairman

I hope the new layout of the Newsletter and the addition of colour met with your approval. We would welcome your comments and of course any contributions that could be considered for inclusion in the next edition.

Last year we mentioned all the projects that were likely to happen but this year everything is a little more positive.

### Church Lightning Conductor

This has now been installed and we have thanked the Red Lion Charity Fund for their contribution towards the cost of the installation. We can now all relax in a storm!

### Church Wall

This has now been repaired and the finished result is magnificent. With all the work that has been carried out, clearing, planting and turfing the garden is a picture and well worth a visit, thanks to all concerned. In fact in early July it will be judged in the

neighbourhood competition "South West in Bloom". Let's keep our "green" fingers crossed! However, we can't relax yet as there is still a little more to do.

### Confessional Screen

By the time the Newsletter is published the Screen, (that has been modified by Tim Jeffree from Prinknash Abbey Workshop) will have been re-installed into its new position.

### Churchyard Cross

After all our trials, tribulations, applications and frustrations, we have finally received approval to proceed with the repairs necessary. One slight delay is that because we now have to scaffold, we have to seek amended costings. This is in hand and hopefully we can have this carried out before our Millennium celebrations in 2008.

I mentioned last time about our successful stand at the Cricklade Show that we took again this year and it is an excellent way of promoting the work of The Friends. We were

not blown away by the large attendance however our gazebo was nearly blown away by the strong winds. With the help of friends, ropes and timber we managed to keep our gazebo on the ground. We will try again next time with a new gazebo!

We also had a very successful Church Open Day in June tagging on to Cricklade's Western theme and raised £180.00 Our thanks to Gerry Dudley and Trish Snape for organising the activities. It's a long time since I have seen so many cakes!

A barbeque is planned later in the summer and we thank Jenny and Steve Wrigley for the use of their beautiful garden.

Finally on behalf of the Committee and myself, thank you all for your continued support, without this all the work that I have mentioned would not have been carried out. Thanks again and enjoy the summer.

Eddie Condon

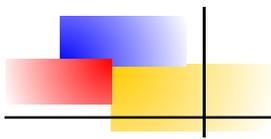
Newsletter  
Issue 15 August 2007



Faces from the past  
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## The new ambo at St Mary's - by Edmund Lee

Introducing new furnishings into a historic church can be fraught with controversy. Should the design attempt to match existing furnishings – at the risk of appearing to be a pastiche? Or should the design be new and modern, a 21<sup>st</sup> century contribution to a church which has developed bit by bit over ten centuries, at the risk of sticking out and jarring with the historic interior? There are no simple answers to these questions, but the new reading desk at St Mary's shows a good way to approach them.

Heritage professionals faced with these challenges frequently speak of 'values'. Every addition or change in a historic church communicates the traditions, beliefs, concerns and aspirations of the people who commissioned and designed it. This has always been the case: the thorough Victorian restoration of St Mary's, for example, reflected their desire for a modern, regulated church with everyone facing the front in orderly rows.

One way to approach a new design then is to ask whether it

continues the values of the community, even if the materials, techniques and style are modern. The reading desk (technically an 'ambo' - a term in use since the early Christian period) reflects the



same values that have been embodied in the design and development of St Mary's over the centuries. It is made from the best affordable materials (oak) and is built to last; it respects the past (using carved ornament which connects with the seventeenth century altar table); but it is nonetheless distinct, not

afraid to use modern techniques (the pattern was transferred from digital images); it embodies the theology of the congregation (the use of a flat 'table' design emphasises that the Word spoken from it is a part of the Eucharist, the sacred meal, rather than something set apart); it was made locally (by a Fairford craftsman, Mr Ian Westlake); it commemorates the community as well as serving it.

So the best of the new doesn't have to look the same as the old, but be inspired from the same roots. In this way change can be accommodated in the continual development of St Mary's, while respecting the legacy of the past.



The ambo was commissioned and dedicated by Eddie and Lin Condon in memory of their son Paul

## Millennium Celebrations 2008 – by Tricia Snape

As many of you will be aware, in 2008 it will be our millennium here at St Mary's. This is an event which is so important we hope everyone will be involved.

During the course of the year there will be events staged to celebrate this occasion ending in a spectacular Son et Lumiere in October, which will tell the story of the Church over the last one thousand years. The details of this will be in our next newsletter.

In order to stage our Son et Lumiere, we are hoping to upgrade the lighting in the Church. This entails changing the bulbs, which at the moment are halogen, to halogen/tungsten and the switch plate with a dimmer system.

Although this will enhance the performance, more importantly, this will be of benefit to us all for years to come. The cost of this upgrade will be borne by The Friends of St Mary's. Simple costumes, such as tabards etc., will be worn by the performers, so if there are any nimble fingers out

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### 1000 years of worship on the site of St Mary's

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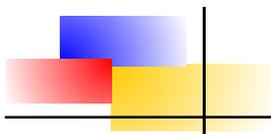
there, we will be delighted to hear from you as many hands make light work.

In order to raise funds for this event, there will be activities, which I am sure you will not want to miss. For example, the choir from Prior Park

School, along with other performers will be appearing in concert at the Church.

Louise and Seymour Aitkin, staunch supporters of "The Friends", have offered the use of their delightful garden in which to stage an event. We want this to be really special, so we are at present discussing ideas. One suggestion put forward is to have a concert in the open air (A bit like The Proms in the Park), but on a slightly smaller scale. Just imagine singing and music in a lovely setting in the lovely town of Cricklade.

Watch out for publicity for these events and I trust you will give your full support to make them both enjoyable and successful.



## Update on St Mary's Church Garden Project - by Helen Cliff

Following on from 'Phase 1' planting, which proved to be very successful despite the dry summer last year as only one of our shrubs failed and the rest are healthily growing and spreading just as we want them to, in April 2007 we set about tackling clearing the remainder of the long strip of ground which we intend to plant. We were motivated in part by the wonderful dry stone wall repair and rebuild carried out on behalf of Cricklade Town Council which has certainly helped to enhance the south side of the churchyard. A good crowd of friends and parishioners turned up and once again we cleared weeds, ivy, old roots and many pieces of stone from the ground, covering part of it in weed resistant film, the remainder to be laid to turf. Some of us planted a selection of shrubs in the filmed area in May and the planted ground was covered in mulch – it all appears to be doing well. In June the turf arrived (a week after it had been raining!)

and with help afterwards from



various people to water the turf in, and the recent rainfall, the turf is looking very good and now being maintained by the Council groundsmen. Whilst on our April clearance there was time to clear the west end of the churchyard too, taking out elder, ivy and nettles – when they start to grow again weed killer will be sprayed so that we can do more work on that area. The bonus was that this work cleared some gravestones which had been obliterated and were tilting dangerously. In the

future our aim is to plant bulbs in the grassy area to the north of the church, adjacent to the road, and to plant bulbs and wild flowers on the west fence to the rear of the churchyard with bird and bee boxes to encourage wild life to our gardens

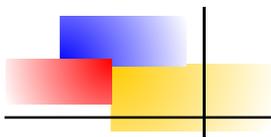
We have been asked by the West Country in Bloom association to enter the Neighbourhood Award Scheme for this project and our ongoing work. The judging for this takes place in July so we will report back!



**Visit Our Website**  
[Http://welcome.to/friendsofstmarys](http://welcome.to/friendsofstmarys)  
Virtual Tour  
Photos  
Church History  
Parish Map

### Dates for your Diary

- **Cricklade Show 27 August 2007**
- **Cycle Ride and Church Open Day 2 September 2007**
- **Coffee Morning - Brook House 17 November 2007 10.00 am to 12 noon**
- **AGM - Brook House 20 November 2007**
- **Proms in the Garden of Brook House (Date to be confirmed)**
- **Millennium Son et Lumiere October 2008 (Date to be confirmed)**



## Ringling the Changes - by Edmund Lee

The Friends have recently been lent these two photographs by Les Osborn of the local British Legion. They date from 1979 and show the removal of one of the three 18<sup>th</sup> century bells that used to hang in the tower. Inside the church, handling the lowering of the bell are Les Osborn (left) Doug Boniface (right), while outside the bell is being pushed along by (left to right) Les Osborn, John Rolf,



Les Osborn (left) Doug Boniface (right)

Brian Danby and Doug Boniface. The young man on the bike looking on is thought to be Andrew Ritchings.

There were once three bells in the bell-frame at St Mary's, which are documented from 1553, with a further call bell added in the 1730's, (still in use). The bells were replaced at least once – the bell shown was cast by Rudhalls the bellmakers in Gloucester in 1779. Local memory suggests that they were quite light bells, and could be rung by one ringer using a frame in what is now the sacristy at the bottom of the tower to hold the three bell-ropes. By the 1970's the condition of the tower had become

too unsafe for the bells to be rung and, with the church little used, the hard decision was made to remove them after exactly two-hundred years in service. The bell shown was the middle of the three at St Mary's. It was taken to St Sampson's just up the road in Cricklade. With a little modification to the bell-frame there it now serves as the treble (highest note) bell in the ring of six bells, and can be heard every Wednesday and Sunday\*.



((L to R) Les Osborn, John Rolf, Brian Danby and Doug Boniface.

Please share your memories, stories or pictures of St Mary's and we will include them in the newsletter when possible. This is a beautiful church with a long history and we owe it to ourselves and future generations to have it well documented

Contact the Secretary of the Friends  
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To join the Friends of St Mary's contact the Secretary or download a subscription form from our website

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