

Friends of St. Peter's, Meavy

Providing a focus of support for all who value this ancient church

Newsletter 1

March 2010

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Friends of St Peter's Church Meavy Newsletter. The launch of the Friends at a coffee morning in St Peter's on 18th September got us off to a flying start, with over 50 people coming along to find out what we were about. Pauline Hamilton-Leggett gave us an interesting insight into many of the features of the church.

From that meeting a committee was set up. Denis Walker, a resident of Meavy and lifetime supporter of the church, became Chairman. Sarah Gordon, Douglas Henderson, Catherine Leather and Michael Parle are the other members of the committee.

The committee has met regularly to plan action and future fundraising events. The Friends has a website set up by Michael Parle, www.meavy.org.uk/fsp. We have also produced a full colour leaflet and an application form which is available in the church and on the website.

A View of the Local Church

Reverend Anthony Good

The church is the most ancient and significant historic building in the parish, going back hundreds of years.

It is the repository of all the histories of the local people for that time. The records of the baptisms, marriages and burials and the memorials both inside the church and outside record people and events through that historic period.

There are over 10,000 churches belonging to the Church of England in this country and 618 in this Diocese of Exeter.

The Church Commissioners do not give any grants towards the repair and maintenance of churches. All their income goes towards the stipends of clergy and clergy pensions. Their funds have not kept pace with the rise of inflation and so the number of clergy is being reduced and parishes are being joined together.

The parish share, which each parish pays towards the clergy incomes and therefore is the first call upon the parish finances, is for many parishes becoming more than they can afford with decreasing numbers of worshippers. Income needed to maintain the building becomes therefore difficult to find.

The lottery fund may pay twenty two million towards church repairs but the sum asked for is two hundred and twenty two millions. Therefore many churches are disappointed.

It is impossible for the church members to maintain their buildings without help. Most have used up their reserves. If communities wish to keep their church open and repaired then help must come from elsewhere.

Reverend Anthony Good was an architect and served on the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for over 30 years and is a strong supporter of rural churches.

The Churchwarden's Perspective

Philip Helby

I am delighted to have been asked by the Committee of the Friends of St Peter's Church to describe the Parochial Church Council's priorities for maintaining the fabric of the church. Firstly however, may I say how delighted I am that local people of energy and commitment have stepped forward to form the Friends to assist the PCC in preserving this historic Grade I listed building which, together with the Royal Oak, provides a centre piece for the village of Meavy.

As many of you will know, the church is surveyed by an officially appointed and approved architect on a five yearly basis, known as the Quinquennial Inspection. The architect's report forms the basis for the maintenance and repair work in the succeeding period.

Our last Quinquennial took place in May 2007 and we received the report in early autumn. The very detailed report examines every aspect of the church fabric and structure, making recommendations on what should be done. The PCC formed the view that, with the exception of some of the smaller items with no significant cost implications, the focus should firstly be on keeping the church dry.

Achieving this goes a very long way towards preventing other problems developing. For this reason, in 2009 the PCC commissioned the repointing of the top third of the south and west faces of the tower with lime mortar in place of the cement pointing then in place. That work is complete though we have been told not to expect the real benefits to show until next winter.

The other major item relating to keeping the building dry concerns what are known as rainwater goods. This principally means gutters and down pipes, but also includes lead valleys, lead flashing, and all other related items. The condition of our gutters and downpipes, and some of our lead can best be described as poor. Some are too small, some are not correctly



Downpipe at west end of south aisle showing corrosion and section of pipe of wrong size.



Top of downpipe on the west side of the vestry, showing evidence of corrosion and water overflow. The pipe here is too small as it takes a large proportion of the water from the nave roof as well as the vestry. It needs a larger cast iron hopper and wider square profile downpipe.

located and there is fairly considerable corrosion.

The PCC has already received two quotes for the necessary work which both ran well into 5 figures and is seeking others. We do not expect them to be significantly different but we do need to ensure that the price we eventually pay is competitive. This is our major priority which we intend to undertake as soon as we have both the money and the necessary authorisation.

The other major work outstanding from the quinquennial relates to the windows and to the reredos. Almost all the windows need some work done to them: the east window in particular needs to be completely re-leaded; if you look carefully at the north light, you can see a split near the bottom on the left. The east window work can only be done with the reredos dismantled to allow access.

As it happens, the reredos is also in need of repair as the iron fastenings holding it together are rusting, swelling and splitting it apart. In order to repair it, the reredos needs complete dismantling, and therefore we hope to repair it and the east window simultaneously. The other window work can go ahead without any such constraint and will, we hope, take place this year.

For health and safety reasons, we would like to remove one or preferably both of the altar steps. If we are allowed to do this, it would also take place when the reredos has been dismantled.

The package of work that I have described above is clearly not going to be cheap and so the PCC is seeking funding from all potential sources. The support offered by the Friends to the PCC is extremely welcome and very much appreciated. Please tell your friends and invite them to join with us in preserving this important part of our heritage. The more the merrier.

Photographs taken by Michael Parle illustrate just a few of the rainwater goods problems.



Corroded joint with two sections out of line and with corroded back face to the gutter.



One of a number of missing gutter ends.



The trench that surrounds the church is the only means of draining water away. This part of the trench side at the south east corner had to be rebuilt recently because of damage caused by water flowing out of an open gutter end.

A Christmas Concert

This was held in St Peter's Church on Friday 11th December and it was a great success, thanks to all who came. The concert featured a kaleidoscope of local talents.

We had community carols lead by Kate Luffingham, songs from Kate Walker, her son Theo read Mike Harding's "Christmas Market", bell ringing from Meavy Hand Bells, folk music from Brian Wills and from 'Rolling Sky', and jazz with 'The Bad Band'.



The Bad Band at the Christmas Concert

Treasurer's Report

Douglas Henderson, Hon. Treasurer

Thank you to all those who have become members of Friends. To date there are 12 Life members, 11 Joint/Family members and 5 single members. More members would of course be very welcome and details can be found in a leaflet at the back of the church or from me.

The concert on 11th December raised over £440 and we have received a donation of £300 from the Meavy Oak Fair Committee. We are now a registered charity with HM Revenue & Customs for tax purposes. Altogether, with tax recovered through Gift Aid, we have raised over £2,500.

It is hoped that the Friends will be able to contribute over £3,000 towards repairs to the roof and rainwater guttering and downpipes that is planned for St Peter's this year. Further fundraising events will be held and we would also welcome individual cash donations.

If you have collectable items or antiques that you would like to donate to raise funds these items will be sold through auctioneer's sales and the proceeds added to Friends funds. If you are a UK taxpayer the money raised through these sales can also be gift aided to add 28p for every £1 donated. So if you have any items that you would like to donate please contact me (tel. 01822 855383)

Events

Friday 26th March, 7:30pm. Concert: Music for Flute and Guitar *Dou Volatus*

Saturday 12th June. St Peter's History Day *Meavy PCC*

Saturday 19th June, 2:00pm. Book Stall at Meavy Oak Fair

Saturday 25th September, 10:30am. AGM, including a talk by Reverend Anthony Good
Date tbd. Autumn Tea Dance, Meavy Parish Hall

Join Us

Membership of the Friends of St. Peter's Church, Meavy is open to all who support the aims of the Friends and wish to help to ensure that future generations can continue to use and enjoy this lovely church. Should you wish to join please complete the Membership Application Form (see our website at www.meavy.org.uk/fsp) and send it to our Treasurer, Mr Douglas Henderson (to the address on the form).