



May 2015

Dear Friend

While up the hill with the dogs this morning, along with the larks on the wing and the breeze rustling the barley, I caught that magical sound of the church bells ringing. It became a moment of perspective. Here we are, deeply rooted in the Wiltshire countryside, but with a magnificent church loved, used and visited by all sorts of people from all over the world and, not least, supported by you. A glimpse at the Visitors Book reveals addresses from as near as Westbury to as far as Cornwall, Snowdonia, Cumbria, Hungary, Canada, Australia and beyond. Indeed a gentleman from Brisbane, wrote that he had attained a 30 year old ambition by visiting us.

The ringers were from St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol (a renownedly good team) “attempting” a Swindon Surprise Royal, with over 5,000 changes and taking about 3½ hours. It sounded magnificent and I was drawn down to the church, where I met the lady who does much of the training in the bell tower. She’d come especially from Melksham to hear them and told me that, since the dedication of the new simulator, they have 6 new recruits to the local team and our own ringing is going from strength to strength, with the bell tower getting busier and busier hosting visiting teams and ringing celebratory peals like the VE Day Anniversary one last week.

Your Council was meeting here that day and we interrupted proceedings to listen, but the wind was in the wrong direction so, strain as we might, much to our regret we returned to deliberations without hearing them.

Philip Harris and Annie Brooks were welcomed as new Council members, having been elected last August. After all her hard work as Churchwarden, Clare Brown has handed the baton to Sue Davies, for whom it was also the first meeting.

“Unless the roof falls in” has often been the preface to Michael Jones’ Fabric Fund reports, but in early February a piece of plaster really did fall from the Chancel ceiling. Investigations by the architect and surveyor have been made and it would appear to be less drastic than one might fear, but will be closely monitored after an initial repair is made. Michael requested that the Council recommend a Friends’ grant to cover some – or all – of the costs involved. And this we will need to discuss at the AGM, although the work will have been completed by that time in order to make sure the Chancel will be useable during the Festival.

*Friends of Edington Priory Church*

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We will also need to report on the works for the Cheney Monument, which we voted to help fund at the AGM last year. The PCC have received the Conservation Surveyor's final report and recommendations and will be seeking a Faculty for the repairs to be done in November this year.

Before we hold the AGM, however, there's a festive lunch to consider! The Festival will be celebrating their Sixtieth Anniversary this year. So do, please come and join us for lunch in the Marquee on Festival Saturday – 29 August 2015. (Details on the attached sheet.) We have opened the doors again, this year, to everyone so that we can join together celebrating what Canon Ralph Dudley started all those years ago. The Friends' Sixtieth will be next year and we are currently thinking about how to celebrate that. Details will be announced at the AGM.

Andrew Carwood, of The Cardinal's Musick and St Paul's Cathedral, has generously agreed to come and give the Talk this year. As you know, he was involved with the Festival for many years and it will be a great pleasure to welcome him back and hear his perspective and anecdotes on the Festival and its achievements.

In the meantime there is a lot to fit in. Quite apart from the usual daily services, weddings, baptisms and funerals there have been several concerts and visits. Edington Arts is well and truly up and running. The Gentlemen of St John's came and gave an excellent concert in April and the next one will be quite a treat – Bob Chilcott is coming on 20 June to give a workshop on his St John Passion, with a performance in the evening. They have other concerts booked and more being planned so do look at their website ([www.edingtonarts.org](http://www.edingtonarts.org)) or ours, where you will find a link to them and to the Festival itself. Although I have attached a "What's On" list for those who don't have the facilities to check the web.

So do come and see us soon and bring your friends: the more, the merrier!

A gentleman visiting the other day stopped to chat while I was trying to arrange flowers. He had a well-thumbed Pevsner tucked under his arm and was talking knowledgeably about the church to his antipodean cousin. It turned out that he had been one of the local boys, drafted in by Canon Dudley for the first Festivals. He had very fond recollections of those days, but hadn't realised that the Festival was still going, getting stronger and stronger. I exhorted him to come again and re-live old memories and start some new ones. I do hope he does.

Hoping to see you  
With very best wishes

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