



A record of the past twelve months in the life of our church

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## *Conservation and Refurbishment Project*

It is now two years since the church reopened. Early in the year the architect visited to sign off the snagging list of items that required further work twelve months after completion.

The Heritage Lottery Fund aspect of the project has also been successfully closed. We have claimed and been paid 100% of the funds due, including all of the contingency funds which were set aside in case of need. They were pleased to receive our final report, as well as the detailed Evaluation Report which was kindly produced for us by Marian Shaw.

Also completed is the Conservation Management Plan. This provides a full record of the history of the church and the various alterations and improvements made in past years, including the recent project. It also provides guidance for the PCC on the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the fabric of the building. It will be updated each time there is a quinquennial inspection so as to include any further work carried out as well as any historical information that has newly come to light.

The audio-visual tour using small tablets and earphones is available at the back of the church. Now the visitor season has begun, do ask a church guide to show you how they work. Guides are in church on Sunday afternoons, 2-4 pm. When you have a moment you may want to try one. The tablets are easy to use and the tour contains much fascinating information about St Mary's heritage features.



*Audio visual handset and earphones*

The materials for sight-impaired visitors are almost ready and we hope will be available for use during the visitor season.

*Charles Baker*

## *One Body of Christ*

It is hard to believe we are coming towards the end of our second year as an integral part of the St Mary's congregation. The time has flown by - it has been a real joy to join with other Christians in the village and to build many new friendships. It is fair to say that the Methodists have come to appreciate the different style of worship we now enjoy together. We have also been delighted to welcome into the congregation two Methodists who recently moved into Chalgrove.

The Chapel has been sold and as many of you will have seen is now being redeveloped.

Ian Cohen and Adam Stevenson have recently been working with the Bishop of Dorchester to formalise the relationship between the denominations in a 'Declaration of Welcome'. This gives a firm foundation for us to build on in the future and is much appreciated.

We would like to thank Adam Stevenson and Jennifer Thompson for their regular commitment to preaching and leading worship, and everyone within the St Mary's community for continuing to make us feel so welcome.

*Nicholas and Louise Bates*

**Special points of interest:**

**A peal of bells for retiring Headteacher Julie Quarrell—p.2**

**Our finances—p.3**

**The Choir has a full complement, and a wet BBQ again! - p.4**

**Our four StRiders visited 74 churches and raised a total of £842—p.8**

## Bellringing

Over the last few months we have increased our numbers, welcoming Maggie Lindley and Jonathan O'Hara. Both are progressing well; it will not be too long before they are able to ring rounds unaccompanied. Faye Buttery has also taken a few tentative steps in learning the ropes. Chris Devonport has joined us having learnt the art of bell ringing in his youth. Our practices continue weekly with a loyal group, assisted by Wendy Simon. We tend to ring a lot of Minor, including Plain and Little Bob. I am still attempting to learn Cambridge, although I do need my copy of the blue line on the floor for comfort!

Sundays have been a struggle, most weeks we are only able to ring 5 bells as there are so many other commitments taking people elsewhere. We were able to manage a full band for all of our Christmas services at Chalgrove and Berrick Salome which was appreciated in the communities. As a team we have twinned with Aston Rowant, Dorchester and Drayton St Leonard, sharing a practice home and away, giving us the chance to ring different methods and more importantly socialise with other ringers. Over the next few months we will twin with Benson, Chinnor and Marsh Baldon.

A highlight for us was a peal rung by the St Blaise Society in December. It coincided with the departure of Julie Quarrell, our school headmistress and was rung to thank her for all she has done for the village of Chalgrove. The morning assembly, at which there were farewells to Julie, finished at 10 am. Shortly after the bells began and pretty well rang until the end of the school day, which finished early on the last day of term, so Julie had bells all the way through her last hours as Head at Chalgrove.

Colin Turner who arranged the peal sent the following message.

"Thanks for the arrangements for today's peal, details of which may be found using this link: <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1203815>. We enjoyed the bells very much, they are considerably easier to ring than I remember from my previous visit 28 years ago! We had some very nice ringing and I am sure that the celestial audience that Brian Gray and I compiled before we started would have approved. It was good to catch up with Brian after a gap of many years. Finally, by the time you read this I will be celebrating 40 years as a bellringer."

*Andrew Davis*

## Caretaking

It is a pleasure to only have to deal with minor issues these days, there are few surprises.

*Andrew Davis*

## Steeple Keeper

The clock is still keeping good Chalgrove time, the winter cold slows it down by a minute or so per week, the summer sun, when it comes, speeds it up. With Barry's assistance the mechanism was fully serviced in the Autumn; his expertise in clocks has allowed us to bring this maintenance in house as we were not happy with the previous service provider.

Finally, following various family health issues some distance from home, I intend to get the Bells and Tower inspected again as part of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers' Tower Maintenance Award Scheme.

*Andrew Davis*

## Lost for Words

We have met quarterly during the year, sharing tea, sandwiches and cake, in the John Hampden Hall. The Epiphany lunch too was a great success. These gatherings are so valued by those who are lonely and who live on their own, to share friendship and memories.

I would like to thank Posies and Presents who kindly provide a small arrangement of flowers taken to recently bereaved families. Thank you also to the small team which helps to make our afternoons so successful.

*Jeanette Barrington*

"A highlight for us was a peal rung by the St Blaise Society in December."



*Plaster fall from North Aisle*

"These gatherings are so valued by those who are lonely . . ."

## Financial Report

2017 was a calmer year, from a financial perspective - with a reduced focus on fundraising and a return to the norms of regular giving, events and balancing the books.

St Mary's has been fortunate to have benefitted from grants and other funding from external sources for project works; however, all day-to-day, week-by-week costs are funded by you, through your donations and support for events. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

Highlights from 2017 include: Regular giving - £35,742; Gift Aid - £7,341; Progressive Supper - £942; Flower Festival - £810; Friends events - £4,863; Banquet - £1,665; Ride & Stride - £421; St Nicks Fayre - £2,117; Talent Challenge - £3,310.

Funds have also benefitted during 2017 from two legacies, which were gratefully received - setting up a legacy can be as simple as making your intentions known and recorded in your will.

Our thanks also to Chalgrove Parish Council for their continued support of the churchyard - the churchyard is a valuable community asset.

Costs incurred during the year included the Parish Share of £34,035, utilities and insurance of £7,068, maintenance costs of £8,171 as well as costs of providing services. St Mary's was also able to support other charitable causes during the year with funding of £1,738.

And the project? Local funding, from donations, events, and gifts in kind totalled a magnificent £126,606 over a 5-year period from 2012. Whilst all project costs have been paid, there remains a small project deficit of £15,000 (circa 1.25% of the total cost) - if you would like to make a donation or consider leaving a legacy to St Mary's please contact a member of the PCC. Donations can be made using the Parish envelope Scheme, JustGiving ([www.justgiving.com/stmaryschalgrove](http://www.justgiving.com/stmaryschalgrove)), Give as You Earn (via your employer) or directly to the PCC bank account: NatWest - Sort Code: 60-22-19; Account No: 65281020; Account Name: PCC of Chalgrove

And a short note on Gift Aid:

*Gift Aid boosts donations by at least 20% through HM Revenue & Customs rebating tax you have already paid directly to the PCC. Donors are responsible for ensuring that they pay at least as much tax as the Gift Aid to be rebated.*

*Karen Mulcahy*

## Age Concern/Church Partnership

Looking back on my records I cannot believe that I have been writing this contribution to St Mary's yearbook for more than twelve years now. In that twelve years faces at St Mary's have come and gone with the exception of our vicar, Ian Cohen, who has remained a constant throughout. He has provided succour to our elderly, services for all to enjoy and many a good cream tea at the vicarage. All good things come to an end and this year Ian will be stepping down and taking a well-earned rest in his retirement. He will be greatly missed by all at Age Concern.

Ian together with Adam Stevenson have again conducted services in the Village Hall on important occasions throughout the year for the benefit of our members and for which we are very grateful. On these occasions it should be added that Jeanette Barrington, acting as Sacristan, provides the wherewithal for our members to take communion in the James Martin room. Thank you one and all.

It is now well-known that Oxfordshire County Council has reduced our funding down by 15% 2017/18 and by 20% 2018/19 and will reduce it by a further amount 2019/20. It is thanks to St Mary's church and the £600.00 from the St Nick's Fayre, plus fund raising during last year and the sale of our old minibus, that we should be able to continue for some years yet.

Nothing in this life stays the same for ever and not only are we losing Ian this year, we could well be losing The Acreage where we hold our Friday session and during the summer we are losing the Village Hall for refurbishment. Ho hum.

**"Whilst all project costs have been paid, there remains a small project deficit of £15,000 . . ."**



*Framed chunks of plaster from the north aisle, raised money in the Talent Challenge*

**"Ian together with Adam Stevenson have again conducted services in the Village Hall on important occasions throughout the year for the benefit of our members . . ."**

## Sharing Life Social Events



*Men in Blaque*

The year has a familiar pattern of events including the Quiz Night in February, the Progressive Supper in April, the Autumn Banquet in October and St Nick's Fayre at the beginning of December. But these are never the same and continue to surprise us with the generosity of those who organise them and those who come to enjoy them and take part. Added to them this past year were the concerts in May by the Drury Singers from Missouri, and in July by the Men in Blaque from California. Both these groups used the acoustics of the church to enhance their performances to great effect, and to the enjoyment and pleasure of their audiences. Indeed, the Men in Blaque at last got one difficult piece to work just right for the first time thanks to our acoustics!

In May local artists Sophie Pulker, Jenny Whyte, Mary Blackshaw, Ruth Dodd, Rosie Redhead, Martin Wiggall, Janet Dunkley, Christine Pulker and Gordon Smith exhibited their work as part of the Art Weeks Festival and drew in some 370 visitors.



*Vicarage Garden Party*

And in September Ann Mc Devitt and her team of floral arrangers produced a wonderful Flower Festival which brought a further 250 visitors to St Mary's.

Behind all of these really enjoyable occasions there are teams of talented people who give their time to help others have a good time. At the Vicarage Garden party in July, the PCC thanked as many of these people as were able to come, and we were again blessed with sunshine for the event.

*Bob Heath-Whyte*

## Prayer Group

The prayer group continues to meet on a regular basis. We are assured of a warm welcome from Bob and Carole Heath-Whyte who host our meetings. There is always much to pray for locally, nationally and internationally and also for friends and family and those living in Chalgrove.

It's good to have time together to share fellowship and our concerns, to pray and give thanks for answered prayer.

Do let us have any prayer requests, we are always pleased to include these when we meet.

*Wendy Poile*

## Choir

2017 has been a good year. Once again, our resident composer Rhiannon Fentimen has been busy and has given us some amazing anthems. Panis Angelicus was written for Lent/Easter and was used on Maundy Thursday and Easter Morning. A Christmas Carol was composed for the choir and the children of the village primary school and was well received by all at the carol service on Christmas Eve.

Traditional and familiar anthems once again have been used throughout the church year with some old favourites that have not been heard for a few years being revived.

We welcomed Sam and Ariane Richards and Bob Kuyper into the choir this year and can now boast a full complement of 16 members. We mourned the loss of Bob Larter who died in 2017 and it was fitting that a full choir sang for his funeral. We are delighted that, carrying on the tradition, Bob's wife Gill has now decided to join us.

Social events included the choir meal at the Red Lion and quizzes throughout the year, with the choir victorious in this year's church quiz. The BBQ for the 4<sup>th</sup> year under my tenure was a complete washout and I keep my 100% record.

On a personal note I would like to thank all the choir for their commitment and turning up in all weathers and conditions to sing and enhance the worship at St Mary's. I would like to thank Edward Pooley for conducting and helping at rehearsals and to Patricia Hunt for playing the organ at family services.

We look forward to next year with a few new anthems in mind including an Elton John piece for a wedding in 2018.

*Chris Devonport*

**"Traditional and familiar anthems once again have been used throughout the church year . . ."**

## Deanery Synod

We had three meetings during the year, at Great Haseley, Thame and Berinsfield. Topics covered included the 'plus side of clergy absences, especially during interregnums', the work of a Science Missioner and the Parish Giving Scheme. The retiring Area Dean, Revd Alan Garratt paid tribute to the great commitment of all those involved in any way in the life of rural churches, and our new Area Dean, Revd Emma Pennington, was welcomed at the following meeting, which she chaired.

We have two vacancies for Deanery Synod members, so if anyone would like to take up this opportunity to be involved in the wider church please speak to me before the APCM.

*Edward Pooley*



*Church Stall at the May Day Festival*

## Flower Arrangers

A busy year for us with all the usual festivals plus five weddings. We were also involved with the Harvest Flower Festival. Following that we are pleased to welcome Sharon to our group. We have a full complement of twelve on the rota and my thanks go to them all. It looks like another busy year ahead with many weddings on the list.

*Claire Ing*

## The John Hampden Hall

The Committee met four times in 2017, in February, April, June and October, with the AGM taking place in April. I was again elected Chairman, Terry Fisher as Treasurer and Barry Spicer took over the role of Minute Secretary as Ann Reed was indisposed. The other serving members retained were Tricia Fryer, Don Belcher and Gill Spicer; the Vicar being ex-officio. No representatives from the other users groups had been forthcoming, although sought. Unfortunately Karen Mulcahy retired from the PCC so consequentially we lost her from this Committee. We, this Committee, thank her for her untiring work. Our other great thanks go to Adam Stevenson and the Methodist Circuit who generously donated 39 chairs to the Hall, all the right colour and weight. A true 'gift from heaven'.

The regular users at present are as follows – Age Concern and their Computer Club, the Local History Group, the Brownies, the Dance Class, the Scrabble Club, Tots Music, Little Masters, the WI, the Quilting Group and the Flower Club. As our service to the village all these use the Hall at a reduced rate, their own funds being limited and hiring rates were not increased during 2017. At the weekends a number of children's parties, the Church's Bereavement Teas and the Lunches took place.

The Committee members took part in two garden tidy mornings in April and October when the brook was thoroughly cleared amid much mud and laughter. They also shared the task of tidying the garden throughout the growing season. Consequently the garden could be used by all hirers.

General maintenance was carried out on the building, mostly by the Committee, but the major expense of the year was the overhaul of fire safety equipment. The Fire Officer was called in for suggestions and these were acted upon. Next year the size of the fire extinguishers may be reduced as he thought that the present designs were too heavy for the majority of hirers to use. All electrical, plumbing and safety reviews were up to date.

My thanks in helping to run the Hall over the past year go to the hard working Committee who give their time and talents for free, and to Gill Spicer, who as our caretaker, makes sure all the user groups can function successfully.

*Gill Lester, Chairman*



*Flowers for Matt and Jenny's wedding, May 2017*

**"The Committee members took part in two garden tidy mornings . . . when the brook was thoroughly cleared amid much mud and laughter."**

## *St Mary's House Group*

The House Group has continued to meet throughout the year on a Wednesday evening once a fortnight as holidays and fitness permit.

During Lent 2017 we used the 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' (CTBI) Lent course entitled 'Christian Faith in Encounter with Other Faiths'. This was quite challenging but gave us the opportunity to explore belief systems outside our own experiences, especially those with whom we are increasingly expected to share a platform. After this we returned to the book 'The Song of the Shepherd' to complete our study of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

After a summer break we learnt about Bishop Steven's common vision for the Diocese calling us to be a more Christ-like Church. Working solely on the first few verses of the Beatitudes we used a group study to explore how we could become more Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous.

We began this year with a familiar resource from Norwich Diocese. Using art, literature and music we looked at the many themes of Epiphany recognised and celebrated by the Church during January.

This Lent we have been encouraged to use another booklet produced by our Diocese to further our desire to be a more Christ-like church. 'Abundant Life', a series of reflections on 'The Raising of Lazarus' from John's Gospel, looks at how Christ sets the standard for us to become more Contemplative, show more Compassion and be more Courageous in our discipleship.

Details of all the House Group activities are always listed in the weekly Church Notes and newcomers are very welcome to join us.

*Janet Hickmore*

## *A Tale of Two Churches*

### **Reflections on the Chalgrove-Berrick Benefice**

Chalgrove and Berrick: two Parishes united in one Benefice. Chalgrove, of course, can claim the higher ground, being at greater elevation (yes, up that windy treacherous hill with lethal bends and disintegrating verges) but it also boasts a population twenty times the size of its neighbours down the hill: Berrick, Roke and Rokemarsh. And size matters, I decided, as I was reflecting on these two communities, and how they interact and support each other.

Chalgrove has the enviable person-power and resources to sustain a thriving selection of clubs and societies, as well as 'proper' village facilities such as shops, pubs and a surgery, not to mention a bus. Their less endowed smaller neighbours, on the other hand, do not. Down at this end, we can only boast two pubs, a village hall, and a church – but nevertheless, this latter generates much of the collective village social life. Because we need to pay the Diocese enough money to sustain a weekly service down here, we lay on, as you do in Chalgrove, a range of activities designed with fund-raising in mind. Unlike you, however, there is less competition in our community for attendance at the quiz, the progressive supper, the garden fete, the open gardens and the Christmas fair. While in a larger community, church activities are mainly patronised by those who attend church, in our relatively small community, where the church is virtually the only organisation, around 50% of our inhabitants take part in fund-raising activities. It matters not whether folk attend church services – any church activity automatically becomes a 'village event'. Much of this is due to Ian Cohen's inclusive leadership: even if they do not have a belief, everyone respects what he stands for.

We are grateful to those Chalgrovians who support our activities, just as we thank them for inviting us to theirs – and this bodes well for the future. As we move remorselessly towards the period of the interregnum after Ian retires, and as PCC members take on more responsibility, I have no doubt that the Chalgrove-Berrick relationship will grow even stronger, and I look forward to developing further the ties that bind our two communities.

*Marian Shaw*

*Churchwarden, St Helen's Berrick Salome*

**"... we used a group study to explore how we could become more Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous."**



*Easter Flowers 2017*

**"It matters not whether folk attend church services - any church activity automatically becomes a 'village event'."**

## Friends

This last year has been a particularly busy one for the Friends committee and the wider group of members who help the committee to run events, so I want to begin by paying tribute to them all for the time, skills and energy they have given. They have all contributed to the task of establishing the new membership scheme, whilst also providing members with regular editions of the Friends Quarterly and running several great events. Thank you all of you.

We can now report that the new membership scheme for Friends is underway. Membership currently stands at 42, either new or renewed members. Our thanks to all of you who have expressed your support in this way. Without the support and friendship of the members, Friends would not exist.

All monies raised by Friends continue to support the life, work and fabric of St Mary's. Over the past year, Friends supported or presented some very successful and enjoyable events. The total raised from the Workshop event, the May Day stall, two Concerts and an Open Garden afternoon was £1,438.81. Membership income is now being recorded and at January 2018 it was £2,240 without the addition of Gift Aid.

This year's Church Quiz was again promoted by Friends, and thanks to the generous help given by so many people, it was enjoyed by all who participated and raised a net profit of £763.

The February edition of the Quarterly newsletter has been distributed. Geoffrey Searle joined the editorial team to help produce this edition. We are very grateful to him for taking on the challenging task of compiling it and sticking with it until he achieved the objective. Thank you Geoffrey. And thank you too to Peter Hunt who retired last year from the role of compiling the Newsletter. Peter's contribution over several years has been a real asset to the editorial team. Particular thanks too to Andrew Davis for his long-standing support of Friends events and for his willingness to continue this when possible.

Friends events/activities still to come are - the Church stand at the May Day Festival; an Organ Recital performed by Dr Joseph Nolan on 19 May; the Friends' Strawberry Cream Tea on 10 June; and a Choral Concert on 30 June. We hope that you will join us on some if not all of these occasions.

New members are always welcome and application forms are available in church or from me (400402). And of course, if you can offer help at any of the events, or in other ways, that is very welcome too!

*Lynn Baker on behalf of the Friends Committee*



*The Autumn Banquet*

**"Without the support and friendship of the members, Friends would not exist."**



*MC, Question Master and Recorder at the Quiz*

## Interpretation/Communications

The new format of the website continues as a work-in-progress as we learn more about how to use it. The 360 degree virtual tour is proving to be quite popular.

A total of fourteen groups made organised visits to see the church and the medieval wall paintings during the year, in all some 270 people. The PCC's decision to charge such visiting groups for the wall paintings presentation and for guided tours, to cover the costs of lighting and heating, does not appear to have affected the number of groups wanting to see our church. Added to this a further 270 visitors came during the Wednesday and Sunday open hours, and were shown round by our trained guides. There has been a slow take up in the use of the visual aid guide tablets and the smartphone app.

With the additional visitors to the Artweeks exhibition and the Flower Festival, a total of some 1,160 visitors came to see St Mary's in 2017.

Work continues on the guide for the visually impaired and it is hoped to 'roll this out' within a month or so. A group of VIPs from the Tuesday Club at the Oxford Association for the Blind visited in October to help us with our draft materials and advise us on how to improve them. We have also visited a mentor at the Natural History Museum in Oxford who is doing similar work and has given us lots of helpful advice. As well as producing swell paper information sheets we are looking at the possibility of printing tactile 3D models of items such as the cresset stone and the carved pillar corbels.

*Bob Heath-Whyte*

**"A total of fourteen groups made organised visits to see the church and the medieval wall paintings during the year, in all some 270 people."**



*Andrew Davis and Barry Spicer put the finishing touches to the Christmas tree*

## Safeguarding

Within the Parish nothing has changed to affect our Safeguarding Policy. Our new Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor is John Nixon who replaced Stephen Barber last year and in August we were advised that the **Access Personal Checking Service (APCS)** is our new DBS Umbrella Body for future Disclosures.

Early last year the Church of England published '**Practice Guidance: Safeguarding Training & Development**' providing a new framework of training across all Church communities. Details have just filtered through to parishes in this Diocese and we are now required to take steps in identifying all persons required to complete the necessary training.

*Janet Hickmore*

## USPG

USPG - United Society Partners in the Gospel.

USPG is a Christian charity working in partnership with local Anglican churches throughout the world. Together, they work with local communities to improve health, put children in school, tackle discrimination, nurture leaders, give a voice to women, and much more.

St Mary's, with St Helen's in Berrick, have continued supporting Healthcare and Training for Church Leaders in Tanzania during the past year. During Lent and Advent, donations were made using sets of weekly envelopes. Prayer guides and 'Transmission' magazines, which describe the work of USPG, are always available in Church throughout the year. Study guides are also available and they can be found in church or on the website [uspg.org.uk](http://uspg.org.uk).

Thank you to all at St Mary's who support the work of USPG. A total of £258.20 was raised during 2017.

*Carole Heath-Whyte*



## Ride and Stride



*Andrew Davis on his way!*

Twelve cyclists visited the church during the annual StRide on 9 September. There were two cyclists and two walkers who represented St Mary's: Andrew Davis visited 33 churches, Alan Thompson 24 and Lynn and Charles Baker walked to 17 churches in Oxford. We are very grateful to all the welcomers who sat patiently in church to sign in StRiders, and we congratulate 'our' StRiders.

Our StRiders raised £842 through sponsorship. Half of this sum is retained by Oxford Historic Churches Trust and half comes back to our church. Congratulations and thanks to all who took part and to those who supported their efforts.

*Carole Heath-Whyte*