

Friends Report 2012

The Friends have continued to be busy with many events over the past year.

Just before Palm Sunday the St Georges Singers gave their second concert, comprising choral and organ music for Passiontide, which was again a glorious and moving evening, and which attracted a large and appreciative audience.

Our efforts are now turning towards the final challenge, the restoration of our fine Nicholson organ . At the end of 2010 we received a grant of £5000 from the Rowlands Trust towards the work on the organ, and the Williams Music Trust has subsequently given us a grant of £5000. Following discussions with Nicholson's, and a considerable amount of form filling, a Faculty was granted by the Diocese for a new and larger blower. Thanks to these grants, the new blower for the organ was installed and commissioned in October this year. This is indeed timely, and welcome good news as the old blower was exceedingly noisy and life expired.

This will be a first significant step in the restoration of the organ, and we shall be approaching a number of other trusts, seeking their support. Meanwhile, on the advice of our organist Ian Ball, tenders for the full restoration have been received from several reputable organ builders. The total cost is likely to be in the region of £300,000, which regrettably now includes the 20% Vat recently applied for such restoration work. The tenders have now been forwarded to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) for further review prior, to detailed discussions with the organ builders. The restored instrument will certainly be an invaluable resource for teaching and concerts, as well as its regular use at Sunday services.

Shortly after Easter, and as part of the combined celebrations for St George's Day and the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Saint George's parish, The Friends organised a Quiz Evening which attracted a capacity audience in the Magdalene Room. This was great fun, although somewhat mentally challenging for some of us, and all present enjoyed an excellent ploughman's supper.

The next happy occasion was the Garden Party on the afternoon of Saturday 26th May, at 5, St George's Square, by kind permission of Mr Michael and Dr Jane Silvey. Despite the generally awful summer weather, this was blessed with a fine afternoon, and a rare opportunity to enjoy their lovely garden in warm sunshine.

The Friends again provided the barbecue at the St Georges Church Summer Fair on Saturday, 14 July. Miraculously the rain stopped at 9 am, the sun came out and the large and hungry crowds devoured the entire stock of 200 hot dogs and burgers!

The Friends hosted a week of Coffee Concerts during the Worcester Festival, featuring Recitals by students from the Elgar School of Music in Worcester. These young musicians gave fine performances, and the comfort and excellent acoustics of Saint George's were much appreciated by performers and audience alike.

At the end of October the Friends arranged another very enjoyable and financially successful Quiz evening, and it was good to see so many of our near neighbours in the teams taking part.

On Friday 9th November we welcomed back the Volcano Choir, the St Georges School choir and Drumlove for an exciting evening of music for all the family. A week later welcomed back the St. George's Singers for their third concert. This concert was given in memory of Bob Greenwood, and included a newly commissioned work; again an evening of wonderful music.

It has become apparent over recent months that the church boilers were getting close to the end of their lives, and the Friends undertook to help in finding the necessary funds for their replacement; some £20,000. A grant of £7,000 has been given by the Severn Waste Environmental Fund, and a subsequent grant of £5,000 was recently received from the Garfield Weston Foundation. These generous grants, together other fund raising, and supported with a loan from the Diocesan Board of Finance, has enabled the old boilers to be replaced in time for the coming winter. The new boilers are high efficiency condensing boilers, thus helping the environment and reducing the church's energy bills, as well as ensuring that the church has been reliably warm and comfortable during the recent snowy weather.

The Wassail Concert in December was again a resounding success, with glorious music and entertaining readings, and our Christmas quiz proved to be mentally challenging as well as being a useful fund-raiser!

Lastly I'm glad to be able to report that The Friends were able to contribute £1,500 in February towards the repayment of the Diocesan loan, and were able to contribute a further £1,500 in August this year.

Revd Prebendary Dr Colin Beevers
February 2013