

## AGM REPORT

2019 and the first part of 2020 up to the AGM has been a quiet period for the Friends in respect of fund raising and major projects. We have had sufficient funds on hand to respond to the small requests from the PCC for financial assistance but this period has also been our most significant time yet in terms of legacies.

We received £10,000 from the estate of the late Peter Dingley and this is likely to be used to conserve and rehouse the King James Bible of Holy Trinity. We are very grateful to Peter for remembering the Friends in his will.

The second legacy was very generous in that the late Mrs Gloria Wooldridge left us her entire estate. Mrs Wooldridge had no obvious connection with Holy Trinity yet she chose to leave her estate to the Friends - a remarkable act of generosity. We received the legacy in September 2020 and it is a very substantial amount.

The news of Mrs Wooldridge's legacy in particular caused us to cancel the event planned for September which was to launch a £300,000 appeal to fund the restoration of the North Transept and the roof of the South Aisle. The legacy from Mrs Wooldridge was sufficient to cause the PCC to reconsider their restoration programme and aspirations for the church. We hope that we will be able to restart fundraising soon, once the PCC have determined their priorities.

We are very grateful to such generous donors and would urge others to consider leaving a legacy to the Friends to help safeguard Holy Trinity for future generations.

In June we were delighted to welcome a group from the Friends of Hereford Cathedral. They had a most enjoyable visit with a tour of the church and tea afterwards. Many thanks to the church's volunteers who made the visit possible. We might consider a "return" trip whereby a group of our Friends visit Hereford?

During the year, the Friends paid for and Lindsay Macdonald supervised the republishing of the booklet "Skulduggery" and a second edition of "Holy Trinity Church: A Taste of History". Both were originally edited by former Chairman Prof. Ronnie Mulryne and we were delighted to honour his memory in making them available again. Both are now on sale in the Church shop. We are grateful to Lindsay for undertaking this task

In the Autumn, the Friends sponsored a series of six weekly talks on the history of the Church under the general title "Holy Trinity Church: Before and After Shakespeare". They were dedicated to the memory of Ronnie Mulryne and were very well attended with over £1,000 being raised in donations. Sandra and Lindsay Macdonald organized the series of talks and were indeed two of the speakers. We are very grateful to them for doing this. The talks will form the basis of a new booklet with the same title and we hope that it will be available soon in the Church shop.

Many of you will have seen that the Hatchments are now back in the south aisle after a long restoration paid for by the Friends. They were apparently in a very bad condition and we are immensely grateful to the skill and patience of Stewart Meese for doing such a superb job on them.

The Trustees have been looking at the subscription rates for membership of the Friends. On balance, the current system of having Bronze (£20), Silver (£40), Gold (£60) and Life (£350) members seems unduly complicated for a small charity. We are proposing a simpler system of just Annual membership and Life membership and we are proposing that new members will pay £50 for Annual

membership and £500 for Life membership. Existing members however can keep on paying their current levels of subscriptions if they prefer.

Since the year end, Covid-19 has disrupted life everywhere and Stratford is no exception. The lack of visitors has hit the town's economy badly and the church was closed for months. This has created a large hole in its finances and so the Friends are needed now as never before. Thank you all for your continued support.

At this AGM we also bid farewell to two of the Trustees. Pat Pilton and Richard Hartley are stepping down after serving the Friends for seven years and five years respectively. We would like to thank them for all that they have contributed to the Friends and wish them well. During the period under review, we also welcomed Cllr Jenny Fradgley as the new Town Council representative Trustee.

ALAN HAIGH

CHAIRMAN