

Friends of St Andrew's - Annual Report 2014

Promoting George Herbert

It was, of course, the year of the Festival. Why 2014 to commemorate George Herbert? The 422 anniversary of his birth or 382nd since his death? Or was it just that Canon Judy Rees realised that when Rowan Williams retired from being Archbishop, this was the perfect moment to invite him to come and lead a celebration of one of his favourite poets? Judy's idea was soon taken up by the parish, cathedral, Sarum College, and a host of others and large committee was formed, very ably and successfully chaired by our webmaster - Peter Webster.

The quality of speakers - from Rowan, to Gillian Craig, Andrew Motion. Gillian Clarke, to John Drury, Helen Wilcox, and Sonia Woolley, - made this an international event of high calibre. There were children's events, calligraphy workshops, history, literature, spirituality. It drew hundreds of people for 4 days of listening, talking, thinking and praying. It was never intended to start a regular event, so it has been marked in two ways. Firstly a commemorative booklet, with photos and thoughts from contributors - this is available through the website, or locally from one of the committee. Secondly it is remembered by a stone on the doorway to St.Andrews.

This stone was given by the Cathedral quarry, and carved by a member of St.Michael's congregation - Robyn Golden-Hann. It immortalises Herbert's most famous line, and was blessed by Rowan Williams at the 7:00am communion. It stands to welcome visitors and pilgrims and remind them that it is God who welcomes them into St.Andrews.

Looking after St.Andrews

More mundanely - we have been maintaining the building. The heating is working well and has proved a satisfactory solution.

A quote for replacing the lighting is being sought.

Discussions are ongoing for the future positioning, permanent or removable status of the recently installed noticeboard. The current position and status is not satisfactory.

The Quinquennial inspection with the new architect identified a number of areas of concern to the architect. Some had been raised previously and the ongoing solution agreed, others were new and had not been of concern to the previous architect. These will be raised with the Architect and other experts.

Drainage via the gully around the building was raised previously and a solution agreed which did not require digging of a soak away.

Deteriorating stonework – we are aware of some worn stones and are preparing a programme of repair and replacement as they reach a critical state. This will be less far reaching than the level of replacement suggested in the Quinquennial inspection.

Clearance of ivy etc from gravestones – we think this unnecessary as it does not affect the building, has been there for very many years and is part of the character of the small country churchyard.

Hilary Bird - Churchwarden

Simon Woodley - Rector of Bemerton

April 2014