



Registered Charity No. 1160314

# The Friends of St Peter's Newsletter

## Number 7 – Autumn 2016

### Introduction by the Chairman of the Trustees

On 7<sup>th</sup> May, the day following the visit to Berkhamsted by Her Majesty the Queen, David Pearce wrote "That was a glorious day. I shall never see the like again. I imagine that for Berkhamsted no one will. It was full of goodwill and happiness, and sunshine. Town and church and School were linked together as they once were in Incent's intentions, and have possibly never been so since. He, lying in his chantry chapel beside us, will have rejoiced." David was inspired to write, on the same day, the article which appears on page 3 of this Newsletter and which I commend to you.

I would also like to mention two other events this summer. First, there was the performance of I, Elizabeth on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June in Berkhamsted School's Centenary Theatre. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, this was indeed a tour de force by Rebecca Vaughan and I am sure that all those present will have learnt much about Queen Elizabeth I and also have been greatly entertained. The Trustees are very grateful to Penella Warren for all the work she did in organising this event.

The other event was the Rectory Lane Cemetery Heritage Open Day on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September. An article about this appears on page 2 of this Newsletter and, whilst I will not attempt to add to it, I would like to take this opportunity to thank James Moir and his team for organising such a successful day.

We are planning to hold our next social event early in 2017 and details of this will be announced as soon as possible. In the meantime we really would welcome the ideas of our readers, as to what you would like to see the Friends doing for you and for the whole Berkhamsted community. Please do get in touch – my email address is below.

Peter Williamson

### Patrons and Trustees

#### Patrons

Carolann Smith Dorrien  
The Venerable Jonathan P. Smith, Archdeacon of St Albans

#### Trustees

Chairman: Peter Williamson ([peter.williamson47@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.williamson47@btinternet.com))  
Secretary: Cathy Imber ([cathy.imber@btopenworld.com](mailto:cathy.imber@btopenworld.com))  
Treasurer: Victoria Booth ([victoriabooth@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:victoriabooth@tiscali.co.uk))  
The Rector of St Peter's ([rector@greatbrkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:rector@greatbrkhamsted.org.uk))  
Paul Crosland ([peejaycee@yahoo.com](mailto:peejaycee@yahoo.com))  
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David Pearce ([drap@15pvr.me.uk](mailto:drap@15pvr.me.uk))  
James Moir ([jamesmgmoir@aol.com](mailto:jamesmgmoir@aol.com))  
Peter Matthews ([peter.b.matthews@gmail.com](mailto:peter.b.matthews@gmail.com))

### Can you design a Seat to Remember?

The Friends of St Peter's are inviting entries for innovative designs for new seats around the Rectory Lane Cemetery.

Eight **new** benches are needed at various key locations around the Cemetery. Entrants may either design an individual bench (sympathetic to the proposed location of the bench) or design a composite scheme for all the benches. The prizes on offer are £1,000, £500 and £250 for the best individual seat designs **or** you could win one prize of £2,000 if you design a composite scheme. To find out all of the rules and the background information please see <http://rectorylanecemetery.org.uk/>

This competition which is open to all is part of a 'Parks for People' Project, a joint initiative of the Big Lottery Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund.

James Moir, Trustee of FoSP and convenor of the RLC project said 'We want the seating to become part of the attraction of the Cemetery, elevating its sense of being a 'special place' and contributing to the enjoyment of the experience.'

The closing date for submissions is Friday **18<sup>th</sup> November** at midnight (GMT). All other terms and conditions are available at: [Rectory Lane Cemetery – Bench Competition 2016](#)

### Help from local supermarkets

#### Waitrose Green Button Charity

During October the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project will be one of the Waitrose Green Button Charities that people can vote on. Please support our work in the cemetery by voting for us when you are shopping. It would also help if you spread the word amongst your friends and family and encourage them to participate.

#### Tesco Bags of Help

The restoration of the Seat of Remembrance, located by the Memorial Arch in the centre of the Rectory Lane Cemetery was made possible by a generous grant of £8,000 from Tesco's 'Bags of Help' Scheme. The bench was erected in 1934 by Lucy Foot in memory of her late husband Brigadier General Richard Mildmay Foot – see picture overleaf.

## Rectory Lane Cemetery Heritage Open Day

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September we awoke to a day of glorious sunshine; what a relief. A frenetic morning was spent preparing the Cemetery for the many activities planned. Just before 2pm the majestic hearse pulled by the beautiful black horses Whirly and Art arrived courtesy of Malcolm Jones and Metcalfe and Berkhamsted's own Mayor Mr Tom Ritchie launched proceedings and welcomed everyone.

As well as local families who came to learn of the proposals for the space where their relatives lie, we also had a group from Poland. The brothers Kaznowski have a connection with the town through their mother. Their grandfather Reginald Hugh Hughes retired here and was instrumental in the building of All Saints Church in Shrublands Road, although he himself was a St Peter's parishioner.



More local history was brought to life by a group of talented players from the Berkhamsted Youth Theatre. They portrayed three latter day movers and shakers of the town: George Loader, (1839-1908) the Rev John Wolstenholme Cobb (1829 – 1883) and Walter Pitkin (1882-

1945) telling us their view on the developments planned. The playlet written by Kate Perera (from the Parish office) was well received. Also seen in the Cemetery were characters from the Social Living Foundation with Mr Ghost the Gravedigger, (late of Castle Street).

The focal point of the afternoon was when the Seat of Remembrance was unveiled by Professor Sarah Foot great grand-daughter of Brigadier General Richard Mildmay Foot. She thanked all who had been involved in this restoration and particularly Charles Fiddler of Berkhamsted Metro who was present on behalf of one of the major funders - the Tesco 'Bags of Help' Scheme.



Sarah Foot trying out the restored Seat of Remembrance

Various talented musicians serenaded us throughout the afternoon. Thoby Davis began with haunting versions of Ralph McTell songs and the Swan Centre Youth Project's Sophie O'Neill (who many may recognise from her shifts at Tesco) thrilled us with her very powerful voice. After 5 years at the Youth Project, this was a sort of 'swan song' for Sophie as she is off to study Aeronautics at Preston University.



Towards dusk the dulcet tones of Daria Kulesh gently lulled us into a more contemplative mood for the Lantern Procession.

People of all ages carrying torches, glow sticks, lanterns and even lighted umbrellas were led by the New Orleans Jazz band Mississippi Swamp Dogs while the traffic was halted as we progressed from St Peter's along the High Street up Rectory Lane. Two sombrely dressed gentlemen looking remarkably like Jeremy Biddle and Paul Crosland escorted the hand bier which would have been the means of transport for the last journeys of many of the Cemetery's residents.

At the Rectory Lane Gates the Rev Timothy Pilkington led prayers next to the war memorial in recognition of those lost in all wars and particularly those young men involved in the Battle of the Somme exactly 100 years ago.



The procession then traversed up the hill to the furthest and most Southern point of the Cemetery and returned following the carefully laid LED lights which lent an enchanted quality to the space.

Thanks to everyone who came and gave us their views – feedback is the lifeblood of this project, so thank you for your interest, consideration and time. Any contribution of time can be as flexible as you like to suit your availability.

Like to know more? Please contact James Moir on [jamesmgmoir@aol.com](mailto:jamesmgmoir@aol.com) or 07545 786372



## The Vision of John Incent Founder of the 'Free Schole'

Every inhabitant of Berkhamsted knows that opposite St Peter's church, there stands an ancient timbered house known as Dean Incent's. And there the interest generally ceases, though that, in fact, is the starting point of a glorious story that should be better known to the folk of Berkhamsted. By long tradition that house was the birthplace, about the year 1480, of John Incent. His father, Robert, was a 'Gentleman' and 'Secretary' to Cicely, Duchess of York, who was the chatelaine of the castle. The Incents had a long connection with the town, certainly going back, by marriage and by implication and land-holding, to Henry of Berkhamsted and the battle of Crécy, 1346.

In the town were a number of mediaeval hospitals founded to care for the needs of travellers and the poor and the sick. One of these was the Hospital of St John the Baptist, which I am fairly certain was situated on the same site as the present school. That hospital had fallen into disuse by about 1517 and was no longer administered in Berkhamsted for the good of the townfolk, but by a neglectful Foundation in London. Incent, by this time was moving in royal and episcopal circles, and was sufficiently wealthy – with the support of the citizens (note that) – to pay off the London owners, and to become the President of a newly invigorated Administration. This was to be devoted to the cause of Education in Berkhamsted. That was Incent's vision. A free education.

His mother, Katherine, made benefactions to this in 1518, and, in 1523, another Catherine, Catherine of Aragon, made grants to this scheme of John Incent. This Royal patronage, and Incent's mother's death in 1520, clinched the scheme. Incent was able to endow a school out of his own wealth. And so it was that a 'free' school for Berkhamsted existed by 1523. It was a school that he devoted to the good of all Berkhamsted. We know that, at this date, Dr Incent 'President and Chief of the said Fraternity gave all the lands which he had here for the said use, and sent a schoolmaster who taught their children...' That is from 493 years ago. And just note: it was 'children' in Incent's plan, although I rather suspect that by that he meant 'boys'.

In all this we see the links between town, the Royal castle, Royal patronage, St Peter's church, Education, and personal generosity. The eventual School founded in 1541 was put under the patronage of Henry VIII. There it was safe in troublous times. Everything that Incent did, both up to this point and subsequently, he did 'not without ye healpe of ye town and country'. The town was a community. That is still our sense of the town: when there is need and a good cause, the people rally round.

Incent, in the service of the immensely important Bishop Fox of Winchester, knew all the important people – Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Archbishop Warham, Wolsey, Cromwell, Thomas More.



He made money and intended it to endow a great school for his own town. His town and St Peter's church mattered to him. He 'hath done many benyfyt & ornament gyven unto thys chapell of Saynt John' where his father and mother were commemorated in brass. And Education mattered to him. He was almost fanatical about that. One

vexed steward of land in Hampshire wrote that Dr Incent 'took away every penny and pennyworth' so that he could purchase land to found his own school.

This was the 'free schole' for Berkhamsted, the town of his birth and his affection. There is no memorial to him, though he was the famous Dean of St Paul's. From time to time he came back to stay in his school, and it seems that in 1545 – when he died – he was buried in his chantry of St John, here in St Peter's. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there is record of a florid Latin epitaph under the 'cote' and crest of Incent, and Clutterbuck (1820) speaks of his being buried in the church in his own chancel.

These are the bones of Incent's story. Whenever I hear of divisions in Berkhamsted – of cases of grievance – I comfort myself with the noble designs and generosity of Dr John Incent. Of course, we know that it has not turned out quite as he expected, but the vision was there, and in the Queen's visit, and in the Receptions for representatives of all Town life, of the Schools and institutions, and of Church there was a timely renewal of that Vision.

I shall cherish that vision, and, with it, the sight of my own daughters looking out from the windows of Dean Incent's house, where we once lived, to view the arrival of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, whose great predecessor Incent knew.

David R.A.Pearce  
7<sup>th</sup> May, 2016



Dean Incent's house, Berkhamsted High Street

## Programme of Events November 2016 – April 2017



|                      |                                     |           |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct  | Bridgewater Sinfonia Concert        | 7.30 p.m. |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> Oct | Organ Recital                       | 8.00 p.m. |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct | Organ Recital                       | 8.00 p.m. |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Organ Recital                       | 8.00 p.m. |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Bridgewater Sinfonia Concert        | 7.30 p.m. |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> Nov | Organ Recital                       | 8.00 p.m. |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec  | Berkhamsted Choral Soc. Concert     | 7.30 p.m. |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec | Organ Recital                       | 8.00 p.m. |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec | Chiltern Chamber Choir Concert      | 7.30 p.m. |
|                      | Praetorius Mass for Christmas       |           |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Jan  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Mar  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Mar | Bridgewater Sinfonia Concert        | 7.30 p.m. |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Apr  | Chiltern Chamber Choir Concert      | 7.30 p.m. |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Jun  | Rectory Lane Cemetery working party | 2–4 p.m.  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> Jun | Chiltern Chamber Choir Concert      | 7.30 p.m. |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Jun | Bridgewater Sinfonia Concert        | 7.30 p.m. |

### Bryceson Organ in St Peter's

This small pipe organ has been in St Peter's church for nearly 25 years. It came into the church in 1992 when its owner, the distinguished organist, Christopher Bowers-Broadbent could no longer accommodate it and needed to find a home for it. In the original arrangement in 1992, the church accepted the instrument on a 'long loan' basis. Now, following the very generous decision by Christopher Bowers-Broadbent to gift the organ to the church, it is in St Peter's on a more permanent basis.

In this new situation, the Friends will be making the restoration of the Bryceson organ an early priority. Vincent Woodstock, who recently restored and enhanced the main organ in St Peter's, has already been asked to assess the work required to restore the Bryceson and to bring it into full working order. Meanwhile the Friends are beginning to explore sources of funding for the restoration.



## Become a Friend

To join the Friends please use this application form (or a photocopy of it). Alternatively, you can download an Application Form from the Friends website: [www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk](http://www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk)

### Personal Details:

|            |
|------------|
| Title:     |
| Full Name: |
| Address:   |
| Postcode:  |
| Telephone: |
| Email:     |

### Subscriptions

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Individual | £12 |
| Family     | £20 |
| Corporate  | £50 |

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My subscription payments **should/should not** be treated as Gift Aid donations (delete as appropriate)

### Bankers Standing Order

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| Bank Address: |
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Please pay The Friends of St Peter's Church Great Berkhamsted, A/c No. 64109216, NatWest Bank (60-02-21) the sum of:

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| £ | Amount in words |
|---|-----------------|

Beginning on :

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| Date: |
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and annually thereafter until further notice, charging my account:

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| Account Name:   |
| Sort Code:      |
| Account Number: |

Date:

Signature:

Please return this form to: Paul Crosland,  
11 Upper Hall Park, Berkhamsted, HP4 2NW