



Friends of St Andrew's Church
Stratton, Cornwall

Newsletter - Autumn 2014

Volume 6 Issue 2



Dear Friends,

It seems as though 2014 has just flown by and yet for St. Andrew's church many things have taken place during this time. We have experienced the foods of faith in our Flower Festival, also "Remembering World War One" in the "Book Fest", not to forget the Summer Fete which once again was filled with hard work and sunshine and not to forget St. Andrew's commemoration weekend of world war one shown though a special exhibition.

As we travel through September into October the seasons change with the onset of Autumn and as the poet Keats reminds us so eloquently

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run...

It's almost like the turn of the season tells us to prepare for winter, not just physically and practically but spiritually as well. The autumn season has always been associated with the completion of the harvest. It's a time when all should be,

"safely gathered in ere the winter storms begin".

Over the last 150 years or so it has also been a time for the church to give thanks to God for all the gifts He has given us. It is right that we should remember to give thanks for the gifts of the harvest. It is also right to give thanks for the other gifts God has showered on us, the practical gifts of finance and help that enables St. Andrew's church to function on a daily basis.

May I also offer my grateful thanks to all who support the Friends of St. Andrew's (FoStA) for their contributions throughout the year.

Yours in Christ's service

Fr. David



Val Barker writes:

The year is marching on apace and it is hard to believe that it almost time for our Harvest Thanksgiving – where has the summer gone?

I wrote last time about gardening and the seasons and it is heartening to hear in the media that despite the terrible winter storms this year's harvest is expected to produce bumper crops – the best for years.

We have had a productive time here at St Andrew's as you will read in Fr David Barnes' letter and elsewhere in this edition. Throughout the year here, as in many other areas, a constant theme has been the First World War

It started at the church as part of the very successful BookFest when the partnership with the Imperial War Museum's 1914-1918 Centenary Project was launched.

The Flower Festival entitled 'Food in Faith' even managed to include an arrangement for poppy seeds on behalf of the British Legion and as I write this the Old Cornwall Society are getting ready for a commemorative WW1 exhibition in St. Andrew's at the weekend.

The three day event will finish on Sunday with a special service when we will hear again the sermon, preached at St Andrew's, at Evensong on 9th August 1914 by the then parish Priest, the Revd. Canon Cyril Leslie-Jones, at the outbreak of the Great War.

With all the Centenary Remembrances taking place nationally and locally our War Memorial has been very much a talking point of interest and enquiry. The War Memorial at Stratton is Grade 11 listed and is in fact an early C16 pillar from one of the arcades of the church originally inserted in the 1530s to give extra height needed for the new rood-loft.

It was then removed during the 1888 great restoration, stored somewhere and 30 or so years later used as the war memorial. As is stated in our latest guide book ...

"The granite for this particular pillar appears in the Church Accounts for 1535 under the local term 'moor stone', which reflects the use by mediaeval masons of granite selected from blocks lying on the moors and hills; it came by sea to the nearby haven at Efford [Bude], whence it was 'caryed home'."

Elsewhere in the newsletter is an article by Sue Ryan, nee Worden. It is in fact the introduction to a book she is writing entitled 'Behind Every Name' and although we are now only at the beginning of the commemoration period her poignant description invites and enables the reader to understand a little more of how day to day lives were affected by the war and to reflect on a more personal level especially at Remembrance Sunday when we will hear those names read out aloud yet again.

Thank you all, as ever, for your support of St Andrew's; the church and the churchyard and all that we endeavour to do to maintain the building and the fabric and also to those who provide snippets of information and documentation that does much to enrich our archives.

Special thanks go to FoStA member, Alan Barber, who very kindly made a new hymn number board for the church free of charge. He installed it when visiting for the BookFest at the end of March. The folk who sit in the choir stalls very much appreciate this addition.

It was with regret that FoStA accepted the loss of Nicola Nartowski as a committee member. She resigned earlier this year and her input and support is greatly missed. Thank you Nicola for your hard work and inspirational ideas.

We have a new committee member, Phyllis Barnard and we offer her a warm welcome.

With every good wish from us all at St. Andrew's,

VB



Dates for Your Diary

- Sunday 21st September
Harvest Thanksgiving with Harvest Lunch at the Tree Inn
- Saturday 29th November
Gift Day and Mini Fayre
- Sunday 30th November Patronal Festival Mass at 10.30am

Although these are not specifically FoStA fundraising events I know there are many who like to put these dates in their diary. More information will be found on our website or on A Church Near You in due course.



OBITUARY - R.I.P.

It is with the deepest regret we record the death of one of our Friends, Mrs Patricia Mary Blair. She died on 8th July 2014 and her funeral took place on 29th July in Brentwood, Essex.

Pat, who had lived for some years at the Old Police Station in Stratton, had moved, with her husband, to be nearer their daughter in Kent when her health began to fail.

She was sorely missed at St. Andrew's both as a regular worshipping member and as a supportive church family member and good friend to many. Despite her poor sight she was always cheerful and had a very positive attitude to life.

Although at a distance, Pat remained in touch with friends in Stratton where she will be remembered by many with a great deal of fondness.

Our condolences and prayers are offered to her husband Don, her daughter Rosamund, son in law and grandchildren.

Ed



Membership News and Comment

Addresses

Please remember to inform the membership secretary if you have a change of postal address or e-mail. Keeping in touch is really important to us.

Standing Orders

Even more of you are now paying by Standing Order – the majority in fact – and that is a great help as it saves on administration costs but please be assured that we are quite happy to continue with all the other means of payment if it's more convenient for you.

Donations and Legacies

Thanks are due to those who have very kindly made donations this year or who have enhanced their membership subscriptions. It is appreciated. We were also fortunate in that we received a generous legacy from the will of the late Miss Elizabeth Cardale.

Membership

There is a need to keep adding new members to FoStA if we are to continue to grow.

If every member reading this could encourage one other person to join it would be amazing. Why not download the information and application form from the website and pass it on to a friend or family member or even buy a membership for someone as a gift?

There are now 28 Friends who have become fully paid up Life Members and special thanks are due to them for their support and generosity. Some have very kindly continued with donations. In any event, it is good to know that we keep in touch via the Newsletter if not in any other way.

Contributors

We are genuinely grateful to those who fundraise; those who help find new members; those who write articles for the newsletter; our volunteers and the committee who are forever supportive and especially to all our membership who have made it all possible.

Anniversaries

We would like to offer our congratulations and best wishes to one of our founder life members, Fr David Standen who, on the 27th June, celebrated the 10th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood.

Newsletter

If you would be willing to print your own newsletter or read it from the website instead of receiving a hardcopy in the post, would you kindly let me know. It looks much better in colour!



Fabric Committee Update

The Lighting wiring upgrade was done successfully in February with a grant from FoStA of £2,877.05p for which the PCC are very grateful.

A faculty has been obtained for the work on the outside of the church and internal decoration as described in the last newsletter so we are now actively fund raising for this to be done next year.

The Blanchminster Trust is giving their support and an application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is a complicated procedure requiring an intention to make the church more user-friendly for activities other than services. One way of fulfilling this criterion is a plan to make the floor at the back of the church safer for the occasions when we use tables and chairs, while still keeping the nearby pews for traditional use.

We hope to publish new editions of the Church Guide and the Memorials and Burials Book and to encourage small local craft groups and others to use the church facilities. Our local Primary School are keen to expand their visits to the church and churchyard.

The solar panel movement activated lights on the Diddies Road path are appreciated by many and we are grateful to FoStA for a grant of £40 towards the £49.82 cost.

In 1992 a scheme of planting trees and hedging in the churchyard took place and these now need considerable pruning and crown raising to protect the adjacent memorials and their visitors.

Professional help will be needed along with our local volunteers tidying up the smaller bushes and the paths so the autumn is getting busy in all the above ways. FoStA's help with the support of all our activities is as always much appreciated.

Dr Ian Barker. PCC Secretary.



BookFest 2014 - the Third Edition

They came, they saw and they bought! Three years and many thousands of books later, BookFest returned with its unique style and book lovers from all over the West Country turned out in their droves to leaf through the variety of volumes on offer at bargain prices, and linger in the theatrically dressed thematic sets.

This stylish event has achieved a wide and loyal following in a short space of time, as it presents books and reading in a fun and dynamic way. Readers of all ages enjoy the decorative element and admire the many and varied props that are used to highlight different genres - from Nordic Noir to the Baking Boutique... all designed to create a bookshop experience within the historic building.

Such is BookFest's fame amongst the 'biblioratti' that it is now appearing on booklovers blogs and book sites such as Good Reads

and has been promoted approvingly by the BBC's Culture 24 site and Nudgemenow.com.

Always keen to innovate, BookFest this year had many new elements. The most noticeable was the use of the Sanctuary to display the copious amount of books for children. This allowed the very young to choose books for themselves and to sit and read on the altar steps, on cushions on the floor or in the choir stalls. Thanks must go to Father David for supporting this radical concept, as it allowed all ages to fully engage with the Sanctuary area and see the entire church from quite literally a whole new perspective.



Many parents and grandparents were pleased to leave with copies of their own favourite childhood books and it was delightful to see storytelling happening entirely spontaneously, as children couldn't wait to see what was inside their new books. A majority of parents commented on the expense of children's books and the unsatisfying

content, and many gave generous contributions despite the idea being to take them away for free!

Another new idea was the Book Tree. Everyone who came along had the opportunity to vote for their favourite book or author and over 120 readers posted their preference. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his local connection, the poet and novelist Thomas Hardy topped the adult poll with a tie between Angela Carter and Maya Angelou for second place.

Interestingly, our younger participants voted in equal measure for The Gruffalo and the books of actor David Walliams. There was not a single vote cast for any Harry Potter book. Sorry JK, you are so 'over' in terms of the vote of the Stratton jury - better luck with your adult fiction.

Local MP Dan Rogerson has almost become synonymous with BookFest by now and this year invited himself along and stayed for over an hour and a half. He enjoyed sharing lunch with several visitors and took the time to speak to as many helpers as he could.



He viewed the launch of BookFest's partnership with the Imperial War Museum and their 1914-1918 Centenary project and revealed one of his childhood passions with his choice of author on the Book Tree. Dan has been very supportive of our efforts and has mentioned BookFest several times in his Westminster columns, so it was only fitting to thank him for his kind words by presenting the Boy from Bodmin with a pre-launch copy of the Cornish volume of the British Academy's Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture. To say that he was thrilled would be an understatement. As a keen reader of Cornish history he was delighted to receive this scholarly volume which does much to explain the archaeological and historical evolution of the county.

Our renowned Signed Book Raffle is always a highlight of the two days and this year we embraced the coalition by having, ironically enough, a signed copy of Vince Cable's book and the prize everybody wanted to win, a Michael Portillo autographed Bradshaw's Guide. Michael Portillo (ex Cabinet Minister and presenter of Great British Railway Journeys) is amongst our many supporters and generously donated and dedicated to Stratton BookFest one of these now legendary little brown books.

It was fortuitously won by a local railway enthusiast and is already much treasured. Interestingly, when Minister for Transport, Michael was the man who saved the Ribble viaduct on the Settle to Carlisle line from closure, so his enthusiasm for railways is indeed as genuine as it seems.

As always, thanks are due to all who came along and to those that helped to create such a complicated and multi-level event, in whatever capacity. BookFest's success depends on you - one and all.

We must also include in our gratitude Wadebridge Rotary Club, as this year BookFest has been able to pass on, through their kind efforts, many of our books to an orphanage on the Burmese border. This connection has seen all our residual children's and up-to-date reference works being shipped off to Singapore and then put on steam trains up to Mandalay.

So if you donated any poetry, English language texts, atlases, dictionaries, story books, plays, mathematical or scientific texts, the likelihood is that they are now being appreciated by the 6,000 children of the Phaung Daw Oo orphanage in Burma. Run by Buddhist monks they are extremely grateful for any books to help with the children's education and training.

As you might imagine, our gift is a very small drop in a vast ocean of need, however it is a Cornish drop and may be the start of a more substantial flow...

Nicola Nartowski



Members' Musings

St. Andrew's revisited - Graham and Ann Bacon.

Ann and I made a nostalgic trip to Cornwall to see old friends three years ago, with a very happy stay at the Stratton Gardens.

We'd left in 1983 to move to the North York Moors and schools in Stokesley, on the edge of the hills South of Middlesbrough, and Whitby. Our Cornish days began with six weeks in a caravan on the grass in front of "Walnut Cottage", before we moved into the house, ending the need to take a bar of soap down to the pool in Bude on a regular basis. We were made very welcome here.

The decision about our churchgoing, even as former Methodists, was obvious when we could look out at St. Andrews and be in hearing distance of the bidding bell. With the children, we could stride, or run, depending on height and circumstances, up the path in less than two minutes (actually, not always).

So began a very happy association in the ministry of Father Smith. After his sad death came Father Thomas and, on occasion, a long-retired naval padre - Father Young. Our children brightened visibly as soon as he walked in. The life of the church and the great Festivals framed our year. The Christmas Eve service for the children began the family celebration.

Because of my headship at Budehaven, I used to watch the wandering procession of the children with their wavering candles with close interest. They often weren't concentrating only on the flames! However, the carols and readings always worked their magic.

The Fete brought everybody together in the summer. Ann and her friend Angela Crisp would have different ideas for their stall each year. The main triumph was one selling unwanted costume jewellery. It raised more money in one year than all their other efforts. I once contributed pots of the pate I used to make at Christmas, which no one would touch. Ann said, afterwards, that of course they wouldn't, because in summer they needed refrigeration. I got to barrow away the cow pats before the opening. I liked that job, because I could see instant results - rare in teaching.

Our time in Stratton was a real joy. Within 200 metres of each other there were the Crisps (who rented "Tatra") the Bacons and the Hams. Barbara Blood was then Secretary of the Bude Music Society. Her wide network of musical contacts made the concerts one of the local jewels in the crown.

We had a Christmas party with the Greenwells when we all played an incomprehensible board game (a fore-runner of Dungeons and Dragons). Our son, Matt, and the Greenwell boys endlessly talked details, their plans and the rules (not all of which had been explained to the grown-ups). Alan and I struggled to work it out, but failed. Ann and Pat, with our daughter Pippa, played an unobtrusive part, as befitted the Mummies, and so, unaccountably, won hands down.

We're still in touch, and I'm looking at two of Pat's drawings as I type. One is down Spicer's Lane, with the figure of Grandpa Crowell disappearing over the crest (his usual companion was Grandpa Worden). The other is of the church, with dark graves in the foreground, winter trees and a windswept conifer. The church is lighter - a mixture of serenity and certainty, steadfastly reassuring.

Your notelets, to which Pat has contributed, are a great idea, as is Nicola's BookFest. I remember her in her sixth form days. Cornwall's creative traditions are very strong.

Our church visit three years ago brought back many memories, but the outstanding sense was one of a home-coming, created by the care and love which has gone into the day-to-day maintenance. To see the names and responsibilities of those who are helping, many of whom we remembered, spoke of commitment and dedication. The scent of polish and the sheen said "Welcome".

A key verse in George Herbert's hymn, often used in schools in my time, about service done in the spirit of Christ, says it all:

*A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.*

Graham Bacon was Head Teacher at Budehaven Comprehensive School from 1972 until 1983. Ed.



BookFest 2014 – David Barber writes ...

I am writing this just before my wife Kathryn and I put on our best 1950s style outfits and go to a total immersion cinema performance of my favourite movie *Back to the Future*. You are probably thinking what on earth has a 1980s science-fiction film involving time travel got to do with FoStA and this year's BookFest? Bear with me, as there is a tenuous link.

Back to the Future was first released and set in 1985, before the time travel shenanigans kick in and the setting shifts to 1955 (hence the 50s outfits).

While the film was first released in 1985, it was filmed in 1984, which was also the year I was born. I was not christened in 1984 but I was, a little later, christened at St Andrew's. (Told you it was tenuous). This means St. Andrew's has been part of my life for a long time and I have always been fascinated by the church's history and architecture.



Anyway, since FoStA was first set up, due to my personal links to St. Andrew's, and Stratton in general, I have supported it through donations.

However this year thanks in part to my employer at the time having a Corporate Social Responsibility programme, where by I can spend some of my working hours doing charity work, Kathryn and I thought why not use that time contributing to helping raise money for FoStA.



On arriving at St Andrew's on the Friday morning we were both impressed at how the church had been transformed into different areas dedicated to different genres of fiction and non-fiction.

Over the two days we spent our time in different areas taking payments for books as and when required. Kathryn deployed her skills from when she worked in a library, tidying and re-arranging books that had been looked through, to help gather more interest and therefore more sales.

There tended to be peaks and troughs of visitors throughout both days, with some people walking away with one book others went way with one bag or more. During the quieter spells Kathryn and I built up quite a collection of books ourselves, fiction for myself and

some gardening for Kathryn. My parents, Alan and Mary, built up a small stockpile of books over the two days as well.

Visitors, and those helping out, were well fed through the great choice of snacks, meals (pasties in my case) and cakes that were on offer. A good number of raffle tickets were sold for the signed books but unfortunately neither mine nor Kathryn's raffle numbers came up.

While I do not know the final tally of sales for BookFest 2014, I can definitely say that Kathryn and I enjoyed getting involved and helping out as much as we could.

David Barber



The Bells of Childhood

Church bells in Christian Churches throughout Europe have for centuries played an important role in community life - summoning parishioners to Sunday worship; pealing loud and joyfully to celebrate weddings and feast days; doling a single solitary note at funerals reminding us all, as Elton John so poignantly sang, that life is but 'a candle in the wind' - an instant in the ocean of eternity.

Born near Launcells, I have no recollection of any bells at all.

Each Sunday as a toddler I was taken to St Swithin's, the local Church - to me, a cold forbidding edifice set in the depths of a dark wooded valley beside a pool of even darker shadowed water, seemingly bottomless, black and frighteningly still. In my three-year old mind this was the home of the Devil and his monsters.

Moreover, my mother insisted I wore a bonnet to enter the Church. I liked my hair flying freely in the wind, not encased in the restrictiveness of mud-brown velvet. But my protests were to no avail. I had to show respect to an invisible man called God said my

mother for this was HIS house. But who was this God? Where was he? He never seemed to be there. I didn't understand.

Nobody seemed to smile at St Swithin's. I didn't understand that either, for in my parents' house, my home, everyone smiled, even my rabbit Snowball.

A man in a long white dress seemed to be in charge but he never once smiled. He wasn't God whispered my mother, he was 'the vicar'. He thundered from a raised box called a pulpit about hell, damnation, the devil and all his works; he led some singing but the congregation (a big word for a child to comprehend) was sparse, producing little more than a wobbling whisper. Apparently, this invisible God had a son called Jesus but I couldn't see him. He wasn't there either.

This Launcells God must be very old I thought, for I felt no love, no energy in this sombre house. He must be stern and unforgiving too I mused, if he sent his own son down to hell and then pulled him up again. Here was no light, no laughter, no joy. No bells rang. No birds sang. All was silence and gloom. I didn't like this God.

A couple of years later, my parents moved to Stratton. Yet again, dressed in my Sunday best, shoes highly polished, still the hated, now too small bonnet perched on my head I was taken to a new Church. I didn't want to go. It might be even more disturbing than St Swithin's. But rebellion yet again proved useless. Many tears and tantrums later I was marched reluctantly to this new Church. It was called St Andrew's.

It was a warm Easter Sunday. The sun shone brightly in a cloudless sky. I wished so much to be running free through the surf at Crooklets beach, not having to listen to more threats of evil and damnation.

BUT

the moment I set eyes on this new Church, mellow, rising from a swathe of green, with heavenly music coming from the sky ("church bells at the top of the tower" explained my mother) I fell in love. My heart beat faster. This was so exciting. Such beauty, such light, such

stirring music in the sky. It must be a dream. But no! The bells continued their joyous peal, filling me with exultation. This was like going to the pantomime. I couldn't wait to go inside.

Straightening my bonnet, entering the Church porch and passing through its heavy, studded door I found myself in a large, airy space, high ceilinged, full of energy and light. The smell of snowdrops, daffodils, violets and roses wafted through the air.

Banks of flowers lined the aisle leading to a white clothed table called an altar. Above the altar with its silver cross was a huge window with pictures of people and designs in vivid jewel-like colours ('stained glass' smiled my ever-patient mother). The sun's rays shone through the vibrant glass, lighting up the faces of the seated crowd. I felt so alive. This was even better than the pantomime. And still the bells rang out their music that resonated so deeply within my soul.

But who owned this house? I still didn't understand. Were there two Gods? Or was this happy new God the son of the grumpy God at St Swithin's? This house was beautiful. I didn't want to leave. And when a new man who seemed to be in charge, his long white dress covered with a golden cloak passed by he smiled, his plump, kindly face welcoming me to this new God's house. And as the organ filled the Church with soaring harmonies and we all sang with such passion the Easter hymn 'Jesus Christ Is Risen Today', suddenly, in a blinding flash of revelation - a 'coup de foudre' - I understood. I had found the true God. The old Launcells God of fear vanished, never to return.

My God is kind, loving, all-embracing. He is my friend, my mentor and my guide - forgiving, compassionate and wise. He is always beside me. I talk to him easily in times of joy and in times of pain. I listen to his words. Sometimes I feel a gentle touch upon my shoulder; at the funeral of my husband a soft and comforting hand upon my brow. My God does not threaten the fires of Hell. He is simply LOVE.

Addendum.

As an adult I visit both Churches on my visits to Val and Ian (Barker). I now appreciate the calm of silence, the aged flagstones of St Swithin's where I was baptised. I know too that the ringing of Church bells during the Second World War was forbidden and that the black pool that terrified me so all those years ago is said to be the Holy Well of St Swithin.

But it is at St Andrew's where I was confirmed and where my parents lie in the churchyard that my heart remains. There I found my faith in God and I carry the sound of the bells of St Andrews forever in my mind.

Averil Bloy Slade. (nee Curtis)



"BEHIND EVERY NAME"

Nearly hundred years ago the face of the local landscape across the country changed.

The 'Great War' was over, now was the time to recognise the sacrifices made. With so many of the fallen lying dead or missing on foreign soil and no grave at which to mourn, it became imperative to remember in their home cities, towns or villages, each man by his name.

It was considered an essential act of this remembrance, a sign of recognition of sacrifice, both for the grieving families and the returning troops for their comrades who did not survive to return home.

Immediately after the war and during the early years of the 1920's, memorials both large and small were erected and all of these, whether in a village green, a churchyard or surrounded by urban traffic and overshadowed by high-rise buildings, convey the same poignant message; a reminder of tragic events, of loss and of sacrifice.

They also convey an appeal that echoes down the generations, in the words of J.M Edmonds written for a soldier's grave in France and published in 'The Times' in July 1918:

**"When you go home, tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow, these gave their today"**

Every year on Remembrance Sunday, people across the country and indeed across the Commonwealth, gather round these local memorials to hear those time honoured words **"We will remember them"**.

Sadly however with the passage of time, it becomes increasingly difficult to know whom we are remembering. The time has come when all memory of those men and women has vanished with the passing of the people who once loved them. There are very few, if any, still alive who can actually recall their faces personally or knew their stories and so really remember them.

Consider the photograph on the next page; the unveiling of Stratton's War memorial on November 11th 1920

A large crowd had gathered around the memorial, some of the men are in uniform, there are many women both young and old, what thoughts and memories are being recalled.

The names on the granite stone are not just names, but sons, husbands, fathers, grandsons, uncles, nephews and friends, each name has a familiar face, a sound of a voice, shared memories and

the heart break of loss to family and friends and to the local community.

The war caused suffering in more ways than one, families were left without a breadwinner, wives lost the man who otherwise would have been friend and companion through to old age, children grew up without ever having known their father, and then there were the men who did come home but were broken in mind or body and unable to ever again lead a normal life.



Far more men were injured than lost their lives and had to endure the consequences of lost limbs, eyesight or chronic pain. As soldiers of the Great War were exposed to poisonous gases, they often suffered damage to their heart and lungs, which manifested itself later in life as chronic bad health and premature death.

There were also those that came home seemingly unscathed and took up the reins again of normal life, but what memories did they conceal from their loved ones, what sights had they seen, what friends had they lost and hardships endured.

Not only the dead but also the survivors need to be remembered when we count the cost of the war in human terms and remember the sacrifices made.

What of today? Is it possible to fully realise what their sacrifices were and what was lost. Do we ever, except perhaps on Remembrance Sunday, give those names more than a passing glance? Perhaps for Stratton it is easier, the memorial is situated in the heart of the village, and its names are easily readable by anyone passing by along the road or on their way to church, if they so wished, but Stratton itself is not the town it was back then, its role has changed.

Just as in Bude, so many of the names no longer have ties with the community today, a symptom of the modern way of life and the changing social structure of our towns and villages.

For Bude, remembering the names on the War memorial is even harder. From its position up on Shalder Hill, the monument is visible but somehow invisible, its significance lost to many of the younger generations.

To read the names on the memorial, a concerted effort has to be made to visit it, to cross the river and climb the hill; you do not glance at the names as you pass by on your daily business as is possible at Stratton.



While the site is a fine one with its commanding views over Bude, it has in many ways resulted in the loss of personal connection with the names on it.

The two war memorials however offer a fascinating insight into the life in the area during the first twenty years of the last century. The names on the memorials come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and offer insights into the changing structure of society at this time in the area, no doubt a direct result of the coming of the railway and the rise of Bude as a tourist destination.

The whole spectrum of society is here, grocers, shoemakers, rabbit trappers, fishermen, an African explorer, and young lads in search of adventure, footballers, coastguards and engineers. There are farmers, stonemasons, painters and decorators, students, railway workers, scoutmasters, carpenters, regular army soldiers and officers and long serving naval men, clerks, jewellers as well as the landed gentry.

There's the young lad of 15 who went to war as a midshipman in 1914, the private secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, labourers, foremen, a journalist, the young man training to be a doctor, a policeman and those young men who had emigrated to both Canada and Australia but chose to fight for the mother country and young boys not long left school.

They are all here, their names recorded but their stories and lives lost to us through the passing of the years. They all did their duty, served their country and paid the ultimate price.

There were many more like them from this area but who survived and came home, but their names are now slipping away through the mists of time, unrecorded and in many ways also unremembered.

By researching and recording what can be uncovered, nearly a hundred years later, about each of these men whose names are set in stone, it is hoped to somehow bring more understanding to our remembrances, to give back to these men their faces where possible, their stories and to remind us of their sacrifices on a more human and personal level.

Behind every name there was an individual, with a face, a family, and a life before the war destroyed him and changed his family for ever.

Whatever your views on the war maybe, take time to look at those names, not just on Remembrance Sunday, and remember them as a person, who had a family, a home, a job, hopes and dreams just like you and me and thank him for his sacrifice.

Lest we forget

Sue Ryan



A note (and two poems) received from member Ruth Thomas whose father was a Vicar of Stratton:

"I have recently written two poems remembering the First World War.

My father was a prisoner and kept a small diary. The first is based on his diary and the second is something he told me about

The " St. George's" he mentions is St. George's, Truro where he and his family worshipped."

Commemoration of a Hundred Years since the Start of the First World War

For Arthur

St George's Day, now just eighteen years old
All hell is here, the Captain shouts hold on.
Poor lad he's shot and lies there on the ground
The white flag raised, we must be strong and brave

"Remembered St George's, offered it to Jesus"

Now starts the marching, hunger and the fear
Digging graves all day burying the dead
In death no difference be they friend or foe
Each day recorded in a tiny book.

“Determined to stick everything for Mum’s sake”

So hard not knowing what each day would bring.
Are we to move? Can we write home at last?
Work on munitions dump for one whole day,
Then digging, heard that this to be our camp.

“O God bring me through all this”

Think of my friends Old Wise, and Lock and Len
So sick they cannot work, will they get home?
Unloading coal all day, I want a bath.
Unloading beer, but not a drop to drink.

“Think of my people, please God keep them well”

Now barley soup and hunger are our friends
For bread, my watch, pen, cardigan all sold
Oh such hunger, I’ve seen men fight for bread.
With friends we plan what we will eat at home

“Please God grant that we may get an extra bit of bread”

Now a long journey starts, where are we going?
We pass through Cambrai untouched by war
What beauty and what quiet peace is here
Peasant women are working in the fields.

“Please God help me to do right”

At a new camp, the Jerry jolly good
Now given numbers mine is three four two
Work in a timber yard and in the woods
The smell reminds me of the Fal at home.

“Jesus give me the strength to stick it out”

July, his birthday comes no mention made
From now we only have his Doctors notes
Infected leg, condition poor, chest weak,
On Armistice Day flu and infected ear.

But he survived to see his home again. "Thank God"

An Unknown Soldier

The Abbey lit by candle light
Extinguished as a hundred years
As music soars just one remains
To light the unknown soldiers tomb
Four guards resplendent in red coats
Now at each corner keep their place.

Nearly one hundred years ago
A young man just eighteen years old
Dug earth for one also unknown
No time for any graveside prayer
But each night till he reached old age
A prayer was said for that young man

Nearly one hundred years have passed,
But even now a prayer is said.
In future those who read these lines
Please spend a moments quiet thought
Remembering the one whose life was short,
And one who cared and buried him.

The Ven. Arthur Charles Williams was an Anglican Priest: the Archdeacon of Bodmin from 1962-1969. Born on 8 July 1899, he was educated at Truro Cathedral School and served in the First World War – he was a prisoner throughout 1918. He was ordained in 1922 and after curacies became Vicar of Stratton from 1932 – 1939 when he became a Chaplain to the Forces. Ed.



Post Script

You will have noticed that this year there are no draw books and no advertising of Christmas Cards. This was a positive decision – we all need a rest now and again. But if you were to think of FoStA when you are considering your Christmas charitable giving we would be delighted for any gift. Thank you.



Items for sale

St Andrew's Churchyard Survey (Book Form)	£10
St Andrew's Churchyard Survey (CD)	£5
Chimney Corner Tales by Joan Heard	£3.50
Inspired by Stratton – Poems by Derek Ward	£3.50
Growing Pains – Anthology of poems by Derek Ward	£1.75

All the above items can be sent by post, free of charge, to FoStA members but please note that multiple items may incur some costs.

A selection of Greetings cards and Notelets are also available through the Membership Secretary.

Orders can be made by post or e-mail.



Can you help please?

As we go to print I have just heard from Ian Riddler that he is no longer able to undertake the role of Minutes Secretary to the FoStA committee. Many thanks Ian for all you have done on our behalf – we shall miss you.

If there is anyone who would feel able to undertake this task I would be grateful. At the moment I seem to be a general factotum and that isn't a good place to be for all kinds of reasons.

Being the Minutes Secretary is not an onerous task as we only meet four times a year unless something special crops up. Most of the other correspondence is undertaken by me as the membership officer.

Do please, give it some thought. Can you spare a few hours four times a year to take notes and type some minutes? Ed.



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Parish Priest: Father David Barnes
The Rectory, 8 Falcon Terrace, Bude EX23 8LJ
Tel: 01288 352254 e-mail: d.barnes645@btinternet.com

Curate: Revd Alison Hardy
Newfield, Brook Drive, Bude. EX23 8NY
Tel: 01288 488308 e-mail: reverendalisonhardy@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Mrs Val Barker
Chynoweth, Bowden, Stratton, Bude EX23 9BH
Tel: 01288 353435 e-mail: memsec@fosta.org.uk