



# The Friends of St Peter and All Hallows Church West Huntspill

Newsletter No.17 Winter 2023/24

*Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and peaceful  
New Year*

Dear Friends,

As we rapidly charge towards the Winter Solstice and of course Christmas it is time to update you with our newsletter. My first few months as Chairman have been quite mixed, I had to make the decision to cancel the Richard Lennox concert, unfortunately we didn't sell enough tickets.

On the positive side we have made great progress with our fundraising for the Tower Handrail Appeal, especially at our table during the recent Craft Fayre in the Balliol Hall, as reported below.

Christmas is full of traditions, nationally, locally and in families; there are some reminiscences of a local tradition within this newsletter.

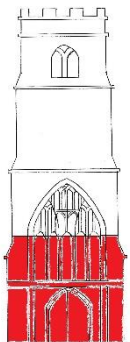
We are hosting a traditional Christmas Concert featuring the King Alfred Concert Band in the Church on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, a mince pie and tea or coffee for everyone, a great opportunity to meet other Friends and get into the Christmas spirit, hope to see many of you there.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas from myself and all the Friends Committee.

Dave Paul

## Update on the Tower Handrail Appeal

In the Summer Newsletter, we announced the launch of the Tower Handrail Appeal. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) had asked the Friends to fund the replacement of the existing rope "handrail" on the steps up the bell tower with a metal handrail. As well as improving safety for those people who need to use the steps in their Church duties, this will also allow the Church potentially to allow interested persons access to the stunning views from the top of the tower.



The PCC requested £5,000 for the manufacture and fitting of the rail and so the Appeal has a target of raising additional donations of £2,500 which will be matched £ for £ by the Friends from their general funds, raised through membership subscriptions and events. All donations specifically given to the Appeal are placed into a restricted fund and cannot be used by the Friends for any other purpose.

As well as inviting donations, we also invited people to "Sponsor a Step" with 97 numbered steps available of which people could choose to sponsor a particular number for a donation of £25. We are delighted to report that to date, 25 steps have been sponsored and those sponsors will shortly be receiving their certificates. In addition, we have received some appeal donations and all together, including fund matching, the appeal fund stands at £1,485, nearly 30% of our target as you can see in the graphic on the left.



## Christmas Caroling by Farm Cart

From 1967 a tractor-drawn farm cart – replete with canvas covering, oil lamps, straw bales for sitting on and piano has toured the village, visiting all areas over three evenings (usually the week before Christmas) collecting for different charities. Hospitality was provided most evenings somewhere on route, usually at Smurlands, The Grove and Plymor Farm. In this picture we see (left to right) Jean Davies, Madge Langdon, Noreen Burrridge, Janet Lamb, Betty Lambert, Janet O'Neill, Ted Lambert, Fred House, Rev. Hill, Pastor Callaby, Miss Gardner, Bridget O'Neill and John Lamb.

This tradition lasted some 23 years until Christmas 1989, though 1981 was missed owing to the devastation caused locally by the flooding. During one of the weeks prior to Christmas the cart would be prepared at Plymor Farm with the canvas covering, lamps, seating and piano all made ready.

The first night the northern part of the Parish would be visited, Alstone Road/Lane, Smurl Lane and New Road as far as the Playing Fields. The second evening all of Church Road, Sloway Lane and part of Main Road were visited. The final night the rest of Main Road, part of Old Pawlett Road, Withy Road (down to the railway bridge) and Ringstone were 'done'. The money collected (the last evening always seemed to be the most productive financially) was donated to various local charities nominated by the P.C.C. – in 1989 over £300 was collected over the three evenings.

Each night hospitality in the form of hot drinks, Sherry and sandwiches was dispensed at one or even two houses enroute; The Hollies at Smurl Lane, Mrs. Palmer (The Grove) and Fred House at Plymor Farm being the main benefactors.

In 1990 two evenings of Carol Singing on foot was tried.

Thanks to John Lamb for the photo and narrative above.

Further memories of those days have been put into writing by John Davey, Michael Hopkins, and Ann Hopwood below!

The piano used for the cart was pulled out of Mrs. Tiley's chicken shed each year and loaded up onto the cart! First stop was at Stanley Cavill's by foot at The Poplars to sing on his lawn before everyone piling on to the cart, John Lamb, John Holmes, Mary Redman and Michael Hopkins took turns at playing the piano on different nights. David Holley always liked everyone to sing The Holly and the Ivy as it was a long carol enroute to Old Pawlett Road the singers would go into The White Cottage to sing.

One night there was an accident outside The Woodpile as the cart was about to turn into Old Pawlett Road; a vehicle went into the back of the cart, thankfully no one was injured as of course no one was wearing seatbelts in those days, everyone was just sat on hay bales! Michael Hopkins was playing the piano that night and he remembers John Nicholls was accompanying him on the trumpet, John fell off the cart and his trumpet got bent, everyone was quite shaken up so they were all invited into Mary and Ron Hopkins bungalow in Old Pawlett Road for cups of hot tea; nothing much has changed, if there is a problem put the kettle on!! Great memories .

**FUTURE EVENTS**  
**CHRISTMAS CONCERT**  
**King Alfred Concert Band**  
**At The Church**  
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm**

A Mince Pie for everyone, tea or coffee.  
There will also be a bar selling wine and soft drinks.

Tickets are £7.50 (children free) each and can be purchased via the Members Store on our website (where you also have the option to pay via PayPal) , by e-mailing us at [hello@friendsofspaahc.org](mailto:hello@friendsofspaahc.org) or contacting on 07557 103443.


**Are you interested in becoming the Membership Secretary for the Friends? If so, please contact us for more information.**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Telephone 07557 103443 or email: [hello@friendsofspaahc.org](mailto:hello@friendsofspaahc.org)

Friends' Council Members:

Chairman: Dave Paul	Secretary: Christine Stephens
Membership Secretary: Vacant	Treasurer: Anne Paul
Elected Member: David Holmes	Elected Member: Ann Hopwood
Elected Member: Michael Hopkins	PCC Nominee1: Geoff Bryant
Co-opted Member: Janet Hill	PCC Nominee 2: Bronwen Wright
Co-opted Member: Ian Fleetwood	

See our website: <https://friendsofspaahc.org> for the latest news, new membership, renewals and ticket purchases. Follow us on Facebook  for news.