

## FRIENDS OF REPTON PARISH CHURCH



### Our first newsletter!

Greetings to our President, Patrons, Honorary Patrons, Trustees and Friends!

It has been such an unusual year with our not being able to launch the Friends in the manner we would wish. But here we are! Hurrah!

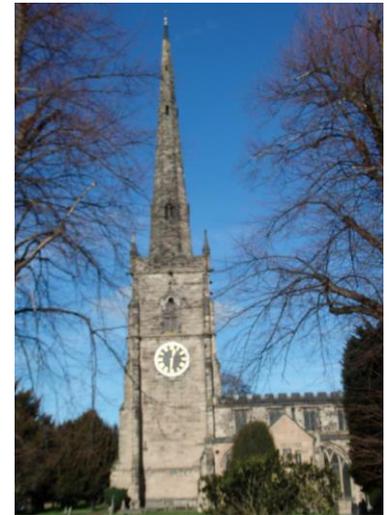
A Friends organisation for St Wystan's is long, long overdue. When I arrived in 2012 I was very surprised one did not exist. I am so glad that we have managed to bring it into being as it can play a vital role in ensuring St Wystan's continues to witness to many things.

Wearing my 'Chair' hat, it is a building of such historical significance. We have had two film crews visiting during this lockdown alone and Dr Cat Jarman, the archaeologist who has been working on excavations in the Vicarage garden over the last few years, has a new book out **River Kings: a new history of the Vikings**. It traces the origin of a bead found in the Viking warrior grave at the east end of St Wystan's Church to show Viking trading links across the Baltic, through the Middle East to India. Archaeological research continues to reveal new insights into what was happening here

when it was the capital of Mercia and when the Vikings visited. This research has now broadened our 'local' vision to include Foremark as well.

Wearing my 'Vicar's hat', it is a place of worship [it has been for over 1300 years] and home to successive generations of Christians for all that time. It has been extended, adapted, refurbished, re-furnished almost countless times to meet the changing needs of congregations while continuing to state clearly, that here God's presence is acknowledged in wood, stone, metal and glass in a manner that speaks both of permanence and importance. It is wonderful to have a Friends organisation that will share with present and future congregations the care and development of this glorious building.

We also need to consider how we inform and engage the casual visitor, tourists and the groups of adults and school children who come to experience the 'living church with the fantastic history' as it was recently described to me. Some work is already being done in this area, but if we are to



make the most of what we have inherited there is so much more yet to be done.

I hope that by mentioning these things I will have enticed you, not only to get more engaged with us, but to spread the word and encourage many of your friends and family, colleagues and even businesses to support us as Friends. Making the most of St Wystan's and ensuring it continues to shine out to future generations as the major historical parish church that it is, is what we are about. Let us not sit back and simply maintain it, but move forward and reveal its hidden depths of history, faith and spirituality for all to see and experience.

The Rev'd Martin Flowerdew

Chair of the Friends and Vicar of Repton with Foremark and Newton Solney

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### Our first event Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October

Due to Covid lockdowns we were unable to hold our first event last October but we are planning to hold it at St Wystan's Church

(time to be confirmed). It will include some light entertainment, a couple of short talks, the official launch of Friends of Repton Parish Church and a chance to meet Trustees,

Patrons and President while enjoying wine and nibbles.

**A date for your diary**

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## Our Patron, the Bishop of Repton, Malcolm Macnaughton writes:



*It was a joy to be able to visit Repton and St Wystan's, albeit unexpectedly, last October on the day when my appointment was announced. What a beautiful, still, and holy place!*

*My wife Pam and I were glad to come and sit for a few minutes, and light a candle and pray. Last week on the 14<sup>th</sup> April I was ordained Bishop of Repton.*

*A trivial thing perhaps, but on our brief visit I noticed the door in the wall above the chancel arch, and wondered what lay behind it? I am sure I will not be the only one to have asked that question. There are no doubt many more significant mysteries to be revealed as I get to know more of the place where Christianity first took root in Mercia, with the baptism of King Peada by Finan of Lindisfarne in 653. Having grown up only a short bike ride away from Lindisfarne I value deeply Repton's connection*

*with the Northumbrian mission. I pray that Repton Church will always be a place where visitors and regular worshippers may find God in following Jesus Christ, and find their place as well within God's story.*

*So I am very glad to join the 'Friends' of Repton Church. It will give me something to say about Repton when people who assume my title means I live there – in fact I live in Swanwick, which is convenient for getting about the whole of the Diocese, from Mercia in the South to Glossop and Peak in the north. I look forward to being with you at Repton for worship later in the year.*

Best wishes,  
+Malcolm

## Could you be our next Treasurer, Secretary or Media co-ordinator ?

At this early stage of development of the Friends the Trustees have recognised that while we have many skills represented in our body we have need of some additional expertise.

Firstly, is our need of a **Treasurer**. John Perks, has done a marvellous job getting everything in place - not an easy task having to organise many different things

during lockdown. But now he needs to step down so that someone else is required to take over.

If a new **Secretary** could be found, our current secretary could concentrate her efforts on other work for the Friends, which might include acting Treasurer for a time but someone with more expertise in this area would be far preferable.

While the Trustees mostly know their way around a computer, **running a website and social**

**media outlets** has been challenging. These are needed to advertise, inform and engage our Friends and potential Friends. If you are social media savvy [or are willing to learn] and would like to support the Friends in this way, you would not have to become a Trustee.

If you are interested in helping us in any of the roles then do please get in touch with me – the Chair, Martin Flowerdew, [thevicarofrepton@gmail.com](mailto:thevicarofrepton@gmail.com) or on 01283 61968

## Exploring the History of St Wystan's

As part of ongoing work of the Friends a new guide book is being planned together with explanatory hand-held information boards about interesting features of the church.

## Life During Lockdown – a vicar’s perspective

As a Parish Priest, lockdown has been something of a trial. Of course, compared to many others it has been easy for me; but its challenges have had to be met head on. It has been a time to consider those who have been in a far worse place. Trying to play my part in doing the best we can to support people both from within the church and the communities we are part of; providing what pastoral care we can; while keeping appropriate structures going; all the time coping with the ever-changing regulations and expectations placed upon us.

Trying to do things differently or simply accepting there is no way ‘we can do that this year’ has been exhausting. Every task seems to have taken a lot longer,



and a lot more out of me, than normal and I am sick of the sight of my computer.

If you ask me what the biggest disappointment has been over the last year it was the forced closure of our churches. To me it was an unnecessary restriction that denied people the opportunity to pray in a place special to them just when they needed it most. If you could go to Tesco’s to buy your food, then why could we not have kept churches open for people to go pray in? Oops – you’ll recognise a



Vicar on his hobby horse!!

Of course, some other things have simply been frustrating, like not being able to launch the Friends as we planned. However, the Trustees have had time to move things forward and plan for the future. At the same time, bodies, like the Building and Churchyard Team, have been beavering away and have ensured that St Wystan’s has been kept in as good a condition as possible – even getting some major work

completed during lockdown – well done them and thank you.

As I write, as I so often have over the last 15 months, I stare out of my office window at the tower and spire of St Wystan’s. I am reminded they have borne witness to God for many centuries and have experienced situations equally as bad as Covid. And that glorious sight is a blessing as the spire inevitably lifts one’s spirits and lifts one’s eyes heavenward. When I occasionally wander down the Crypt to check all is well I am touched by over 1300 years of Christianity in this locality, where Mercia was converted to our faith, and I give thanks that I have the privilege to continue to minister in such an important place as this. Even in the midst of the darkest days of lockdown it has always been possible to remind people to look to the horizon; that a new day will dawn; that God’s light continues to shine and will shine in the future. The other certainty I know to be true is that **St Wystan’s Church will outlive us all.**

## Floodlighting St WYSTANS Church

### our first fundraising project

St WYSTANS Church with its iconic spire is arguably the most prominent and spectacular view in Repton. It is probably the first vision that a visitor sees when visiting Repton and is the first view from any point of the compass to welcome us home. This lovely church has been flood lit for many years for the benefit

of all but having been installed in 1967 the lighting is unrepairable and consequently out of use. The old system was very uneconomical to run and not in keeping with the Green movement nor the Eco church project.

The Friends of Repton Parish Church have therefore planned to fund the replacement of the old system with new LED lighting which will replace the now defunct system and will not only be cheaper to run but will also

reduce the light pollution as the beams can be targeted.

This is our first project and we would like to have a turning on ceremony at an event on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and so if anyone would like to contribute financially to this project please do so via our Charities Aid Foundation page

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/16987>

## From the archives

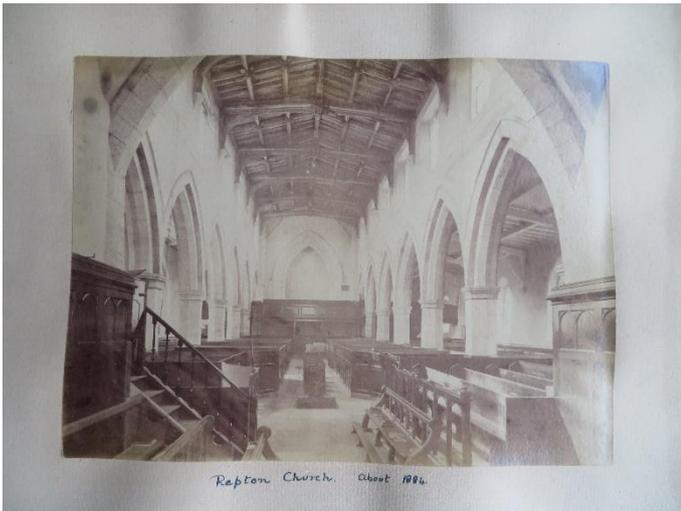
### How old are the church pews?

As St. Wystan's is essentially a medieval building with an earlier Saxon crypt and chancel we tend to think that the interior arrangement must be hundreds of years old. This is not really the case. The layout and furnishings as we see them today date from

1885-6, 130 years or so ago, when there was a major restoration. This included changing the floor level, new pews and choir stalls, pulpit and lectern. Photos from the Repton Village History Group archive show the interior just before the restoration work started.

The first photo looking west shows the musicians' gallery in the west tower arch that was

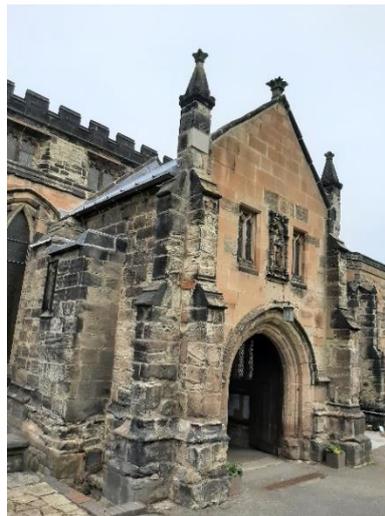
taken down as part of the work. The second, looking east, shows the previous pews dating from the 1790s, the flat floor right through the nave and chancel, the organ in the north aisle (at some stage moved to the south aisle roughly where the current organ is) and the new pulpit on the south side of the chancel arch, shortly to be moved across to the north to make way for the new lectern.



Photographs: by permission of Repton Village History Group

## Recent Work at St Wystan's

As one of England's major parish churches we were very fortunate recently to receive a grant from the Government's Heritage Stimulus Fund, part of the Culture Recovery Fund administered by Historic England and the Church of England.



Together with further grants from the Garfield Weston Foundation and AllChurches Trust, this enabled us to renew the porch roof, and carry out other much needed repairs to roofs and gutters. This ensures that our building remains in good condition for our worshippers and visitors in the years to come.