

St. Clement's Christmas Newsletter 2008.

This is an update since the last Newsletter was published for Christmas 2006 and so much has happened in the intervening time. The good news is that we have ordered 4 night storage heaters, which we hope will be installed by the time you read this. This should enable us to get rid of the dangerous gas heaters and relieve Gordon Mortimer of having to light them early every winter Sunday morning. Gordon will be retiring as Churchwarden in April after 25 years of dedicated service and we give him a very big "thank you" for all that he has done to keep St. Clement's going. Other changes that have taken place in 2008 are that our Honorary Treasurer, Malcolm Holding, has moved to Topsham after over 15 years of looking after our finances so Pat Maguire has agreed to take over this onerous responsibility. Roger Williams has taken over as secretary of the PCC.

It has again been a busy year fund raising for the building fund and at last we were able to get the south valley of the roof releaded and the drainage of the north facing gutter redirected. This work cost us £25,000 of which £19,600 was covered by grants. Repair work on the windows is due to start in January and the latest estimate for this work is £33,000. We do not have enough money to cover all of this, therefore, as many windows that we can afford to repair will be done and then we shall have to wait for the others. This work may well take up to six months, so be prepared for some slight disruptions to the normal smooth running of the Church.

Another memorable event during the year was the visit by the Bishop of Exeter to preach at the Harvest Festival Service. Everyone appreciated the lunch that was held at Powderham Castle afterwards and our thanks must go to the team that organised it.

During the year we had two christenings, four weddings and Ian Thompson was confirmed at the service in Kenton during February. We welcome Ian and his family into our congregation and thank him for taking on the responsibility of spraying the weeds in and around the churchyard as this is a hard and unrewarding job. We already have four weddings booked for 2007. Whilst they do bring some income to the church, they require a great deal of work by a small number of people not least, spending up to three hours at the church on a Saturday afternoon.

Recently you will have been given a questionnaire to answer regarding women priests taking services at St. Clement's. It is not

intended that this change should take place immediately, but it is becoming more difficult to find retired clergymen to take our services. We have been very fortunate to have Cannon Ken Parry join our rota this year and our thanks must go to him and Peter Spackman, Peter Dawkes and John Murch for taking our Services. Illness has taken its toll during the year with Peter Smith, Colin Evans and David Evans not being able to do as much as they would like. Peter Spackman had a recent stay in hospital, but is now better, and we would wish them all better health in 2007.

Despite a very dry and warm year our fund raising events were hit by circumstances beyond our control. The Cream Tea event held on Powderham Green suffered depleted numbers due a football "World Cup" match taking place at the same time. It did still make a good profit and Jennifer and Bernard Rowland must be thanked for all the hard work that they put into it. The Belvedere BBQ was terminated after two hours as the rain poured down and soaked the organisers to the skin! Three weeks later the depleted team of congregation members and our dedicated supporters from the SFCC got so wet during the first half of the BSO Concert that they had to retire as soon as they had completed the bucket collection. The amount collected was almost £1000 down on previous years. The weather was kinder for the Forest Gate garden Party and the Devon Historic Churches Trust Bike Ride. Those who have organised all these events have worked very hard and been supported so generously by the congregation and their friends. Just over £2000 has been raised this year and this includes the "Grand Christmas Drawer" at Forest Gate.

We must this year thank our PCC members and Churchwardens who give up their time to make our lives richer.

We must also thank our organists, John and George, and of course the bell ringers that welcome us to St. Clement's each week.