

## Report from St Mary Magdalene Church for the Annual Parish Meeting

2014/15 has seen a large amount of buildings-related work being carried out in our church.

East Wing Cabinetry has done a splendid job with the cupboards by the south door and in the vestry and they have been much admired by everyone. This leaves the Vestry Screen, the Children's Area and the Welcome Area to be tackled during the next two months

The floor under the rear pews at the back of the church was also replaced last year by Richard Baldry. Some parts of this were unsafe and, when the old floor was taken up, all the joists were found to be rotten. He also replaced the floors in the Vestry and Children's area prior to cupboards being installed.

There were continual problems with the Choir heating through the winter and spring of 2014; we are happy to report that a new cable has been fitted in the and the heating now works well. It does not stop the choir shivering but they now shiver less than before. Unfortunately, in a church the size of ours, it is impossible to raise the temperature to a comfortable level when it is so cold outside.

One repair last year was an emergency, when a stone fell from the bottom of one of the roof supports. The dent in the front pew can still be seen (it's a good job that nobody ever sits there!). We had to close the church for a couple of days until we were sure that no other stones were likely to descend unexpectedly. They were made safe by ensuring that there was a space between the roof supports and the decorative stones below them. This repair was all the more pressing because the stone fell sometime between Sunday evening and Monday morning and the Art Exhibition was due to open on the following Friday. We were grateful to the URC who offered their building as an alternative venue should it be unable to go ahead in St Mary's but happily this was not the case.

2014 seemed to be a year of funerals, particularly in the first half of the year. Fortunately this year has not started in the same way. This is a service the church provides for villagers at a dark time in their lives and it is important that we care for the bereaved and support them. We have a number of people who visit spouses of those who have died and, this year, a letter was sent at Christmas to those who had lost a loved one, acknowledging the difficult time they may have while everyone else was celebrating.

We held a number of benefice events last year:

- a benefice BBQ in the grounds of Winston Schoolroom
- a benefice flower festival with each church having flower displays celebrating 100 years of the diocese and/or commemorating 100 years since the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War
- a benefice BBQ following the last service taken by Rev Penny Wilkes.

We are encouraged by the establishment of the Tea & Cakes church that meets once a month in Dove Cottage and the group of Mum's and Toddlers that meeting at the vicarage. On the Sunday before Lent 8 children and 3 parents enjoyed cooking pancakes and making "welcome" notices for the church. We hope this will lead to more young people being involved in the Family services.

Snowdrops and aconites have been planted near the South door in memory of Audrey Scase and we are planning to purchase a frontal for the nave altar using money from the collection following her funeral.