

WALPOLE OLD CHAPEL

*In the care of the Historic Chapels Trust
(Registered charity number 1017321)*

Annual Newsletter 2009



NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS

At the end of our last season the Reverend Kenneth Maltus-Smith decided to retire as chairman of the Friends of Walpole Old Chapel, a service he had performed with a dedication and commitment matched only by that of our first chairman, the Reverend Ben Angell.

We have been extremely fortunate in having been supported by two men with such an understanding of the place that the Old Chapel at Walpole holds in the history of dissent in general, and in the Congregational movement in particular. In 2007 another minister with all the right credentials retired into the area and immediately volunteered to join those of us who care for the old chapel.

The arrival of the Reverend Bill Mahood was possibly instrumental in Ken's decision to retire as chairman, and we have been most fortunate in finding Bill willing to take the chair.

The Historic Chapels Trust places great importance on maintaining a good relationship with the former denomination of the buildings in their care and Walpole has been very fortunate in that respect, both in their chairmen and in the support we receive from the URC in Halesworth.



*Retiring Chairman
Reverend Kenneth
Maltus-Smith*



*Incoming Chairman
Reverend Bill Mahood*

Thursday 27th May
Walpole old chapel is really an old house.
Inside the chapel is a ship's mast to
hold up the roof. The floor down side
is made of white bricks of sand. The box
pews were made of pitch pine wood. On the door
they have metal black hinges and catches.
You go up some steps to the pulpit. There is a
little door to go in before you go on the pulpit.
There is a sounding board above the pulpit.
Upstairs the floorboards are made of oak.
They found gloves, money, marbles, paper,
graffiti upstairs. They had oil lanterns.
On Sundays people sang and prayed.

2008 EVENTS

The 2008 season began and ended with a children's choir. The locally renowned Wenhaston Girl's Choir performed on the 18th of May, the mixture of sacred, musical, swing and contemporary songs delighted the substantial audience. Our Carols and Readings for Christmas were accompanied by a new local choir based at the Old School in Henstead. They were a delight and I am sure that choir enthusiasts will be hearing much more of them in the future.

We also enjoyed a visit from Cookley & Walpole School, sadly in its last term as it closed in the summer of 2008. Children from the Religious Education class came and, as you will see from one of the reports they made [left], really soaked up the information.

We enjoyed our usual mixture of singers and poets during the season with further visits from the Norfolk Gallery Quire and the Waveney Valley Brass.

At the annual service in June the sermon was given by

(continued over)

Professor Clyde Binfield, a trustee of the Historic Chapels Trust, who had also been persuaded to give a lecture on the previous evening on the history of dissent in the region.

One of the great joys of being involved in caring for the chapel is the number of interesting visitors we receive: simply enjoying the 'wow' factor as people come through the door is wonderful. Occasionally, though, something really touching occurs, such as last year when a lady arrived and presented us with a copy of the marriage certificate of her grandparents, Albert Aldred and Sophia Broomfield Bracknell, who married in the chapel on the 3rd of April 1899. Another item for our growing archive.

The Carols & Readings for Christmas were led by Bill Mahood and, despite three of the readers calling in sick, the exceptional and unusual readings he had chosen were

greatly enjoyed; and of course singing the old carols in the evocative atmosphere of the old chapel got Christmas off to a good start.

HALESWORTH FESTIVAL FRINGE

A particular highlight of the year was the inclusion of the Chapel as a venue for a performance by the Mouth to Mouth Theatre Company of a play by Caryl Churchill, *A Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, which takes place in the revolutionary zealous period of the mid-seventeenth century. The chapel was a splendid venue for this thought-provoking piece of theatre.

We hope that the Chapel will be used again for events in this year's festival, plans for which still have to be finalised, so watch the local press and the website later in the year.

THE 2009 PROGRAMME

The events for this season are listed below but there is a plan for 2010 which needs prior notification. Chris Doddridge is working on a plan to hold an exhibition to coincide with the Heritage Open Weekend in September 2010. The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel would like to invite locally-based artists to submit a work for the purpose of a joint exhibition with the Halesworth Gallery. The work can be in any medium and should be related, directly or indirectly, to the Old Chapel.

Holding the exhibition over the period which covers the Heritage Open Days will give it wide publicity. It is proposed that it be a selling exhibition and that a small commission will be taken for each sale. Further details still have to be worked out, but will be publicised before the Chapel opens for this season in May.

Incidentally many of you will be pleased to see that, after a break of a couple of years, Chris Doddridge will be playing Indian Classical Music and telling us about the wonderful instruments that he makes in the Chapel on midsummer's eve.

The previous evening we welcome back – by popular request – Charity Quin who sang to such acclaim at last year's Annual Service. She and Michael Peck will bring us *Songs and Poems for a Summer's Day*. It is also a joy to welcome back to the Chapel singer/songwriter Alan Franks and vocalist Patti Vetta, who thinks that performing in the Chapel is 'like singing out onto a velvet cushion'. We'll also welcome again Kate Foley (who we have decided is our 'Poet in Residence'), as well as members of the Norfolk Gallery Quire and the Waveney Valley Brass.

Saturday 13 June	Singer/songwriter Alan Franks and vocalist Patti Vetta – 7.30
Friday 19 June	Charity Quin and Michael Peck <i>Songs and Poems for a Summer's Day</i> – 7.30
Saturday 20 June	Chris Doddridge, Indian Classical Music – 7.30
Sunday 21 June	Annual Service, preacher Canon Stephen Henry, Canon Emeritus, Wakefield Cathedral – 3pm
Sunday 5 July	Kate Foley, Poet in Residence: workshop 2.30 followed by an evening performance of music and poetry at 7.30. <i>Details of the workshop from Christina, see below.</i>
Saturday 11 July	The Norfolk Gallery Quire – 3pm
Sunday 9 August	Visit from Halesworth Café Poets – 5pm
Saturday 12 September	Suffolk Historic Churches Bike Ride and Heritage Open Day. All day
Sunday 13 September	Heritage Open Day – 10.30 to 4.30
Sunday 20 September	Songs of Praise with the Waveney Valley Brass – 3pm
Saturday 19 December	Carols & Readings for Christmas – 3pm

OPENING TIMES

The Chapel will be open as usual and a guide will be on duty to show visitors around on Saturday afternoons from **23 May until 12 September, 2pm to 4.30**. To visit at any other time either individually or for a group or to book the Chapel for an event please contact the secretary **Christina van Melzen**, Rookery Farmhouse, Laxfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 8JA. 01986 798 308 chrisvanmelzen@btopenworld.com

Walpole Old Chapel is in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust, St George's German Lutheran Church, 55 Alie Street London E1 8EB
020 7481 0533. www.hct.org.uk.
President Sir Hugh Rossi *Chairman* Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP *Director* Dr Jennifer M Freeman