

HOLY CROSS CHURCH HANKERTON
CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT FOR 2013

The Church continues to be an important part of the village. Services on the first and third Sundays are supported by a small regular number of worshippers, whilst the congregations for Easter, Carols and Christmas were more encouraging.

The major event of the year was the retirement of our parish priest, Barry Raven. This took place in October, when there was a terrific “send-off” in Crudwell, who hosted the event on behalf of the six churches in our Braydon Brook Group, the other four being Ashley, Charlton, Minety and Oaksey. We thank Barry, who was well supported by Avril, for his faithful and cheerful approach to what is a challenging role, looking after six rural parishes. We are going through the process of finding a new parish priest and, during the vacancy, we are being well looked after by Lee Barnes, as interim minister, ably supported by Sarah Wyman, Richenda Daws and others.

Various events were held throughout the year. The Strawberry Tea in the churchyard was enjoyed by many villagers in lovely weather and the Harvest Lunch in the North Aisle was also well supported. A Lent Lunch was held in March and our usual Advent Sale at the end of November.

We were lucky, for the second year running, that general repairs and maintenance on the building were low but there are signs of various works requiring attention in 2014. The architect's next Quinquennial Survey is due in 2015 and this usually highlights fabric repairs, not noticed by the untrained eye.

The “Living Churchyard” project, under Steve Davies' direction, continues with a good variety of wild flowers. The churchyard grass has been regularly cut, usually including an extra trim ahead of the four weddings held in 2013. There has also been some tree surgery during the year.

There has been continued use of the North Aisle by the History Group and the Parish Council. It is now used as a polling station by Wiltshire Council for all elections. We thank Anne Brown who coordinates the Saturday morning “Coffee and Chat” This is an important part of our community life and all ages are welcome. The North Aisle fund raising continues, with the main event being the Street Fayre in August and we thank the members of the North Aisle committee and many other people who have been involved.

We would also like to thank Lee Barnes, Sarah Wyman, Richenda Daws and Richard and Margaret Maslen for their spiritual guidance throughout the year. Sarah's ordination as a priest took place in Bristol Cathedral in June and there was a special group service at Hankerton on 7th July, when she fully took the communion service for the first time in front of a congregation of 120, followed by a splendid lunch in the churchyard. It was a memorable occasion.

We thank all members of the PCC for their various efforts during the year, Rick Hewitt, our main organist and others who have played throughout the year. We also thank those on the flower and cleaning rota for all their hard work in keeping the church looking lovely.

The Church and churchyard are well maintained by village volunteers. The North Aisle is an important facility for the community. Like many Churches, our congregations are mostly small, so we must continue to try and find ways to draw in people of all ages, for communion in its broader sense. It is not only a peaceful place for worship but also to meet and talk with people of all views.