



Winter 2018/19

**Published by the Friends of Long Sutton Church**

Trustees: David Aitken - Chairman      Phil Godfrey - Treasurer  
Geoff Pringle - Secretary      Michael Brake  
Rob Hartley      Kevin Robinson  
Jane Farenden      Christine Turner

## Chairman's Report 2019

2018 has certainly been a very disruptive year politically and is certainly not over yet. Happily, I can announce that FOLSC has weathered the storm with three excellent events which were all very well attended (reports later). Trustees stood up to the plate when it came to ticket sales, selling all tickets after losing the facility of a box office at Long Sutton Stores.

We have at last spent some money on the church yard which we hope will quell some of the comments we received about not parting with any cash. There is another quite large project in the pipeline and we are happy to finance this. Other repairs seem to be on hold at the moment.

It was noted recently that Crewkerne friends had a fighting fund of just over £63,000 but they have contributed £50,000 towards the cost of window repairs (estimated in region of £85,000). This just shows how quickly a satisfactory fighting fund is quickly diminished.

Two trustees are standing down this year. Jane Farenden and Kevin Robinson. We can only thank them for their sterling efforts over the years. Phil Godfrey is standing down as treasurer. He is leaving the area but will stay on as a trustee until such time as he departs. Rob Hartley has kindly agreed to take over in a temporary role until we can find a permanent candidate!! All our remaining trustees are happy to continue for another year.

One bone of contention at our meetings is how do we increase membership. Suggestions range from flyers to a notice in the welcome pack that is given to new incumbents. We believe, however, that the best way is word of mouth. So I implore you, to just get one friend or neighbour to join us and our ranks would swell beyond all our expectations.

Thanks to all trustees' spouses for assistance - you are invaluable. Thanks to Val Pringle who has yet again sprinkled her fairy dust on this publication.

Lastly, can I say thanks to all members for your continued support.

AGM: 6th February, 2019 in School Hall.  
Doors open 19.00, meeting commences 19.30.

**David Aitken. Chairman**

## Treasurer's Report

After several years without any requests for funding, this year we were asked to cover the cost of some groundworks in the churchyard. This work was the result of damp problems being caused to neighbouring buildings. FOLSC came to the rescue with a donation of £2,370 to pay for this much needed work.

Despite this, we managed to increase the funds by a further £1,466. This has been possible as a result of the continued support of from our members' subscriptions to the tune of £775 and profits from the three events held during the year. Profit from the Elvis night was £1,249, from the Pantaloons event - £258 and from the very well received Nautical talk - £1,177.

Our total reserves are £56,793 which is made up of £7,574 in the Current account and £49,219 in the Deposit account. In addition, there is a late subscription of £25 making a total of £56,818. Interest on our deposit account has more than doubled over the year to £222 with a current interest rate of 0.532%. Whilst still a low figure, it remains competitive with the major banks.

In addition to a number of donations given during the three events, we have also received a donation of £100 from Tom's place on the Langport road which is most welcome.

Our membership has declined a little during the year due to a couple of resignations and one of our members having unfortunately passed away. We currently have 29 life members and 61 Annual members, making a total of 90.

**Phil Godfrey - Treasurer**

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## Church Warden's Report

Well, well, doesn't time fly! Here we are again and although time feels it travels ever more quickly, we have to remember that time involving church buildings moves at a more sedate pace. Perhaps that is why Long Sutton's Holy Trinity Church appears to be looking good even after 525 years!

So, what I am about to say may be somewhat familiar. Firstly, I must start by saying a whopping thank you to all the FOLSC Trustees for helping me keep what sanity I have left in their continuing support to the PCC of Holy Trinity Church Long Sutton. It is a fact of life for rural churches that we see a steady decline in numbers attending regular services, whilst the larger services, such as the Carol Service and Remembrance Sunday, continue to be very well attended. This in effect means that the finances of the PCC struggle to meet increasing costs and they are in a perilous shape, to say the least. It is the income from service collections and regular giving by the congregation plus special fundraising events organised by the PCC that is used to keep the church open for services, coffee mornings, marriages, funerals and other events that are held in church throughout the year. Enough of the bad news as I am pleased to report that with the help of FOLSC there is some good news as well.

### **Churchyard Groundworks**

A big concern in the early part of the year was the evidence of damp within the back wall of one of the garages along the southern border of the churchyard. This was probably aggravated by the build-up of soil (from digging graves) together with shrubs and elder bushes that had taken root. Fortunately FOLSC stepped forward and paid the cost of the work amounting to £2370.00 for which we are very grateful. I should also thank Peter Tulk, Mark David together with son George for carrying out the work so quickly, carefully and expertly.

### **Church Sound System**

The PCC has become acutely aware that the existing church sound system is beginning to show its age. This has manifested itself in the use of hand and lapel mics becoming very hit and miss and completely untenable for services and events held in the church. We need to make sure that all visitors, irrespective of hearing ability, can understand what is being said and enjoy the music played.

In Long Sutton we are fortunate to have Phil Godfrey and Mike Turner with the expertise to recommend exactly the right type of system that the church needs to provide the best audio experience we can enjoy without the financial expense being prohibitive. Once again I am saying a big thank you to FOLSC in getting behind the project for a new system that will benefit all who come to the church for events and services. When the installation is complete, the PCC plan to hold a Poetry and Prose Evening to celebrate the new sound system and raise much needed funds to assist with the ongoing church running costs.

### **Welcome Pack**

In consultation with the various contributors the Welcome Pack has been updated. I have asked all our Roundabout / Newsletter deliverers to notify Anona Hawkins or Sue Creegan when new residents move in and ask them to deliver a Welcome Pack to those homes. Among the information provided are details about FOLSC membership including how to join and methods of paying the membership fee.

### **Quinquennial Report – Past & Future**

A year ago I reported that although the major works highlighted in the last QR had been completed as required, there were some outstanding works that should be completed within the five years of the last report. Throughout the year I have met or spoken on the telephone with builders who might undertake the type of work required on a Grade 1 listed building. Unfortunately, most builders are extremely busy on residential works and not available or willing to take on the work needed for the church. Currently I am awaiting a call from John Beauchamp, our Diocesan approved architect, to arrange the now overdue inspection and report. I know he is very busy carrying out reports for other churches in the Diocese so we are probably not a priority at this point in time.

### **Lavatory**

The PCC is continuing to look at the most suitable option for the installation of toilet facilities at Holy Trinity. All the variations available have been considered and a meeting was held in August with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee including the Archdeacon and our architect. In principle they have given approval for us to have plans drawn up and submitted for consideration. So the next step is to meet with John Beauchamp and ask how much it is going to cost from here including all fees associated with a project of this nature.

### **Church Fundraising**

The PCC are only too well aware of having to step-up its own fundraising. So, in the first half of the year in addition to an appeal letter there will be a talk by Jonathan Walker entitled 'Female Agents in WWII' which is on 8th April 2019 in the Village Hall. Tickets are £12.50 per person.

We will be holding a Dinner & Auction of Promises, at Long Sutton Golf Club, in aid of Holy Trinity on Saturday 22nd May 2019. This should be a great evening with a planned ticket price at £38.00 per person.

Finally just a great big thank you to everyone involved in running and supporting FOLSC and in turn our beautiful Holy Trinity Church.

**Tim Creegan**

## 2018 Events Review

### Spring: Elvis is in the building!



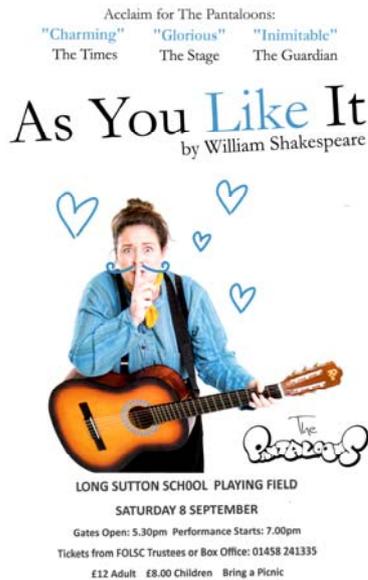
What a night we had! Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April saw the Long Sutton village Hall filled to capacity with many guests travelling a good distance to witness 'The King,' AKA Tim Bassett, perform for us all those numbers many in the audience remembered from the 1950's and 1960's. It was clear from the opening hit this was not just another tribute act but rather we had 'Elvis' in the room with us! With an atmospheric light show and superb backing 'The King' was soon interacting with his audience and played a range of his classic songs and was also happy to slip in the odd request.



During the interval an excellent ploughman's was served (more Somerset than Memphis but still well received!) and having been fed and watered we welcomed back to the stage our second act 'The Bassetts Allsorts'. Tim took on an entirely new persona and with tables cleared away the dance floor was packed for the remainder of the evening. We enjoyed a range of period hits that appealed to 'our generation' and included Cliff, Johnny Cash, Mud, Showaddywaddy, Everly Brothers, Bryan Ferry, Neil Diamond, Tom Jones, Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly and more. Suffice to say we all had a brilliant evening and Tim commented to us what a great audience he had. Clearly FOLSC aim to provide a great night out whilst making money for our charity and to this end we succeeded on both counts. Post-concert feedback has been very positive and now all the bills are settled we can declare what we believe to be a record profit of £1,250 so many thanks to our members and those from the community who turned out in such numbers.

## Late Summer: The Pantaloons - 'As you Like it'

**FOLSC** were delighted to welcome the hugely talented boys and girls from the Pantaloons back to Long Sutton in September for the Company's unique take on the Bard's 'As You Like it'. Long Sutton's school grounds were an ideal pastoral location for a transformation into the Forest of Arden, the main setting for the show. We had anticipated the 'BBQ summer' of 2018 would continue into September and we would enjoy a 'balmy' evening with the Pantaloons but despite the best laid plans of mice and men the weather did not entirely play ball!



There was a very convivial gathering of villagers and other guests before the show and drinks and picnics were consumed. Sadly, the weather gods then had other ideas and light rain commenced mid-way through the first half and as the interval approached it was clearly not letting up. The organisers decision to transfer the 'Forest of Arden' into the Village Hall was greeted by applause from our guests and the cast continued faultlessly with an even more impressive second half.

The Pantaloons blend of interactive entertainment is unique and Orlando's fight with the King's wrestler Charles was hilarious, as was audience member Ben's suggestion to Rosalind, when disguised as a man, that older chaps walk with dodgy knees! The cast also managed to partake throughout the show by 'borrowing' both drink and food from the audience and the profusion of ad libs blended seamlessly with Shakespeare's original script, so adding to the charm of the evening. The departing smiles on the faces of both cast and crew said it all and we have no doubt we will be inviting the 'Loons back to Long Sutton in the not too distant future.



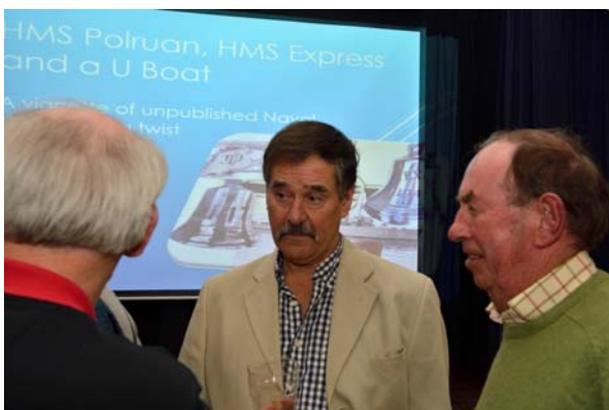
## Winter: A Vignette of unpublished Naval Stories



Our final outing of 2018 proved a great success with close to 100 guests joining us at the Village Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> December for a hugely enjoyable social gathering, drinks, canapes and an entertaining and informative presentation by Trustee Geoff Pringle.



We left the hall knowing rather more about 'Warship Week' fundraising in WWII and how a WWI U boat bell had direct associations with Germany's last Fuhrer!



The evening also raised a fantastic £1,177 for the fighting fund, so a great result to finish the year on!

## Reminiscences of a Trustee

Jackie and I moved to Long Sutton back in November 2007. As newcomers to the village we decided that it was important to become involved with the various organisations in order to meet people and to contribute something to the community. We started by joining in the various events that were being held and eventually joined the Golf Club, the Gardening Club, WI (Jackie not me!) FOLSC and eventually the Parish Council. More recently, the Village Hall has called upon my time as well.

After a short while, David Aitken approached me and said that FOLSC was looking for another Trustee. I am sure that his words were “you don’t have to do much, just come along to the occasional meeting”. Strange then that after just one meeting he asked if I would take on the role of treasurer! Not being very good at saying no, I agreed and have had the position for the last 8 years or more.

Having lived in a number of villages over the years, I can honestly say that the residents of this village are much more inclined to join in with events than other village communities. On many occasions, our entertainers have commented that the audience has been a pleasure to play to and I think that says a lot about the people in the village. Over the years, it has been a pleasure to work with Geoff Pringle, David Aitken and the rest of the trustees to put on a variety of events and to see the attendees enjoying themselves.

Of course the purpose of FOLSC is to build a fund to maintain the structure of our parish church and to respond to emergencies such as leaking roofs, broken windows etc. The official survey some 5 years ago identified some minor works that needed to be done and we were able to fund those without having to call upon the limited finances of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). More recently we have paid for groundworks in the churchyard to avoid further damp problems to nearby properties. Whilst some may question the need for such reserves, it is sobering to note, as our Chairman has already mentioned, the scenario at Crewkerne church. An apparently healthy fighting fund can very quickly be decimated by a single restoration bill.

Whilst building the fund may be our primary aim, I must say that it has been great fun being involved in putting on our various events. From singers, to theatrical troupes and from comedians to brass bands, we have tried to create variety and keep up a high standard of entertainment to bring the village together. Undoubtedly, the most time consuming was providing audio/visual support for the bespoke quizzes that FOLSC has put on. These are quite unique and very popular. It is, however, hugely satisfying to see so many people enjoying the end result.

Nothing is forever, and it is time for Jackie and I to move on to pastures new, especially now that we have Jackie’s mum Jean to consider as well. A boat at Portland is drawing us southwards along with a preference to live closer to the facilities of a town. We will be sad to leave the many good friends that we have made over the last 11 years, but we look forward to the next phase of our lives.

### Phil Godfrey



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The many disguises of Phil & Jackie! (Editor)

## 1918-2018 Armistice Day: A Somerset Family Perspective

Those who were able to attend the humbling 2018 Armistice Day service at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November will have seen the emotive displays created by those of our parish who have associations with and artefacts from the 'war to end all wars', which is fast becoming a distant memory.



My own family, on my Mother's side, are from Weston-Super -Mare and having been born in the town in 1951, can certainly claim to be 'Somerset born, and Somerset bred' having lived most of my life in the county, finally arriving here in Long Sutton nearly 21 years ago. I am the current custodian of the family archive and when the request went out for contributions for the Armistice weekend display and with a lifelong interest in history, I was in an ideal position to contribute.

My Mother's family, the Bakers, established the largest legal practice in the area, founded in 1777 and based at the family home 'Aldwick Court', situated on the edge of the Mendips, between Wrington and Butcombe. The firm flourished as the village of Weston-Super -Mare expanded and in 1779 Samuel Baker was appointed High Sheriff of Somerset. Ernest E Baker, who was the Great Grandson of Samuel and my Grandmother's Father, was the last of the lineage to live at 'Aldwick Court' but sadly like so many other families they were virtually wiped out in the carnage of WW1. Mr & Mrs Ernest Baker lost both their sons, a son in law, a brother and three nephews who were all fated never to return to their Somerset homes. This directly resulted in 'The Court' together with the park, numerous cottages and 700 acres being sold on 10th May 1919 and the Baker family moved to more modest accommodation in Weston.



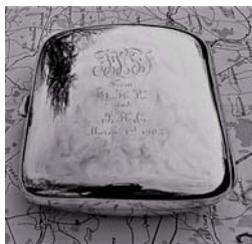
Despite my own interest in history, I had never properly researched the family archive I hold, but the Rev Jane's request for a display stimulated a more detailed analysis, both of the 1914-18 war and the dire impact it had on our family. Captain Aubrey Baker, my Grandmother's eldest brother was killed in action in Mesopotamia on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1916. Then her husband, Captain F. St George Tucker, who she had only married in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1915, was killed at the Battle of the Somme, leading his men in an attack on an enemy position, on 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1916. The situation was then compounded when on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917 her younger brother Lt Neville Baker died of wounds inflicted in battle.

Perhaps the most emotive are the letters to Ernest Baker; one dated March 16th 1916 written from the hospital ship 'Madras', is from a fellow Officer who served alongside Aubrey describing the incident when he fell: **'He was not killed outright, but when I went across to him and found him quite unconscious, I am certain he was in no pain. It was impossible to do anything for him where we were, but four men, young Beedle for one, volunteered, at great risk to themselves, to carry him to the rear. They got some way back and behind cover but were unable to get as far as the dressing station and when I found them some time afterwards about 600 yds to the rear, your son was dead. I am quite sure, that even if he could have been got to a Doctor, it would have been useless'**.



In terms of artefacts, we have shell cases brought back on leave from the front, a carved cherub's arm and plinth recovered from the shattered ruins of Reims Cathedral but perhaps the most emotive object I now treasure is a silver cigarette case with a unique story to tell. I recount it here for the first time but to do so we must go forward from 1916 to 1931. My widowed Grandmother by then had remarried with a family of two daughters, the eldest of whom was to become my Mother. At her home in Weston one June morning she received in the post a buff envelope stamped 'Imperial War Graves Commission' and addressed to Mrs F. St George Tucker, a title she had not used since remarrying in 1920.

The typed letter within notified her the body of an unknown soldier had recently been found near Mametz Wood, south east of Contalmaison in the Picardy area of France. His identity disc was missing but the authorities established from the remnants of his uniform he had served with the Lancashire Regiment. When the remains were recovered for reburial in a military cemetery a silver cigarette case was discovered beneath the body where it has lain in the mud of the Somme for at least 13 years. The team then started their detective work to see if this artefact could help identify the fallen soldier. When the encrusted mud was removed the case was in remarkably good condition being solid silver and on one side were the ornately engraved initials 'F. St G. T From D.H.K. and J.H.C. March 1<sup>st</sup> 1905'. The experts felt they were half way home and just needed to check the East Lancashire Regiment data base.



These hopes were soon dashed when the reverse side was cleaned an engraved crest of the 4th Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment was revealed. The investigators therefore contacted instead this Regiments archivist and they were quickly able to identify the original owner from his initials as one of their own, none other than Captain F. St George Tucker, who fell in action on the third day of the Battle of the Somme, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1916. Their letter concluded by asking my Grandmother, as next of kin, if she would like the cigarette case returned.

She replied in the affirmative and we can only imagine her emotions when she held it in her hands for the first time after its wartime loss and post war rediscovery. It has since been handed down in the family these last 88 years and most recently I have inherited it from my Mother and is now back in Somerset once more.

We will never know for sure the sequence of events that led to its loss and rediscovery on another soldier's body near Mametz Wood in 1931. To speculate it seems highly likely the unknown serviceman of the East Lancs Regiment 'relieved' Major Tucker of it when it was clear he had no further use for it. My research indicates the East Lancs Regiment have a battle honour for the action at Mermantz Wood in early August 1916 and seems likely that is when he too fell and for his body and the family cigarette case to be discovered at the same spot 15 years later.

In conclusion Captain Tucker, aged 33, remains in the beautifully tended Oவில் Military Cemetery on the Somme. Lt Neville Baker, aged 21, is buried in Voormezele Military Cemetery Belgium whilst his older brother Neville, age 26, lies where he fell in battle and with no known grave, is commemorated on the Basra memorial, ironically located on the site of a major battlefield of the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War.

You can now perhaps appreciate why the 1918 Long Sutton 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations were particularly poignant for our family and never has John Maxwell Edmond's epitaph **'When you go Home, tell them of us and say, for your Tomorrow, we gave our Today'** carried more meaning. For our family at least and despite the passing years **'We Will Remember Them'**.

**Geoff Pringle**



And finally .....



Tim & Janet Walford issued an invitation in early 2018 to those who had a close association with FOLSC, past and present, since its inception and to celebrate FOLSC becoming a teenager!

A fine company duly assembled at Upton Bridge Farm, as proven by the attached photograph and a very convivial time was had by all. Tim of course was one of our founding Fathers and the occasion also marked probably the last major social gathering before Tim & Janet down-size in early 2019. We are sure those who attended would like to again pass on their thanks for a very memorable day in July 2018 and to wish them a long and happy (semi) 'retirement' in 'Vedal House'.