



THE FRIENDS' OF MORLEY NEWSLETTER

February 2008

A Message from the Chair of the Friends, Nicholas Henshall....

Dear friends,

Recently I was on retreat in a very remote part of Northumberland. It was quite a testing week, doing nothing! One afternoon I was walking across the foothills of the Cheviots when I heard a hammering noise in the trees. I stopped and listened. Turning slowly I gradually located the source of the sound – high up in one of the trees a woodpecker was making its home. And – having nothing more pressing to do – I watched and waited.

It was a remarkable story of patience and engineering. First the woodpecker tried out different parts of the tree – sometimes spending 10 or 15 minutes excavating a spot before deciding there was something better elsewhere; and then once the final location was selected, he worked away for hours building a home.

I'd come away on retreat to do some *re*-building. Arriving exhausted, I left just beginning to feel renewed! And while most of the work of a retreat necessarily fades, that woodpecker has stayed with me.

I know the lessons are obvious, but they are ones for us as individuals and as a group supporting Morley as a place of hospitality and prayer. We are building a space - a space in which we seek God, through which we invite others on the journey, and in which we will know nurture and grace. And building this space requires the perseverance of a woodpecker - keeping on just keeping on as we build an environment in which to flourish.

Back in Derby of course I have the company of birds of rather a different kind – the magnificent but rather terrifying peregrines on the Cathedral tower! Not likely to glimpse a woodpecker in the city centre, but his little bit of inspiration goes a long way!

With my best wishes.

Nicholas

A Day for the Friends of Morley Monday 15 September 2008

A further day event for Friends has been arranged for this autumn. Canon Nicholas Henshall will again lead the day which will commence with coffee at 10.00 am and conclude after tea and cakes at about 4.00 pm. This will include some quiet space but is also an opportunity for Friends to meet each other and to pray together. The day will cost £20 per person.

Please contact the House to book your place (details on back page)

Some Friends may like to come to the Quiet Day that will be led by the Revd Katie Tupling on the day after, Tuesday 16 September. We would be glad to offer you Dinner, Bed and Breakfast on the Monday evening. Should you wish to stay for both events we will charge a special rate of £65 per person.

Please contact the House for a Booking Form (details on back page)

Gardening at Morley

At recent meetings to review our business plan both the staff and Trustees were agreed that the gardens are one of the House's greatest strengths and I know that the gardens have a special place in the hearts of many Friends of Morley too.

There are times, however, when the gardens can be either a disappointment or a problem... when a guest comments on how many exuberant weeds are thriving in our beds, ...when a strong wind brings down branches or shrubs, ... when rainy weather means that the grass has grown over-long ... the list could go on for ever!

For over a year now Jamie Holloway, aided by his teenage son, Aiden, come on Saturday or Sunday and mow the grass, keeping our lawns in good order. In winter months Jamie has undertaken many pruning tasks, most recently cutting back the overgrown rhododendron hedge opposite the rose garden. We will not have the blossom this year, but next year it should be lovely. This has allowed the Magnolia tree more light which should improve its growth too. Jamie has also re-planted the rose garden as the old plants had not responded to two years of careful pruning hardly blooming at all last year. The roses will of course take a few years to grow to optimum size but we look forward to this area again being a special place to sit in.

In November we had a full Tree Survey of the grounds and are planning to remove some of the (self planted) Holly trees that have grown enormously recently, no doubt aided by the very wet summer last year. The tree surgeons will also prune the cordoned and espaliered apple trees in the walled garden this year and in the autumn we plan to have the big lime trees along the front wall to Church Lane lifted for safety reasons.

We have cleared out the flower border outside the first part of the Walled Garden and plan to re-stock it for the summer

So much to do but many hands can make light work and the Friends' Gardening Days for the last couple of years have kept areas at the front of the House clear of weeds, have kept our hanging baskets and tubs beautifully supplied with pretty bedding plants and have totally renewed the flower bed in front of the House where the Ceonothus died in the drought in the summer of 2006. These days DO make a difference, and we again offer our thanks to those who come so faithfully. If you've not been on a gardening day why not try it this Spring (Thursday 8th May) there are tasks for all abilities and a friendly group to work with; drinks are provided but bring your own packed lunch please. It is fine to come for only part of the day if that suits you better.

Three times a year we open the grounds for a Quiet Garden Day, when our chaplain, Revd Pat Gower, will lead prayers to start and finish and at midday, but you will have space to spend time as you please in the gardens.

Catherine

Warden's Report - February 2008

I am writing this during the half-term holiday lull when we have little or no midweek guests but plenty of contractors carrying out improvements to the building. As I walk around the smell of fresh paint reminds me that we have just had the finishing touches done to the last of the refurbished House toilets & showers and Sitwell has just been redecorated, during which we unearthed a beautiful Victorian tiled fireplace that had been hidden behind a sheet of hardboard for over 40 years! By the time the weekend group from the Baptist Union arrive all the Wing bedrooms will have locks at last. The quiet period has also given us the opportunity to spend a day together as Staff and Trustees with a facilitator from CCI, our "trade association", where we were looking ahead at ways in which we might develop the House over the next 5 to 10 years.

But it's not always so quiet here. In fact last year was the busiest on record with the last 3 months particularly so. Even December which is usually rather quiet was filled up thanks in part to our new initiative of providing Christmas dinners in the lead up to the ever popular Houseparty. There is every indication that this year will be busier still as more and more people seek to get away from their normal environment and seek time out in a peaceful environment for a variety of reasons.

The Staff too need to get away and in recent months each of us have spent time at conferences run by CCI, Archway (the Retreat House Wardens Association), Derby Diocese and Southwell Diocese. These provide us with opportunities for personal development, spiritual refreshment and networking.

As well as putting a lot of effort into improving the safety, security and comfort of our guests we also launched a brand new website just before Christmas. Most of our new business now comes via the internet so do take a look at www.morleyretreat.co.uk and let us know what you think of it. In fact you will even be able to look at it when you next come to stay if you bring your laptop with you as we now have Wireless Broadband available for guests throughout the main House.

A particular highlight of the past year was when all the staff were able to attend the baptism of our Assistant Chef Alison Bamford and her daughter in our own chapel. As it was early November we then enjoyed a firework party afterwards! And then a few months later we hosted the refreshments after the Confirmation service at St Matthew's Church where one of the candidates was our Chef Alison Cattermole. It's events like these that make Morley such a special place to work.

Jeff

Prayer Focus

Give thanks for:

- All the Staff at Morley including Jeff and Catherine, Bob and Alison.
- The assurance of new life as we enjoy springtime.
- Christian friendships.
- Jamie and Aiden Holloway and all who work in the garden.

Please pray for:

- The Warden, House Manager and all the other Staff who work at Morley.
- The continuing upturn in the business of the House.
- The Trustees as they put together the Business Plan for the House.
- Nicholas Henshall and all the staff of Derby Cathedral.

Forthcoming Events at Morley

Friends Spring Gardening Day - Thursday 8 May, 10.00 am onwards

Enjoy fellowship whilst working together in the garden.

Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be provided.

Annual General Meeting - Sunday 15 June, 3.30 pm

Including tea and Evensong

A Day for the Friends of Morley - Monday 15 September, 10.00 am

Led by Canon Nicholas Henshall

Autumn Gardening Day - Saturday 25 October, 10.00 am onwards

(arrangements as for 8 May)

Friends' Eucharist followed by Christmas Lunch, 12 noon

Cost: £17.50

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2008

Subscriptions for 2008 were due in January (£7.00 for individuals and £15 for Parishes). Please make cheques payable to **THE FRIENDS OF MORLEY** and send them to the Treasurer at the address shown below.

Thank you to those Friends who have already paid their subscriptions and also to those who have very generously sent donations above the minimums requested.

PRAYER CARD 2008

An updated prayer card is enclosed.

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