

St Mary's Church, Shipton-under Wychwood. 1986 - 1996

A new Visitors' Book – again generously donated by the same anonymous benefactor – has been placed in the church this year. The previous book, covering ten years, contains inscriptions by travellers from all over the world - think of a country and you're almost certain to find it represented. The world beats a path to our lovely Cotswolds!

Many of our visitors express their gratitude at finding the church open, -"Thank you for keeping your church open to us" – "Peace when peace was needed" – "Thank you for a time of peace and strength".

There are many appreciative comments that our church is beautiful and well-kept, and the font, pulpit and stained glass are particularly admired, as are the flower arrangements. The annual Easter gardens and the very special Flower Festival in 1995 receive high praise.

Visitors who have shared our services have appreciated the quality of the music and been uplifted by the worship, and over and over again have been grateful for the welcome they have received.

Many visitors come in search of their roots: – "A relative of the Reade family", – "Great-great-great-grandfather born here in 1780" – "Ancestors married here in 1913 / 1847 / 1733 / 1712", – "Christened here in 1902, – born at The Malt House". And does anyone remember Frank Gregory, a choirboy in 1940? Or "T W John, schoolmaster 1956-63"?

We are lucky that so far we have been able to keep the church open during the daytime and it is amply rewarding to see that so many people find strength, peace and spiritual uplift here. As a visitor in 1992 expressed it: "A welcoming, beautiful place; God is here".

Margaret Nicholson, Churchwarden.

The long arm of coincidence.

While on a recent working visit to Turkey, Tony Butterfield was the guest of The British Council. During his three days in Ankara, Tony was invited to attend a concert by the New English Consort, also guests of The British Council.

Imagine his surprise when he found that the soloist for the event was Catherine Bott. Well, Catherine and Tony live 60 yards apart in Green Lane, Milton.

Tony had never heard Catherine sing. She is a world expert on Early Music. Imagine his surprise when he found himself in the centre of the front row. And with no chance to discuss low-cost housing at the end of Green Lane.