

# FRIENDS OF LITTLE GIDDING NEWSLETTER

November 2015



## PILGRIMS ON THE LITTLE GIDDING CAMINO



Some two hundred people walked from Leighton Bromswold to the tomb of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding for this year's Pilgrimage at the end of May, which was led by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. In his series of addresses through the day, Lord Williams read and reflected on a number of poems by Ferrar's friend and contemporary, George Herbert. Report and more pictures on page 6.

## LITTLE GIDDING CHURCH APPEAL

As reported in the last Newsletter, Little Gidding Church is in need of quite significant restoration, and an appeal is under way to raise £40,000. The hard work of raising this money is the responsibility of Great Gidding PCC, as Little Gidding Church is part of the Giddings group. Great Gidding Church is itself also in need of major restoration at the moment, so their efforts are divided and it is expected that the Little Gidding appeal will take longer than had been previously thought.

Meanwhile, the Friends have made a 'seedcorn' donation of £1000 from our reserves. This is in addition to any donations that individual members of the Friends may make. It is hoped that this donation will help to show various grant-making bodies that there is

interest in this restoration work and attract further grants.

At the start of the year, the appeal organizers wrote to all members of the Friends with more information about the Appeal. Please help us to spread the word beyond the Friends to all who might be interested in ensuring the future of this beautiful historic and holy place.

May we remind readers that donations may be made by cheque payable to 'St John's Church Little Gidding' and sent to: Mr John DeVal, Churchside House, Main Street, Great Gidding, Huntingdon, PE28 5NX

*Friends may like to accompany any donation with a note that they are giving through the Friends of Little Gidding. Please ask for a Gift Aid form if you can contribute this way.*



## NICHOLAS FERRAR DAY – 5 December

This year's celebration of the feast day of Nicholas Ferrar will be observed on **Saturday 5 December** at Little Gidding. The Bishop of Huntingdon, David Thomson, will preside at the Eucharist at 10.30 am, and afterwards will talk on one of the most famous legacies of the Ferrars, the Gospel harmonies they created, 'Collages for Christ: the Little Gidding Gospel Harmonies then and now'.

After lunch we will hold the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Little Gidding. This is your opportunity to elect the officers and committee for the coming year, to receive reports for the year ended, and to comment on what the Friends have done or what we might do. Members will have received the formal notice of the AGM, but non-members are welcome too (though they may not vote at the AGM). If you plan to come, please let us know so that we can cater accordingly.

### 2016 PILGRIMAGE

The 2016 Pilgrimage will be held on **Saturday 21 May**. Please put the date in your diary for 2016. The Pilgrimage leader will be the Very Revd Frances Ward, who is Dean of St Edmundsbury, and is also the Chair of the Little Gidding Trust. Further details will follow but it is expected that the day will begin at 10.30 am at Leighton Bromswold.



David Thomson is Chair of the Council of Reference, which advises the Little Gidding Trust. He is a published writer in the field of Middle English, and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Historical Society.

### MEMBERSHIP

Our thanks to all who have renewed their membership this year; may we encourage others to renew theirs, to consider setting up a Standing Order, and where possible, to 'Gift Aid' membership and other donations to the Friends? Please return forms and subscriptions to Sally Seaman, our Membership Secretary, or email her at <membership@littlegidding.org.uk>.



## FERRAR HOUSE – from the Warden

It is a great privilege for me to serve this unique place, a place that has inspired so many and continues to do so. When I shared the news of my appointment as warden with friends a good number of them recounted visits they had made here and the enduring sense of God's presence that enfolded them.

2015 has been a busy year at Ferrar House. By the time the House closes after Nicholas Ferrar Day around 400 people will have visited for quiet days as individuals or as part of a group. Visitors are predominantly Anglican though we have also welcomed a wide variety of other Christian traditions. We have also been used for training

days by secular groups and charities. Pilgrims and retreatants have included a man walking from Lincolnshire to Rome! We also hosted a group of visitors from the USA led by former Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, who were very moved by being here.

It is hoped next year that we can open Ferrar House seven days a week. To do this we need volunteers prepared to spend a day here and willing to welcome visitors and serve tea and coffee. Training will be given and those coming a distance may be afforded B+B. Anyone who wishes to explore this should contact me on 01832 293383 or email <info@ferrarhouse.co.uk>.

Andrew Good

## LITTLE GIDDING CALENDAR

Saturday 5 December 2015 **Nicholas Ferrar Day**  
10.30 am Holy Communion, followed by lunch

The Rt Revd Dr David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon, is our speaker at the annual Commemoration on Nicholas Ferrar Day.

1.30 pm **AGM of the Friends of Little Gidding**  
The AGM will begin after lunch, not earlier than 1.30pm.

Saturday 21 May 2016 **Annual Little Gidding Pilgrimage**  
Led by the Very Revd Dr Frances Ward, Dean of St Edmundsbury and Chair of the Little Gidding Trust. More details to follow. Please put the date in your 2016 diary.

Saturday 9 July 2016 **Eleventh Annual T S Eliot Festival**  
Sunday 10 July  
Planning is already under way for next year's Festival. Please make a note of the dates.

### Regular Services

Evensong is normally said at Little Gidding when there is a fifth Sunday in the month: 31 January (3 pm), 29 May (6 pm), 31 July (6 pm), 30 October (3 pm).

A monthly service is held at noon on the second Friday of each month and is followed by lunch in Ferrar House. For catering purposes please email <info@littlegidding.org.uk> if you would like lunch. Services are held on the following Fridays:

11 December, 8 January, 12 February, 11 March, 8 April, 13 May.

### Poetry evenings

Poetry evenings are held most months at 7.30 pm in Ferrar House, usually on the 13th. For further information please email <info@littlegidding.org.uk>.

For further details about any of these events, or to book a place, please email <info@littlegidding.org.uk>.

To arrange your own event, please contact the Warden, the Revd Andrew Good, at Ferrar House, telephone: 01832 293 383; email <info@ferrarhouse.co.uk>

For an updated calendar and diary of events see [www.littlegidding.org.uk](http://www.littlegidding.org.uk) and [www.ferrarhouse.co.uk](http://www.ferrarhouse.co.uk). Information is also shared on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/littlegidding](http://www.facebook.com/littlegidding)  – 'like' this to receive updates.



## LITTLE GIDDING PILGRIMAGE

The 2015 Pilgrimage was held on a lovely spring day at the end of May. The presence of Bishop Rowan Williams, Lord Williams of Oystermouth, as pilgrimage leader had raised the profile of the day, and our organizational skills were tested to the full, as just about 200 people spent some or all of the day at Leighton Bromswold, Little Gidding, or the walk between the two churches. Bishop Rowan took as his theme for the day a number of George Herbert's poems: first reading them and then giving an address or short reflection at the various stations.

It was wonderful to welcome so many pilgrims – familiar faces, some who had never been before and others returning after a long absence. We hope that many of them will come back regularly and bring their friends with them, that the life of Nicholas Ferrar, and the beauty of Little Gidding might be more widely appreciated.

If you missed the day, then put next year's date (21 May) in your diary now.



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

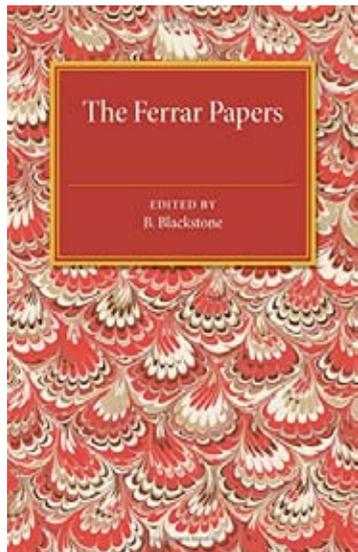
The Very Revd Frances Ward, Chair of the Little Gidding Trust, tells about recent thinking by the Trust, the owner of Ferrar House. For some time now the Directors of Little Gidding Trust – Frances Ward, David and Rosemary Way, Fiona Chesterton, Mary Jepp, Berkeley Zych, John Harrison and Don Simmonds – have been thinking carefully about how to ensure that Little Gidding fulfils the purpose of the Trust – to promote pilgrimage – in the best possible way.

We talked with the Bishop of Ely and have listened and shared thoughts with him, and he suggested that we spend a couple of days together to develop a vision document for the next ten years. We were ably led by the Very Revd Keith Jones, who used to be

Dean of York, and now have a vision that the Bishop thinks is exciting, and we are increasingly happy with, as we revise it in the light of comments received.

It will involve, over the next ten years, developing the barn, the houses, building a house for retreatants, and Ferrar House itself in a staged and careful way, preserving the wonderful sense of history and domestic feel of the place. The first stage is a feasibility study, and until that is done, hopefully by the New Year, we don't want to be too specific, as all our thinking may come to nothing, and we don't want to raise expectations just yet! But please pray for Little Gidding and its future, and watch this space!

Frances Ward

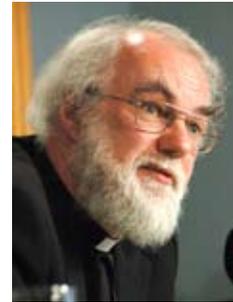


### The Ferrar Papers back in print

First published in 1938, Bernard Blackstone's edition of *The Ferrar Papers* contains a selection from the family papers held at Magdalene College, Cambridge, including extracts from what remains of John Ferrar's detailed notes for a life of his brother Nicholas (not quite a biography, but underpinning most if not all of the subsequent biographies), an account of one of the dialogues that formed part of the 'Little Academy', a collection of short moral histories, and a selection from the family letters.

Out of print for many years, and hard to obtain second-hand, this important collection is being re-published by Cambridge University Press on 3 December, priced £25.99.

## ROWAN WILLIAMS: VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE FRIENDS



Following this year's Pilgrimage the Committee of the Friends invited Bishop Rowan Williams to become Vice-President of the Society of the Friends, and we are delighted that he has accepted our invitation.

The President of the Friends is Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely, a position which successive Bishops of Ely have occupied since the Friends was first founded in 1948. T S Eliot was Vice-President from that original foundation until his death in January 1965.

It is a great delight to welcome Bishop Rowan as Vice-President. Now Lord Williams of Oystermouth and Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, he was after his ordination a young priest in the diocese of Ely, and it was then that he first came to Little Gidding. The College of which he is Master is also the home of the Ferrar Papers, a great treasure of the 17th century and an important source of information about the early colonization of Virginia by the English, a venture in which the Ferrar family, including Nicholas, played an important role.

We hope to arrange a visit to Magdalene College for Friends to view some of the Ferrar archives and portraits held at the College.

## CONFERENCE: THE FERRARS OF LITTLE GIDDING

Magdalene College, Cambridge is to host a conference in September 2016 on *The Ferrars of Little Gidding*. The College, whose Master is Bishop Rowan Williams, is the custodian of the historic Ferrar Papers, containing an extensive collection of personal and business papers, as well as a significant record of the work of the Virginia Company, in which the Ferrars were strongly involved as it sought to create and sustain the first English colony in America. The Conference will look at the influence of the family from their involvement with the Virginia company, to their relationship with George Herbert and the planned construction of a Harmony of the Gospels. The conference coincides with the completion of a major project to conserve the 600 Ferrar prints (collected by the family from the late sixteenth century) at the college and there will be an open exhibition of items from the Ferrar papers, including newly-conserved prints, and the Ferrar portraits. There will also be a concert, a gala dinner, and a visit to Little Gidding. For further details, including costs, see [www.littlegidding.org.uk](http://www.littlegidding.org.uk).

## ELIOT FESTIVAL 2015

2015's Eliot Festival was blessed with fine weather: not too hot, but warm and dry and not windy – probably the best conditions the Festival has experienced in its history.

However the day was not without problems, principal among them that the coaches bringing the members of the International Summer School from London got stuck in a major traffic jam south of Cambridge and were about an hour late arriving at Little Gidding. Not only were many of the audience on the coaches, but so were three of our speakers. Hastily, we rejigged the programme and after a slight delay the day began with the audience participation of 'My Favourite Eliot'. Much loved by the festival-goers, this is when anyone who wants to can come up on stage and read a bit of Eliot poetry or prose. And so the coach travellers reached Little Gidding and found us enjoying poetry both humorous and serious.

Once all had arrived, Lyndall Gordon talked about Eliot as an expatriate, and how the influence of this could be seen in his poetry. In the afternoon Ronald Schuchard returned with an update on the Eliot publishing programme. The Eliot Society lecture was given by Robert Crawford. With his recently-published biography *Young Eliot*, he has been popular on the literary circuit this year, but Robert is an



old friend of the Festival, and this was his third visit, having read *Little Gidding* twice, once notably with Seamus Heaney, and subsequently with Daljit Nagra. The Festival ended with *Little Gidding*, lovingly read by the President of the Eliot Society, Graham Fawcett.

This was the tenth Festival, a milestone in its own right, and a quick show of hands on the day indicated that four people claimed to have been at all ten (for the record: Susanna Ferrar, Graham Pechey, Megan Smedley and Simon Kershaw). It was also a day on which we remembered three people. First, Bob Miller, who had the idea



of an Eliot Festival at Little Gidding to mark the 70th anniversary in 2006 of Eliot's visit, and had subsequently founded the T S Eliot Society. Without Bob's vision there would be no Fes-



tival and no Society. Secondly, Peter Cochran who at the last four Festivals had entranced the audience with his renditions of Eliot poetry. With Jenny Sargent he memorably read *The Waste Land*, and on other occasions read *Pru-frock*, *East Coker* and, just last year, *Little*

*Gidding*. And thirdly we remembered the fiftieth anniversary of the death of T S Eliot himself in January 1965.

Those important people were remembered and their lives celebrated in the reading of poetry and the study and enjoyment of the life of Eliot and his contemporaries.



left: Robert Crawford (top); Lyndall Gordon, Graham Fawcett (below); this page: Bob Miller (left); Peter Cochran (right)

## DR MICHAEL HUDSON AND LITTLE GIDDING

As defeat in the English Civil War loomed and danger drew closer, King Charles I made the ill-fated decision in April 1646 to leave the Royalist Headquarters at Oxford and join the Scots Army at Newark in Nottinghamshire. Oxford was finally to fall to the Parliamentary forces in June 1646. For his two companions he chose John Ashburnham and his devoted chaplain, Dr Michael Hudson. John Ashburnham was also to accompany the King on his subsequent flight from Hampton Court in 1648. The party slipped out of Oxford just before midnight on Monday 27 April 1646 by separate gates

with the King in disguise as a servant. The King had also cropped his hair somewhat inexpertly.

During the journey they lodged at various places including a stay with the Christian community at Little Gidding, occupied at the time by John Ferrar and his family. They left there and spent the night, 3 May, in Alderman Wolph's house on Barn Hill, Stamford, which is no longer in existence. It was said by the historian Dr William Stukeley that this was the last night the King 'may be said to have slept a free man', but Rushworth's Historical Records indicate

that they may have spent the next night at Downham before reaching Newark on 5 May. On the day before, 4 May, Parliament declared that those who harboured the king would both forfeit their estates and lose their lives. Several members of Stamford Corporation were subsequently dismissed from their positions.

It must have been an anxious time for both the fugitives and for the members of the Little Gidding community who were present. The arrangements were apparently made by Hudson, who, as a clergyman, had a number of connections in the area and would have been fully aware of the community. He was Rector of both West Deeping and Uffington in South Lincolnshire, near Stamford, and knew the wider district.

Hudson had been born in 1605. He was a graduate of Oxford University and had married about 1630 a Miss Pollard of Newnham Courtney, Oxfordshire and about the same time was made a fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. He came into contact with the King and was for a time tutor to the Prince. He was made a Doctor of Divinity at Oxford in February 1643. He was known as an agent, a messenger and a spy. Later during the Civil War, he had been until 1644 Chief of intelligence (described in the language of the day as Scout-master) to the Royal Army

in Lincolnshire and the North East under the Earl of Newcastle. Among the most loyal of all the cavaliers, the King nicknamed Hudson his 'plain-speaking chaplain'.

At Newark the King was handed over to Parliament but Hudson was kept by the Scots, despite Parliament on 23 May 1646 having despatched a Sergeant-at-Arms for his arrest. He was however seized shortly afterwards and imprisoned in London House. On 18 June 1646 he was examined by a Committee of Parliament as to the King's journey to Newark. He gave a vague description of extensive wanderings without apparently mentioning Little Gidding. The record does have a description of a barber's criticisms of the King's poor haircut.

On 18 November 1646 Hudson escaped from London. He re-established contact with the King and carried letters on the King's behalf to Major General Laughern in Wales. Laughern was one of the Presbyterians disaffected by the development of extremism and minded to change allegiance from the Parliamentarians to the Royalists. After further employment on behalf of the King, Hudson was again captured in Hull in January 1647 and imprisoned in the Tower of London. While in the Tower he wrote 'The Divine Right of (Monarchical) Government' and an 'Account of King Charles I'. The dispute over 'the divine right of Kings' was one of the main



issues in the Civil War. Early in 1648 Hudson was one of the few in history to escape from the Tower, in his case by means of a disguise and by carrying a basket of apples on his head.

The Second Civil War in 1648 was a much more serious affair than is sometimes appreciated. It was highly coordinated with risings in Wales and various parts of England, an invasion from Scotland and a planned landing of a fleet with the Prince of Wales, the future King Charles II. Major General Laughern did transfer allegiance and with others was besieged by Cromwell in Pembroke Town and Castle for some weeks in June and July 1648 before capture.

Hudson took part in the Second Civil War by forming a body of horse as a military commander on behalf of the Royalists. He was besieged in Woodcroft Castle, in Etton, between Peterborough and Stamford, in what

was then Northamptonshire, not far from West Deeping. All of the defenders except Hudson were allowed to surrender but Hudson was refused quarter. As the Parliamentary soldiers broke their way into the building he retreated to the battlements. There he was forced over the side into the surrounding moat where on 6 June 1648 he was killed with considerable savagery by a man called Egborough from Stamford and others.

The fictitious character, Dr Rochecliffe, in Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novel, 'Woodstock', was said by Scott to have been based on Hudson (see the Editor's note in that book).

It is fitting that the troubles of the times and the visit of the King and his companions to Little Gidding in search of sanctuary should be kept in remembrance.

*John Spicer is retired justices' clerk who has written extensively on legal and historical themes*

*continued from page opposite*

perhaps, is the position and depiction of the manor house, both of which have been a mystery until the discovery of this map. Are they as accurate as the field boundaries? If they are then this gives us, for the first time, some indication of the house as the Ferrars knew it.

The map is now kept in a temperature-controlled archive strongroom at Huntingdon Library, but you may ask to see it. The Archives are open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You are advised to check opening times before travelling – search for 'Huntingdon Archives', phone 01480 372738 or email <hunts.archives@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>.

Thanks to the efforts of Canon Bill Girard, an A3 copy of the map can be viewed at Ferrar House.

## MAP OF LITTLE GIDDING



In August this magnificent map of the parish of Little Gidding dating from 1596 was purchased (with funding from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Huntingdonshire Local History Society) for Cambridgeshire Libraries, and is now at the Huntingdonshire Archives at Huntingdon Library. It shows the village of Little Gidding, and the manor house itself in elevation, as it existed just after the birth of Nicholas Ferrar. It was drawn in 1596 by the cartographer John Hexham and shows the estate of Little Gidding landowner Gervase Clifton.

If you compare this with a modern map, or modern satellite photograph (e.g., on an online map), then the parish boundaries and many of the modern field boundaries can easily be identified. The Alconbury Brook, at the west edge of the map, runs a somewhat straighter course nowadays, but the hedges and roads that form the rest of the boundaries are unchanged over 400 years later. The modern 'main' road, past Steeple Gidding, and on to Great Gidding is not shown on the map, but crosses the southern boundary near the windmill in the middle of the map and continues more or less due north. Most intriguing,

*continued at bottom of opposite page*

## WATERCOLOURS BY CUTHBERT BEDE



Cuthbert Bede was the pen-name of the Revd Edward Bradley (1827–89) who between 1851 and 1853 was an assistant curate at Glatton and Holme, close to Little Gidding. He was a prolific artist, illustrator and writer, and eventually became the incumbent of various parishes in the Stamford area, where he was well-acquainted with William Hopkinson, restorer of Little Gidding Church in the 1850s, and who died almost exactly 150 years ago, on 1 September 1865.

These two watercolours depict the interior and exterior of Little Gidding Church in 1851, just before Hopkinson's restoration, and some 50 years after Carter's line drawing of the interior in 1798. The paintings have been undisturbed in the collection of the British Museum until very recently, although a monochrome etching of the interior was known.

Thanks to the efforts of Canon Bill Girard, the paintings have been rediscovered, and with the permission of the British Museum they have been photographed. Copies of each of them are available as A5 postcards at £1.25 each, and net proceeds will be donated to the Little Gidding Church appeal.

Additionally, Bill is preparing a portfolio containing full-size copies of the paintings, a biographical sketch and photograph of Edward Bradley, a biographical sketch of William Hopkinson, with a copy of Hopkinson's portrait, and a narrative *Little Gidding Church: Dereliction to Restoration: 1626 to 1853*. All enquiries about the portfolio may be made through Ferrar House, or directly to Canon Girard by email <[girard774@btinternet.com](mailto:girard774@btinternet.com)>. The postcards too may be bought directly from Ferrar House, again with net proceeds being donated to the church appeal.

This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Little Gidding.

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