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Four generations of the Steel family have been involved in funeral service in Winchester for over 150 years, and as a result we have a significant association with St Cross Church. As a boy Richard Steel sang in the choir from 1950 to 1954 under the renowned organist and choirmaster Isadore Godfrey. The Master at that time was Geoffrey Carlisle. From time to time Richard's father Stanley, who had the distinction of serving twice as Mayor of Winchester, accompanied him to church on Sundays. Stanley too sang in the choir, having sung in the cathedral choir throughout the war. Although Stanley had been churchwarden at St Maurice and St Lawrence in The Square, his funeral service in 1984 took place at St Cross to accommodate the number of mourners.

Richard recalls the choirboys' football league in Winchester. He played for St Cross under the stewardship of Pat Sherlock and Harold Poulter. He continued to sing at St Cross and play football occasionally even while he was away at boarding school. Always keen on sport, Richard Steel & Partners are major sponsors of St Cross Cricket Club.

Many will remember Peter Peace, a stalwart of St Cross for years, who in the 1960s moved to Romsey to become a partner with the Steels in the funeral directors A. H. Cheater. Peter's lifelong love of gardening was a result of living in Back Street and having an adjacent allotment.

Richard's sister Janet and brother-in-law Barry were married at St Cross, and we believe that following their marriage they were the first newlyweds to claim the Wayfarer's Dole at the Porter's Lodge.

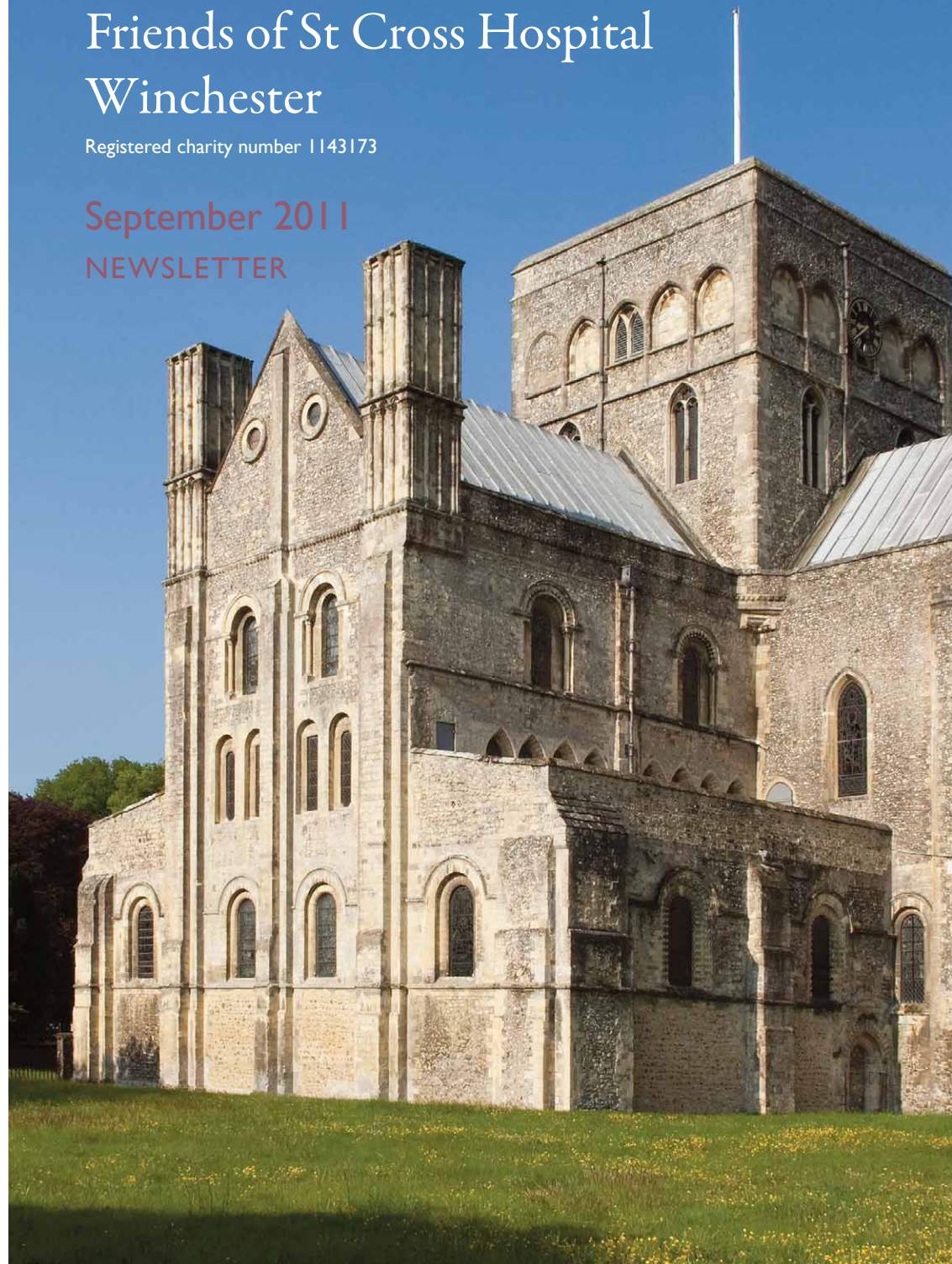
Richard and Iain Steel are delighted to be Founding Sponsors of the Friends of St Cross: celebrating its past and supporting its future.

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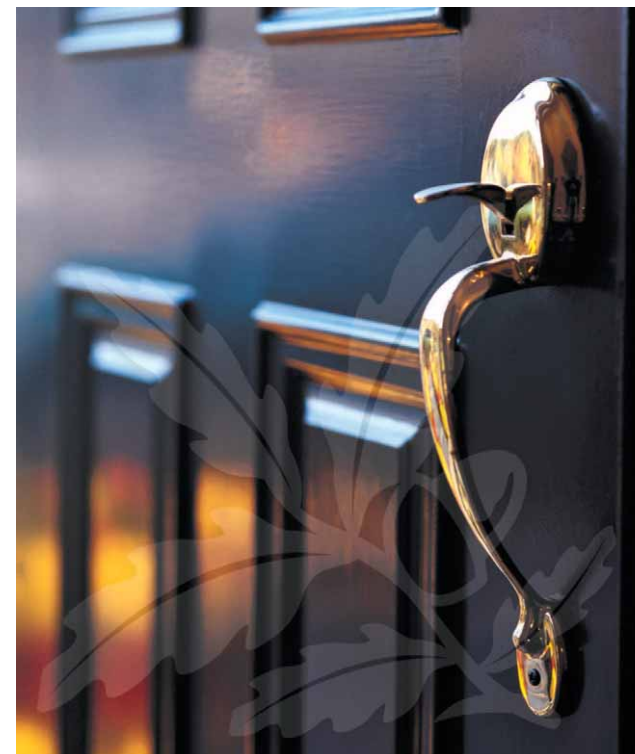
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September 2011  
NEWSLETTER



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# Chairman's Introduction

RICHARD CHISNELL

Hello and welcome! It is with much enthusiasm and excitement that I introduce to you, on behalf of my fellow committee members, the new *Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester*. Founded nearly 900 years ago by Henri de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, St Cross Hospital is a unique and very special place. In its lovely meadow setting, St Cross has a glorious history, and our new Friends charity, whose inception is perhaps long overdue, has been established to ensure that the future of England's 'oldest and most perfect almshouse' (in the words of Simon Jenkins) is supported throughout this century and beyond.

Historic buildings are often referred to as monuments but St Cross Hospital is a *living* almshouse, providing residence and fellowship to both the black-gowned Hospital Foundation Brothers as well as the red-gowned Foundation of Noble Poverty Brothers. Since the sixteenth century, it has also been a place of worship for the parishioners of St Faith.



The quadrangle from the Beaufort Tower

We hope that our new Friends charity will attract support from all sections of the community in St Cross and elsewhere in Winchester, and also from the many hundreds of visitors from the UK and throughout the world who have a connection with this magical place or who are simply touched by its historical significance and tranquil setting. All who wish to form an association with this iconic institution, including individuals, families, businesses and other organisations, are warmly invited to join the Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester.

Our aim is to keep in touch with our Friends through periodic newsletters – like this first issue – and also by holding events. We hope there will be two major fundraising events every year within the Hospital precincts, as well as occasional lectures, social activities and visits to interesting locations within easy reach of Winchester. Our annual Friends' Day and AGM will be the anchor event in each year. A list of key dates for 2012 appears on page 13.

The Trustees of the Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester will meet at least quarterly and will be pleased to hear about ideas and offers of support from all who join our Friends network. We want our charity to be both active and effective, so please let us know your views at any time. Our contact details appear on page 14. We will be pleased to respond to your enquiries.

We have set ourselves some ambitious membership targets during our first year – over 300 Friends across the various categories – and we need your help to achieve these as soon as possible. Please tell your family and friends about the new Friends scheme at St Cross and encourage them all to join.

Finally, to celebrate our launch, we have decided to accord Founder Friend status to all who sign up before 31 December 2011. Please refer to page 14 for further membership details. This is your chance to become part of nearly 900 years of history at St Cross and to have your name recorded as a Founder Friend. You will be remembered as a special part of this very special place.

We look forward to sharing our friendship with you.

# A Brief History of the Hospital of St Cross

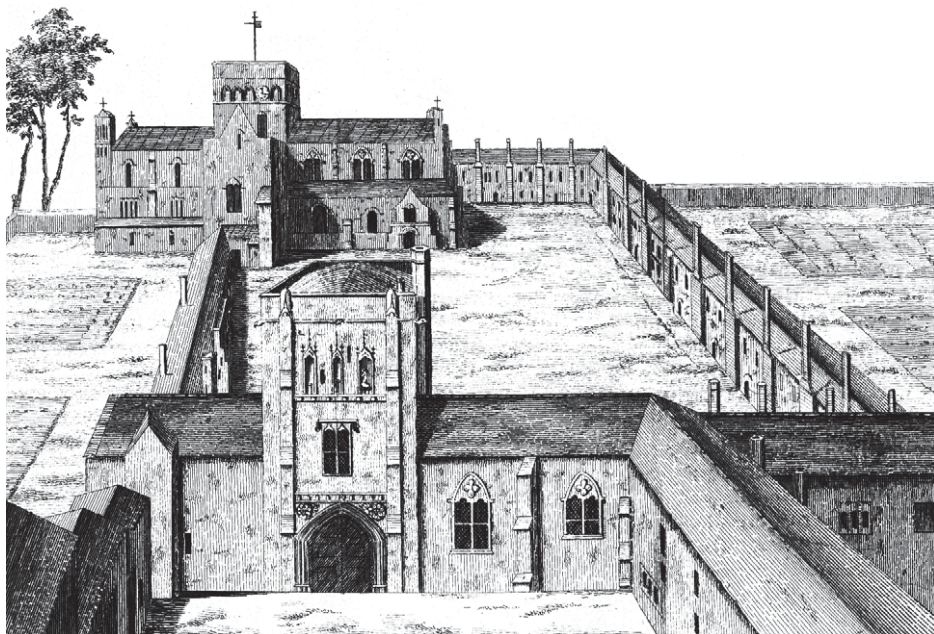
JOHN PRINGLE

In a short article such as this it is of course impossible to do justice to the nearly 900-year history of our Hospital. For this brief summary I am indebted to Dr John Crook FSA, whose excellent recent book, *The Hospital of St Cross and Almshouse of Noble Poverty*, is the authoritative work on the subject.\*

## BEGINNINGS

Soon after his consecration, Henri de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, decided to create a charitable foundation just outside his cathedral city. Hence in the 1130s (the exact date of foundation is uncertain) an almshouse dedicated to the Holy Cross was established to provide support for those in financial or physical difficulty.

The new foundation's location in the water meadows of the River Itchen was set well back from the Roman road from Southampton to Winchester, perhaps so that the thirteen original brethren could enjoy an element of seclusion. This might be



An eighteenth-century view of the Hospital by William Cave. The south range, adjoining the church, was demolished in 1789



St Cross Church from the northeast

a reflection of Bishop Henri's monastic upbringing. Only a small section of what is now part of the church survives from the first phase of building. We have no firm knowledge of how the early brothers were accommodated but they may have occupied a single hall, similar to a monastic infirmary.

#### THE CHURCH

The building we see today is the result of construction over a period of around 100 years. On stylistic grounds – we have no written records of the event – the church was probably started in around 1160. For the first three decades the brothers may have used a temporary chapel or one forming part of their lodgings. The eastern elevation is typically Norman and from the interior one can trace the builders' slow progress westwards, with the west front being completed in the middle of the thirteenth century. Inside, the impression one gets is of height and light. But this was not always the case: until Master William of Edington constructed the upper walls and the clerestory with its windows in 1335–45, the nave would have been dark and gloomy.

Most of the stone came from the Caen quarries of Normandy. The stonemasons showed their skill with elaborate decorative features around the windows and in the capitals supporting the window arches and vaulting ribs. By contrast, dark Purbeck marble is used for the angle shafts and those rising in the corners of the choir.



## RESIDENTIAL AND OTHER BUILDINGS

The accommodation provided by Henri de Blois for the original thirteen brothers appears to have been on the site of the present-day bowling green, to the east of the church. It was only when Cardinal Beaufort resolved to found an 'Almshouse of Noble Poverty' that the area we now see when we enter through the Beaufort Tower was developed. This was to accommodate men who were either of aristocratic birth but had fallen on hard times or members of Beaufort's own household. By 1447, when Beaufort died, the great quadrangle and the north kitchen wing were almost finished. Three years later the foundation was complete, with a total of two priests, thirty-five brethren and three sisters. Each of the thirty-five brothers was to have a separate apartment, set out along the lines of an Oxbridge college. The layout of each apartment was almost standardised and has remained virtually unchanged to this day.

The hall had been erected as a private space for the Master during the tenure of John of Edington, nephew of William, around a century before Beaufort's remodelling. Beaufort had it reroofed and adapted as a common dining room for the Almshouse of Noble Poverty. The kitchen is impressive in size. Most of the equipment now seen there dates from a major refurbishment in 1860, though the lead pump survives from the mastership of Henry Compton in *c.* 1670. The thirteen poor men of Henri de Blois's foundation, the Black Brothers, were probably still required to eat in their own hall.



The ambulatory, the eastern range of the quadrangle



Brother Ron Stacey and Brother Bevis Hillier, 2010

From earliest times a building existed where the local poor could claim a daily issue of provisions. The building in the present outer court known as the Hundred Men's Hall seems to date from the mid-fifteenth century, but there is evidence that an earlier hall was located elsewhere, possibly to the west of the hall now known as the Brethren's Hall.

Many Masters have left their mark at St Cross by adding or modifying existing buildings. Robert Sherborne, appointed in 1492, was responsible for the ambulatory, a first-floor gallery between the church and the Master's lodgings, with a walkway beneath. The ambulatory, an early example of what in Tudor times was called a 'long gallery', allowed the Master and his household to walk in the dry and, probably, to get to the church sheltered from the weather.

#### THE PARISH OF ST FAITH

Since 1446 the hospital church has had a dual function: as the place where all the Brothers still worship daily, and also as the parish church of St Faith.

Winchester's original church of St Faith was located at the corner of modern-day Kingsgate Road and St Cross Road. In poor repair by the early sixteenth century,



it was taken down during Bishop Fox's episcopate (1501–28). Since then the parishioners of St Faith have worshipped with the Brothers.

#### THE HOSPITAL TODAY

The governance of the Hospital today is much as was specified in the Scheme of 1855, with a Board of Trustees that includes the Master of St Cross and officials of important Winchester institutions. There are at present twenty brothers, thirteen belonging to the Hospital Foundation (the Black Brothers) and seven to the Foundation of Noble Poverty (the Red Brothers). There is no social distinction between red and black, and each new brother simply joins the same foundation as his predecessor, into whose flat he generally moves. The Brothers' only obligation is to attend a short daily service of Matins, for which gowns are worn. Once a week comes the Pay Parade: after Matins the most junior Brother rings a hand-bell from the stairs of the Brethren's Hall and the Brothers assemble to receive the princely sum of £1, which is tossed by the Master over the billiards table in a leather pouch.

The tradition of providing hospitality to people from outside the Hospital community continues in various ways, most obviously in the provision of the famous Wayfarers' Dole, now a tiny cube of white bread and a small tumblerful of beer.

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\* John Crook's *The Hospital of St Cross and Almshouse of Noble Poverty* (2011) is available from the Porter's Lodge at the special Friends' price of £11.

# An Interview with Brother Ron Stacey

HARRIET SAWBRIDGE

In his comfortable ground-floor sitting room overlooking the quadrangle, Brother Ron Stacey, Senior Brother at St Cross, described to me how a chance meeting with Canon Colin Deedes, Master from 1980 to 1992, whom Brother Ron had known as Vicar of St Peter's, Bournemouth, first led him to consider coming to St Cross. The two bumped into each other at the Guildhall in Winchester while Brother Ron was serving as deanery representative for his parish church, St Saviour's, Iford, in Bournemouth. Brother Ron was enjoying retirement and joked that the only thing remaining for him to do was to come to St Cross. Canon Deedes remarked that in fact he would fit in very well. From then on, whenever the two met, Canon Deedes gently encouraged Brother Ron to consider a move, eventually inviting him to make a two-day visit. The Brothers' flats were being refurbished at that time and Brother Ron was urged to make his decision before the work was finished to avoid the inevitable waiting list. During his visit Brother Ron said he would be prepared to move on the condition that he should have Flat 21, the one he had been shown, to which the Master promptly replied that the Brothers are not entitled to choose their accommodation. Nevertheless Brother Ron received a letter a few days later, in which it was made clear that although the Trustees had not yet met to approve his application, he should measure up for curtains. He moved into Flat 21 in November 1984, and over a quarter of a century later it remains his home.

Brother Ron remembers his gowning ceremony in January 1985 very clearly. The ceremony took place during a Brothers' Matins service. The Senior Brother, then Jim Gillard, presented him to Canon Deedes, who sat in the Beaufort Chair. The Master welcomed him and asked him if it was his intention to reside at the Hospital. After his response and various declarations, Brother Jim gowned him in the black robe of the Hospital order, before leading him back to the Master, who, after receiving his vows of obedience, gave him a Book of Common Prayer. He then signed the ancient register and was led to his seat among his fellow Brothers. The place remained his until 2000 when he became Senior Brother himself.

Brother Ron's flat comprises a sitting room, a bedroom, a bathroom and a kitchen; he used to enjoy cooking for himself, but these days prefers to lunch in the Brothers' dining room. Each Brother is allotted an area of working garden if he would like it, and although Brother Ron has hung up his gardening gloves, he likes to sit outside his flat or in the Master's Garden. He occasionally visits the Brothers' graveyard to remember the many Brothers he has known. He explained



Ron Stacey, Senior Brother at St Cross since 2000

that although the Brothers are laymen, they are obliged to attend Matins at 10 am daily in their gowns, but can choose where to worship on Sundays. Gowns used to be worn much more frequently in days gone by and Brothers were expected to wear them when out and about in Winchester. Things are more relaxed today, and Brother Ron has worn out only two gowns in his twenty-seven years at St Cross.

Brother Ron described various other traditions to me, such as the Pay Parade, which is thought to have taken its present form in 1926 during the General Strike when the Brothers needed paraffin to heat their rooms. Every Monday the Brothers gather and the Master takes a little soft leather pouch containing a £1 coin and tosses it across the billiards table to each Brother in turn.

As our conversation drew to a close, Brother Ron reflected on the four Masters he has known, and the importance of that key role in strengthening the community, both within the Hospital itself and between the Brothers and the Parish of St Faith.



# Henry Compton, Master, Bishop, Botanist

VICTORIA WAKEFIELD

Henry Compton was born at Compton Wynyates in Warwickshire in 1632, the sixth son of the 2nd Earl of Northampton. After an early career in the army he became a Canon Commoner at Christ Church, Oxford, and sought ordination in 1666. He was made Master of St Cross in 1667. He had a living in Llandinam in Montgomeryshire, at Cottenham in Cambridgeshire in 1671, and Witney in 1674. He became Bishop of Oxford in 1674, and in 1675 Dean of the Chapel Royal and Bishop of London.

As this rapid promotion shows, Bishop Compton had quickly become a national figure with powerful friends. He was also responsible for the education of the two young Princesses Mary and Anne, and later presided over the coronation of William and Mary. Compton's active role in bringing about the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which resulted in the abdication of James II, was long remembered and celebrated as an example of a certain reckless courage that has not always characterised the political stances of the Church of England's senior bishops.



The tulip tree planted by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in 1986



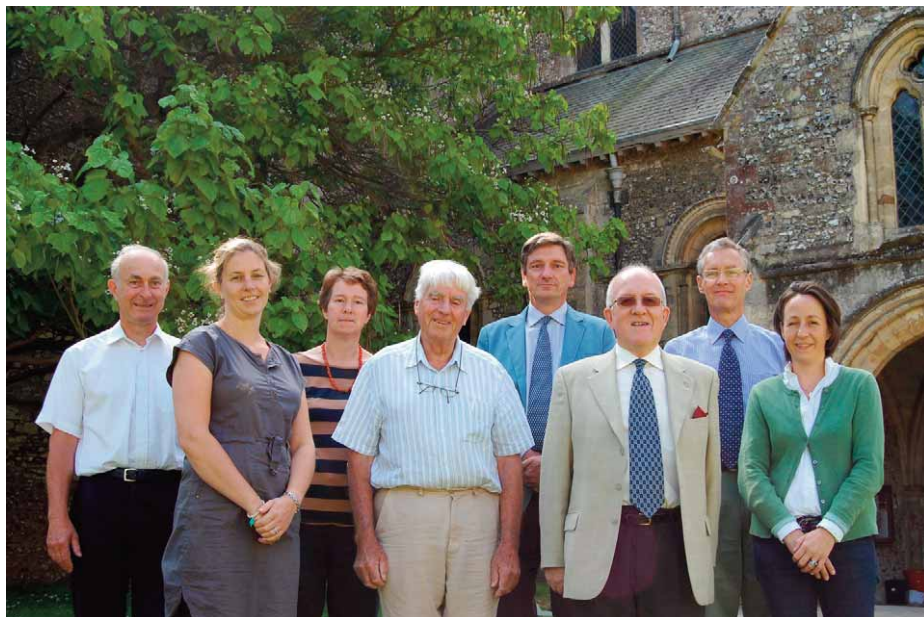
The Duchess of Cornwall and Matthew Ellis planting a Judas tree, 21 February 2008

As Bishop of London, Compton was Head of the Church in the American Colonies, known as the Plantations. Although he never had the opportunity to visit America himself, he was responsible for the appointment of the clergy there. He was extremely conscientious about maintaining contact with them and worked hard to improve their conditions – as well as preferring to appoint those with a particular interest in botany. A first consignment of plants reached Fulham Palace in 1683, including *Lindera benzoin* and *Liquidambar styraciflua*.

Bishop Compton had long been known as an eminent botanist. A biography published after his death records: ‘The Bishop had a great Genius for Botanism, and having now by reason of his suspension, more leisure than usual, he apply’d himself to the Improvement of his Garden at Fulham, with new variety of Domestick and Exotick Plants. He also show’d great Civilities to, and had an Esteem for, all those who were anything curious in this sort of Study’.

Today, Bishop Compton is remembered as much, if not more, for the introduction and rearing of exotic plants, as for his political and religious activities. The garden at St Cross in memory of Bishop Compton was planted in 1986, and opened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on 8 July 1986. It has recently been redesigned and replanted. I am very grateful for the plants given by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and for the advice of Mr Brian Halliwell in particular, and the help of Matthew Ellis, Gardener at the Hospital of St Cross.

# Trustees of the Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester



## FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

John Lunt

Sjanneke Oates, *Administrator*

Sue Woodward

Cled Jenkins

William Corbett, *Chairman of the Trustees of St Cross Hospital*

Richard Chisnell, *Chairman*

John Pringle, *Treasurer*

Harriet Sawbridge

Brian Rees (absent)



# Special Events and Activities for Friends

## **Founder Friends' New Year Reception**

Friday 6 January 2012

## **Friends' Inaugural Lecture**

Friday 16 March 2012

## **Friends' Day, to include a Talk, AGM, Tea and Evensong**

Saturday 19 May 2012

## **Friends' Outing to Christchurch Priory**

Wednesday 20 June 2012

## **Friends' Family Day**

Sunday 15 July 2012

## **Friends' Event to coincide with St Cross Flower Festival**

Friday 5 – Monday 8 October 2012

## **Friends' Inaugural Concert**

Saturday 27 October 2012

*All events take place at St Cross unless otherwise indicated*

*Other fundraising and social events in 2012 to be advised*



# Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester

*Celebrate its Past – Support its Future*

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## *Membership benefits include*

- Free access to the public buildings and gardens
  - A regular newsletter
  - Special Friends' events and activities
  - E-mail notification of other events and activities at St Cross
  - An annual Friends' Day with a programme of activities
  - Discounts at the Hospital shop on special occasions
- 

## *Membership fees*

Annual individual membership	£25
Annual joint or family membership*	£35
Annual corporate membership	£100
Five-year individual membership	£120
Five-year joint or family membership*	£165
Ten-year individual membership	£225
Ten-year joint or family membership*	£315
Life individual membership	£530
Life joint or family membership*	£745

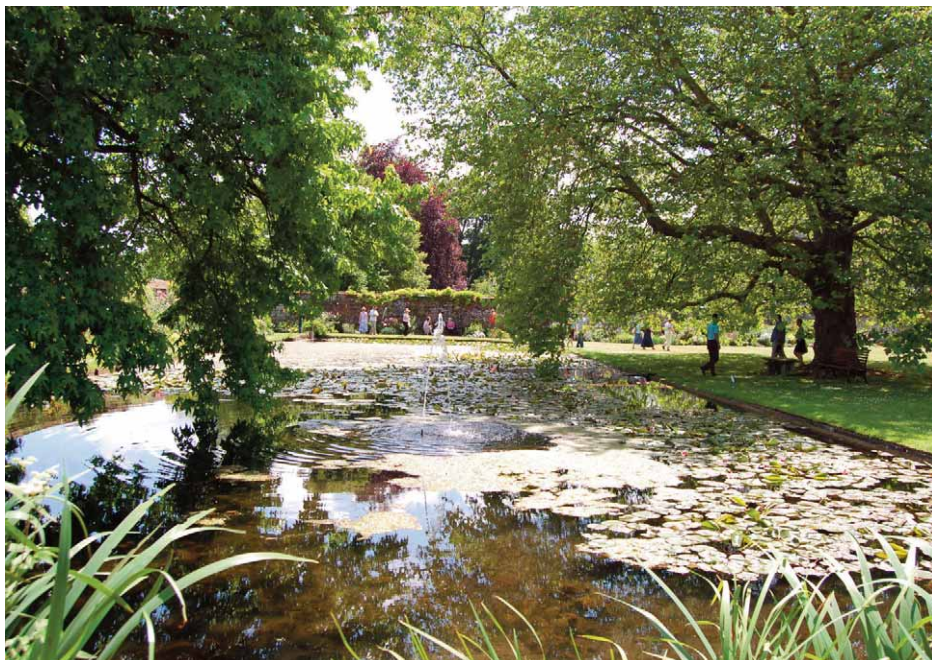
*\* A family of two adults and up to four children aged under eighteen*

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## *For all enquiries please contact*

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The Master's Garden

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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They would also like to thank Brother Clive McClester (pages 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 16) and Dr John Crook FSA (front cover and pages 3, 4, 5 and 6) for kindly allowing their excellent photographs to be used.

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