

THE FRIENDS OF DORCHESTER ABBEY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2014



from: Ingrid Lunt
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Registered Charity No. 275819

President: The Bishop of Dorchester

Vice-President: Mr Christopher Gibbs

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Annual General Meeting

The 2014 AGM took place on June 2 with about 40 members present. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the Trustees. He paid particular thanks to Susan Jupp who now stands down from her role as Membership Secretary, which she has held for the past 18 years. Susan has discharged this role with diligence, commitment, efficiency and good humour. The Trustees are fortunate that Honor Juniper has agreed to take over and to join the Trustees, and she was welcomed. Good news on projects: the Chairman reported that the work on the roof of the North Chancel has now been completed, and has even come in under budget. This is in large part due to the competence and commitment of John Taylor who managed the project, and thanks were also expressed to Christine Dawson, Steph Forman and Judy Macfadyen who joined Sue Booyes, with Hugo Brunner as consultant to the subgroup. This is an enormous achievement.

Current Trustees (all honorary)

Chairman: Richard Dick
Vice Chairman: John Taylor
Revd Canon Sue Booyes (Rector, ex officio)
Hugo Brunner
Tim Cook (Church Warden)
Christine Dawson (Treasurer)
Stephanie Forman
Tanya Hawley
Honor Juniper (Membership secretary)
Ingrid Lunt
Judy Macfadyen
David Parker
Mary Saunders
Hilary Warburton (Secretary)

The Rector expressed her gratitude to the Friends, both for their substantial fundraising, and for their commitment to and support for various projects. She mentioned in particular the Lighting project, which is now underway, and the renovation of the Cowshed, the latter a project undertaken in conjunction with Benson Choral Society.

At the AGM it was reported that there are 254 Friends and 117 Beauforest Society members. The finances continue to be in good order, thus enabling the Friends to support a range of Abbey projects.

The 2014 Dorchester Lecture

This was given on June 12 by Professor Tony Travers, who addressed the question: ***Is local government dying?*** Professor Travers is a well-known expert on local and regional government and public service reform and is Director of LSE London, a research group based at the London School of Economics.

His lecture did not disappoint and around 100 of us were drawn to attend the lecture which elicited lively questions and discussion. In his talk, Professor Travers traced the evolution of British democracy (one of, if not **the** oldest developed democracy) from its beginnings in 1066, through the emergence of early local government through industrialisation and the development of larger cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. He described how reformers such as the Webbs, the Fabians and George Lansbury led moves for greater equality and a more important role for central government which was strengthened by WWII and the war effort which led to the development of the Welfare State and other services. However, this was followed by efforts to redistribute resources to local government, and to create a balance between centrally raised and locally raised taxes. This is the big question for any developed democracy: the balance between central and local governance. Where are we now?

Professor Travers' main message was that local government is the most efficient and effective part of the public sector. He pointed out that most opinion polls show that the public trusts local government more than they trust MPs, and that countries, towns and parishes play a very important role for civic loyalty. Answering the question of his title, he suggested that local government is far from dying, and that over-centralisation is democratically dangerous. However, in order for it not to die, there is a need to devolve more powers to local communities and for local communities (and individuals) to engage more actively in the business of local government. Local officials are at least recognisable, he pointed out. At the time of writing, the tension between Westminster and regions has been and continues to be vigorously played out through the aftermath of the Scottish referendum, demonstrating that demands for more local government are far from moribund.

The Trustees are hoping to be able to attract Mark Carney as next year's lecturer: watch this space!

Friends Outing to Tewkesbury Abbey, 12 May 2014

David Parker kindly contributed this report on the Friends outing.

31 people boarded the coach, Friends and friends of Friends. On the way to Tewkesbury, the party stopped at Hailes Abbey, a ruin tucked away in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, which is owned by the National Trust and managed by English Heritage. With the help of an excellent handbook and audio guide, visitors are able to discern from the remaining walls and arches

what the Cistercian monastery looked like and how the monks had lived.

Hailes Abbey provided a fitting preparation for our visit to well-preserved Tewkesbury Abbey, a Benedictine monastic church consecrated in 1121. At the Reformation, Henry VIII offered the church to the townspeople, who bought it for £453 (Compare this to the £140 which was paid for Dorchester Abbey). Tewkesbury's parish church, as the Abbey now is, is huge, the size of a large Norman cathedral, where there are many beautiful architectural features to enjoy. Our visit included an excellent guided tour of the Abbey, followed by refreshing tea and cakes served by charming volunteers in their Touching Souls Tea Room, reminiscent of our own tea room.

This was another very successful outing, thanks once again to Yvonne Lawden's meticulous planning.

It is possible that our 2015 outing will be to Malmesbury Abbey, another former Benedictine monastic church which now serves as the parish church and which possesses the tomb of the Saxon King Athelstan (d. 939) who is acknowledged as the first king of all the Britons, achieved by defeating both the Scots and the Norsemen of York.

We are very grateful to Yvonne Lawden for arranging these outings.

Music in Dorchester Abbey

The Abbey provides an excellent place to enjoy music and a good acoustic for both instrumentalists and singers. There is always a rich programme of events, which includes a regular programme by John Lubbock's Orchestra of St John's (OSJ) and the Benson Choral Society. This autumn, OSJ's Music in the Abbey Festival took place from September 9 to 14 and provided an exciting range of music, including a performance of all six of Bach's Brandenburg concertos with James Galway on solo flute.

The autumn programme includes:

- A concert by Encantados (a choir of 20 singers specialising in sacred music by English composers) on November 9
- The Benson Choral Society autumn concert on Saturday November 29, performing Mendelssohn Hymn of Praise and Dvorak Te Deum
- A number of events in December leading up to Christmas which include: December 4 and 8 Christmas concerts, December 14 PACT

Christmas Carol concert, December 20 Handel Messiah with the OSJ

- A New Year's Eve concert A Strauss Family New Year with the OSJ

Herb Garden

The beautiful Herb Garden relies on volunteers for its upkeep. We have found that it benefits from being tidied up in the spring and again in the autumn. This year volunteers will be welcome to come and help on Sunday October 18 from 9.30am. The more volunteers that we have, the sooner we finish! Refreshments will be provided.

Beauforest Society

The subscription for membership of the Beauforest Society is £100 a year for four years (paid into the Friends account). Many thanks to all those who signed up for Beauforest membership, and who have enabled the Friends to support the PCC in important projects. This is a great way to support Dorchester Abbey. Additional Beauforest members are always welcome: please contact our Chairman Richard Dick for further details.

Fundraising and projects

Dorchester Abbey is an ageing building, built for the most part in the 14th century and is therefore continually in need of maintenance and repair. A central role for the Friends is to support the PCC with funds (and on occasion expertise and effort) for restoration and maintenance projects. As reported to the AGM, the Re-roofing of the North Chancel is now complete and external Stonework repairs to Walls and Tower have been undertaken.

As a result of the Dorchester Abbey Roof and Stonework Appeal, £280,000 was raised, an impressive sum: thanks are due to the many Friends who supported this appeal.

Current projects include:

- The replacement of internal lighting, for which the team is awaiting tenders, The Friends have agreed to contribute up to £100,000 for this.
- Refurbishing the drains at the East End in order to prevent rainwater causing long term damage. The Friends have agreed up to £30,000 for this slightly less glamorous but nevertheless very important project.
- Refurbishment of the Guest House. There is a need for short-term repairs and decoration, with

a view to a longer term major refurbishment to restore the building to its former elegance.

We are all extremely grateful to John Taylor and his fundraising team for running the appeal and to the Friends who made contributions.

Miscellanea

In this section we identify interesting facts and information for each Newsletter (and welcome suggestions from others). The first concerns Dudley Carleton, 1st Viscount Dorchester, and I am grateful to Hugo Brunner for drawing his existence to our attention. Dudley Carleton was born in Brightwell Baldwin in 1573 and educated at Westminster School and Christ Church. He became a diplomat and an MP, and in 1610 was knighted and sent as ambassador to Venice, and in 1615 to the Netherlands. On his return to England in 1625 he was made Vice-Chamberlain of the Household and a privy councillor, and shortly afterwards elevated to the peerage as Baron Carleton of Imber Court. He was created Viscount Dorchester in 1628, and took the title because he lived locally and was the owner of Brightwell Park, Brightwell Baldwin. Apart from his diplomatic and political activities, Dudley Carleton was a keen art collector. Sadly, he had no children and the title died out with him in 1632.

Viscount Dorchester is of particular interest for two reasons:

First he is the only person who has taken the title Dorchester and secondly the portrait below (unknown artist) can be found immediately above the main entrance to the Hall in Christ Church.



Portrait of Dudley Carleton by an unknown artist dated 1628, and to be found in Christ Church Hall.