

THE FRIENDS OF DORCHESTER ABBEY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2016



from: Ingrid Lunt
c/o The Rectory
10 Manor Farm Road
Dorchester-on-Thames OX10 7HZ

Registered Charity No. 275819

President: The Bishop of Dorchester

Vice-President: Mr Christopher Gibbs

Abbey Website: www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk

Email for list of concerts and events:
events@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

Membership enquiries:
Honor Juniper 01865 343228
friends@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

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The 2016 Annual Friends of Dorchester Abbey Lecture



Sir Charles Pollard QPM

The Annual Lecture was given on September 29th by the distinguished former Chief Constable of Thames Valley, Sir Charles Pollard. He had given as his title 'Tackling Crime in London and in the Thames Valley' but his subtitle could well have been 'My role in it.' He took his audience through his career using it to illustrate the massive changes there have been since he began, the importance of a few key aspects of policing and the presence of terrorism throughout this period.

When he started as a bobby on the beat his two methods of communicating with others were a whistle and the use of a public telephone in what we all think of now as a tardis. Now, of course, personal radios, body cameras and vast information retrieval systems are commonplace.

It was salutary to be reminded of the terrorist threats that there have been throughout this period. The horrors of the July 2005 bombings in London may have overshadowed what happened in the mid 1970s when the IRA exploded bombs in the West End of London, Harrods, outside the Old Bailey and in the garden of No10 Downing Street. He was at this time a young Inspector stationed at Marylebone having to take decisions as to the most appropriate course of action when a warning call came in. Was it a hoax or not? What should be done?

Later in that decade came the era of peaceful demonstrations some of which were not. He helped to develop the policy of talking to the leaders of demonstrators to assist them to achieve their objectives in peace. This was a fundamental principle of his philosophy of policing, namely to engage with the community and thereby to obtain its respect and assistance in keeping that community safe.

After the riots during which Blair Peach met his death he had a hand in drafting what is now the Public Order Act 1986 probably taking advantage of the fact that he had earlier been sent by the police to Bristol University to take a law degree.

On his promotion to Sussex he found himself overseeing the ill-fated 1984 Conservative Party Conference and was early on the scene at the Grand Hotel where a substantial bomb had failed to kill the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, but had killed and injured many others. He had been illustrating his lecture with contemporary pictures and news clips. Such a picture of a seriously injured Norman Tebbit on a stretcher was shocking and effective as a reminder of the horror of the event.

He became Chief Constable here in 1991 and he set out some of his responsibilities. Three million people live in the area which contains Aldermaston, Windsor and Chequers as well as being one that is immensely varied, from Slough in the East to the agricultural West, Milton Keynes in the North and industry and academe to complete the mix.

He was in charge when the Blackbird Leys car racing problems hit the headlines and he had to reassure Kenneth Baker, then Home Secretary, that he had a plan to control things and therefore to be patient. Fortunately the plan worked and he and the politicians were off the hook. That also led to a new aspect of influencing behaviour, namely by redesigning the streets and street furniture. The local community had an input too and the problem has not resurfaced.

Another event to hit the news-stands was the continuing series of demonstrations against the construction of the Newbury bypass. 'Swampy' became a national figure and he and his fellow demonstrators threatened to disrupt the completion of the road. It was inside information, or intelligence, which finally enabled the police to outwit the demonstrators and allow the contractors to complete their work.

Intelligence, Sir Charles said, was, and is vital in tackling terrorism. It will not be available if there is no trust between the community and the police. Communication is therefore essential.

This was an interesting and stimulating lecture from a most successful policeman whose thoughtfulness came across both in the lecture and in his off the cuff answers to the many and varied questions his talk had prompted.

Julian Hall

Narnia at the Abbey

For the past few weeks, the Abbey has been transformed into the world of the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Those who have visited the exhibition will have been taken back to the wartime evacuation of London children to villages like Dorchester. C S Lewis, who lived in Headington, took four of these children and created a story that has entranced many children with the magical and spiritual messages of their adventures.

Go into the Cloister Gallery, and you find yourself brushing through fur coats hanging in the wardrobe at the entrance, and at a step you are in another world. You are in Narnia, under the control of the White Witch, 'where it is always winter but never Christmas'. Here there are snow-covered bare branches, red eyed wolves and a chilly feeling of evil, but also a faun who befriends Susan and takes her back to his home (in the Shrine Chapel). You can follow their tracks, as there are snowy footsteps on the ground leading you there. The story continues with tableaux of the main features of the story, culminating in the victory of the lion Aslan over the wicked witch, and the crowning of the four children as kings and queens of Narnia.

The exhibition is further enhanced with explanatory posters, which put the story in the context of the Christian faith and the abbey itself. You are invited to consider the triumph of good over evil, treachery, forgiveness and the need to stand up for what is right.

Many of the local primary school children have visited the exhibition. Whilst one part of the group has been taken on a tour of the story, dressed as evacuees, complete with their identification label, others have studied the east window of the church to see the parallel stories it tells, and some groups have been introduced to story writing or making models. Altogether over 450 children visited via school and church groups, and the feedback from the teachers and parents was extremely positive.



Half term was a full week of craft workshops, where children had the opportunity to make a variety of models, and masks, all staffed by a team of local volunteers.

There has been no let-up at weekends. On Saturdays there have been more craft workshops. Whilst the children have been kept busy, their parents have had a cup of tea, and a slice of cake at a pop-up teaspace in the back of the Abbey, which was also open on Sundays.

Besides all the school groups and families, there has also been a steady stream of other visitors, and as word has spread, more and more have been arriving. The comments in the visitors' book were a testimony to the success of the project.



Putting on an exhibition of this nature requires an enormous amount of hard work and imagination. Margaret Craig, the education officer at the abbey has been the driving force behind the exhibition, but it would not have been possible without the help of many local volunteers who have constructed some of the tableaux and enabled the event to run seamlessly for a whole month, helping with workshops and general supervision of groups of children as well as organising the teas. Our thanks go to them all, but especially to Margaret.

Honor Juniper

Music in Dorchester Abbey

The Abbey provides an excellent place to enjoy music and a great 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. Future Events include:

Benson Choral Society

Saturday 26 November, 7.30 p.m.

Verdi Requiem

Soprano Elizabeth Roberts

Mezzo soprano Susan Legg

Tenor Mark Chaundy

Bass Christopher Foster

Handel Messiah

Saturday December 10, 7.30 p.m.



Hannah Davey *soprano*

Roderick Morris *counter tenor*

Christopher Turner *tenor*

Julien van Mellaerts *baritone*

OSJ Voices

Orchestra of St John's

John Lubbock conductor

**O Magnum Mysterium and other carols,
Saturday December 17, 7.30 p.m.**

An entertaining evening of familiar Christmas music in the historic surroundings of

Dorchester Abbey. The evening will include eight versions of O Magnum Mysterium and other carols.

OSJ Ashmolean Voices

John Lubbock conductor



New Year Strauss Gala

Saturday December 31, 7.00 p.m.

Wonderful waltzes and polkas by Johann Strauss Junior and well-known tunes from Strauss and Lehar. 'Turkish movement' from the Mozart 5th violin concerto, and Kreisler favourites Tambourin Chinois, Liebesfreud, Liebesleid and Schön Rosmarin with brilliant young violinist Mathilde Milwidsky.

Orchestra of St John's

John Lubbock conductor

Thames Consort

Sunday February 5, 7.00 p.m.

The Thames Consort directed by Jeremy Boughton will be performing at Dorchester Abbey on Sunday 5th February at 7pm. The programme includes vocal and instrumental music by members of the Bach family, including the great Johann Sebastian and also by Handel and Schütz. The singers of the Thames consort are joined by Sharon Warnes and Claire Parkin - violins, Judith Dallosso - 'cello and Glynne Stackhouse - organ continuo.

There will be a collection at the end of the concert given (after expenses) to the Friends of Dorchester Abbey.

Future Events

**** Dorchester Festival Friday April 28 to Sunday May 7***

Supporting Sue Ryder Nettlebed.

Key dates:

- Family weekend 29 April – 1 May
- The Tallis Scholars Saturday 29 April
- Jazz supper with Cate Cody BH Monday 1 May
- Food & Gift Fair 6 & 7 May
- Big Band Night Sunday 7 May

www.dorchesterfestival.com

**** Save the date Monday May 15: Friends Outing to Salisbury Cathedral***

**** AGM of Friends of Dorchester Abbey June 5***

Dorchester Lectures Friends of Dorchester Abbey

The Dorchester Lectures were the brainchild of Mr Anthony Harman who was the chairman of the Friends in 2005 when the first lecture was inaugurated. Anthony lived in Dorchester and was a lay reader. It was his ambition that by having an annual lecture the profile of Dorchester Abbey and the Friends would be raised and that more people both within the parish and beyond would be inspired to support the needs of the Abbey. Sadly, Anthony became ill and managed to attend the inaugural lecture in a wheelchair, but died soon afterwards. His widow, Sheila, is still resident in the village and is a regular member of the congregation.

Following Anthony's death, Mrs Bessie Kelaart was appointed as chairman in 2006 and the Friends have gone from strength to strength. The trustees of the Friends have worked hard since 2005 to keep the annual lectures going. An attempt has been made to cover a range of topics relevant to today's society, and the record includes an impressive list of speakers:

- * 2005 Lord Hurd 'Morality and Politics'
- * 2006 Baroness Julia Neuberger 'The Moral State We're in'

- * 2008 Lord Bishop of London, Richard Chartres 'The use of church buildings in contemporary society'
- * 2009 Lord Winston 'Medicine and Morality'
- * 2010 Lord Carlile 'Morality and the Law. National Security'
- * 2011 Lord Stern 'Climate Change'
- * 2012 Robert Hardman 'Our Queen, a thoroughly modern monarch'
- * 2013 Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, former ambassador in Kabul 'Afghanistan – strategy and tactics'
- * 2014 Professor Tony Travers 'Is Local Government Dying?'
- * 2015 Professor Roger Ainsworth 'Brunel – father and son'
- * 2016 Sir Charles Pollard 'Tackling Crime and Terrorism in London and Thames Valley'

The Trustees are always grateful for suggestions of possible speakers for future lectures. Plans for 2017 are already well underway, but it is never too early to think of 2018!

Beauforest Society

We are all aware that 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. The Beauforest Society was established to provide additional support to initiatives to preserve the fabric of this wonderful building.

The subscription for membership of the Beauforest Society is £100 a year for four years.

Beauforest members receive the Friends of Dorchester Abbey Newsletter, and an annual Beauforest event is planned in the autumn each year to ensure that members have the opportunity to be fully involved in activities in the Abbey.

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 the Chairman Richard Dick or the Membership Secretary Honor Juniper for further details.