

THE FRIENDS OF DORCHESTER ABBEY

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2019



from: Ingrid Lunt
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10 Manor Farm Road
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Registered Charity No. 275819

President: The Bishop of Dorchester

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

Meetings of the Trustees of the Friends of Dorchester Abbey

***There have been two meetings of the Trustees
since the last Newsletter, Tuesday September 25
and Wednesday February 27.***

At the September 25th meeting

Trustees observed a minute's silence in honour of Anne Kelaart, former Chairman, and Christopher Gibbs, Vice President.

Current Trustees

Richard Dick (Chairman)
John Taylor (Vice Chairman)
Hugo Brunner
Christine Dawson
Stephanie Forman
Tanya Hawley
Christian Hoyer Millar
Nick Jenkins (Treasurer)
Honor Juniper (Membership secretary)
Ingrid Lunt (Newsletter)
David Parker
Mary Saunders
Hilary Warburton (Secretary)

Ex officio

The Revd Canon Sue Booy (Rector)
Hans Paul (Church Warden)

The following items have been discussed over the two meetings:

- The additional lighting over the choir and altar steps which has been funded by the Friends, is due to be commissioned on February 28, with work carried out during March
- the Guesthouse project is progressing slowly and the Friends are working with the PCC on the most appropriate design and on the fundraising.

The PCC has undertaken some improvements in the facilities.

- The West End Gallery project. The Friends have agreed to allocate £110,000 towards the build costs. There will be a need to set up a fundraising initiative, both to get to the Planning Permission stage and for the substantive project. The Trustees confirmed that the West End Gallery is a priority for the Friends.

- the finances continue to be in good order. The Trustees agreed to a small increase in Friends' subscription with effect from January 2019.

- as membership secretary, Honor Juniper has been carrying out sterling work to clean up the database and to ensure that we comply with the GDPR. There is now an accurate system for tracking membership details. Record was made of the outstanding contribution made to the Friends by members who had died over the past 6 months, and in particular Bessie Kelaart, past Chairman who founded the Beauforest Society, Roger Mitchell who played an active role with the Dorchester Lecture and Christopher Gibbs as Honorary Vice President of the Friends.

At the February 27th meeting

Professor Roger Ainsworth

The Chairman reported the sad news of the recent death of Professor Roger Ainsworth who gave the fascinating and very well-received 2015 Dorchester Lecture, entitled: Brunel – Father and Son. Professor Ainsworth was Master of St Catherine's College from 2002 to the present time and the longest serving Head of House in the university. Alongside his many university roles, he was Chair of the Oxford Preservation Trust, Chair of the Dragon School Governing Body, Chair of Abingdon School Governing Body, Chair of the Board for the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies and Chair of the Advisory Board of the Collaborating Centre for Values-Based Practice in Health and Social Care. Above all, Roger Ainsworth was a great teacher, scholar, organiser, leader, and a very fine man. He is much missed and we send our condolences to his family.

Herb Garden

This is now looked after by a professional gardener paid for by the Friends. A clear-up and weeding session is planned for April 15, 2.00 p.m. All welcome.

The Friends 2019 AGM, June 3, 6.30 p.m.

This year's AGM takes place on Monday, June 3, 6.30 p.m. in the Abbey, followed by supper in the Abbey for those who would like. Further details in the next Newsletter.

Friends of Dorchester Abbey Outing to Worcester Cathedral, Monday May 13, 2019

This year's visit will be to Worcester Cathedral, which is one of England's loveliest cathedrals and is a magnificent sight as it rises majestically above the River Severn.

The Cathedral contains the royal tombs of King John and Prince Arthur, medieval cloisters, ancient crypt and chapter house and magnificent Victorian stained glass. It also houses the second largest collection of medieval manuscripts in any cathedral in the UK. The present cathedral was built between 1084 and 1504 and represents every style of English architecture or, as Simon Jenkins puts it, a 'royal flush of styles – Norman crypt, transitional west nave, Early Gothic presbytery, Decorated nave and Perpendicular tower.' It was massively restored in the C19th, mostly by George Gilbert Scott, with the result that the east end is essentially Victorian.



The medieval cloisters

Simon Jenkins again: 'Wulfstan's crypt is one of the loveliest in England. Some of its pillars are thought to have survived from the Saxon church, with single-scallop capitals...The crypt contains a lovely Pieta by Glynn Williams (1984), in which the figure of Christ is supported only by the disembodied hands of love'.



The nave

Timetable for the day

Coach leaves from the Bridge End car park in Dorchester at **9.00 a.m.** with arrival in Worcester about 11.00 a.m. Free time to explore Worcester and have lunch.

Guided tour of Worcester Cathedral at **3.00 p.m.**

The coach will leave Worcester at 5.00 p.m. and arrive back in Dorchester by about **7.00 p.m.**

The cost, which includes coach travel and guided tour will be £30.00 for Friends and £32 for non-Friends. Please return the booking form at the end of the Newsletter to Yvonne Lawden.

Report on the Annual Dorchester Lecture

This was given by Professor Louise Richardson, Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford who addressed the title: *Universities in Turbulent Times* on September 18.

The Vice Chancellor paid her audience the compliment of giving a serious analytical lecture on the rise of populism and the problems for

elitism in the modern world, illustrated by the election of President Trump and the Brexit referendum and the impact this might have on the university, in comparison with some of the major perils it had survived in the past. What was her biggest surprise on taking up the post? The unrelenting focus of the media on the university.

For her, the turbulent times were linked to Brexit, and to the political competition for the youth vote. A quick romp through history suggested that things were much more turbulent in the past, with Henry VIII and Cromwell, Ridley, Cranmer and Latimer, the Civil War, and in other countries such as Turkey, Hungary. Nevertheless, the rise of populism, the popular movement that opposes the established government and draws on anti-intellectualism, fosters the polarisation of 'the people' against what is seen as a 'corrupt elite', and the view that only one group of people is legitimate. Across Europe there has been a growth in populist movements; indeed, according to the OUP 'post truth' was the word of the year

This populism and anti-intellectualism feeds a distrust in experts (for example Gove's statement that "we have had enough of experts"). Professor Richardson suggested that universities have a duty to bridge the gap between experts and the people. Crucially, given that level of education was the single biggest predictor both in the US Presidential election and in the 2016 Referendum, universities have an important role in helping to bridge the 'education gap'.

So, what can universities do?

Universities have a responsibility both to push forward the frontiers of knowledge and to educate the next generation. They are both global and local institutions, and have global and local responsibilities, serving as drivers of social mobility, as engineers of our economy and as guardians of our culture. Concluding her lecture, Professor Richardson suggested that universities remain more trusted than other parts of the establishment and must continue to be fierce guardians of and advocates for knowledge and truth, for the independence and autonomy of government, and for uncompromising standards of scholarship. Universities may be 'the last bastion of the optimist' or an 'anchor in the populist storms'.

The lecture stimulated a wide range of questions relating to current issues:

- **Quality.** The quality of universities varies across the sector. Although she has no quarrel with the existence of elite universities, there is something very wrong with the system, and there is a major problem with vocational education
- **Numbers.** The number of post-graduates exceeds the number of undergraduates for the first time this year. The only plans to expand undergraduate numbers are in the under-represented technological subjects, notably computer sciences and engineering, with around 450 increase eventually overall (from 11,000 to 11,500).
- **Funding.** She saw little harm in a modest student loan scheme, particularly considering the enhanced earning power of a good degree qualification, and the fact that given that education is both a private and a public good, costs should be shared between the individual and the state. She had however lobbied hard that (a) student maintenance support for poorer students should be by grant not loan and (b) that interest rates on student loans should be reduced to more reasonable levels.
- **Inclusivity.** The university puts a major effort into encouraging applications from as diverse a field of applicants as possible – but they need to do even more. Many maintained schools still advised their students against applying to Oxford. However, this year for the first time 60% of admissions were state educated. She was insisting on an even more thorough publication and analysis of admission statistics but stressed that the governance and structure of the university made any central policy or oversight impossible, particularly since admission choices were in the hands of individual college admission tutors. Even Heads of House, many of whom were in sympathy with more diverse admissions, did not have the power to achieve this in their own colleges.
- **Oxford v Cambridge.** She saw little difference now between the two, and spoke warmly of their

shared interests, cooperation, and her personal and frequent links with Cambridge V-C.

- **Brexit.** General concern about the potential loss of EU students, staff (24% of Oxford staff come from the EU), and loss of access to collaborators and research funding.

Ingrid Lunt

Dorchester Festival

The Dorchester Festival takes place 3-19 May, 2019. As usual there is a wide range of entertainment and activity to suit every taste.

Buying tickets: on-line from www.dorchesterfestival.com OR call 0333 666 3366 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Please email the Festival Office festival@dorchester-abbey.org.uk with general enquiries.

Oxford Historic Churches Trust / Dorchester Abbey Conference for Representatives of Churches and Chapels across the County and Diocese

Churches for Mission & the Community

A forum for friends of churches: making your church building a resource for the future

Dorchester Abbey: 10:00 – 3:30 Sept. 28th 2019

OHCT and Dorchester Abbey, with support from the Diocese, are offering their resources and experience to help churches of any denomination in Oxfordshire and the Oxford Diocese to build Friends and to work with them to maintain, develop and use their buildings as resources for mission and the community.

The forum will consist of a mixture of plenary talks, small group workshops and a concluding panel discussion. The workshops will aim both to be informative and to encourage the sharing of experience and ideas. Participants will be invited to choose two workshops covering topics such as:

- Starting Friends groups and making the most of your Friends
- Major projects to improve the facilities and usefulness of your church:
 - Planning
 - Engaging the support of your community

- Routine maintenance: responding effectively to quinquennial inspections
- Fundraising
- Organising events in churches
- Welcoming people into your church: helping visitors, including schoolchildren, to appreciate and enjoy your church
- Using your building to engage people with the Christian mission

Participants will be welcome to stay for Evening Prayer at the close of the Forum.

Full details will be publicised and online booking will open during June.

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 originally established under the chairmanship of Bessie Kelaart 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.

This year's annual Beauforest tea and evensong is planned for Sunday November 17, 4.00 p.m. tea, followed by Evensong at 5.00 p.m. The aim is 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. Or download an application form from the Dorchester Abbey website (search Beauforest).

Booking form for the trip to Worcester on Monday 14th May 2017 leaving at 9.00am

I would like to book places for the visit to Worcester

£30.00 for Friends and £32 for non-Friends for coach travel and Cathedral guided tour.

I enclose a cheque made out to 'The Friends of Dorchester Abbey' for £.....

Your name

Your phone number Email address:

Please return this booking form with your cheque to:

Mrs Yvonne Lawden, 9 Queens Close, Dorchester-on-Thames, Wallingford, OX10 7LR

by Friday 14th April. [Please note: you will not be sent tickets or a receipt, if you have any queries please phone Yvonne Lawden on 01865 340465 or email: y.m.lawden@gmail.com]