

# Friends of Bolton Priory

PRIORY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST CUTHBERT  
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## Chairman's Update



It is hard to believe that it is 7 years since I was asked to take over as Chairman from the much admired and much missed Andrew Hartley. I was hesitant to take on this role, doubting my ability to fill such highly respected shoes. However, as so often happens, I was persuaded to accept the invitation. Quite one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have loved every minute. It has been a great honour and I have learned so much from my far more experienced and knowledgeable committee colleagues.

Earlier this year at the AGM of the Friends of Bolton Priory I stepped down as Chairman. Keith Simpson, our Secretary, also announced his retirement after almost 11 years in post. We both had very nice things said about us at the meeting, we were presented with a huge bouquet of flowers and wine respectively and were promptly proposed and seconded as President and Vice President. Jenny Laycock was also proposed and seconded as a Vice President. Then Keith's successor, Susan Barker, was proposed and seconded as the new Secretary. All those in favour etc etc... job done, it took all of 10 minutes!

I am delighted to announce that we do someone who is willing to take over from me. A relatively new Friend, Richard Watson, is well and truly integrated into our Parish community. Richard and his partner Katherine Hague regularly attend both our services and our FOBP events. Richard acts as a stand-in vergger when our regular vergger Peter Lambert is unavailable. Katherine has recently taken over as our new Membership Secretary and is already doing a magnificent job. Richard has many interests and business commitments, so naturally he was concerned that he would not have time to take on this role. Fortunately, I managed to assure him that, with our hard working and efficient Executive committee behind him, he would not find it too onerous a task and the rewards far outweigh any misgivings he might have.

Our Chairman Designate will be proposed and seconded at the Friends' AGM on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024, and once approved by the membership, will take over as Chairman. I am confident that under the leadership of the new Chairman and the Executive Committee we will flourish and continue to support the Priory for many years to come.

My thanks and best wishes to you all.

Jill Riley, President



## Spring Trip to RHS Bridgewater

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June, a full coach load of Friends of Bolton Priory set off for RHS Bridgewater on the outskirts of Manchester. The newest RHS garden has only been open to the public for 3 years and has already had over a million visitors.

The very helpful staff organised us into 3 guided tours of the 2 amazing Paradise walled gardens and the tour guides, all volunteers, were full of fascinating information about the development of the site and were so knowledgeable about all the species of plants and flowers.



Some of the group even managed to fit in a second tour of the Chinese Streamside Garden which is still being developed but which has come on massively even since last December.

There was plenty of free time to discover the rest of the gardens and to visit the impressive plant and gift shop and the weather was kind enough to allow people to picnic outside or have a meal by the beautiful lake outside the reception centre.

Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy their day and, most importantly, we arrived home with the same number of people as we left with! Thank you all for a fabulous day of fun and friendship, and special thanks to Caro Smith for organising such a super day out.

## Autumn Trip to Auckland Castle

Our Autumn coach trip departed for Bishop Auckland with a full complement of passengers from Bolton Abbey on a beautiful sunny morning. We arrived at the Auckland Tower, from which you can get far reaching views of the area. As we made our way through the imposing entrance gates next to the Castle Lodge we could see where work is still in progress, on the Faith Museum on one side and the Walled Garden on the other.

Once at the Castle we were shown to the Old Library where we enjoyed refreshments. Our next stop was St Peter's Chapel in the castle. The chapel remains the private chapel of the Bishop of Durham and is one of the largest private chapels in Europe. The Bishop of Durham's Chaplain, Revd. Dr Chris Knights, kindly conducted a private Communion Service especially for us, which was the first of its kind to have been organised for a group visiting the Auckland Project.



We then had some free time to tour the castle and to sample lunch in either the Bishop's Kitchen Café, or the Tapas Bar next to the Spanish Gallery. The knowledgeable and friendly castle guides added greatly to our understanding of the castle rooms. There was the magnificent Throne Room with its Georgian Gothic splendour, the Long Dining Room where the Zurbaran paintings have always hung. There was also what had been the Bishop's Study, and in the room beyond there was reference to how a former Bishop of Durham, Brooke Westcott had gathered pit owners and union representatives together to end the miners' strike of 1892.

The other attraction was the Spanish Gallery, which is set over four floors and houses amazing Spanish artworks including those by El Greco, Murillo and Velazquez.

An enjoyable, interesting and enlightening day was had by all, with many saying they would be returning to see the completed Faith Museum and the Auckland Project as it progresses.

*Susan & Max Barker*



## Upcoming Events



### **Advent Sunday Supper: 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

**in the Boyle Room, immediately following the 4.30pm Advent Carol Service**

**Tickets: £10 pp. Please book using the enclosed booking form.**

## FOBP Postholders

<i>President</i>	Jill Riley
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	Keith Simpson & Jenny Laycock
<i>Chairman Designate</i>	Richard Watson
<i>Treasurer</i>	Adrian Hendley
<i>Secretary</i>	Susan Barker
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Katherine Hague
<i>Committee Members</i>	Max Barker
	Barry Cody
	Rosemary Murgatroyd
	Keith Nightingale
	Sally Ognall
	Caro Smith
	Amanda Wood
<i>Rector</i>	Revd. Nicholas Mercer
<i>PCC Representative</i>	Rosemarie Fisher
<i>Newsletter &amp; Website</i>	Aurora Mercer