

Friends of Bolton Priory

PRIORY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST CUTHBERT
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2020 - A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

We hope that this, the hundredth edition of the Newsletter for the Friends of Bolton Priory, finds you healthy and in good spirits, and that you and your families succeeded in celebrating the joy of Christmas under the unique circumstances of the restrictions that we are all subject to. Early last year when the seriousness of Covid-19 was first recognised, none of us could have predicted what lay in store for at least the ensuing twelve months. Apart from the impact on our daily lives and the changes that we have subsequently become accustomed to, the Church too has become more dependant on technology, relying on Zoom for PCC meetings and pre-recording Sunday services.

This Newsletter reflects some of the adaptations that have been required. The Rector, Revd Nicholas Mercer has contributed the second of his diary entries since the first lockdown in March 2020 and Keith Simpson, FoBP Secretary has written an article below with proposals for a virtual Annual General Meeting 2021. These proposals are important and should be considered by all members. Please contact me with any comments and I will pass these on to Keith and Jill Riley, FoBP Chairman.

There is also an opportunity to read the second instalment of the Restoration of Bolton Priory written by the late Frank Lambert.

Hopefully, you'll find this edition interesting and the Executive Committee thanks you for your continued support and pray that you will stay safe in the coming months.

Love and Blessings

Jean Crawford — Editor



FRIENDS OF BOLTON PRIORY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

It was decided unanimously by the Officers and the Executive Committee to cancel the AGM 2020 that had been planned for Sunday 10 May due to the UK government Covid-19 restrictions. The decision was taken with regret at losing what has become one of the most enjoyable of all Friends events.

Now at the beginning of 2021, the Chairman, Jill Riley, and members of the Executive Committee, think we must endeavour to hold some form of Annual General Meeting this year, if for no other reason than important elections need to be made for the Officers and the Executive Committee.

Regrettably at the time of writing, UK government restrictions still apply to gatherings such as our AGM that would prevent an open meeting in the usual format. On the other hand, the planned date for the AGM 2021 is Sunday 9 May and there appears to be reasonable hope that if the vaccination programme proceeds successfully, we could be free of the current restrictions by then. But.....for the sake of caution we must have a plan for either eventuality.

The Friends Constitution, drafted in the late 1980's, is no help as to how we should proceed since the draughtsmen, quite reasonably, had no thought of a pandemic. *Continued on next page*

FRIENDS OF BOLTON PRIORY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021 - Continued

These are strange times. What is proposed is unusual but the Officers and the Executive Committee believe they are the best we can do in the present circumstances and recommend them to the membership. A Zoom meeting has been considered but dismissed as impractical.

It is proposed that :

- ◆ This issue of the Friends Newsletter and the one due for issue in April will be the medium by which we conduct a virtual AGM 2021 if it transpires that we are unable to hold an open meeting in the usual format.
- ◆ In those circumstances, it is also proposed that the Constitution requirement of a quorum of 30 at an AGM be waived for this occasion only.
- ◆ Again if we are unable to hold an open meeting, it is further proposed that the Officers & Executive Committee members, all elected by the membership at the AGM 2019 or earlier, be authorised to conduct the business of an Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Bolton Priory on Sunday 9 May 2021.

Any member objecting to any one or all of those three proposals should give notice by 28 February 2021 to the Secretary, Friends of Bolton Priory, Church Office, Bolton Abbey, Skipton BD23 6AL

The important items on the Agenda for this virtual AGM 2021 meeting will be :

- ◆ acceptance of the Minutes of the AGM on 9 May 2019 as a true record
- ◆ approval of the Annual Accounts for 2020
- ◆ election of Officers and Executive Committee members
- ◆ appointment of DCS Dack as Independent Examiner.

In that respect, the Minutes of the AGM 2019 were seen by Officers & Executive Committee members shortly after that meeting and no disagreement was registered that those Minutes represented a true record of the decisions taken. Any member wishing to see a copy of the Minutes of the AGM 2019 should apply to the Secretary, Friends of Bolton Priory, Church Office, Bolton Abbey, Skipton BD23 6AL.

Keith Simpson Secretary Friends of Bolton Priory

FoBP Website

All photography in this Newsletter and in the future issues is attributed to Aurora Mercer, wife of the Rector, Rev Nicholas Mercer. Aurora is a skilful and creative photographer so our Newsletter promises to have even more beautiful pictures of the Priory and surrounding landscape.

We are delighted that Aurora has also kindly offered to update our website. If you have an opportunity please visit the site.

www.prioryfriends.org.uk

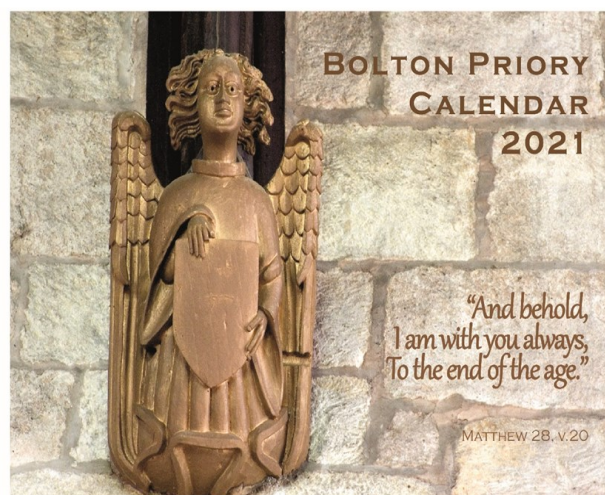
Our sincere thanks go to Emma Padgett of Hartley's Auctioneers who, for the past five years has maintained the website because none of the Executive Committee had the skills nor expertise to do so.

We are indebted to you Emma.

Priory Calendar 2021

Copies of the Priory calendar are still available. If you would like to purchase a copy, please send a cheque for £15.00 made payable to Bolton Priory .

Bolton Priory Church Office, Bolton Abbey,



THE RESTORATION OF BOLTON PRIORY 1980-1985

Some thoughts on the Restoration by Frank Lambert

Part 2:

From the Archives

For many years a large dark red woollen fabric was fastened to the wall behind the altar. When this was removed, wall paintings were revealed which no one knew existed. A Duchess had not liked them so they were hidden away and when uncovered were as new.

Shortly after the work started the chairman of the Works Committee moved away from the district and Maurice Slaughter asked me to become chairman of this committee, a post I held for about fourteen years until Richard Bull took over from me. It was a great committee full of characters with many wonderful and varied ideas. Maurice, and Neil Hartley, the architect, were on the committee and Neil would report on the progress of the work. We would discuss and debate the ideas put forward before proceeding to the Devonshire for a pint. On one occasion Dennis Spooner queried, if any treasure were found hidden, to whom would it belong?

The main contractors we appointed were Henry Barretts of Cross Hills, who were excellent. They kept to agreed time schedules and charged a very competitive price. The workmen were very sincere and in many ways there seemed to be a feeling of empathy with the original builders of the Priory.

The work carried out was extensive. The roof had to be completely re-leaded, water was coming into the Church in many places, and even now, marks caused by the water can be seen on the walls. Decayed wood was removed from the roof beams and replaced with new oak. The external walls were repaired where necessary. The electrical system was completely replaced together with new lighting. The floor in the church was laid with small coloured tiles similar to those in the sanctuary; the latter proved to be of poor quality so were replaced with a new floor. When the old tiles were removed a number of bones were uncovered including a skull with a bit of bone missing on the top which looked like a battle wound. Maurice reburied the bones under the new floor and the workmen attended the burial ceremony.

One of the first jobs I did was to clean out the bell tower. There were bird nests all the way up the steps. I swept them out and then had a bonfire. Peter Cockshott had a weed killer he used on his farm and we both went up on to the roof and leaned over the edge to spray the Priory walls and kill off the vegetation growing on them. We chose a still evening so that the spray did not drift across and kill flowers in the Duke's garden.

The windows of the Priory were removed and repaired by York Glaziers. Although they quoted a price for the work, about halfway through it was increased by 30% as wages had risen. Maurice, Neil and I met with their director and told him a price had been quoted and that we could not go back to the PCC and ask for more money. We only paid the price quoted.

When the windows were removed the stone mullions collapsed and we were told that when the windows were installed, iron fastenings were used which had rusted and caused the stone to crumble.

The organ was rebuilt and the console moved and electricity was used to power it. When a plumber removed some old pipe work under the floor near the Choir vestry, he saw some steps. We investigated; they led down to vaults in which were lead-covered coffins of the people commemorated on the East Wall plaques.

Maurice found a sealed stone altar in the graveyard and this was erected in the North-east corner of the church and surrounded by medieval tiles that John Sheard had found on the Estate.

First published in the Bolton Abbey Parish Magazine in August 2010

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THE RECTOR'S LOCKDOWN DIARY

Part 2

During lockdown, the Rector of Bolton Abbey (Reverend Nicholas Mercer) kept a diary as he realised that the Priory was living through historic and unprecedented times. Although we can't be certain, the Priory has never been closed throughout its 850 year history despite the ravages of invasion, Reformation, Civil and World Wars. Over the coming editions of the Friends Newsletter, he will be sharing extracts from his Diary during lockdown.

In this edition, we can read about another snapshot of Church during a time of pandemic.

Tuesday 24th March 2020

Lockdown. The Prime Minister announced on television that there was no option but to lockdown the whole country. People were asked to work from home and to stay in their houses. Non-essential shops were ordered to close and people were only allowed out to get their food or pharmaceuticals. The police were empowered to fine people for non-compliance. The country has never experienced anything like this in its history and the closest equivalent is the Second World War. We are now all in the Rectory. My daughter finally arrived home last night at just after 10pm and we also agreed to look after my brother's dog as he is self-isolating at home.

The first day of the lockdown was agreeable enough. I exercised my right to exercise once a day by going for a run before breakfast and my son took himself off on a route march. The dog was clipped on the lawn which looked as if someone had started to pull the stuffing out of a mattress. I have resolved to ring every member of the parish every ten days and had a very pleasant couple of hours conversing with people in the parish, some of whom I had never met. I received a call back from a retired priest. I said this was "love in a time of cholera". We enjoyed the humour.

As we are unable to travel we also conducted our first ever meeting using an app called Zoom. It worked very well indeed and begs the question as to why we travel all over the country and indeed the world to meet with other people when there are perfectly sensible electronic solutions instead. The Estate has now also locked all its gates. It is impossible to hermetically seal all the entrances but we hardly saw anyone for the whole day. There is no chance of infection but a whole six months is very hard to imagine. It is estimated that there will be a million sufferers world-wide by next week.

PEACE IN A PANDEMIC



Last but not least::

Despite all our worries and fears during these difficult times Mother Nature is still there to comfort our souls and give us a warm glow inside.....

The Barn owls were social distancing and declined a photo shoot on health grounds!



It is rare to see a red squirrel in this area and the local Naturalists Society were very interested in Amanda's photographs. Sadly, there hasn't been another sighting.

Our thanks to FOBP Executive Committee member, Amanda Wood, for the photography

