

NEWSLETTER

of the Friends of Beverley Minster

SPRING 2016



THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Roger Lewis

This year is our 80th anniversary. Someone had foresight, 80 years ago, in setting us up – we are older than many other cathedral and church friends' organisations. There's a history of the Friends of Beverley Minster waiting to be written – maybe by one of our many local historians? Or by one of our local universities' higher degree students? This would take research; my appeal, some years ago, for old copies of our annual reports, was unsuccessful.

As I write, we are finalising arrangements for this year's social programme. 'We' in this case is Pamela Martin, our Social Secretary, who is busy contacting speakers, coach companies, food providers, printers (and carrying out all the rest of the work involved).

The first event is a study day on Saturday April 30th on 'How to read our churches: the world of religious iconography'. Many thousands of people visit our churches and cathedrals; a smaller but still significant number worship in these buildings. But how many understand what they see? Some may have a grasp of the development of architectural styles; others may know the liturgical functions of font, pulpit and altar furniture – but it's likely that the detail of what may be considered the 'decoration' of surfaces, in wood and stone, may not be fully appreciated.

These details however are not merely 'decorative'; they are part of the language in which the building communicates its purpose – the worship of God. They are signs and symbols of core Christian beliefs and, when they were made (in the Minster's case, from the 1200s) performed a vital educative function, in an age in which books were rare and expensive and when only a small proportion of the population could read.

Without an understanding of these 'signs' (and what they signify) we too are illiterate – we cannot 'read' the language. A firm grasp of iconography will help us to understand buildings across the world. Visit York or Bourges, Canterbury or Chartres, Norwich or Amiens and you are in exactly the same world of symbolism – whatever the medium in which it is communicated. The day school will help us look at stained glass, wall painting, sculpture, roof bosses, tombs, bench ends and misericords in a better-informed way – leading us to a richer encounter with them.

The history of iconography is instructive. With the 16th century Reformation much of the medieval symbolism was destroyed. Protestant

England was an England of the word and not the image for much (though not all) of the next two centuries. Texts on walls took over the role of teaching aid – for those who could read. Some symbols were, however, still acceptable, and can be seen on monuments and gravestones.

In the 1840s the church returned to symbolism. The Victorian pioneers understood their medieval iconography and were prepared to use it anew. So you will find many 19th century churches full of colour and imagery – sometimes (as at Garton-on-the-Wolds) total schemes, using wall painting, mosaic, stained glass, wood and stone carving, flooring tiles and vestments – again not just as decoration but to instruct and as a prompt to devotion.

The day school will cover all this and – because we know the importance of bodily as well as intellectual refreshment – lunch and morning and afternoon refreshments are included in the price. Those who enrol will receive a substantial booklet to reinforce the points covered during the day.

Our speaker is Roger Willson, who has for many years planned and run workshops and study trips on local history, architecture and a host of related topics, for organisations such as the University for the Third Age. Roger is based in Loughborough and he has taken Beverley Friends on coach trips to churches in Lincolnshire; he also ran a day school for us in 2006. He was at school with me – a friendship lasting nearly as many years as the Friends of Beverley Minster has been in existence (a little poetic licence there).

Minster tours

Following last year's successful tours of aspects of the Minster, we have three more in 2016, all to take place on long (and we hope sunny) June evenings. The first tour is of the Minster's monuments given by Professor John Wilton-Ely, who last year pointed out the splendours of the Georgian Minster. The second will cover the outside of the Minster – the history of its development, with new findings based on research by John Phillips, who will be our guide. Our third tour links well with the theme of the day school as it interprets the iconography of the stained glass in the nave; there could be no better guide to this than the Vicar of the Minster, so we are very glad to have 'signed up' Jeremy. This will complement last year's tour where we considered (with Phil Thomas) the quality of the stained glass as art (rather than as iconography).

Coach tour

Last year's coach trip to north Yorkshire was very successful. We repeat that formula in 2016, going north again to visit four very different buildings: Hovingham Church, Ampleforth Abbey, Shandy Hall and Coxwold church, accompanied again by Sophie Weston. At Ampleforth the Father Prior will take us round the church and the curator of Shandy Hall will be our guide to this, the home of Laurence Sterne

author of Tristram Shandy and A Sentimental Journey. Coffee mid-morning, lunch, and afternoon tea are all included in the fee for the day (as well as the costs of the coach, entry fees and donations to the churches).

AGM weekend

This year's AGM weekend is 7th-9th October. Full details will be given in our annual report, due out in the summer, but the annual dinner will be on the evening of Friday 7th and the AGM, the St John of Beverley lecture, afternoon tea and the Friends' Evensong will take place during the afternoon and evening of 9th. We are also planning activities for the Saturday to make this a whole weekend of activities, worthwhile for distant Friends to come and stay in Beverley (as we were very glad to see happened last year).

Sign up!

You will find details elsewhere in this newsletter of how to book places on these events. You will note that we offer a reduced rate for Friends; please bring your own friends, perhaps enrolling them as Friends at the same time, to encourage them to support our work (and benefit from the cheaper rate!)

Thanks

My thanks go to several people for work on this newsletter: John Phillips (who puts this newsletter together); Pamela Martin (Social Secretary); Mervyn King (for his help with design and production) and the team who fill the envelopes for the mailing and, wherever possible, post this newsletter through your letter boxes.

FROM THE SECRETARY

One of the Minster projects recently completed with the help of the Friends was the restoration of the Georgian font cover. This has been cleaned and restored and is now able to be raised and lowered with one finger by means of a counter-balance mechanism installed in the roof space above the aisle vault. The Friends contributed to the restoration, and paid for the re-gilding of the dove above the cover itself. It now looks much as it did when first installed in the early 18th century.



SOCIAL PROGRAMME 2016

APRIL 2016

SATURDAY 30

10.00 – 16.30

FRIENDS OF BEVERLEY MINSTER STUDY DAY

Venue: Peter Harrison Room, Beverley Minster

'How to read a church: the history of church iconography'

Roger Willson will deliver four lectures on different aspects of this fascinating subject, which include symbolism on fonts; saints on rood screens; the bestiary as on misericords; moralities as in wall paintings; the medieval world of iconography, then how the Reformation destroyed much of it and had an alternative; then how High Church Anglicanism rediscovered it in the 19th century.

Cost per person (to include lunch, morning and afternoon refreshments): £25 (£20 for Friends of the Minster)

JUNE 2016

GUIDED TOURS OF BEVERLEY MINSTER

19.15 – 21.15

MONDAY 6

'Decoding the past; the monuments of Beverley Minster'

Guide: Professor John Wilton-Ely

MONDAY 13

'The exterior of the Minster; re-dating the building'

Guide: John Phillips

MONDAY 27

'Light on the Word: the nave windows and the Bible'

Guide: Revd Jeremy Fletcher

Meet at the North Door (Highgate entrance) of the Minster

Cost per person: £6 (£5 for Friends) per tour: £16 (£12 for Friends) for all tours

Max. no. 30 people per tour

AUGUST 2016

FRIDAY 12

COACH TOUR

to Hovingham, All Saints' Church, Ampleforth Abbey, Shandy Hall and Coxwold St Michael's Church

Church Guide: Sophie Weston

Shandy Hall Curator: Patrick Wildgust

The itinerary includes morning coffee in Malton, a brief stop at Hovingham, All Saints' Church, a tour of Ampleforth Abbey Church by the Father Prior, lunch at the Abbey Café, a guided tour of Shandy Hall, a guided tour of Coxwold St Michael's Church and finally afternoon tea in Coxwold (home about 19.00).

Morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea and guided church tour included in price plus entry fee to Shandy Hall & donations to churches.

Meet at east end of Beverley Minster on Eastgate at **08.15 for 08.30**

start NB. the nearby Minster car park will be open

Cost per person: £47.50 (£42.50 for Friends)

Max. no. 49 people

OCTOBER 2016

FRIDAY 7 - SUNDAY 9

AGM WEEKEND 2016

FRIDAY 7

ANNUAL DINNER

19.00 for 19.30

Venue: Cerutti's, Station Square, Beverley

Cost to be advised

Speaker: Patrick Wildgust (Shandy Hall Curator)

SATURDAY 8

Details of the day will appear in the Annual Report produced in the summer.

SUNDAY 9

14.15

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Venue: Parish Hall, Beverley Minster, Minster Yard North, HU17 ODP

15.15

ST JOHN LECTURE

'The Percy family and Beverley'

Speaker: Professor Barbara English MBE

Venue: Peter Harrison Room, Beverley Minster, Minster Yard North, HU17 ODP

Followed by Afternoon Tea in the Parish Hall

St John Lecture – Cost per person: £5 (no charge for Friends)

17.30

CHORAL EVENSONG

BOOKING ENQUIRIES TO:

The Programme Secretary, Friends of Beverley Minster,

85, Ancaster Avenue, Hull, HU5 4QR

E-mail: pjmartin@pjmartin.karoo.co.uk

Telephone 01482 442221

Please use the enclosed form to apply for places

Below: Friends Summer Coach Outing to North Yorkshire churches 2015



The Friends of Beverley Minster unite in common fellowship all those throughout the world who wish to be associated with this outstanding medieval building. They are a link between those in Beverley and far beyond, whose love of the Minster inspires them to share in preserving it, in all its beauty, for future generations.

Registered Charity No. 501302

Beverley Minster Parish Centre, 38 Highgate, Beverley HU17 0DN

T: 01482 868540 E: minster@beverleyminster.org.uk W: www.beverleyminster.org.uk

PROGRAMME SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pamela Martin

JULY 2015 – JANUARY 2016

Overall, the events in the summer were a successful attempt to attract more people who were not necessarily Friends. Following on from my last update in the Annual Report, the final **Guided Tour of Beverley Minster** led by Phil Thomas (Church Buildings Officer for the Diocese of York) gave the group of about 20 people a most informative insight into the variety of stained glass windows contained within the walls of the Minster, including design, age, quality of glass and the names of some of the companies and artists involved.

The **Guided Tour of North Yorkshire Churches**, which took place at the end of July, was blessed with a sunny, warm day. Twenty eight Friends and visitors travelled to Malton for morning coffee at the Old Lodge, which had much to recommend it, and met our guide, Sophie Weston (an expert in medieval church architecture) who was waiting for us. We visited two quite remote churches enroute to our lunch stop, firstly Salton, St John of Beverley and then St Gregory's Minster in Kirkdale, an Anglo-saxon hidden gem. An appetising buffet lunch was enjoyed at the Barn Hotel Tearooms in Hutton le Hole followed by a short journey over the Moors to Lastingham, St Mary's church. The original church was built in 725AD and the current one dates from 1078 when the crypt was built. Lastingham was founded by St Cedd in the 7th century. Our final stop was at Pickering, St Peter & St Paul church, which is famous for the medieval wall paintings within the nave. In all, a very informative excursion.

The **AGM weekend** in October commenced with an excellent evening meal on the Friday at *Cerutti's*. The Bishop of Hull, the Rt Revd Alison White, addressed some forty members present with a most entertaining after-dinner talk. Our thanks go to John Phillips, our Secretary, for arranging this event.

The Saturday was devoted to visiting Cottingham, one of the largest villages in England. After morning coffee, a small group of friends and visitors were given a most interesting and informative guided tour of Cottingham St Mary's church by local church historian and parishioner, the late Geoff Bell. Some weeks after, Geoff passed away, but he was determined he would not let us down on that Saturday, even though he was clearly not well. We were greatly indebted to Geoff on this and on many other occasions. After a substantial buffet lunch at the *Rector's Tearooms*, Pat Elliott, who was our afternoon guide, took us on a very well researched walkabout of the part of Cottingham where the wealthy merchants of Hull had lived (some houses are still standing and others demolished over time). Afternoon tea and delicious cakes were enjoyed at the Parish rooms before we dispersed.

The AGM **St John of Beverley Lecture** on the Sunday was delivered by Dr Craig Taylor, Director of the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York. The subject, '*Henry V and Agincourt*' attracted over forty Friends and visitors to a very well prepared and delivered presentation, which produced lively discussion afterwards. Afternoon tea followed with appetising pastries from *TC Patisserie* in Beverley and the weekend closed with Evensong in the Minster with an address by the Revd Becky Lumley (*Vicar of St Mary's Church, Beverley*). Several of the members who attended the weekend as a whole had travelled some distance to be with us.

Finally, an excellent **Epiphany Organ Recital** was performed in January 2016 by the Musical Director of the Minster, Robert Poyser. This was followed by refreshments hosted by the Friends. The attendance was very high this year, leaving no opportunity for the choir members to indulge in the 'leftovers'.

FROM THE SECRETARY

At the time of writing, filming for a new ITV series about the early life of Queen Victoria has been taking place in the Minster. The building is doubling for both Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, and a photo is included showing the scene of activity in the Minster, enhanced by the effects of a beautiful February day and the Minster full of artificial smoke to give it 'atmosphere'!

