

Friends of Bolton Priory

PRIORY CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST CUTHBERT
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Editor : *Chris Dale*

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**Dr Chris Davidson 100 years of age
2nd March 2010**

On a beautiful Spring morning I met with Doctors Chris and Mollie Davidson to talk about their long connection with the Priory.

From the age of 8, Chris - born in Saddleworth - has been a "Yorkshireman". His schooling was at Ilkley Grammar School and Leeds University, which was followed by a post at Leeds General Infirmary. During the war Chris was part of the D-Day landing and became a very young Lt. Colonel in the RAMC shortly afterwards.

On his return from the war he worked at Bradford Royal Infirmary and St Luke's Hospital until his compulsory retirement aged 65 in 1975.

Chris and Mollie have lived in the lovely hamlet of Beamsley since 1979. Their connection with the Priory began soon afterwards in the time of Canon Maurice Slaughter with a congregation of less than 30 and the Priory under threat of closure.

This small congregation, under Canon Maurice's leadership, moved mountains for which we are all very grateful today – they started a Choir, held a jumble sale to raise funds for robes and bit by bit raised the Priory to its present wonderful condition.

I believe around £400,000 was raised for this work by means of grants and fund raising! A huge sum! Over a period of around seven years and with a lot of hard work, the congregation rose to over a hundred and there were 74 applicants for the

position of Rector on the retirement of Canon Slaughter! Such exciting and uplifting times for the Priory which one hears about even now, decades later. I know that there are other members of the congregation too who were part of this group who certainly "made a difference".

Chris was a Guide for several years and enjoys meeting visitors to the Priory to this day – but rather less frequently!

He also played his part as a Sidesman and, one Christmas Day, unexpectedly was called upon to be a Communion Assistant – which he then carried on doing for quite a few years.

Chris and Mollie have many happy memories and firm friendships made during their years as part of the Priory family and we wish them more happy years to come.

It was a fitting end that, just as I was leaving, Chris received a telephone call from Canon Maurice to wish him happy birthday.

A close knit group indeed.

The Pugin Windows of Bolton Priory



The six lancet windows which so gloriously embellish the south wall of the Priory Church, are thought by many to be the church's most stunning feature from a visual point of view. The generations of worshippers and visitors who have looked in wonder at their beauty and considered their religious significance have to thank the Sixth Duke of Devonshire William Spencer Cavendish known as 'The Bachelor Duke'. The Sixth Duke was a great patron of the arts and devoted much of his life to the development of Chatsworth in Derbyshire and Bolton Hall which faces the West door of the church. He was a frequent visitor to the church at a time when the pulpit stood against the south wall, thus inviting a view of the windows to the congregation which then faced that direction.

Perhaps it was this configuration that gave the Duke the idea of commissioning the now famous windows. He turned for the design to Augustus Pugin, whose work features in the Palace of Westminster and who had undertaken work at the Duke's residence at Lismore in Ireland. The windows are made up of thirty-six panels depicting the life of Christ. It has been thought that the work was executed by J. C. Grace but recent research has discounted this. It is not known why the windows were not glazed by Pugin's preferred Specialist Hardman of Birmingham, with whom he most often worked.

Because of the position of the windows it is impossible fully to appreciate the beauty and intricacy of their design and the accuracy with which they follow the Gospel story.

Following lengthy research by Dr Malcolm Parsons the Parochial Church Council authorised the production of a booklet depicting the windows with references to the scenes shown. The pictures were taken from negatives kindly made available by Brother Lawrence Lew O.P. who, Dr Parsons discovered, had taken them using his photographic and computer skills. The picture reproduced shows one of the scenes, the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene, it is described as 'the masterpiece of the series' because of the way the layout makes use of the quatrefoil shape. The cost of the publication was met by generous donations of members and supporters of the Priory Church. The booklet is available at £3.50 from the church or £5 by post. [see: www.boltonpriory.org.uk tel: 01756 710238 or email :office@boltonpriory.org.uk]

The Reverend James Turnbull

(With acknowledgements to the late Peter Watkins and Malcolm Parsons)

Spring Lecture

The Very Reverend Keith Jones, Dean of York Minster, delivered his lecture on "Barchester transformed: the value of cathedrals and other churches today" to a packed house seemingly without notes and with great enthusiasm. He briefly covered his early career starting in the attic of the Deanery at St Albans (as Vicar to the Dean) to the present day, salted with anecdotes - and with an insight into the rise and fall ...and rise and fall...of the cathedral coffers.

Cathedrals offer a centre for festivals and a place for large gatherings and are also the places from which Bishops function. Over the centuries cathedrals have competed with each other to become bigger and better until the Reformation when they were almost closed down altogether. Until Queen Victoria the churches had control of the baptisms, marriages, wills etc and cathedrals represented the Bishops' power. They were hugely endowed and heavily staffed with Prebendaries enjoying very affluent lifestyles. The big change came when the power went to London. Instead of Bishops and Deans travelling around the country everything centred on London. Cathedrals were starting to need much restoration and a campaign was started in the 18th century, e.g. Exeter needed shoring up with more wood in the roof; Hereford Cathedral fell down, St Paul's was struck by lightning, botched together and then burnt down. It was rebuilt with much more style. There became a magnificent stock of the most remarkable buildings. Parliament decided to sort out the cathedrals and formed a Commission in 1840 where it was decided that all funds from cathedrals should go into one pot and then be shared out - new dioceses were created and new churches. This 'rationalisation' meant that Bishops had an income and repair allowances were made to cathedrals. As the years passed Prebends died out and cathedrals formed new relationships with the Dioceses, with a stipend for Deans. A major reorganization of cathedrals and churches was underway - for example Bradford Cathedral was formed to reflect the growth and successful textile industry in the city. In the 1930s cathedrals were struggling to fund church-owned slum property and cathedrals were in dire need of repairs. In 1927 entry fees to cathedrals had been abolished and funds were dependent upon the new tourists visiting by charabanc and train but unfortunately this did not cover the bills. By the 1970s cathedrals were once more under threat of closure. A reversal of the system occurred. (In 2011 Government grants will cease).

It was noted that York residents can visit the Minster without charge and that it is increasingly a reflection of all religions and none – some 200 visitors in winter and 500/600 in summer attend Evensong. The Dean sees a future threat in that the government does not appear to know how to handle religion. He feels that only religion supplies the sort of glue which society needs in order to flourish. The best way forward would be in partnership with English Heritage. Our cathedrals were sources of an incredible amount of history and available to all.

Mr Andrew Hartley gave the vote of thanks – as a huge Barchester fan he considered it a treat. He thanked the Dean for his anecdotes and the wealth of information offered – and so clearly enjoyed by his audience. Andrew then presented the Dean with a small token of appreciation for his visit to the Friends of ‘Wharfedale’s Cathedral’.

Visit to Chatsworth, Wednesday, 7th July 2010

Our visit to Chatsworth has now been arranged by our Chairman, James Pearson, and a 48-seater coach has been booked.

The even better news is that the Duke of Devonshire will personally conduct the tour of the house and “behind the scenes”.

Coffee will be provided on arrival after which, at 12.00 noon, the Duke will take the first group on the Tour.

This will be followed at 1.30pm by a 2-course set menu lunch for all those who have booked it.

To assist your lunch decision the set menu is :

Griddled Chicken with Stables Salad, served with minted potatoes, followed by:

*Apple & Pear Crumble with English Custard
Coffee/Tea*

The Vegetarian option for the first course is:
Butternut squash & Stilton Tart with toasted pine nuts served with a trio of salads

It may be that Friends might like to make their own lunch arrangement – although we have been informed that Chatsworth will be busy on this date, day so some may like to take a picnic – it is July after all! The Duke will take the second group on the Tour at 3pm. The tour is expected to take an hour and a half. Time will thus be available for both groups to visit the gardens and shop.

This should be a wonderful visit and the Duke is keen for it to be a success.

A booking form is attached – please spend a few moments completing this form according to whether you want to pre book and pay for lunch, and if you qualify as a ‘senior citizen’, in order to work out your payment.

Tickets will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis, so be swift and book if you want to come.

Departure will be 8.30am prompt from Bolton Abbey Village Car park. We will leave Chatsworth at about 5.00pm, arriving back at Bolton Abbey around 7.30/8.00pm.

Priory Church Monthly Magazine

For those of you who would like to keep up with events in the life of the Priory it is possible to request a postal copy of the monthly Church Magazine from May this year. The cost is £7.50pa please contact the Church office to arrange.

Diary Dates

Coming up soon:

AGM – Noon, Sunday 23 May 2010 in the Village Hall

Chatsworth Visit - 7th July 2010

Later Visits for your diary:

Theatre Visit – Wednesday, 1st December 2010
Ilkley Playhouse

Advent Wine & Cheese Party, Sunday, 28th November 2010 following the evening Advent service.

It would be much appreciated if Friends could be a little earlier in their booking for events....just sometimes there is a flurry of last minute bookings which can make life difficult for the organizers....

Remember that our **website** is also **YOUR** website! We welcome your visits to the site but particularly would like your contributions of pictures or items.

(Send direct to the Webmaster). You will notice there are many pictures in the Photo Gallery covering events in the life of the Priory Friends going back several years.

If you have any comments, stories or pictures for consideration in future issues of the **newsletter** please send them to the Editor via the Church Office at the address on page one or e-mail direct to chris.dale3@talktalk.net

