

Friends of Blackburn Cathedral

September 2013 Newsletter

The Council of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral has, since the last newsletter and the annual bulletin, been busy on your behalf, furthering the objects of the Society and planning forthcoming events, more details of which appear later in this newsletter. Please make a note in your diary and try to support as many as you can.

Gifts

You will recall the generous gift of two of the commemorative solid silver goblets from the Cathedral's 25th anniversary, which the Friends turned into awards to be presented to young musicians annually. Two further such goblets have been donated and are being prepared to be awarded to other musicians. We hope to be able to announce the recipients in the next newsletter. The presentation will take place with the other choral awards at Evensong in the Cathedral on the 17th November 2103.

Flower Festival

The following item is very early notice and without being able to specify a date, but the Friends will be facilitating a Flower Festival to coincide with the completion of the development of the Cathedral in a couple of years. This will be an event advertised nationally and likely to attract many visitors to the Cathedral. It would be most pleasant to have many Friends in the building to welcome visitors at that time, as well as to enjoy the wonderful displays of God's creation. More details will follow when we can be more certain about dates, but in preparation for that, you will find with this newsletter details of two flower-oriented events later this year on the 28th October and 23rd November. These will be of great interest to any Friends who are engaged in arranging flowers and others who can appreciate the beauty of an expert arrangement.

Christmas Cards

After a gap of two years when, we sold earlier examples of the Friends' Christmas card rather than create a new one, we are fortunate to have as a member of Council, Patrick Troughton, who has generously painted a picture of the south porch for use as the front of the card. An order form is enclosed. Please place an order for cards as they have in the past added considerably to the Society's funds and enabled us further to assist the Cathedral. We are aware of the state of the economy, and that some people have stopped sending cards altogether, but if you still like to greet friends and relations whom you do not see often during the year, this card, with a reminder of the nativity and the Cathedral which means so much to us on it, will be well received with your good wishes. We shall be publishing a blank version of the card as notelets which can be used throughout the year.

Christmas Concert

For some time it has been on the agenda of Council meetings to consider how the Friends can better bring to the attention of parishes within the Diocese, the Cathedral as the mother church of all those parishes. We have been given permission to stage a Christmas concert on the 19th December 2013 in St Helen's Church Churchtown, Garstang which will be preceded by a drinks and canapé reception at Myerscough House, for which event the owner, Mrs Thompson, has kindly offered rooms in the house. The Christmas themed music for the concert will be provided by the Renaissance Singers of Blackburn Cathedral whose reputation for high quality entertainment goes before them. You can see them on Songs of Praise on BBC1 on 5th January 2014. There will be a ticket price of £10 for those wishing to go only to the concert, where there will be refreshments included, and £30 for those who wish to attend the concert and reception and to view the magnificent rooms at and ambience of Myerscough House.

National Memorial Arboretum

It will not have escaped your notice that 2014 will be the centenary of the commencement of hostilities which erroneously became known as “the war to end all wars”, World War I. Your Council has formed preliminary plans to recognize the anniversary with a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire followed by Evensong at Lichfield Cathedral which has a significance for us insofar as the Blackburn Diocese was created out of the Manchester Diocese, which in turn was carved out of the Chester Diocese which was originally part of the Lichfield Diocese, making Blackburn a great-granddaughter church of Lichfield. Many of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral will have relatives who fought in WWI, and some may wish to remember those who died in the conflict. This will be an opportunity for all to remember them and all those who answered the call a hundred years before, and paid the price of victory with their life. Please let us know if you are interested in joining the party for that day out, by completing and returning the part of the attached form relating to this outing.

Friends AGM

Those of us who attended the Annual General Meeting will recall that Brian Topham retired after several years of service as Hon. Treasurer and was replaced by Tony Cope who has produced a statement of the accounts which accompanies this newsletter. This provides an opportunity for all members to keep up to date with the way we are managing funds and growing, and to raise issues of concern or questions of any nature about the finances of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral.

Lunchtime Talks

Lunchtime talks continue to be enjoyed. We know that a lot of members are reluctant to leave home for evening events, especially in winter, so the lunchtime talks are an excellent way of getting to meet other Friends over lunch and to listen to interesting people talk about experiences which we are never likely to experience first-hand. We meet in the Crypt at noon for the talk followed by lunch which gives the opportunity to speak to the guest about matters arising in the talk.

On 23rd February 2013 we were fortunate to have as our speaker Fr. Jonathan Hemmings, retired teacher and orthodox chaplain to the University of Lancaster. He gave a very entertaining talk on the use and significance of icons in the orthodox religion. Upon hearing that the cathedral did not possess an icon he duly presented one which was accepted on behalf of the friends by the Dean.

We look forward to our next talk on Tuesday 1st October 2013 when our speaker will be Mr Ray Lea, co-ordinator for the Mission Aviation Fellowship. He will talk about M.A.F. and its work as a Christian organisation flying across hostile territories to the world's most isolated people. This promises to be an illuminating talk. Mr Lea asks that we bring along any postcards, new or used, as last year a sum of more than £16,000 was raised for the work of M.A.F.

The speaker booked for February next year has to undergo surgery and will not be able to deliver his talk as planned, but will be in good form to talk to us later in the year. As soon as the name of the speaker and his or her topic are known they will be made available to you. You can always check for activities such as this with the Hon. Secretary via Church House.

Advent Service

The reception before the Advent Sunday Service will be held again this year at 5 pm in the Dean's office. It is good to see so many Friends at the event and we hope that many of you will be there. Please feel free to bring a friend who might become a Friend with you, but whether alone or in company, please send in the accompanying slip to indicate your intention to come, as it is essential for the correct level of catering and the correct number of seats being reserved. Guests have to be limited to one per Friend as the good seats are reserved for us by the Cathedral staff in recognition of the great contribution made by the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral, but there is always a full house so those who are not Friends have to take such seats as are left, and it would be unfair to take a greater allocation of seats than we need.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our forthcoming events.