

Inn of the Lord

Transcript of the original recording April 1983 revised January 1985

Blackburn Cathedral stands in the place from which Christian worship has been offered continuously for about fourteen hundred years. The traditional date of its foundation of 596 is hardly likely to be accurate. We know that Blackburn originally was a Viking settlement, and it would seem that soon after the new settlers came to the river Blakewater, the local inhabitants set about their conversion and the church was established. The first documentary evidence we have of a church in Blackburn is to be found in Doomsday Book where we are told that the priest's name was Gamaliel, and the church had been assessed to pay a certain figure each year towards the Blackburn Hundred's contribution to Danegeld, a tax which was imposed in the early tenth century. This indicates that the church had been long established at the time of the Conquest.

The Norman church which was standing then was replaced in the thirteenth century by a small mediaeval church from which these Misericord seats, dating from the fourteenth century, are almost the only pieces of furniture remaining. The carvings form a base on the underside of the stalls for a ledge on which the monks could rest while standing. In all probability these came from Whalley Abbey which was established in 1296, and, although many of the monastic buildings are now in ruins our Diocesan Conference House is established in an adaption of what was originally the Abbot's lodging.

There is also a chalice of silver gilt bearing the hallmark of 1491. Perhaps our most valuable relic is the Mediaeval Pax which would have been used in the Mass by being passed round and the congregation to symbolise the Unity of Christian Fellowship. This was found in a gravestone in the churchyard and is one of only nine now existing in England. It has been adopted by the Friends as their emblem. That church was itself replaced in Tudor times; this new church had within it a Chantry School provided by Thomas Stanley, the second Earl of Derby, and this made provision for a Choir for the church as well as a school for twelve poor boys of Blackburn. The ruff of three tiers, which we see Thomas Stanley wearing in this portrait here is reproduced and worn by the choirboys of Blackburn Cathedral today.

Chantry schools were abolished in 1545 and to replace this school the townspeople established a Grammar School contiguous to the Parish Church which subsequently received a Charter from Queen Elizabeth I. This school is still with us as Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Blackburn. From the Tudor church we have surviving nineteen fragments of glass formerly in a window which was destroyed by the Cromwellian soldiers returning victorious from the Battle of Preston in 1648. They broke into the church and smashed the window to smithereens. These fragments were picked up by someone, I suspect it was a choirboy, presumably as many pieces as he could conceal about his person, not wishing to fall foul of the soldiery; he took them home, took care of them all through the long years of the Great Rebellion and then, when Blackburn had a proper Vicar again, restored them to the church which has taken care of them ever since.

The victorious soldiers, on the same occasion, also destroyed Judge Walmsley's tomb. He was a local worthy who was a High Court Judge of Common Pleas of Queen Elizabeth I and survived into the reign of James I. His tomb was a replica of that of Ann, Duchess of Somerset, in Westminster Abbey, seen in this photograph. All that survived after Cromwell's soldiers' destruction is the coat of arms belonging to the Walmsley family which has now been painted and built into the wall of the South Transept as his memorial. In 1818 it was decided that there should be a further rebuilding of the Parish Church of Blackburn, known locally as "The

Inn of the Lord". Dr Thomas Whittaker, the famous historian, being vicar at that time, set about having plans drawn for a new and larger church. In order that the site might be more accessible, the old Grammar School land was purchased by the church and with the purchase money the Grammar School Governors bought the land in West Park Road, where the school still stands. The church, designed by John Palmer, was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester in 1826. It was one of the finest examples of the Gothic revival architecture of that period, and is transitional from the classical style of the eighteenth century to the revived Gothic style of Victorian days. It has a fine Georgian tower which we can see here through the roof of the nave; this photograph was made possible by a disastrous fire a few years after the consecration.

When the church was built, galleries were installed, and the windows were not intended to be seen as one, but as two; one above the gallery and the other below. That is why, now that the galleries have been removed, we have these very long narrow windows. The chancel of this new church was a Trompe l'Oeil; it was a single arch of many orders, giving the appearance of a much longer chancel than in point of fact it was.

The glass in the east window was not made for Blackburn Parish Church. It was originally a window made in the middle of the eighteenth century for a convent in Belgium. Another Doctor Whittaker, the then Vicar, bought this window when the Convent was selling it, as it was installed here in 1840 and is a fine example of Flemish glass.

The Sanctuary of the old church can show pieces of furniture, some of which are still in use to-day and will be recognised by those who know the Cathedral well.

In 1926, exactly a hundred years after the consecration of this church the Diocese of Blackburn was created and Bishop Herbert was appointed as its first Bishop.

On the day he came to be enthroned in February 1927, the procession of town and county dignitaries and diocesan clergy proceeded up Church Street towards the Cathedral.

About this time there lived in Derbyshire a very famous woodcarver called Advent Hunstone and he carved this Bishop's throne, or Cathedra, his official seat, which makes the Parish Church into a Cathedral.

Bishop Herbert and all subsequent Bishops have used, to knock on the door when they come to be enthroned, the Saxon hammer. This is a stone-age hammerhead discovered in the bed of the River Ribble which has been mounted in modern times on a shaft of cedar wood with silver wire. The significance of it is the place of its discovery, for the River Ribble flowing through the Diocese, divides it into two. North of the Ribble was at one time in the Archdiocese of York; south of the Ribble was in the Diocese of Lichfield. In 1541 when Henry VIII founded the Diocese of Chester, and put it firmly in the Northern Province, Blackburn became part of the Province of York. This means that Bishop Herbert and all subsequent Bishops of Blackburn can trace their ancestry back to St Aiden, St Cuthbert and St Wilfrid in the North, and to St Had in the Southern Province. The Vicar of Blackburn at the time that it became a Cathedral was Canon Sinker an Honorary Canon of Manchester Cathedral, and by the Cathedral Statutes which order that the Vicar of Blackburn is to be the Provost, he became our first Provost. He did much to enable the extension of the Cathedral to become a possibility and supervised the collection of much money.

In 1933 Mr W A Forsyth was commissioned to be the architect of the new Cathedral and he drew plans which were accepted. The plan, an impression of which we see here, including a large central bell tower, had an extended chancel eastwards reaching nearly to the Boulevard wall.

In 1938 enough money had been collected to allow work to begin and in that year a film was made of Bishop Herbert making an appeal to finish the Cathedral, which was shown in every cinema in the Diocese. Here is an excerpt from the sound track of that film.

"England has no prouder possession than her great cathedrals. Many of you will have visited some of these like York Minster or Hereford or Wells or Chester and will know how the piety and art and worship of bygone generations can still uplift and beautify our common life. But old cathedrals are not enough. We want new ones too. The Cathedral is the mother church of a diocese and so the Diocese of Blackburn, now eleven years old, needs a worthy cathedral."

He went on to say that a generous donation of One Pound could be made by contributions of one penny per week for five years. In October of that year the Princess Royal laid the foundation stone of the extensions. This is in the crypt, directly under the Sanctuary.

In 1942 Wilfred Askwith became the Bishop of Blackburn and by that time Provost Kay was well established as the Provost. He had collected many things to be used, not in the church as it then was, but in the church as it would be when completed. Among these was the Ramsey pulpit, a memorial to a local practitioner, Doctor Ramsey, given by his widow, and it is a fine example of Gothic woodwork. Mrs Ramsey also presented the Cathedral with the Ramsey Cross, a processional and altar cross, it having a dual purpose, which is made of silver provided from her household effects and from her personal jewellery. There are on the cross 25 amethysts and 16 diamonds. Another gift received about this time were two standard candlesticks given by Mr Gillibrand who was Mayor of Blackburn as a token of thanksgiving for his mayoral year. Here we see them with one of our young men to give some idea of their size, and they are standing in the columbarium, an apartment of the crypt in which walls have been built containing niches for the immuring of the cremated remains of members of the Cathedral congregation.

We are fortunate that the stone of the extensions could be the same hard gritstone with which the 1826 church had been built. Earlier rebuilding had been necessary by the fact that the local stone is a red sandstone, very porous, which weathers badly. This gritstone is much harder and is not likely to need replacement for many hundreds of years to come.

After the war we couldn't continue building the Cathedral until building licenses had been made unnecessary: and this was not until the fifties. Provost Kay was faced with the problem that the money which had been raised would no longer pay for more than a third of what was envisaged.

Having spent that on the South Transept, by struggling and saving and making economies of every possible kind under Provost Kay's direction, the North Transept, the Central Space and the first two bays of the Forsyth Chancel were built. At that point it was decided that the building should be halted and that the Cathedral should be completed in a seemly way and temporary manner, and then we could concentrate on the interior furnishings.

This decision was taken during the episcopate of Bishop Baddeley which lasted from 1954 to 1960.

Bishop Baddeley is one of the great heroes of the 20th Century, now having remained in Melanesia throughout the Japanese occupation, leading the resistance. Being in hiding, at no point nor at any time did any of the islanders betray his whereabouts to the Japanese. The East Window of the 1826 Parish Church was now placed in the North window and here we see it. Our Lord is in the middle with the evangelists, two each on either side.

Shortly after Bishop Claxton arrived in 1960, Provost Kay retired and Provost Robinson was appointed.

Bishop Claxton devoted himself to the completion of the Cathedral which he dearly wanted to effect before his retirement. Money didn't come in quick enough from his various appeals but, nevertheless, much was done.

In 1961 Mr Laurence King was appointed as the Architect of the Cathedral. He had already earned for himself a reputation as one of our leading architects by the work which he had done on the restoration of St Mary-le-Bow. Here we see Mr King looking at a photograph of that church.

Almost immediately after his appointment, as an earnest of good things to come, he set about the restoration of the Western tower and porch. Here we see the arch over the West door with the two coats of arms repainted. They are the coats of arms of the bishop of Chester and the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1826, the year in which the new church was consecrated, of which this tower was a part. Inside, a new door was established with the Royal Arms above it and this gives us the first example of Laurence King's great work.

In 1963 a committee, largely composed of businessmen, was established under the chairmanship of Colonel Bowman, and Mrs Heggitt was appointed to the the Secretary of the Appeal. Money was raised for the restoration of the nave and the completion of the rest of the Cathedral.

Then began a great work of devastation; the old organ was taken down and dismantled, the wooden pews were removed, the wooden floor of the nave was taken up, and scaffolding began to be erected.

Arthur Haythornthwaite, here seen on the left, Croft's foreman, is a great character of Blackburn. He had worked on the Cathedral ever since the extension began. The nave was filled with scaffolding and the Victorian glass in the windows was removed. It was replaced by specially manufactured hand-blown glass. When this was installed it made a dramatic change to the nave which must now surely be one of the lightest churches in Christendom. John Hayward, an artist in metal, glass and paint, was commissioned to provide a feature for the west wall of the nave. He produced the Worker Christ. We see here the statue being installed and hung.

The artist's message is that, as we leave the church, this being the last thing to be seen, we are reminded that Jesus was a working man; that He has overcome death by His resurrection. The lines of the cross have been broken by His extended arms and the aureole of this globe suggests a loom in a Lancashire weaving shed. this means that we worship God, not only in church, but in the work which we do for our living.

The nave having been completely restored, it was ready to the rehallowed and on October 6th 1965, in the presence of Princess Margaret, the Archbishop of York effected this reconsecration. Here is the kneeler that was used by the Princess on that occasion and another kneeler bearing the Borough coat of arms to be used by the Mayor of Blackburn.

Many representatives of Diocesan bodies and important personalities attended that service. Here we see the representatives of the University of Lancaster.

Princess Margaret herself arrived, in due course, and the service was one that was very memorable to all who attended.

Only a limited number of people could be accommodated in the nave for this service, because there was a dividing wall between it and the transepts and the central space, which were as yet an empty shell. In order that as many people as possible could take Martin the service, the transepts were filled with chairs and those sitting there participated through the medium of closed circuit television. The next thing to be done was to restore the pinnacles of the Georgian tower which had been removed many years before because of corrosion caused by impurities in the atmosphere. Here we see the pre-fabricated pinnacles being assembled below the tower. Each section had to be adjusted to the crane that was going to take it up. Then when all was ready and secure, slowly they rose into the heights. They were received at the top and put into position.

Once again the tower was complete. This tower contains a ring of ten bells which had been recast several years before. The weight of the whole ring is more than 5 tons and the tenor bell seen here, weighs over 1 ¼ tons. As we bring it up to its ringing position, listen for a few moments to part of a peal rung by the Cathedral ringers.

Mr William Thompson of Burnley and his sister Sarah had provided a generous gift of £25,000 for the erection of the lantern tower and the spire and here they are seen standing at the West Door of the Cathedral with Bishop Claxton.

Work began in 1966. First of all scaffolding had to be erected and then the lantern itself made its appearance. It is by this crown to the Cathedral that Laurence King has managed to weld together all the various styles of architecture in which the Cathedral has been built.

After completion of the lantern came the flèche or spire to be made of aluminium rising high into the heavens. When the last piece came to be affixed, people were at the top of the lantern waiting.

Again we see Arthur Haythornthwaite with his back to us directing the operation to raise the piece of aluminium slowly with a group of interested bystanders. It reached its appointed place and was fixed into position. A scroll had been prepared on parchment bearing the names of all those associated most closely with this particular phase of the work, and this was inserted into one arm of the gilded cross of which the spire was to be surmounted. When the cross was fixed into position and all the scaffolding was taken down, at last we could see this glory of the Cathedral. It was the intention that at night time the cross should be illuminated so that the symbol of our Christian faith should always be seen riding high above the darkened town.

Work could now begin beneath the lantern for the completion of the transepts and the central space. Once more scaffolding went up and the whole of the central space was filled; the glass was inserted, and as the scaffolding came down we could see the glories of John Hayward's symbolic and very colourful design. In the central boss of the lantern tower was the symbol of God as the Holy and Undivided Trinity, of God the Father the source of light and power, God the Son who through the cross and the nails of His crucifixion saved us, and God the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, fluttering down into our hearts.

The Cathedral received many gifts and about this time William Atwood, Croft's stonemason, gave us this statue, made by him of Carrara marble, for which the model was a young lady he saw on the Boulevard and it is therefore known as the Madonna of the Boulevard. William and Sarah Thompson now gave a further generous gift of thirty thousand guineas for the creation of a new organ. This was made by Walkers, the specification of which was drawn up by John Bertalot, the Cathedral Organist, assisted and directed by Dr Francis Jackson, the organist of York Minster.

Dr Jackson was also commissioned to compose a piece of music to be played by him at the opening recital.

In 1983 he assisted the Chapter in the appointment of Mr David Cooper to succeed Mr Bertalot as Organist and Master of the Choristers. Listen now to the organ being played by Mr Bertalot.

Coronation March from Poppea. Monteverdi, arr Sion Preston

The glass formerly in the windows of the nave, which was Victorian was used to provide the glass for the window in the South Transept. This was assembled by John Hayward to form an abstract design based on the Tree of Life and Waters of Baptism. About this time the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral were revitalised and reorganised and shortly after that a book was presented in which all their names could be inscribed and their signatures placed. On this page we see the name of Dr H Palmer who is the grandson of that Palmer who designed the 1826 church. The Friends, re-established and re-formed, set to work with a will and one of the first events which they organised was a most popular Flower Festival to which thousands of people came. This raised the sum of £2000. Shortly after that the workmen were having to be laid off, because the money that had been accumulated to pay for the completion of the Cathedral had all been spent.

The Friends, committed to the adorning of the Cathedral rather than to the building of the fabric, nevertheless came to the rescue and, with the £2000 raised by the Flower Festival, the work could continue and the floor of the North Transept was completed in Derbyshire limestone.

The Flower Festival ended with a very great service which was a thrilling occasion for all.

Some young men of the choir established a Bookshop in the North West porch of the Cathedral and this has gone from strength to strength. It is manned by members of the Friends organisation and here we see one of them at work. The Friends also paid for a large replica of the 15th Century Pax, which is their emblem, to be a feature of the East wall of the south Transept.

The Corona, which hangs above the High Altar, symbolic of a crown of thorns and of a royal diadem, designed by John Hayward, was provided by gifts from friends of Provost Sinker in his memory and in gratitude for the great work that he did in preparation for the extensions of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral Friends organised and gave a Frontal for the high altar. The altar is square so that it can present the same aspect from whichever arm of the church is seen and therefore everybody can be involved in the act of worship, no one being at the side or behind. This means that there have to be four pieces of embroidery for the four fronts; which were embroidered by the ladies of the Diocese under the direction of Mrs Anderson, a regular worshipper in the Cathedral. It was placed on the High Altar a few hours before the enthronement of Bishop Martineau in February 1972.

Blackburn Parish Church and Cathedral has been the spiritual home of the East Lancashire Regiment since its inception until its final incorporation into the Queen's Lancashire Regiment. The memorial Chapel of the East Lancs dedicated to St Martin and is situated in the south-east corner of the Cathedral. Here we see it with the colours of the Regiment and the altar frontal which bears the regimental badges.

The screen is adorned with etched glass depicting three soldier saints, St George on the right, St Michael the Archangel in the middle and St Martin of Tours, to whom the chapel is dedicated, on the left. St Martin died at Tours and is buried in the Cathedral there. When the Chapter of that Cathedral heard by some means that there was to be a chapel dedicated to St Martin in Blackburn Cathedral, their leader, Canon Cadeau, sent to us as a gift from St Martin this wooden statuette carved by Tourangeau (from Tours) Yves Le Pape, a modern French artist.

The font was a present too from Bishop Claxton and his wife in memory of their parents. It is created in the shape of an egg cup, an egg being the symbol of the resurrection and on the top of the cover there is a statuette by John Hayward of Our Lord being baptised in the River Jordan by St John.

We were fortunate when the Cathedral was established in 1926 that in England there was working a silversmith of international repute called Omar Ramsden and we have several pieces of his work. Here is the Bishop's crozier, originally a gift to Bishop Herbert from the people of the Diocese of Southwark whence he came. Because it bears many symbols of Blackburn, when Bishop Herbert was translated to the See of Norwich, he left it behind to be the official crozier of the Bishops of Blackburn. In the middle we see the Cathedral Cross, a fine example of Omar Ramsden's work, and on the right the virgin that he produced. Omar Ramsden had an apprentice called Leslie Durbin who is now much acclaimed and is the most decorated silversmith in the history of this realm. Here are two examples of his work, both virgins made for the Cathedral; and here is a ciborium that was presented to the Cathedral as a gift from one of our Friends. The Friends organisation marked the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the 1826 church which is now the nave of the Cathedral, and also the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese by presenting this wonderful silver gilt wafer box made by Leslie Durbin bearing the Pax Madonna. The presentation of the gift was delayed until 1977 because that was the year of the Queen's Jubilee and Leslie Durbin had been commissioned to provide the special hallmark that was to be used throughout that year. More recently Dr Durbin was commissioned to design the pound coins for Wales and Scotland. He has also produced these Churchwarden's staves, on pair being surmounted by the Pax Madonna and St George of England; the other pair by the coats of arms of St Chad and Edward the Confessor. Thus each pair represents the authority of Church and State.

This statue was sculpted by Josefina de Vasconcellos and was commissioned by the Mothers' Union as a memorial to Helen Dex who for many years had been their Secretary.

In 1973 Provost Jackson was appointed and he set himself with a will finally to complete the Cathedral.

The first thing to be done was to decide on the location in which the choir should be sited and, after much experiment, it was agreed that it should be placed west of the central space. The stalls were built and put into position and they are made of afrormosia and cedar wood. The Choir is a voluntary one and maintains a very high standard of English church music, as we can now hear,

Psalm 98 Chant by Thomas Attwood (1765-1838) Faux-bourdon by David Cooper

It was also required that there should be a small church within the Cathedral; daily and small devotional services do not require the whole extent of the nave and therefore a Jesus Chapel

was created east of the central space. To do this, and to provide an ambulatory through which people could walk from one side to the other, two screens were installed to the east of the altar and on one of these seats were arranged for Diocesan dignitaries, leading up to the one in the midst which is a new Cathedral or Bishop's Throne, made as part of the overall scheme.

The Jesus chapel was created in the first two bays of the Forsyth Chancel and here we see behind the altar the Icon painted by John Hayward depicting Our Lord at the moment of his resurrection, and on the left the Aumbry for the purpose of reserving the Blessed Sacrament, which was a gift of Laurence King.

Looking westwards in the Jesus Chapel we see the other side of the two screens dividing it from the Sanctuary.

A group of ladies of the Cathedral embroidered on canvas, covers for the kneelers to be used in this chapel. They form a set of hassocks having the armorial devices of the Cathedral and the various diocese to which Blackburn has belonged. The completion of the Jesus Chapel was delayed for sometime until the Friends, of their generosity, paid for the installation of the final screen on the north side. This is in memory of Roy Stevens who for many years was Chairman of the Friends organisation and worked unfailingly and indefatigably for the glorification of the Cathedral. The engraving depicts various Saints and Bishops connected with the history of the Church in Blackburn and the artists is Bryant Fedden of Cheltenham. Whilst still in office, Provost Kay commissioned Advent Hunstone of Tideswell to carve these Rood figures showing Our Lord on his cross attended by His Mother and St John, and he gave them to the Cathedral. They were remounted and hung high above the Jesus Chapel by the generosity of The Friends.

We can now say that Provost Jackson's first ambition had been fulfilled and that the worshipping area of the Cathedral had been completed.

At a great service attended by Princess Alexandra on 18th November 1977 the Cathedral was finally consecrated by Bishop Martineau. Here we see Bishop Martineau and Princess Alexandra signing the Deed of Consecration.

One of the reasons why Blackburn Parish Church was chosen to be the Cathedral of the new Diocese was that it had been built on a platform, made necessary by the fall of the land, and therefore underneath the Cathedral was a large and roomy crypt.

This has not yet been completed and although much has been done, much is still required before its use can be fully exploited. The crypt can provide many apartments and rooms in which the Cathedral can fulfil its role as a cultural, social and artistic centre as well as a meeting place, and for many other causes.

The right Reverend Stewart Cross was appointed as the 6th Bishop of Blackburn and at another great service on the 8th May 1982 he came in procession from the Town Hall to the Cathedral, was admitted, and duly placed upon his throne. Bishop Cross gave to the Cathedral great joy when on his arrival in the Diocese he consented readily to become the Patron of the Friends. He immediately committed himself to the work of the organisation and commends it to the attention of the Diocese in these words:-

"Well, I hope you've found this story as fascinating as I've done. Sometimes I've looked at a mediaeval cathedral and marvelled at what was then achieved. Seven or eight hundred years ago England's population was much smaller than it is to-day. With one of our modern building techniques, mediaeval men nevertheless built great churches to the Glory of God; it was a

massive expression of commitment and faith. And still to-day we live in history; our actions and achievements for better or worse, are now writing what will be history to-morrow. During the darker days of this 20th Century it has looked at times like being a very secular, materialistic faithless age. T.S. Elliot, a prophet pulling no punches, wrote in the 1930s. "Here were decent, godless people, their only memorial the asphalt road and a thousand lost golf balls". But Blackburn Cathedral and others like it, enlarged, improved, built, rebuilt this century, continue to demonstrate a loving care for the things of God. Here craftsmen's art and music's measure combine to inspire God's people on their pilgrim way. Every church building, from the humblest village church upwards, stands as a witness in the community to the presence of God. It is the community's spiritual home. Members of a scattered family often dream of home and hold in great affection a building they can only rarely return to, step inside and enjoy. But we, the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral, hope increasingly to be joined in a fellowship of care and prayer by members of God's family throughout the Diocese. With this presentation, this programme, we greet you in the love of Christ and pray that these sounds and sights of the Cathedral will have drawn us more closely together in Him.'

Cathedral Choir Hallelujah chorus from Messiah (Handel)

Slide 172 - compiled and narrated by Canon GA Williams MA

Slide 173 - Photography by John Bertalot, John Salter and others

Slide 174 - Bishop Herbert sequences by kind permission of Pennine Films Ltd

Slide 175 - Organist and Master of the Choristers, David Cooper MA, FRCO(CHM)

Slide 176 - The Cathedral Bellringers, Captain Geoffrey Haworth,

Secretary Gary Wignall

Slide 177 - titles by Pleckgate High School Blackburn

Slide 178 - Sound Recording by Richard Hartley

Slide 179 - Presented by the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral

Slide 180 - The End