



Pepperpots

Magazine of The Friends of Southwell Cathedral – issue 52, Autumn 2020



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*Work underway in
the Chapter House*

Editor's Welcome

Charlie Leggatt



Welcome to the autumn 2020 issue of Pepperpots.

What an extraordinary year it has been – one in which we have had to learn new styles of living and seemingly ever-changing modes of interaction with family, friends and neighbours. A casualty was the Festival and AGM, which had to be cancelled (the Hon.

Treasurer writes more on page 3). We had hoped that the autumn lecture (11th November; on the Canadian artist, Tom Thomson) could proceed but this is now postponed until next spring.

There have been times and moments of inspiration during these difficult times, notably in the work of the NHS and other front-line services. Southwell Minster itself has proven admirably resilient and adaptable, despite many curtailments, and we owe the staff our thanks and admiration. Now, as we look to the structural and societal recovery period from Covid-19 (albeit staggered and with some backward steps), the Minster needs our support more than at any previous time since our foundation. Visitor donations and self-generated income from bookings collapsed at the height of lockdown. In which regard, many thanks to all Friends who responded to the request in the last issue of Pepperpots to review what they subscribe. As noted then, our rates are considerably below those invited or required by other cathedrals.

The main focus of our present support has of course been our continuing commitment to the 'Leaves of Southwell' project. Remarkably – and to the great credit of all involved – the renewal of the high Quire roof was completed on time. As the photographs on the front cover show, work is now underway in the Chapter House itself.

On a reflective note, we learnt with sadness of a milestone in the history of the Friends; Mary Dickson, our last surviving founder member from 1947, died on 9th April. Malcolm Stacey reminds us that past Pepperpots have published her reflections; her father was Vicar of Norwell and she recalled bicycling with him to Lowdham "the real joy was that we broke our journey at Southwell to attend Evensong; such a welcome rest and such a treat!" How her words resonate today.

Finally, to conclude on a bright note, we are delighted at how many of you have responded so positively to the email bulletins we began sending out on an occasional basis. This innovation can, though, only be truly effective as a means of keeping in touch if more Friends let us have an email address.

If you have not already done so, please send it to me at: editor.pepperpots@icloud.com

Dean's Column

The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan



My tentative prediction in the March edition of Pepperpots "we are bracing ourselves for an uncertain and difficult few months" reads as something of an understatement given our recent experience.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has changed our day to day lives in ways

unimaginable back then. I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and well during these challenging times. The experience of 'lockdown' and the enforced 'stay at home' message, multiple cancellations (including the June Friends' Festival), and most distressing of all, the closure of Cathedrals, parish churches and all places of worship for three months, was traumatic. All but a few of the Cathedral staff were 'furloughed' (and some still are) and others adapted to working from home. IT and online skills, including worship, soon became the 'new normal'. Thank you, Friends, – you contributed to the new website in 2018, without which the Cathedral's major channel of communication would have floundered. Other good news is that remarkably the Leaves Project is progressing on time and on budget due to excellent contractors who picked up the pace after six weeks off site in 'lockdown'.

Reopening the Cathedral in mid-June for private prayer and in early July for public worship was joyous and moving. Sacred buildings are not irrelevant icons from the past. Many people, who would not necessarily declare a Christian faith, find comfort and inspiration from the

"Its open door symbolises hope and welcome – probably more than we realise."

Minster's enduring presence over the centuries. Its open door symbolises hope and welcome – probably more than we realise. Our dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to ensure the Cathedral and shop are 'Covid secure' and although there are many restrictions still in place – and likely to be for many months. The Minster and its community offer spiritual and emotional refreshment for hurting and weary souls, drawing from the deep wells of our heritage and living faith, and this is a precious gift in anxious times.

As you would expect, income has plummeted with fewer visitors, cancelled events and a general anxiety for many about venturing out into public spaces, but – and it is a big BUT there is an abundance of hope, prayer, love, generosity and faith at the heart of what defines the Cathedral's purpose and mission. Thank you, Friends, for being part of its future.



The cancelled Annual General Meeting

The Hon. Treasurer, Roger Wilson, writes



Yes, certainly, it was a great shame that Covid-19 stymied the usual wonderful sight of Friends enthusiastically enjoying the annual day out at Southwell, and once again planned with an excellent speaker engaged, this time Martin Bussey, to thrill us in the morning, followed by the joy of the.... AGM.... to look forward to in the afternoon and rounded off with Evensong to gather our thoughts.

...and what about the AGM?

Our constitution is silent on the matter of what to do about voting in the event of cancelled AGMs (this is something which we might need to consider). Whether or not an AGM was held, two important matters had to be addressed and voted upon – the receipt and adoption of the financial statements ending 31st December 2019 and the re-election of our Independent Examiners, Brooks Mayfield Limited. The “Receipt of the financial statements...”, which normally would be the presentation and explanation of the accounts at a “physical” AGM, was evidenced by publication in the Spring issue of Pepperpots together with, I hope, a satisfactory description of them. “Adoption of the financial statements...” and the “Re-election of Brooks Mayfield

Limited...” required your vote and we invited a return of your voting preferences in the same issue of Pepperpots.

We assumed for this process the quorum threshold set out in the Constitution for normal AGMs, which states “one-twentieth of the number of members for the time being or ten members whichever is the greater number”. The number of members eligible to vote was then 430, which implied a minimum taking part in the election would have to be 22 (rounded up to a whole number). I am happy to report that there were 42 returns received (although I had hoped for more) and all were in favour of both propositions, such that the financial statements were adopted and the re-election of Brooks Mayfield Limited as Independent Examiners was confirmed. So, thank you all for your interest and response.

I hope that I have explained adequately the voting process which we used to overcome the lack of a normal AGM. Following further the Charity Commission guidelines, we have to ensure that our minutes record the voting process and the election results, which of course we will do.

...and indeed we now look forward even more to next year’s offerings, when Covid-19 should be a memory. We truly hope that you are all well and will stay safe.

Life during Lockdown

Glenn Formoy, Head of Marketing & Events at the Minster, writes

What a crazy few months! Like many other colleagues at the Minster and millions across the UK, I was furloughed at the start of April. For the first time in fifteen years I no longer had to get up in the morning for work – however, having a three-year-old child ensured there would of course, be no extended lie-ins.

“...there’s a different pace to life now... priorities in life for many people have changed...”

The first week was strange to say the least and I found myself not sure how to react, feeling I should be working and not really allowing myself to have fun on this enforced ‘holiday’. By the second week I’d started to relax and enjoy the sunny days with my family, playing out in the garden and going for dog walks. DIY projects that had been put off for months were soon completed and our garden has never looked so good. I’ve been out with my camera, a real past passion of mine that had unfortunately fallen by the wayside over the last few years with so little time to

get out and explore, and seen the world through different eyes. We’ve had fun as a family spotting the huge array of wildlife on our doorstep, from owls to pheasants, toads to buzzards, bullfinches to yellowhammers and lots more beside. The air seems cleaner and there’s a different pace to life now and priorities in life for many people have changed around the world for the better.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has had such a devastating impact around the world has, thankfully, left Southwell and the surrounding areas largely untouched. The local community, like many others up and down the country, has rallied round, helping those in need and what is more Christian than that? The Minster of course, was forced to close its doors but through the wonders of technology, only the physical wooden doors; the wider virtual doors remained open and grew larger as services were delivered online, allowing thousands of people over the last few months to ‘attend’ church, a source of comfort and healing for so many. We also know that many viewers are not from the usual congregation and so we are pleased that services have been made more

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*“...the church, as with life,
goes on.”*

accessible to more people, both local and further afield.

As lockdown restrictions were eased, it has been wonderful to see so many people using the church grounds (responsibly and at distance of course). On our daily walk to feed the ducklings at Squire’s Pond, we often walk through the grounds and more often than not every bench along the West Walk is in use, with many more people sat on the grass or in the Education Garden, which as always looks stunning. Hearing the bells day in day out, from pretty much any part of town, gives a great source of inspiration that the church, as with life, goes on. As someone who grew up in Southwell, the town has always held a special place in my heart and it’s great to see the shops re-opening and people out and about supporting their local businesses.

I’m looking forward to returning to work, hopefully by the time you’re reading this, and seeing colleagues and the spectacular view of the Minster from my office window (whenever we’re allowed back into the office). I’ve missed it immensely.

It’s been a trying time for so many, but there have been so many positives to focus on too, which will hopefully

continue in the ‘new norm’, whatever that may be. Families have had extra time to bond and I know for one, that the three months I’ve been able to spend with my young son will be a period of time I’ll never forget, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

From a work point of view, it was such a shame to have to make the decision to cancel so many of our wonderful events in 2020, many of which had seen a lot of hard work and effort go into them from numerous colleagues and external partners, but ultimately it was the right decision and we will all work hard to make sure events in the future can still be held as safely as possible, bringing joy to so many.

Thankfully, the ‘Leaves of Southwell’ and roof restoration projects supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, have managed to carry on with only minimal disruption. I am greatly looking forward to getting back working on this which will also see positive changes to the Education Garden, making it even more of a place of beauty and the perfect setting for events, wedding receptions, anniversary parties and the like – maybe we’ll see you at one? Do please consider us for any of your events, the history and stunning views, both in the gardens and inside the magnificent State Chamber, are second to none in the region.

Contact office@southwellminster.org.uk if you’d like to know more.



Glenn with a DIY lockdown haircut



The Music Foundation

Paul Provost, Rector Chori, writes



The Lay Clerks at the Animal Blessing Service (held outdoors this year in the Education Garden).

Canticum novum – we are singing again! I cannot express in words the joy it gives me to be able to write that short sentence. The last public act of choral worship had taken place on 16th March, and we had to wait until 13th September for the next one. Much has changed in that time both locally and globally, with new approaches to pretty much all aspects of life having emerged from the challenges of lockdowns and other restrictions. It has, understandably, been a worrying time for musicians whose very livelihoods have been put on hold and threatened in the long term. But we are nothing if not creative so, although it is not ideal, there have been a host of virtual expressions of music.

Despite the furloughing of all Minster musicians, with me as the exception, music has continued to play an important part in the life of Southwell Minster. During the suspension of public worship, online worship has proved invaluable to a great many, and it is heartening that music has always been seen as a vital part of this offering. We have in the main produced hymnody and some organ voluntaries (played initially on my rather low-tech ‘organ’ keyboard!), but occasionally ventured into more complex waters. The boy and girl choristers really stepped up here by producing individual recordings made by singing along to a backing produced in my home office, which were then sent back to me and edited together to make a performance. This is not the place to list the many skills we have all had to acquire with haste, nor to explain in detail the process of producing ‘virtual’ performances, but it certainly is the place to express heartfelt thanks and admiration for those very special



children whose voices we have continued to hear over the last months.

But we are now back for real, and hopefully to stay. Following much-welcomed research, it was found that singing posed no more significant risk of viral spread than speaking, and thus guidelines could be made, risk assessments written. The practicalities of returning to singing are fairly simple – distance, hygiene, space are all vital factors – and allow us to return to something recognisable if not altogether familiar. It is of course frustrating for congregations not to be allowed to sing yet, and some may say that this is an unnecessary precaution. Whatever your viewpoint on this, there is an opportunity here to connect afresh with the idea of choral worship; choirs sing on behalf of the assembly as an offering of art in worship which allows us to consider and pray the

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familiar texts with greater thought and devotion, much as furniture, vestments, and other religious art gives inspiration to our meditation. This is a duty we take seriously, and our Lay Clerks have been itching to get back to this important work as soon as possible. The choristers are busy rehearsing – we have deliberately delayed their return to singing in services – and their voices will be heard online for a time still, but now in ‘live’ recordings. In short, together with the other important members of our team, including organists and chorister supervisors, it feels right to be back working together.

So far, so good, and as long as there are services of worship then we will be delighted to provide music. It is, however, something which comes at a price, and one cannot deny the expense of our choral tradition in this country. At a time when incomes have been significantly reduced, a sustainable way forward becomes ever more important. Wonderful things have happened, especially the Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund which has undertaken to pay for Lay Clerk salaries until the end of December this year; without this, it may have been very difficult indeed to bring back singing to our Cathedral. And without our professional singers a lot of things would change – we would no longer be able to offer the same variety of music or frequency of services, we would no longer be offering choristerships which involve working as part of a professional group at a high level, we would suffer significant reputational impact. The work my colleagues do with our wonderful choristers is tremendous, bringing up a generation of musically literate and churched young people. As a large youth

ministry, the choristers are at the centre of what we are about: many of them are not of church backgrounds, and we have the chance of welcoming their families to our community. Music here, as in all Cathedrals and churches where there are significant musical traditions, is inextricably linked with our mission and ministry, and is by its very nature an outward-looking endeavour. If we are to see this flourishing into the future, we need to work hard now to protect what we already have, and that will mean, for a time, financial support.

I would like to end on an unequivocally positive note.

“...I have seen nothing but smiling, happy faces.”

Welcoming choristers back, and newcomers (eleven in all) for the first time, I have seen nothing but smiling, happy faces. They have engaged with rehearsals as much as with all the Covid-secure protocols, and have been fascinated to see the Minster laid out differently. The Lay Clerks have engaged with new ways of doing things too, and are desperate to sing for their full round of services again. All of my colleagues have thrown themselves into making things work. At the heart of this community is positivity and a willingness to make things work, which is, after all, the only way us musicians can be successful. We look forward to a bright future, and to remembering the things we have learned along the way.



Despite being left untended at the height of lockdown, the dahlias in the Education Garden looked splendid this autumn.

Out & About

Pauline Rouse writes



Our rescheduled visit to Lichfield Cathedral has, sadly, been cancelled again. The Cathedral is not making any bookings at the moment and the Café there has been closed permanently. At the moment we haven't been able to rearrange a date to visit Deene Park that we had to postpone in September.

We are hopeful that circumstances will improve and we will be able to enjoy our Friends outings again soon; in the meantime I hope you all stay safe and well.



Looking towards 2021 with Southwell Music Festival

Amy Rushby, Marketing Consultant for the Festival, writes



Photos:
Dick Makin



Southwell Music Festival has become a main stay in the town's cultural diary since its launch in 2014. This year, our artists certainly missed their annual Southwell experience, catching up with old friends and bringing a programme of diverse musical offerings to the town over the August Bank Holiday weekend – and we missed seeing you, the audience, enjoying six days of music exploration together.

To fill the gap, you may have noticed that we released two new performances for you to watch in the comfort of your own home. During Lockdown Festival Founder and Artistic Director, Marcus Farnsworth, and Associate Artistic Director, Jamie Campbell, were granted access to the Minster to record two poignant, socially-distanced performances. Visit our YouTube channel at youtube.com/SouthwellMusicFestival to listen and enjoy. Thanks to all those at the Minster who made this possible at a difficult time.

On the Festival YouTube channel, you will also find that a selection of familiar festival faces made their own videos from home, telling us more about their own Southwell memories, favourite performances and their lockdown experience.

As you are probably aware, these COVID times have had a devastating impact on the UK arts and cultural sector. Many organisations in the sector are registered charities, generating income through trusts and foundations, individual philanthropy, corporate sponsorship and ticket sales. As a small charity, a significant proportion of the Festival's annual income is generated through ticket sales, and even though there hasn't been a 2020 Festival to finance, there is still annual organisational running costs that need to be met. We have been incredibly

fortunate that our supporters and friends have generously donated to our emergency crowdfunding appeal, which to date has raised over £7,500. We would like to extend an enormous thank you to all those who have donated, your generosity has been appreciated.

Earlier in the year we also made a successful application to Arts Council England's Emergency Funding scheme. This funding will go some way towards covering our costs and developing the future of the Festival. We would like to publicly thank Arts Council England for this support, knowing that hard decisions have needed to be made at what is an uncertain time for the whole arts and cultural sector.

We very much look forward to reuniting with our friends, supporters and volunteers in Southwell very soon. We are currently exploring ways to safely bring live music to you, potentially through small scale chamber concerts. We don't know exactly when or how we'll be able to do that as yet, as we have to do it safely and make sure that all relevant precautions are in place in terms of social distancing. Either way we look forward to performing and enjoying music together again as soon as we can and, of course, will be back with a bang in August 2021 with a Festival that exhilarates and inspires.

If you wish to keep up-to-date with future Festival news and developments please join our mailing list by visiting southwellmusicfestival.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (search Southwell Music Festival). The online crowdfunding appeal is also still open, should you wish to make a donation.

Please visit southwellmusicfestival.com/Fund2020 or email us at info@southwellmusicfestival.com.



Pepperpots is the magazine of The Friends of Southwell Cathedral

The Friends of Southwell Cathedral exist to bind together all who love the Cathedral Church and who desire to help in preserving for posterity the fabric of this building; in maintaining daily worship therein; and in enhancing its adornment.

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