

Provost Heywood wrote a short guide book to the Minster, entitled "Southwell Minster: A commentary for the visitor". This appeared in several editions, all slightly different. The first edition is printed here in its entirety because there are several interesting historical details. The book also contained 12 black and white photographs.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER

HINTS for a preliminary walk round

MARK WELL HER BULWARKS

You must have entered the Minster to get this little book, but you are advised to go out again, and walk slowly round the *outside* of the Minster first, keeping as far away from it as you can. Try to solve the puzzle presented by the differences between the two western towers. Examine the patterns on the concentric semi-circles of the North Porch. Look at the heads high up on the Chapter House, and on each side of the Choir, and on each face at the top of both of the western towers. A telescope or a pair of glasses will help.

Before you enter again look at the ruins of the Archbishop's palace on the South Side and the heads built into the wall of the Bishop's Chapel. Then go in at the south door, but don't spend time at the bookstall. Under the floors of the pews on your left are some Roman remains - like tiny crazy paving. There is more under the grass in the Residence garden.

Go to the middle under the tower, and be still and quiet for a bit, looking in all four directions, and upwards. Get the feel of the place. Then move to the north transept, where you will see what is left of the Saxon church across the top of the little door in the corner.

Walk to the west end of the nave and see how some of its windows have been altered. Then go to the sanctuary step in the choir and see the change of fashion in 130 years. The lectern, and the glass in the lower east windows, deserve attention.

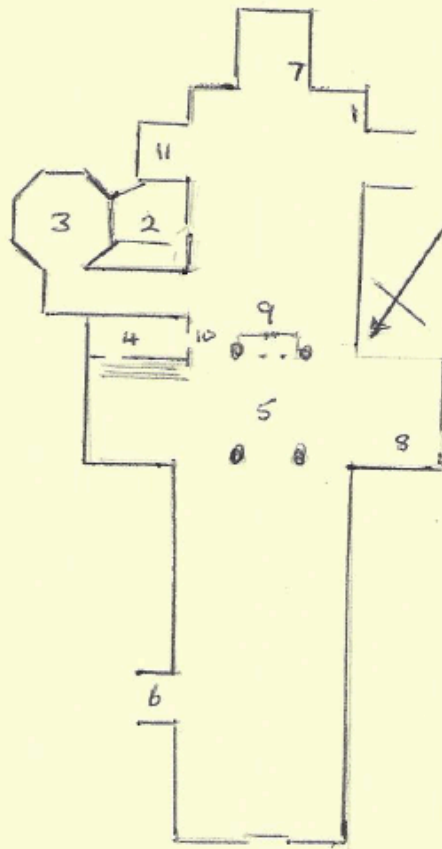
Move back to the screen and spend as long as you can on the heads on its eastern face. Do you think the craftsmen were having jokes with one another? Modern woodcarving is near at hand in the choir stalls. A pocket torch will help you not to miss some good details.

Then go to the north choir aisle and down the steps to the Chapter House. Realise the depth and the detail of the carving, and the width of the roof with no central support. (Another warning - the show cases in the vestibule are not half as important as the Chapter House).

By now you will know exactly which bits you want to spend more time on.

The only mistake you can make is to be in a hurry.

Southwell Minster



Measurements:

- Height of Central Tower
105 feet
- Height of West Towers,
100 feet. (With
Cones, 150 feet)
- Length from East to
West, 309 feet.
(Externally, 318
feet)

Key:

- 1. Men's Chapel
- 2. Vestries
- 3. Chapter House
- 4. Airmen's Chapel
- 5. Crossing
- 6. North Porch and Parvise
- 7. Sedilia
- 8. Tessellated Pavement
- 9. Screen
- 10. Steps to Library
- 11. Girls' Chapel

JHB

DATES

	A.D.
Tessellated Pavement	about 200
Nave and Transepts	1108 - 1150
Choir	1234 - 1250
Chapter House	1295 - 1300
Screen	1330
Sedilia	1350
Perpendicular windows inserted	1450
Lectern	1505
Archbishop Sandys' Tomb	1588
Font	1661
Bells	1693
Spires removed from Western Towers	1802
Spires restored to Western Towers	1880
Minster made Cathedral of Southwell Diocese	1884
New High Altar	1933
Organ rebuilt	1934
Friends of Southwell Minster formed	1946

BISHOPS

George Ridding	1884 - 1904
Edwyn Hoskyns	1904 - 1925
Bernard Heywood	1926 - 1928
Henry Mosley	1928 - 1941
Russell Barry	1941 -

PROVOSTS

W J Conybeare (Rector 1916)	1931 - 1945
H C L Heywood	1945 -

WHAT THE MINSTER IS FOR

"Minster" and "Cathedral" are not interchangeable terms.

The word Minster can mean three things:-

1. A big church.
2. A church joined to a monastery.
3. A bishop's semi-independent outpost.

The 3rd meaning is the one from which the designation "Southwell Minster" comes.

A thousand years ago the Archbishops of York were given the Manor of Southwell, and so a college of priests began here, and the church was their Minster. That determined the scale of this Minster, when, later on, it was built. And that made it the Mother Church of Nottinghamshire. It has always been the Parish Church of this place.

In modern times it has been made a Cathedral, or the place where a Bishop has his official throne.

So it has two distinct functions: to be at once the home of the parishioners and the headquarters of the Bishop, and so of that part of the Holy Catholic Church which is in Nottinghamshire.

BOOKS about the Minster

The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire, R.Thoroton

Antiquities of Southwell, W.Dickinson

History of Southwell, W.Dickinson

History of Southwell, Shilton

The History of the Collegiate Church of Southwell, W.B.Killpack & T.H.Oarke

Illustrations of the Collegiate Church of Southwell, by E.H.Buckler, with an architectural description by J.F.Dimock

An Account of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of Southwell, G.M.Livett

Visitations and Memorials of Southwell, Camden Society - 1891

Southwell (Bell's Cathedral Series), A.Dimock - 1901

Transactions of the Thoroton Society, Vol.15 - Nottingham 1912

A History of the Bells and Chimes, W.A.James - Southwell 1921

A History of Southwell in Saxon Times, W.A.James - Southwell 1923

An Account of the Grammar and Song School of Southwell Minster, W.A. James - Southwell 1927

The Foliage, Flowers and Fruit of Southwell Chapter House, A.C.Seward in the Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Communications, Vol.XXV - Cambridge 1935

The Leaves of Southwell, N.Pevsner Portfolio of English Cathedrals - London 1945

Portfolio of English Cathedrals - Southwell - London n.d.

For comparison with the grotesques on the Western Towers see Leon Underwood, *Masks of West Africa*.

For the glass in the lower east windows see John Booth in *Country Life*, Vol. CXIII, No.2932, 1953

For the glass generally see Nevil Truman in the *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, Vol.XI, No 4, 1954-55 (These last two notes are from the third edition).

COMMENTARY

Nobody in his heart wants a guide book. It is an impertinent intrusion into private joy. We don't come to places like this to revise our history or our architecture. Quite possibly there is little there to revise. And it is unlikely that we come in a mood which welcomes pious exhortation, even though the reason for this building is that it shall serve as the scene of man's deliberate approach to God. We don't come for edification in any of its forms. We come to enjoy beauty, and to attend to beauty's evocation of our debt to a past, richer in many ways than our tortuous present.

We come to enjoy beauty, and here, often unexpectedly, we find it as we turn the corner in the road.

Far off most beaten tracks, dominating a tiny country town, and with its roots lost in the history of a thousand years, stands Southwell Minster, since 1108 the mother church of Nottinghamshire, and since 1884 the Parish Church Cathedral of the Diocese of Southwell.

Though it is far from the main roads, and though neither rail nor road services at present go out of their way to encourage visitors, the trickle of those who find their way to Southwell is growing into a stream.

No one who sees Southwell forgets it. Many would hold it to be one of England's most beautiful buildings. Many return to it year by year from afar, as piety calls them to the renewal of their pilgrimage, and in turning their steps here they are but following those who, through the centuries, have found that this is "a fair place and the joy of the whole earth".

In recent years knowledge of Southwell has spread. Its services have been broadcast, and its carving has been reproduced in well-known pictures. Many who have visited Southwell have taken with them to the ends of the earth something of its unchanging dignity and quiet calm. Here is England epitomised. Here is a cathedral in a country village. Here is a church 850 years old speaking in its stones to the busyness of today. Here is one of the noblest examples of what our past has preserved for us, to be used, in old ways and in new, to meet man's varied needs and to minister to his delight.

For here is yet one more proof of the stubborn fact that there is no ignoring the Christian religion. Here, behind the pageant and pomp of archbishops, and the press of politics and the bickerings of prebends, have lived and worshipped the men and women of an English village. And these stones embody not a grandeur remote from their common life, but their laughter and their desires, their enjoyment of forest and field, their awe and fantasy, and their convictions, perplexed, and still, to some, perplexing, about the source of it all, and how they and their surroundings were continually renewed and sustained.

We can, if we will, atrophy all this with names - the technical arid names of theology or architecture or some varieties of history. But when we do so, we banish the persons who have quickened us here - that great company which no man can number; and the place then may lapse into being a mere museum, instead of a loved and loving home, a treasure house, and a deep and inexhaustible well.

So while you sit, or while you walk about, keep your eyes and your ears wide open. The music of the ages is echoing in these walls and never is Bethlehem very far away. For more than music waits to declare itself to you; and if you come, as we all do, to enjoy beauty bodied out in curve and shadow, in foliage and grotesque, you may find, as most do, that with the enjoyment there comes that which is beyond enjoyment, but which is never beyond your need.

GOING ROUND

As good a starting point as any is to lie on your back on the grass outside the west door and look at the heads all-round the tops of the two towers. The outside of the building tends to get forgotten, but you will not forget these heads when you have seen them. Indigestion and sloth, greed and toothache, and all sorts of moods and outlooks find expression in these grotesques. And in southern Nigeria something very like them stands at the entrance to villages.

Moving north enjoy the teddy bears on the transept, and the double-headed snakes round the windows of the little room over the north porch. Between that porch and the transept there are some more diverting beads. And all round the Chapter House at parapet level is a mixed assembly of men and animals and devils and women - antlered, entertaining, and alive.

Near the east end observe the red brick court (Vicars' court) with its five houses, and then as you move on you will see the ruins of the last house occupied by the Archbishops of York. They have not lived here since the Civil War. It is now part of the Bishop's private house, so it is not ordinarily open to the public. On the wall of the little chapel you will find some exciting heads; and while standing there look up to the parapet of the choir and look down the long line of beads, many of which are reminiscent of Beatrix Potter.

Immediately on the left as you enter the South Door there are some pews. Roman paving is to be seen through two trap doors in the floor; and years ago more was seen in the Residence garden when grass was being levelled. It is anybody's guess what the Romans were doing, but probably the existence of the wells here had something to do with it.

If you then stand in the middle of the church under the tower and get your bearings, you may find that you first want to go and sit in the nave. Apart from two bits of an earlier church (one over the door in the N transept, and the other a bit of a pillar now on the south side of the High Altar) this is our earliest part. In the first half of the twelfth century a stream of carts was bringing the stone from Mansfield. Our freedom from smoke has preserved it very well, but there is trouble on the North Face and North Porch, and round the South Door. Some of the windows in the Nave have been rebuilt, probably in the fifteenth century. On the west side of a pillar on the south side of the Nave (about opposite the pulpit) can be seen traces of an early representation of the Annunciation.

The choir built with this present Norman nave extended about as far as the first step. It lasted about a hundred years, until the first half of that astonishing thirteenth century when so much was moving in the mind and spirit of man. Then the Archbishop of the day decided to double the choir, building the present east end first, and only then pulling down what was there. It is easy to see that alignment was not quite true at the junction of the two parts of the building. The height of the triforium arches has an interesting effect.

The glass in the lower lights in the east end was bought in Paris in 1818 and brought here. It was from a church which had been destroyed in the Revolution

The lectern in the choir was once in Newstead Abbey.

About the end of the 13th century another Archbishop decided to build the Chapter House. Everyone has heard of this, and there have been many visitors who think it is the only thing to see in the Minster. If you sit on one of the seats it is easier to see the depth of the carving in the bosses in the roofs: and then the eye can travel to the carving round the door, and round the room itself. There can be no attempt at describing this wealth of detail. Birds, berries, acorns, mermaids, pigs, dogs, hares, lizards, are all there, fresh and mostly unspoilt. Here is the work of an acute observer - one who recognised that accuracy of observation, and accuracy in recording the results of

Thirty or forty years later was added the Screen. Its richest parts are too easily neglected. You can see people who enter the choir, turn, look upward at the larger beads near the top, and then pass on. But it is in the eighty smallest heads on the lower part of the east side of the screen that there is most to be enjoyed. Caricature and jokes, lust and laughter, all the ordinary rough and tumble of everyday life of ordinary people like ourselves are there displayed; and in that display is uttered a stern contradiction of the division of the world into sacred and secular. These grimacing heads mouth their reminder that only an integrated world makes sense, and it may be that that is the last and wisest word that any building such as this can offer today.

You will not need many more hints. By now you will know where to linger, and which parts to revisit. Do not omit to visit the North Transept once again. Sandys' tomb has both beauty and quaintness, and down the steps near it is a chapel (careful inspection will show that building was probably suspended for some years when it was a dozen feet high) in which some work connected with the R.A.F. is to be seen. In the Choir notice the carving under the seats in the six return stalls, and the modern carved ends of the two western blocks of stalls on each side. The wrought iron gates to the choir were designed and made in a Lincolnshire village. And wherever you go, whenever you find a stone head, large or small, grave or gay, remember with gratitude Edward Cludd who, though a hater of the Church and a keen supporter of Cromwell, loved the Minster and did much to preserve it. And remember, also, that great company who have left no memorial, but whose love for this place, expressed in service through the centuries, has made it possible for you to find such joy today.

ANSWERS to most frequent questions

The ancient Grammar School and the Minster Choir are inextricably interwoven. An excellent arrangement with the County Education Committee and the Ministry of Education gives us most of the benefits of a Choir School with much less than the usual responsibilities.

We have some interesting copes, and if a verger is not too busy he may be able to show you some of them. One - an early 18th century French cope - was found in a cupboard in the library and restored by the Friends of Southwell. The Friends have also given two frontals, one triple oak kneeler, side hangings for the South Choir Altar, and a truck and lifting tackle.

Southwell had all its endowments taken away by an Act of 1841.

The Rector of Southwell became Provost in 1931. A Provost is exactly the same as a Dean with the additional responsibility of having charge of a parish. In England there are 15 Provosts and 27 Deans.

The organ was enlarged and rebuilt in 1934 by Hill, Norman and Beard from an earlier organ by Bishop. Most of it is invisible in the south triforium. There are two consoles.

There are ten bells in all. Two are used only for the tunes which are played twice daily. The remaining eight are for change ringing.

The staff of the Minster consists of the Provost, (a Chancellor was added by the third edition) a Priest-Vicar, a Rector Chori and Assistant Organist, five (six by third edition) lay clerks, three vergers, one dog whipper, and up to twenty choristers and probationers.

(The office of dog whipper dates from days when families brought their dogs to church, and an official took charge of them. The dog whipper now cares for the Minster Yard).

By the time the third edition came out, the following poem had been inserted after the paragraph about the re-building of the choir:

For the thirteenth century was stretching,
Stretching minds and men,
Stretching shapes and stones;
Man's turbulent spirit was stretching,
Stretching up through the solid lightness
Of column upon column;
Stretching up to the light and the sky and their heaven.
Exploring; daring experiment;
Shafts holding and soaring,
And the strong weight of each buttress
Securing and staying
The vault and the wall and the arch.
Stretching, exploring,
In daring experiment -
Minds stretching,
Up, out and beyond -
Stretching - still stretching - up, up and away.

And after the building of the Chapter House comes this poem:

And the forest stretched over England:
And men learnt to see,
To look, to remember, to compare
And to find beauty's pattern told out in the leaves.
So science began:
 Observe accurately;
 Record truthfully;
 Compare wisely;
 Learn humbly.
So is the march of man's knowledge
Captured in our stone -
Captured in the particular, the trivial
Here is a first stone of Calder Hall.

Then, after his description of the Screen, Provost Heywood, in this third edition, adds a short paragraph and another poem:

Pevsner, in Nottinghamshire (p.170) says of the school that did our screen: "Its genius is unquestioned, even if one cannot fail to realize how licentious 1320 was as compared with the noble and more disciplined thirteenth century". And sometimes you can almost hear them working to a song like this:

Tom had a girl with a snuggly chin,
Bill had the devil for next of kin,
We're all the same when it comes to sin,
So let's all go on to the screen;
Jane and Tom and Bill and me,
With some of our bastards out on the spree!
Chip and chisel - at least we're free
To put what we think on the screen

Inside the front cover is the following poem:

And the Spirit quickened the eyes and the hands of men,
("Life of ages richly poured"),
Moulding the smooth slow curves of an arch
("Oh life, that makest all things new");
Never the dull, the expected,
The strictly symmetrical pattern;
Always the flash, the surprise,
The blinding moment declaring the heart of the maker.
Never the dull, the expected,
And never two isolate worlds:
One world, one creator,
One life of the ages:
And the beauty of holiness
Captured in laughter
By craftsmen and chisel and stone.
And Southwell's approaches
Are gentle and graceful,
And subtle and smiling,
And secret and still.
The mind of the Maker
Is hauntingly whispered
By tools, and tools' masters
Who bent to his will.

And inside the back cover:

But I would come here alone at full moon in snow,
Come and wander from capital to capital,
Tasting the columns crowned with their leaves.
I would see them twine and twist,
Alive in veined beauty.
I would see them blend and marry,
Taste the fruit of their berries,
And listen in moonlight
To the whispers of the men who gave this being,
Men who had time to see.

and on the back cover:

Strong uncreate desire,
 bridging his own making by being,
 (being to give, to renew, and to hold),
 made, of the flesh of a man child,
 quick cradled altar of man's common life.
So the depth of the darkening distance
 was spanned by man's maker who made himself man.

Inside the front cover of the fourth edition (1960) we read:

Bare boughs stand sentinel over the winter's cold,
And nothing stirs. Yet ceaseless inner life
Orders the promise of the enfolded bud.

So misery's vale, cold, darkly hopeless,
Fashions for faith its living water. His poor birth
And cruelest death, wrought victory
When all was still, and all seemed more than lost.
Still stones pile to a grey roofless gable,
Never again to know the riot of the feast,
Nor the ripple of scarlet,
Nor the prick of the hot wood ash.

But tomorrow's green stem,
Finding life in the extremity of unlikeliness,
Springs from those wearying joints,
Quick, quickening, erect and secure.
So, once, Jewry, in its grey decline,
Was nursing mother to tomorrow's Babe.

HERE IS... YOUR CHANCE

This place needs money to maintain it

If you don't like being asked to help ...don't read this bit

The life of a diocese grows round the bishop. Its centre is where he has his seat. Thence he governs and teaches. The parish is a convenience for practical administration: but the parish priest is there only as one who exercises that part of the bishop's charge which is entrusted to him: the cathedral church derives its distinctive status and function from the bishop. This is what we express when we call it the mother church of the diocese. Our statutes describe the function of the cathedral church thus: "to offer day by day, so far as in man lies, comely and acceptable worship to Almighty God; that it may be a fountain of inspiration to the clergy and laity of the diocese".

This means regular daily worship of the best that can be offered: and opportunity, and active encouragement, for all to come here for common central acts of worship in any of their natural groupings (British Legion, Mothers' Union, Scouts, Guides, Nurses, and so on). If we are to think and live as a diocese, Southwell must be the centre, and the more the cathedral church *is* the centre, the more we shall think and live as a diocese.

Southwell has helped and inspired many: and it still does this. But increasing opportunities of usefulness to the Diocese, and beyond, entail increased expenditure, and Southwell cannot supply all its own needs. In 1841 the Church Commissioners took over the ancient endowments of the Minster, and with them the responsibility for making competent provision for the Minster, *not* as a cathedral but *only* as a parish church. Southwell owes the Commissioners nothing but gratitude for the liberality with which they have interpreted their duties. Since 1884 the Minster has been a Parish Church Cathedral in a parish of about 2,000 people; and in recent years the specifically *cathedral* obligations have increased rapidly, and are likely to develop further.

For regular daily choral services men and boys are needed. But the work of a lay clerk does not provide a living wage. And the present lay clerks have other work, which they can combine with their duties in the choir. But a higher stipend is necessary to enable men to come to Southwell, and without such men the traditional daily worship of an English cathedral cannot be maintained. Further, there is no margin whatever with only five lay clerks. A sixth is needed if we are to be sure that we can "offer day by day comely and acceptable worship".

Any speculation about our future is shot through with all tomorrow's incipient perplexities and uncertainties. Though the Minster is an ancient foundation it is, nevertheless, only in the infant stages of its existence as a Parish Church Cathedral. Of such there are fifteen in England, all with their different problems, but all alike confronted with the question of how to combine such disparate functions as those of Cathedral and Parish Church. We here are financially favoured because of the Act of Parliament of 1841 and the generous interpretation put upon it by the Commissioners. But the consequence of that Act, and of that generosity, is a weakening of the sense of responsibility of both diocese and parish. For if each does not regard the other as being responsible, both alike tend to regard the Commissioners as being responsible. The Friends (at any rate within the Diocese) exist to foster and develop that very sense of responsibility. It can never be a case of "either - or". It is always "both - and": and they are alike misguided who think solely of Cathedral or Parish. We are, and can glory in being, a Parish Church Cathedral and we must face and overcome the difficulties inherent in a new and quite recent stage in English ecclesiastical genetics.

If those difficulties are to be overcome, our part therein will be by way of conservation and recruitment. But conservation alone will not suffice. Only the steady action by Friends to get more Friends can meet today's difficulties and make tomorrow sure; and that is best done, not by the slow search for the rare person who today can give substantially, but by persuading everyone who loves the Minster to give her five or his ten shillings a year. In this simple sacrament of gift, today will keep faith with both yesterday and tomorrow, and then those who come after will mark well the beauty of those bulwarks so beloved.

An income of about £1,500 is needed. Anyone can join. Subscriptions of any amount are welcome, and no one need think that what he can afford is too small. *All* Friends are invited once or twice a year to meetings in Southwell when policy is discussed and decisions taken. It is hoped that many who read *this* will join; and the Provost will answer any questions or furnish any information.

LAST WORDS

We are anxious to help you in any way we can. Please do not hesitate to ask.

If you want to go up the Tower or if you want to take photographs ask a verger.

It will help us if you remember not to touch carving or brass; not to walk on carpets; and not to leave things about.

An increasing number of parties begin or end their visits with a very short service of thanksgiving and prayer. If you have not arranged this and wish you had, one of the clergy may be about, and he may be able to help.

If a service is going on while you are here, please join **in**. In any case, be sure you say a prayer.

You will certainly want to kneel and pray before you leave.

Here are some suggestions:-

Thank God for this place and for all churches.

Remember builders and worshippers in the centuries of the past.

Pray for those who work and worship here now.

Pray that Christian churches everywhere may give to men of all nations the vision of the living God.

Pray for all men according to their need.

Pray for yourself and your family.

O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive thee, intellect to understand thee, patience to wait on thee, eyes to behold thee, a heart to meditate upon thee and a life to proclaim thee, through the power of the spirit of our Lord Jesus.

-S. Benedict.

Teach us, our God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what we do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

-George Herbert.

Lord, thou knowest how busy we must be this day. If we forget thee, do not thou forget us.

- Sir J.Astley

SOUTHWELL MINSTER . . . welcomes you

Its clergy and vergers are anxious to help you in any way they can. Please do not hesitate to ask.

An increasing number of parties begin or end their visit with prayer. If you have not arranged this, and wish you had, one of the clergy may be about, and he may be able to help you.

If a service is going on while you are here, please join in. In any case, be sure you say a prayer.

Here are some facts of interest:-

There are Roman remains in the South Transept.

A Saxon Church stood here about 700. There are remains in the North Transept.

A charter of the year 956 joined this place up with the Archbishops of York.

The present Nave was built about 1100. (The West Window was added about 1500).

The Choir was built about 1240.

The Chapter House was built about 1300.

The Screen was built about 1340.

The glass in the lower East windows was probably made in France about 1575. It was found in a pawnshop in Paris in 1818 and brought here.

The Minster became a Cathedral Church in 1884.

Ask one of the clergy or vergers to tell you about The Friends of Southwell.

If you want to take photographs ask a verger.

Sometimes a verger is available to take you up the Tower.

It will help us if you remember not to touch carving or brass; not to walk on carpets; and not to leave things about.

Southwell Minster needs you help

Built and maintained by Christians through the centuries, it is today one of England's greatest treasures. It has no state support. To keep it, and to keep it in service, needs everybody's help - ours who live here, yours who come to enjoy this place and its peace. Wherever you live you can help - always by your prayer, and often by your giving.

Wages should go up, costs are rising; and (leaving out of account the pay of its clergy) the Minster, its worship, its cleaning and care, and the long term maintenance of its fabric costs £52 a day. This means that a substantial increase is needed now in everybody's giving. Consider your opportunity now; and also consider your duty. It may be to give regularly - possibly with a covenant. It may be to give generously now. So think; and let your giving match your means, and let your giving be realistic in terms of today's values.

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