

# Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester

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NEWSLETTER



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# Foreword by the Chairman

RICHARD CHISNELL

Since our launch in September 2011, we have been delighted to welcome some 363 members across our individual, joint/family and corporate categories, equating to over 560 individual Friends. Our members are both local and from other parts of Hampshire and beyond, all of them keen to help to preserve one of Britain's finest heritage jewels here in Winchester. Our small but active management team and our busy programme of annual events allow the development of a happy, social network of Friends and assist our fundraising efforts through the year. Following our grant of £9,000 to the Hospital Trustees in our first year, our Board will receive a shortlist of preferred projects from the Hospital Trustees in late March for discussion and agreement at the Friends' Board meeting in April; our decision will be announced at the Friends' AGM. We hope to exceed the grant sum provided in 2012.

Our second annual Friends' Lecture will have taken place by the time you read this issue of our Newsletter, and those attending will have been fully briefed on the evolution of Almshouses by Steve Taylor, in good time for our outing to Dorchester Abbey and Ewelme Almshouse in Oxfordshire on 17 April.

Friends' Day on Saturday 18 May commences at 2.15 pm in St Faith's Parish Hall with our second AGM; this will be followed by a short talk entitled 'Royal Winchester, c. AD 659–1250: Fact or Fiction?' by Professor Tom Beaumont Jones MBE. Afternoon tea in the Master's Garden will allow Friends to socialise before Festival Evensong in St Cross Church sung by the Choir of Winchester Cathedral. Definitely a date for your diary!

Other key dates for 2013 include an outing to Stratford-upon-Avon on Wednesday 19 June; our first Summer Evening Party, with entertainment, in the Master's Garden, on Friday 5 July; and a special visit to St George's Chapel and the State Apartments (optional) at Windsor Castle on Tuesday 3 September, culminating with an inspiring service of Evensong in St George's Chapel.

Our search for musical talent has already begun in preparation for our second Annual Friends' Concert on Saturday 19 October, so do please let one of the Friends' Trustees know if you or a friend or relative might be willing to perform.

Do please support as many of our varied selection of events and activities as you can. Meanwhile, we need to promote the Friends of St Cross Hospital to potential members so that they can join us and share in the fun. Please recommend us to your own network of friends. There's nothing like a good circle of Friends to make the most of life!

Thank you for your support and friendship.

# Foreword by the Treasurer

JOHN PRINGLE

Being new to the nuts and bolts of running a charity, all those involved in the administration of the Friends have found the last year and a bit quite a challenge. But I think your charity is now well grounded, with its procedures tested through a complete annual cycle. Yes, we have had some glitches, with e-mails disappearing into the ether, envelopes wrongly addressed and names mis-spelt. Our apologies to those affected: we have learned from our errors!

The software that runs our membership database and controls our finances has been satisfactory, but we plan to invest in a further programme from the same Data Developments family in order to improve communications and membership management.

Many of you will be aware of forthcoming changes to the way Gift Aid is administered. The piecemeal release of information by HMRC has been taxing the patience of charities and software companies, but we expect to be operating under the new regime well before the deadline. Gift Aid is so important to us, as you will see from the annual accounts. We do not believe the changes will require any additional information from you as Friends.

We also intend to improve our website further in 2013 by introducing a Paypal facility to facilitate payment for Friends' events. We realise that getting to the Porter's Lodge is not convenient for some of you, so this should help.

Do please take a little time to study our Annual Report. We have tried to make it a celebration of what we have been up to in the past year and also to show the accounts in a way that explains how we minimise costs to ensure that as much of your money as possible goes to the Hospital of St Cross to fund essential projects.

We do like to hear your comments and suggestions about the Friends. We have not yet set up a social-media site to act as a forum for ideas as we are not sure how much participation there would be. Do please let us know what you think.



# The Trustees of the Hospital of St Cross

WILLIAM CORBETT

Since 1855 the Hospital of St Cross has been administered under a Scheme of the Charity Commission. The Scheme has been amended on a number of occasions, but the subsisting Scheme from time to time is in effect the constitution of the Hospital.

The current Scheme provides for the Hospital to be managed by a board of fifteen Trustees, none of whom may receive any payment for their work. The Trustees comprise the Master of St Cross, who is appointed by the Bishop of Winchester; the Dean of Winchester; the Mayor of the City of Winchester; a Trustee nominated by Winchester College; a Trustee nominated by Winchester City Council; and ten co-opted Trustees, of whom one shall be a member of the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Faith.

The responsibilities of the Trustees are to look after the welfare of the resident Brothers; to maintain the magnificent buildings of the Hospital and its traditions; to ensure that the Church of St Cross continues to be the centre of the Parish of St Faith; and to so manage the finances of the Hospital that they can achieve these three objectives.

To carry out these responsibilities the Trustees rely on the paid staff of the Hospital, who are led by the Clerk. The Trustees have also established subcommittees of Trustees – Finance, Welfare, Property, Visitors and Risk Management – to ensure that each of these aspects of the Hospital's affairs is regularly reviewed and managed.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

Although the Hospital has an endowment, it is limited and losses incurred in the nineteenth century were never fully recovered. The current finances are therefore very tight and each year the Trustees need to balance their various priorities by setting a spending budget within their means. In addition to the regular expenses of



This stained-glass window in the Brothers' Library commemorates two Henrys and two cardinals



A newly restored shed in the Brothers' Garden

staff, upkeep and the welfare of resident Brothers, the Trustees aim to carry out one or more projects each year.

In the last two years projects have included the refurbishment of the Brothers' Common Room; the refurbishment of the Tower Room (formerly the Muniments Room) and (with help from the Friends) the staircase leading to it; the desilting of the Pond in the Master's Garden; the repair of the walls surrounding the Brothers' Garden; repair work to the Beaufort Tower; repairs to the Church's North Porch; and the purchase of 10 Cripstead Lane to house the Revd Mark Birch as Chaplain to the Hospital and Priest-in-charge of the Parish of St Faith.

The Trustees have also undertaken two rolling programmes. The first will see the upgrading all the Brothers' flats when they fall vacant. Flat 1 is due to be renovated in 2013 following the sad death of Brother Bob Munday. The second is to restore the sheds in the Brothers' Garden. Two sheds were restored in 2012 and the restoration of four more is planned for 2013.

2013 will also see work on some major projects. In the autumn work will begin on a programme of major repairs to the tower of St Cross Church. The Hospital Trustees have been engaged in a major fundraising effort to support this project and happily they are nearing the target, thanks to the generosity of a number of individuals and grant-making charities. The restoration of the choir

furniture in St Cross Church, discussed in greater detail by Dr Nicholas Riall elsewhere in this issue of the Friends' Newsletter, depends on our obtaining a contribution from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The result of the Hospital Trustees' application should be known in June. The refurbishment of the Brothers' Library, so that it can when appropriate be used as an Education Room, also depends on our obtaining a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Even if all these projects are completed much will remain to be done, in addition to our primary responsibility to preserve the Hospital as a home for the Brothers. However, as we approach the 900th anniversary of the Hospital, I hope that its founders would be satisfied with its current state and condition.



Spring colour in the Master's Garden

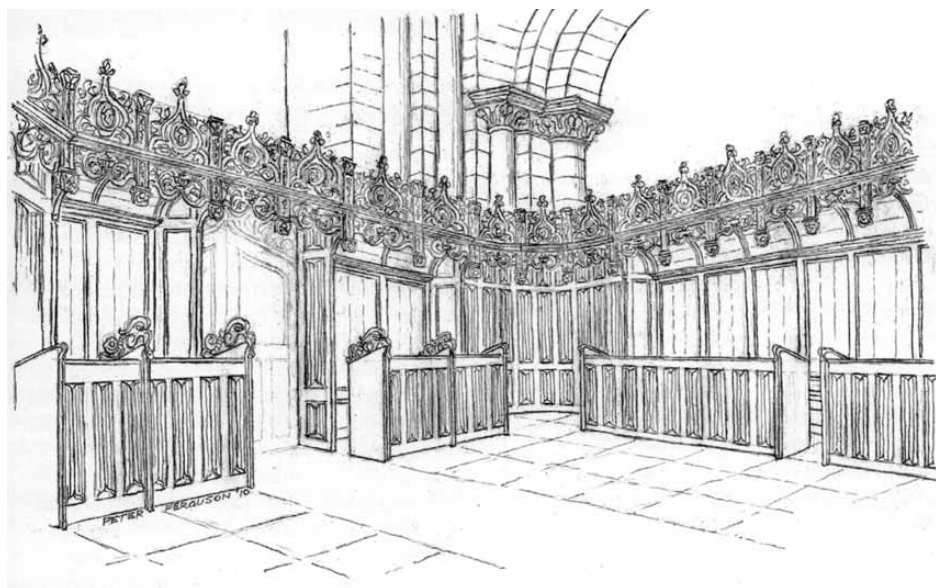


# Restoring the Choir Furniture in St Cross Church

DR NICHOLAS RIALI

The Church of the Hospital of St Cross is justly famed for its architecture. Less often noticed, but almost as important, is the suite of wooden choir furniture in the chancel. Although much battered and no longer intact, this choir furniture is an outstanding example of early Renaissance work in England. It dates to between 1515 and 1520, and was created for the then Bishop of Winchester, Richard Fox.

The choir furniture (which comprises not stalls but benches) was erected to provide magnificent seating for the Master and Brethren of St Cross at a time when Bishop Fox often used the Hospital as a retreat from his duties as bishop and government minister. His personal badge, a pelican vulning (i.e. pecking at its breast), can be seen among the carvings. The choir furniture was created as a U-shaped suite that ran from the north side of the chancel, across its western end and then back along the south side. All that remains today are two canopied benches and desks, with their friezes. The friezes are now detached and hang above the benches between the chancel pillars. In the nave and the morning



Reconstruction of the Renaissance choir furniture in the chancel of St Cross Church, drawn by Peter Ferguson RIBA (by kind permission of Hugh Harrison Conservation)





Bishop Fox's emblem of a pelican vulning

chapel there are remnants of the desks and parts of the frieze that were set across the western end of the chancel, but the four seats and the screen that used to be there have long since vanished.

The choir furniture survived intact until the early nineteenth century, but over the following fifty years or so it was gradually dismantled until nothing was left in the chancel. The two main sections of frieze were returned in the 1870s, but the benches did not follow until the 1920s. However, both benches and frieze were put back in the wrong places; those on the northern side of the chancel belong on the southern, and *vice versa*.

Although the stonework of the Church has benefited from some restoration and maintenance down the years, the choir furniture has largely been ignored. Concerns were raised recently as the importance of this furniture was realised, and efforts are now being made to secure funding to conserve and restore it. Perhaps this will also see the friezes reattached to the benches. This work will cost a very great deal of money, which might lead us to ask: is it worth it?

Fox's Renaissance choir furniture represents one of the earliest post-Gothic suites of furniture in England. Additionally, with its extraordinary set of Renaissance carvings, it is one of the earliest Renaissance settings to be created in the country and certainly the most substantial to survive in the place for which it was made. Perhaps most important of all is that there is now nothing quite like it anywhere else in England, and maybe there never was. The best and



One of the carved sybils beneath the frieze

indeed only parallels that can be found to the St Cross work are to be found in France: in the cathedral at Amiens and among the chapel furnishings from the archbishop's palace at Gaillon that are now in Paris. Is it possible that this is a French-made work? A curious tell-tale feature of the St Cross choir furniture is the use of laminating – that is, gluing pieces of wood together to give the carver a greater thickness of wood in specific places to aid the depth of carving. This can be seen on the south frieze, where the cherub heads were carved on separate pieces of wood: some have fallen off and been lost. Laminating is a French technique and one not found in England in this period.

A less obvious but just as important feature of the St Cross choir furniture are the little figurines that hang from the bottom of the friezes. These feature a series of prophets and sybils (women endowed with the gift of prophecy), all of whom were supposed to proclaim the coming of the Messiah. The prophets and sybils are one of the best such sets in England and again relate to Continental artistic ideas. Several sets of sybils can be seen in Devon, but all were painted on panels, not carved. The St Cross carvings offer insights into Christian beliefs, practices and ideas that have long since vanished almost everywhere else.

It is said that Bishop Fox was fond of Renaissance ornament, but rather curiously his chantry chapel in Winchester Cathedral, which was built at much the same time as the St Cross choir furniture, features hardly any Renaissance work. Moreover, by the 1520s, when the screens were built in the Cathedral, he was blind. This leaves us wondering why he chose such an *avant-garde* style for St Cross. It may be that he did not make the choice for himself but accepted the choir furniture as a gift from the French crown, following the end of the war with France in 1513.

We hope we will secure funding to preserve the choir furniture, and that the restoration work will begin later this year. This will allow us to make further discoveries about how it was made, its date and its origins, for there is much to this story that remains to be told.

# Repairs to the Beaufort Tower

LOUISE BAINBRIDGE

Many remarked on the neat modular scaffold that encased the Beaufort Tower in the autumn of 2012. The lightweight aluminium structure spanned the roofs of the Brethren's Hall and the Porter's Lodge without touching the tiles.

The contract for fabric repairs was awarded to Colin Avery Stonemasons. The tower is built of flint and dressed stone, whose surface was weathered most at high level, particularly in the surviving Green Ventnor stone, which was shaling off in places. A gryphon on one corner had a broken neck, and the leaded lights at high level were loose, having previously been refitted from the inside using hard cement mortars. The rainwater pipe on the south side had split, and plants were growing in the washed-out joints behind.

During the restoration only a few stones were cut out and replaced completely; most of the work done in 2012 involved mortar repair and repointing using traditional lime and sand mixes that are compatible with limestone. Although eroded, original carvings of heads and beasts retain plenty of character; these have been cleaned of moss and lichen, their cracks pinned and their surfaces sheltercoated. The window glass has been releaded, with the







retention of all sound original panes, and high-level sections of lead pipework were renewed.

The sundial on the south side of the turret is at least as old as Owen Carter's drawing of 1848. The conservator Peter Martindale carefully replaced old patch repairs and touched in paintwork mixed to tone in with the last mid-twentieth-century blue-grey layer so that the numerals can again be read from ground level.

The weathervane was mounted on top of the turret in the early twentieth century, its post having been relocated from the church tower. We found that the pine had rotted where it passes through the roof. It has been replaced with a post made of opepe, a sustainably sourced hardwood more commonly used for building jetties because of its durability and dimensional stability. Since the post extends as far below the roof as above, the help of St Cross staff to manoeuvre it into place was much appreciated. The regilded cockerel is now back on top.





Owen Carter, *The Beaufort Tower, St Cross*, 1848, engraved by George Hawkins



## BROTHERS' NEWS

Congratulations to **Brother John Hodges** (left), who celebrated 25 years as a Brother of St Cross on Tuesday 5 March 2013.

**Brother Derek Pryce-Jones** has recently moved to a care home, which can offer him more support than St Cross, an almshouse, can provide.

The Hospital's mobility scooter came to the end of its life at the beginning of December and was finally replaced on 8 March. **Brother Ron Stacey** (Senior Brother) tried out the new one (below left).

The Brothers' Garden, which lies at the rear of their flats, is a private garden in which Brothers can grow flowers and vegetables for their own enjoyment, or sit and enjoy peace and tranquillity away from public gaze. Brothers can also have use of a shed when available. Many sheds have fallen into disrepair and are gradually being replaced.

We are fortunate that the green-fingered **Brother John Leathes** (opposite) has brought some much-needed care to the garden and developed it further, particularly the area known as the Orchard. Brother John writes: 'In 2011 a programme of planting fruit trees started, to make use of the ten-foot-high flint walls that surround the garden. There were 21 apple trees, many quite elderly, but still producing well, a fan plum, and a fan apricot. Three apple trees have been taken out, but in the first year 20 new trees were planted, six bush pear trees, four fan cherries, eight fan plums and two vines.

Thanks must go to the Brothers, Trustees, staff and friends, who so generously sponsored many of the trees. They look splendid against the walls, whether in bud, flower, leaf or just dormant, and they bring great variety to the view. As enthusiasm grew more sponsors came forward in 2012 and provided four fan cherries, three vines, four fan peaches, four fan plums, two bush pears, four bush cherries, four half-standard cherries being trained as fans, and three fan







greengages. A quince was uprooted, given, and is doing well. An apple and pear are both step-overs, three columnar trees were tried, a pear, a cherry, and an apple. In all we have 36 trees. Then there were six red, three white and fourteen blackcurrant bushes, three cranberry and six blueberry bushes, and three black raspberry canes, in all 35 plants. Only one has not thrived but there is still hope. And there is space for more.

In 2013 we are planting a fan peach, two fan nectarines, four bush apricots, another quince, and wanting to do gooseberries, kiwi, blackberries and more blueberries (so good for the Brothers). We have some strawberries already, but want to try hanging baskets to defeat the slugs. The Brothers were a little disappointed in last year's harvest, but it was a difficult year, and so many of our plants were young. The bees however did well and we now have three hives. We are becoming the FRUITIEST BROTHERS!

I have two dates for your diary. If you are interested in bees, the Winchester Bee Keepers' Association is meeting on Saturday 11 May at 2.30 pm to look at my hives. Do come and join in but please let me know beforehand, as we have to collect suitable gear. If you are wondering about the origin of your apple tree, bring an apple with a twig and a leaf to the Michaelmas Fair on Saturday 28 September from 10 am until 4 pm and show them to two experts, who will attempt to identify the variety of your tree for you.'



## RECENT FRIENDS' EVENTS

The inaugural **Friends' Concert**, during which an impressive range of musical talent was on display, took place in St Cross Church on Saturday 10 November 2012.

A convivial atmosphere was enjoyed by all who attended the **Friends' New Year Receptions** in the Brethren's Hall on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 January 2013.



# Acknowledgements

The Friends of St Cross Hospital Winchester are grateful to Penyards Lettings & Management for generously funding the cost of printing this issue of the Friends' Newsletter.

They would also like to thank Louise Bainbridge (pages 9–10), Peter Martindale (page 11) and Brother Clive McClester (front cover, pages 3–5, 7–8, 12–14, inside back cover) for kindly allowing their excellent photographs to be used.

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## ST FAITH'S PARISH HALL

Back Street, St Cross, Winchester SO23 9SB

Registered charity no. 1130671



Recently refurbished and full of light, this handsome Edwardian building, given by a former Master of St Cross to the parishioners of St Faith, contains two spacious halls.

Offering ample parking, St Faith's Parish Hall is the ideal local venue for children's parties, lectures, meetings and receptions.

Please telephone the Bookings Secretary, Sara Arnold, for further details on 07850 231497

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