

## THE FRIENDS OF SOUTHWELL CATHEDRAL

Notes of talk given by Roy Pearson, 12 July 2003

Early records have been lost, but it is known that the Friends was founded in 1946 at the instigation of Provost Heyward. The early membership of 400-500 has remained much the same since, members coming from many places though the majority are local to the Minster or the diocese. It is an independent organisation with its own governing document, charity registration and tax arrangements.

The governing Council consists of Officers, appointees and elected members. The Officers are the President (the Bishop), the Chairman (the Dean), the Vice-Chairman (Dr Martin Duffy), the Secretary (John Marchmont) and the Treasurer (Roy Pearson). The bodies appointing members are the Chapter, the College of Canons and the Diocesan Mothers' Union. The Council meets three times a year in addition to the Annual General Meeting, which is usually held in June.

The Friends are not involved with the shop, the refectory or the information desk and do not indulge in any commercial activity or fund raising as some other Cathedral Friends do. They do not compete with any other Minster groups' activities, but encourage their members to support all Minster activities. Perhaps because of this it has a lower profile (and income) than some others.

The principal role is to make gifts to the Chapter for the benefit of the Cathedral in accordance with the objects set out in the Constitution: 'to promote the restoration, maintenance, repair and improvement of the fabric, ornaments, vestments, fittings, furniture and furnishings of Southwell Cathedral, and to maintain public worship and music therein.' Over the last ten years, gifts to the Minster totalled £425,000. This level was made possible by a major bequest in 1995 from the estates of the late Charles and Mary Cope. This in turn provided a large contribution towards the cost of the new Quire organ. Other gifts have included the chairs, the Nave choir stalls and the voice enhancement system, Peter

Ball's 'Reigning Christ' and 'Christ the light of the world', vestments and altar furnishings, including the Kelham cross and candlesticks which the Dean bought at an auction. Less noticeable gifts have included security locks, walkie-talkies and a vacuum cleaner.

Renovation of the Battle of Britain lace and the Diocesan map, improvements to make the Quire floor safer, a new anthem for the Bishop's enthronement and other music have all been funded by the Friends. In addition, the work of many of the Minster's groups and organisations is supported, especially the Choir, the Needlework Guild and the Flower Guild. The new Stewards' badges were funded two years ago.

The Millennium Pilgrim is a recent gift. The sculptor, Rory Young, explained to the AGM last year that this is an Everyman figure, beyond time and space, inviting contemplation of our inner and spiritual journey. The right-hand sweeps away the impediment of materialism, while simultaneously the left hand still clutches anxiously at worldly security. Most of us can relate to the difficulty of dealing with practical responsibilities whilst trying to allow our lives to become spiritually enriched. Understanding the sculptor's interpretation is important in appreciating this millennium gift from the Friends.