

ERIC FRECKINGHAM (1901 - 1996)

*In September 1996 the former Provost, the Very Revd J.Murray Irvine, wrote the following obituary for the Leaves magazine:*

When I arrived as Provost at the end of 1978 a Minster appeal was drawing to a close. The treasurer of the appeal was a venerable bachelor, a retired director of Pork Farms, who had recently bought Rampton Prebend when it became vacant, repaired and refurbished it, reducing the rambling old house to a reasonable size for modern living. He then gave the house to the Cathedral Council, living in it as the Council's life tenant. That was typical of Eric Freckingham's imaginative generosity. Of the ancient prebendal houses (the houses of the Canons of Southwell), all had passed out of the Minster's possession, only Sacrista Prebend having returned through another act of generosity.

Eric was that rare kind of person who was always looking for ways of using his share of this world's goods imaginatively. He had a deep love of our Lord and of his Church and especially of the Minster, so it was a joy to him when he was able to move from Rolleston (where he had long served as a Reader) to live in sight of the Pepper pots across Westgate.

Not long after I arrived, he began to discuss with me how he could celebrate his eightieth birthday by making a visible gift to the Minster, the only condition being that the donor's name should not be known in his lifetime.

After much discussion between us, the answer was the gilding and painting of Caroe's plain oak reredos in St Oswald's Chapel. The kind of project that would never rise to the top of a list of needs but a gift which enhanced enormously that corner of the south Quire aisle.

These are just two of the ways in which this good and dear old man gave to the Minster about which I happen to know. There were very many other unpublicised acts of kindness and generosity.

He was a cheerful man and a generous host. There were always gales of laughter (as well as serious discussion!) when the Appeal Trustees met in his dining room – not] east because the company included Dick Darby, Bishop of Sherwood. Eric Freckingham was a wise and loyal friend to me. He faced increasing frailty as he grew older with serene courage. R.I.P.

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In 1999 the Minster acquired two memorials to Eric Freckingham, one inside the building and one on the outside. A Thompson chair and two matching stools, complete with mice, have been put into the sanctuary for use by the clergy. On the outside, a stone head of Eric Freckingham, carved by Rory Young, has been placed at the bottom of the dripstone between the two window lights on the outside of the south east transept chapel (the Chapel of Christ the Light of the World).