

FRIENDS OF ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL
Annual General Meeting, 20th June, 2009

Report from the Chairman

How time flies by. This is now my second annual report and it is still a steep learning curve.

Firstly I have to say how sorry I am that work has not yet started on the disabled access to the crypt, but I can assure you it will happen. The Friends fully supported the action of the Dean and Chapter to delay the disabled access whilst other work is being carried out for which funding is only available for a fixed period. Hopefully by this time next year the work will be well under way. The Friends have contributed towards the cost of the Digital Survey and have also paid £6000 for the annual upkeep of the Garth. The Friends are also paying for the refurbishment of Deanery Gate.

Socially it has been an active year. The main event was the five day visit to Rouen when we were able to visit the Abbey at Bec where, of course, Gundulf came from. We had a busy time while there and included visits to Bayeux, including the Tapestry, Arromanches, Pegasus Bridge, Monet's Garden at Giverny and Rouen, briefly. Other events during the year were visits to Battle Abbey and Rye, an Advent lunch at Upchurch Golf Club and a day at Sheffield Park. The Advent lunch was a new idea and seemed to go down well, so it will be happening again this year. A visit was also made to Downe House, Darwin's home. Another change this year is the trip down the river after the A.G.M. My thanks go to the Social Committee and in particular to Derek Clark for the work that has gone into the events to give us such an interesting programme.

The Publicity and Publications Committee have not been idle either. 'Rochester Bells' came out late last year and since then they have produced a very interesting and informative booklet entitled 'Cathedral Curiosities'. This is available at £4 from the Friends' Office or the Cathedral Welcome Desk. It must not be forgotten that this committee is instrumental in putting together the Annual Report, which I know is a major exercise. My thanks go to Anne Sears and her Committee for all their hard work.

Thanks are due to our Treasurer, John Dalley, who does so much to keep our accounts in good order and also chairs our Finance and Projected Works sub-committee. At the moment there is little to talk about under projected works, although we do have ideas. Finally my thanks to Betty, our Secretary and, of course, to our Administrator, Christine, for all they do to keep the Friends organisation running effectively. My thanks also go to Council members for continued support.

I am sure you all know the saying, 'A Friend in need is a Friend indeed.' I am delighted our membership increased a little last year, but we must do better. Remember, we all have friends, so make them Friends and help us to maintain this wonderful heritage.

Thank you very much.
Colin Hoad, Chairman