



A Brief History of the Friends

Part two: 1956 - 1967

Based on an article originally written by Lt Col G F Woolnough, MC

During the 1950s the membership of the Friends increased steadily, aided by a letter from the Dean to each member seeking their help in recruiting new Friends, and the Council set a target of 2,000 by the end of the decade. The increase in membership produced a corresponding increase in income, and a peak of £3,188 was attained in 1959. Subsequently Grants were made over a wider range. Those for the fabric included repairs to the north porch, to the roof, to the pinnacles and windows, and for widening the entrance gates to the Chapter House. Over £1,000 was given to the appeal for the amplifying system; £100 to the Broiderers Guild; a new press was bought for the Muniment Room, grants were made towards the purpose of oaks from the Radnor Estate, for lead and scaffolding, and for the maintenance of the Library and the Chapter house boiler. The masons' wages were £300. The Friends paid £175 for the return of the Codex Augustinus, one of St Osmund's manuscripts abstracted from the Cathedral Library in 1622.

In 1955 a party from the Friends of St Pauls visited the Cathedral, and a return visit was made by 30 Salisbury Friends in October 1957, the first annual outing.

The 700th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Cathedral was a major event for the Cathedral, and the programme lasted from Easter to Michaelmas in 1958. The principal service was held on June 28th, just before the opening of the Lambeth Conference, and was attended by the

Queen Mother and by 60 Bishops, representing most of the Anglican Churches. The Friends' contribution was firstly a commemorative annual report containing many outstanding articles on the 1258 event; secondly a Christmas card depicting the 1258 Consecration, and thirdly sponsoring a play in the gardens of the Bishop's Palace 'Change and the Unchanging' specially written for the anniversary by Miss E Hart.

Advantage was taken of the publicity to approach the business houses of the City, and 30 became Corporate members. The Council offered the Dean & Chapter to 'undertake a really worthy and outstanding work of enrichment and beautification in the Cathedral to mark the 7th Century Anniversary'. After long consultation with the Dean & Chapter, the Friends provided the new marble floor of the Sanctuary, the new fittings and furniture, and contributed towards the new lighting in the Choir and Trinity Chapel.

Sir Arthur Bryant gave the 1958 Friends' Day (Festival) address on 'Our National Heritage'. The 1959 address was given by Sir Own Morshead on Bishop John Fisher, and the Snelzter organ, recently acquired (and re-conditioned by the Friends) was played for the first time at the concert after the Friends' Festival. The decade closed with the redecoration and refurnishing of the Friends' office in Church House.

The Association entered the 1960s under new leadership. The Dean, Bishop Moberly, retired in February 1960 and Prebendary K W Haworth who

succeeded him, was installed during Evensong during the Friends' Festival in July. Then Colonel Peal resigned as Chairman of the Executive Council in July 1961, and General Sir John Whiteley was appointed in his place.

The Secretary went to India for six months between 1960 and 1961, and Mr W S C Leech acted in his absence. On his return, Mr Leech became Editorial Secretary, responsible for the Annual Report and other publications; and mainly on his own initiative, began organising a Youth Membership section of the Friends. There were 120 Young Friends by the spring of 1962 and the Dean enrolled 132 in the Cathedral in the September, mostly girls from the Salisbury schools. The adult membership in contrast was almost static.

The target of 2000 set by the Council in 1953 was reached in 1961, and thereafter increased slowly. In 1957 a proposal to employ a paid General Secretary who would have the time to organise recruiting was considered by the Council, but rejected. When Mr Faulkner resigned in 1962, after 10 years as Secretary, he revived the proposal and this time Council agreed. However the next Secretary, Mr W P C Orchard, was appointed in January 1963 on the same terms as his predecessors on the understanding that he would become a General Secretary in 1964. In the event he found that he was unable to do this. Wing Commander G L Cochrane was appointed General Secretary in 1965.

An interesting 'Honorary Member' that year of 1962 was Rebel, who alongside his masters, the two new Close Constables, lived in one of the two adjacent houses at the High Street Gate.

In 1958 the Friends were warned that their office in Church House might be



The Close Constables and "Rebel"

required for another use. After receiving notice in 1961, the Dean began looking for an alternative place and in 1964 the Friends moved into number 52 The Close, leased from the Dean & Chapter. The new site, internal layout and facilities were a great improvement, and compared very favourably with the offices of other cathedral Friends. The additional space enabled Lady Paskin, a Council and Executive member, to propose that a Pilgrims Room should be organised, where Friends and visitors, and especially overseas visitors, could be made welcome and offered hospitality. A pilot scheme was approved and a number of Friends in the Close offered to be hosts in the room, but the scheme was postponed and was never implemented.

During this period the Annual Festival programme began with Matins, then Holy Eucharist and the AGM in the morning, tours of the cathedral followed in the afternoon, then Festal Evensong after tea, and the programme concluded

with a concert. The Festival Evensong was combined with the Commemoration of the Benefactors of the Cathedral in 1965. Lunch was provided for the first time in 1961, price 6 shillings; and a request was made in the same year to hold the Festival on a Saturday. Members were asked in the annual report for their views, and 58 out of 64 replies preferred a Saturday. The 1963 Festival was held on a Saturday but the attendance dropped, the heavy weekend traffic being one reason, and it reverted to Thursdays thereafter.

The pattern of grants was little changed; and after the completion of the underfloor heating in the Sanctuary and Chancel, were for more minor items. There were 13 separate grants in 1963 and by 1964 20 memorial tablets and the Mompesson Tomb had been cleaned and redecorated. The Dean & Chapter were considering major undertakings such as the heating of the nave and transepts, the repair of the nave and cloister roofs, and an overdue overhaul of the organ. So the Friends set up a special deposit account for Major Works, in which surplus income was invested, and this amounted to £3,000 in 1964. The Treasurer expressed concern that the large balance held by the Friends might inhibit new members from joining!

In 1966 there were several resignations, all unconnected. Council had decided that the Spire annual report would revert to the 1963 format to save costs, and in 1967 Canon Brooks with unusual flair and imagination produced the first of his reports in the present series (and this has continued).

The new team arrived at a time when the tourist trade was beginning the great

expansion into an industry; the Friends, without realising it at the time, were ready to benefit from the boom. In the first place, the office was brought up to date. Mr M Burton, a professional accountant (Friends' co-Treasurer) not only established a modern accounting system, but he improved and codified the Friends' membership recording. Secondly the Friends were given permission to man a new stall in the Cloisters during the Son et Lumiere, in order to recruit members. Afterwards the stall was moved into the North Nave Aisle, was manned by the same keen band of Friends, and was ready to greet the visitors.

In 1967 the Dean & Chapter decided that the only way to finance the major projects which it had been considering for some years was to launch a National Appeal for £250,000. For their part, the Friends undertook to pay for the overhaul of the Cathedral organ, one of the major items listed. £8,000 was given to start the appeal, and the remainder, £13,500, was promised in seven annual payments of £2,000. The Friends' funds were much reduced, and the Council decided to raise the annual subscription rate from 5 to 10 shillings. The Friends' Constitution was also revised and approved at the AGM.

A telephone was installed in the Friends' Office in 1967, ready for the work of the Appeal, to be recounted in the next instalment!

Editor: more on the History of the Friends will be published the next edition – if anyone has any information they would like to be added or published, or can expand on or amend any of the above, please contact the Secretary.

