

Introducing The Friends of Dore Abbey

Very many people love Dore Abbey and I am one. It speaks to me of people – the people who designed, built, sculpted, painted it, lived and worshipped in it. People in each generation who thought of it as their own Abbey. So I wanted to help make Dore relevant for today. I wrote to the then Vicar suggesting that the chancel be kept for Church Services while the transept area could be used for concerts, plays and other events. I thought that a Friends' group and a coloured Guide Book might help. The result was that I was asked to write a new Guide Book and this was produced in 1999.

Meanwhile, it was proposed to make the Abbey a redundant church. A meeting was called in August 1993, and we learned that English Heritage had agreed to fund necessary repairs if the parish raised a balance of £17,000 by December 1993 but this date was kindly extended to January 1994. It was a daunting prospect as there are so few people living in the parish – but we did have a former Cistercian Abbey uniquely founded by monks from Morimond, and which became a rare survival of a Laudian Anglican Church.

I resurrected my proposal for a Friends of Dore Abbey and Dorothy Cooke seconded, and became Treasurer. We were joined by Jean Griffiths, the Churchwarden. Richard Denyer agreed to be Chairman and Bridget Howie became Secretary. Jean placed an article in our local newspaper *The Hereford Times*. Richard organised our world-wide Appeal and I started the *Newsletter*. Gratefully we found donations rolling in and grants being made. We raised that balance by December 1993 so the Abbey was redeemed as a serving Church. Dore has Sunday Church Services twice a month and on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month – you are most welcome to join us.

Richard and the Committee initiated our Events programme, the second Dore Music Festival and the very successful 1997 Cistercian Conference with the accompanying Dore Abbey Exhibition in Hereford Cathedral. The *Newsletters* carried full reports and I have a complete set of all back copies if anyone wishes to contact me about them. The Papers published here concern the history of Dore Abbey, the people who knew it and the local area.

The Friends' Committee has continued to operate through the present excellent members. See their current Events programme on their website at:
www.doreabbey.org.uk