

Chris's Reordering Blog – Week 4 – 26 to 30 June

I was hoping the 'Pool vault' issue would be resolved by the end of last week. The structural engineer came and was confident the vault's brick roof would stand the additional weight of the stone floor but that it would probably need a steel mesh set in concrete above the vault to give the arch some additional strength. However, before he could confirm that view he needed to perform a stress test by loading the arch with bags of sand and testing if there was any movement created. The picture



shows this being carried out. The vault roof passed this test so we have a solution with little additional cost. Above part of the vault there will be a cupboard, but the area where there will be an open floor it seems that the depth available above the vault roof will not be sufficient to enable underfloor heating to be installed so there will be a cold spot over this area, which will be compensated for by a radiator against the wall at this point.

I am pleased, as was everyone else involved, that a solution has been found that allowed Captain Pool and his family to be left in peace without being disturbed which must be the right thing to do.

Also last week the pulpit was lifted and moved into the Sanctuary area. It was lifted, without any dismantling, by a team of Wrencon guys and since it was a case of 'all hands to the pump' sadly there were no photographs.

The pulpit is interesting. Again, quoting from Derek Shorrocks 1992 guide to the Church:

'Henry Gribble Turner, the then owner of Staplegrove Manor, met the cost of supplying the intricately carved pulpit of 1909. Unusually, the work was designed by a local carpenter, Arthur Parkin of Norton-sub-Hamdon, but one sufficiently well-known to have been commissioned to carve bench ends in Carlisle Cathedral. He was described by his granddaughter as a great lover of animals when she visited the church [in the early 1990s]. Although not immediately obvious, but anyone who takes the trouble to look closely at the work will be rewarded by the discovery of a variety of birds, insects, animals and fruits, all cunningly hidden. In so doing, you may wonder why the steps are the wrong way round. This is not a mistake on the part of Mr Parkin. The pulpit was originally placed in its present position, but with the steps on the left hand (that is, the north side), as was originally intended. In 1939, however, the Rector, John Storey, wished to have the pulpit turned round so that the view of the Chancel was no longer hidden at that side.'

I am not sure if the change made any significant difference and when the pulpit is returned to the Nave we are intending to review that decision since, with the choir stalls no longer in place – they were also installed in 1939 – the steps will encroach into the Chancel and having an open space available has significant merits taking account of the new Chancel and Sanctuary layout. A final decision is yet to be made on this issue, so if you have any views please let me or Stephen, the Rector, know.

Just as I am finalising this week's missive, I have been told that another vault has been found under the floor in the South Transept. We did have an inkling that we might find the 'Pool' vault, but had no idea that there was another still to be found, I have no more news on this at the moment so that will be for next week.

Sorry about the lack of pictures this week, there will be more in the next edition!

Chris Young - 5 July 2017