

The Great Stare Project - Progress Report July 2016



Great things are afoot. On 12th July the Heritage Lottery Fund announced that Milton Abbey has been awarded a grant of £1.2 million for conservation of the Abbey and to improve access not only to the Abbey church but also to the wonderful landscape in which it sits. This means that progress can go ahead with the planned conservation of the floors of the north and south aisles, the introduction of improved visitor welcoming facilities and interpretation of the building and spirituality of the Benedictine monks who inhabited it whose ethos is so relevant today. Work to improve access to the sites by improvement to access roads and the construction of three car parks for which planning permission has already been granted will now go ahead.



In the meantime conservation in the Abbey is moving on. During the last two months the east window has been returned after restoration in the workshop and is now protected with an external grill. The north aisle windows have been cleaned and repaired and the Hambro memorial window will soon be fitted with a grill to protect it.

In the south transept work started with the erection of a hoarding across the south aisle and between the transept and the tower. This has now progressed to the lifting of the tiles in preparation for their conservation. This work means that all the masonry fragments including the coffin lid and ledgers stone had to be moved from the transept. These items have now been placed in a roped off area of the crossing. The debris from lifting the tiles is being extracted through the west door so for safety sake visitors are asked to enter the church via the south door into the vestry and Lady Chapel which has itself been cleared of much clutter.



Some people may have noticed that several of the porch windows have been removed. These windows are undergoing conservation in the workshops and will be returned in the next month.

The work is of course raising quite a dust storm so the organ has been shrouded in clear plastic to protect its delicate machinery. It is likely to remain covered for some time to come.





Despite all these works careful management has ensured that the church remains useable as a church and all work finishes early on a Friday to ensure that the building is clean and tidy for the weddings which are taking place on Saturdays during the summer with minimum disruption. This includes making the west door available for use for services at the weekends and for the one wedding taking place midweek.

Outside scaffolding has been raised on the south side and the lead down gullies and down pipes are now being removed for repair and modification to cater for the more intense rainfall that we are encountering as global warming takes hold. Once this work is completed we shall start work on relaying the drains across the north and west of the church several of which are collapsed or blocked.

Whilst this is all going on there is a major exhibition in the Abbey, until August 21st, celebrating the life and work of Capability Brown the tercentenary of whose birth is this year.

As part of the conservation work a number of pine pews which used to be in the south aisle have been put up for disposal. These are available for purchase at £85 each. Please contact info@miltonabbey.org if you would like to make a purchase.