

The Friends of All Saints Pocklington

Autumn Newsletter 2022

Pocklington's Paulinus coin discovery is pure gold

An Anglo-Saxon coin found at Pocklington has recently been linked to Paulinus converting locals to Christianity in 627 AD.

The 1,400-year old mid-Saxon gold coin, discovered by a metal detectorist at Pocklington in 2007, was recognised almost a decade later as a 'Paulinus Gold Shilling', attributed to the episcopacy of the first Bishop of York, 627-633. And the tiny coin was further conjectured to be a commemorative token given by Paulinus after carrying out the first baptisms in Pocklington beck.



Paulinus converted Edwin, King of Northumbria, to Christianity after dramatic events at Goodmanham at Easter 627, described a century later by the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.

The royal household returned to Edwin's capital at York where he appointed Paulinus its first bishop and commenced building the original York Minster. Paulinus then set about taking Christianity across the north, holding mass baptism gatherings at key places throughout the kingdom, with one of them believed to be in Pocklington.

For a decade the coin was loaned to internationally renowned numismatic repository, Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum; but in 2020 the museum decided to return it to its owner, Tony Abramson, who just happens to also be the leading expert on early Saxon coinage.

During his further research and evaluation in 2016 the inscription was newly translated as PAVLINVS EP[ISCOPVS], identifying it for the first time as an early Saxon gold shilling attributed to Paulinus. Furthermore it is now thought the coin's purpose was commemorative, rather than monetary, Abramson stating: "The distribution pattern of the Paulinus shillings may mark his mass-baptismal activity, a gold shilling being an appropriate donative from Paulinus to support the local church."

The coin's discovery and identification augments Pocklington's longstanding Paulinus legend. The Sotheby Cross was found in the churchyard in the 1830s where it had been buried for centuries (such crosses were ordered to be destroyed in the Tudor Reformation), with a cross base inscribed 'Paulinus hic praedicavit et celebravit AD 627'. And it is claimed that the Sotheby Cross was a Medieval replacement for an earlier Saxon preaching cross marking Paulinus visiting the town and establishing its first church.

One face of the cross head has a depiction of Paulinus as bishop of York, and in the church's north transept there is also a Paulinus window, given by the Powell family in the C19th.

Pocklington's mid-Saxon context has been further strengthened in recent years by the archaeological discovery of a rare Anglo-Saxon settlement site dated to the mid-7th century; plus Ground Penetrating Radar investigations inside All Saints indicating anomalies under the Norman church building that have been interpreted as earlier Saxon foundations.

The coin news was welcomed by the Vicar of Pocklington, Jake Belder, who said: "While churches across England are always keen to celebrate their history, the details of that history can often be unclear. The discovery of the Paulinus coin helps us to make a bit more sense of the earliest period of All Saints Church, and to remember that, from the beginning, a commitment to share the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ has been at the very heart of our church's life and mission."

The coin's identification is timely, as it comes in advance of All Saints celebrating in 2027 the 1,400th anniversary of its foundation by Paulinus, who was canonised after his death in Kent in 644.

Sue's window into Pocklington's spectacular Victorian glass.

Sue Bond has spent a good while researching the stained glass of All Saints Pocklington Church and she gave a fascinating talk on Thursday 23rd June 2022. She has investigated the background of each window, and her talk revealed the stories of the local people who commissioned them, and the renowned Victorian artists and craftsmen who made them.

Her illustrated talk, organised jointly by Pocklington & District local History Group and Pocklington Church Friends, was well attended and well received. And in conjunction with



the talk, Sue has also produced a booklet about the church windows which was launched on the night.

The 40-page booklet is packed with colour photographs, information and background material and is available in church and via the Church Office, price £6.

All Saints porch floor project update

It's now over five months since work began at All Saints Church Pocklington to completely renovate the historic church porch and its unique tiled floor.

The tiles in the Grade 1-listed church were designed by Augustin Pugin, one of the pioneers of 'Gothic Revival' architecture and manufactured by the leading Staffordshire ceramics company Minton. The tiling is described as an 'outstanding example of Victorian craftsmanship', and similar tiles can be found in such notable locations as Lichfield Cathedral, York Minster and the Palace of Westminster.

However, the tiled floor had deteriorated with time, and the tiles were breaking up. The total bill for repairs is in excess of £55,000, so an associated fundraising project was launched at the outset of the project to finance the work. Entitled 'Hundreds of Tiles, Thousands of Feet', the project's name reflects the significant numbers who have passed through the porch over the years since it was built in 1885.

Renovation work is still in progress, and to date, the old tiles have been lifted and sorted into those which could be repaired and reused, and those which were damaged beyond repair. Additionally, external drainage has been renewed, along with some of the plasterwork inside the porch and work on recreating replacement tiles for those too damaged to reuse is well under way. The most onerous part of the project so far has been the laying of a special limecrete foundation layer onto which the new and renovated tiles will eventually be laid. This is similar to the foundation that was successfully used in the renovation of parts of the tiled floors in the Palace of Westminster and York Minster. The contractors there had initially experimented with an inferior cheaper solution, but ended up having to upgrade to the more expensive limecrete foundation to prevent further rapid deterioration of the respective tiled floors once they were re-laid. In so doing, those responsible inadvertently helped the All Saints project by literally doing the groundwork on our behalf. Since being laid in early July, the limecrete layer has had to cure for one hundred days, and will be ready for the re-laying of the tiles and the projected completion of the project by the end of October.

Thanks to the additional cost of the limecrete foundation and the drainage work, we saw an increase in the required financing to the tune of about £15,000 to over £55,000 in total compared to the original estimate of around £40,000. A significant part of this money has already been raised thanks to generous donations from the general public, members of the All Saints congregation as well as from local businesses. A launch event back in April along with a 'Sponsor a Tile' and 'Buy a Used Tile' campaign have added to the funds, and a further fundraising event to take place in November is soon to be announced.

We are still in need of funds for the project, and would welcome donations of any amount large or small to enable the successful completion of the renovation.

If you would like to know more about the project, please feel free to contact the church office:

Tel: 01759 306045; email: office@allsaintspock.plus.com

If you would like to donate to the project via BACS, here are the bank details:

Lloyds Bank, Sort Code: 30-99-15, Account no: 27778260

Account Name: All Saints Church Pocklington Fabric

If you would like to donate online with a debit or credit card, please click below:

<https://givealittle.co/campaigns/5d2e36ed-3bbb-40e9-b47c-2def2b3c037a>

or scan the QR code:



Many thanks to everyone who has had a part of any kind in contributing to the preservation of a unique part of our heritage.

Rob Dean & Tina Morley
Churchwardens, All Saints Church, Pocklington.