

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOLDING A SOLICITORS' INFORMATION EVENT

by *Robert A. Letcher*

Background

Torre Abbey was founded in 1196 by the Premonstratensian Order of Canons. Subsequently, some years after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the Abbey ruins were in part converted into a private house occupied firstly by the Ridgeway family in 1598, but mainly by the Cary family who between 1700 and 1750 remodelled the Abbey in the Georgian style.

The Abbey was purchased in 1930 by the predecessor of the present Torbay Borough Council from the Cary Family. Part of the building has been used as the Mayoral Parlour in recent years and the remainder has housed the Borough's substantial and valuable collection of furniture and works of art, which has been open to the public for most of the year.

In 1992 the Friends of Torre Abbey was formed with the encouragement of the Borough Council and the support of BAFM.

Objectives Of Solicitors' Event

To bring the Abbey, its Collections and the Abbey Ruins to the notice of the local Legal Profession in the belief and hope that having done so those attending and their firms would encourage clients to leave legacies and worthwhile 'gifts in kind' to the Friends.

Venue

The Mayor and Mayoress kindly agreed to host the 'Reception' in the Mayoral Parlour (wine & 'nibbles' at the Borough's expense!). After the Reception, guests were invited to tour the Abbey and its collection in the company of the Curatorial Staff and Members of the Friends Committee.

Those Invited

It is obviously important to concentrate on inviting those members of individual legal firms who are involved in 'private client' work, and in dealing with Wills and Probate. It is therefore helpful if one has a solicitor, who knows the local legal fraternity and their specialities, on the organising committee!

The Follow-up

After the event, during which many of the guests had expressed amazement at the existence of what had hitherto lain un-noticed to them on their doorstep, a follow-up letter was written to everyone by the Chairman of the Friends enclosing a supply of Friends' leaflets and suggesting that they should encourage Clients to consider leaving legacies, etc., for the benefit of the Friends or the Abbey.

Summary

Because of the Borough's ownership of the building, the Friends were fortunate in not having to fund the event. It is suggested, however, that even if the Reception is paid for by the organisers, the benefit in the long run should outweigh the cost of a few glasses of wine and 'nibbles'. It is, of course, accepted that any legacies arising from such an event do not materialise for a number of years. For that reason time alone will tell if our event was a success. Suffice it to say that it was a very enjoyable occasion!