

LOCAL NEWS

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Ruins of Priory of St Pancras to be lit up in magical candlelight event

By MARIA HUDD

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Following the success of last year's inaugural event, Lewes Priory Trust will again be lighting the ruins of the Priory of St Pancras with thousands of candles next month.

The event, on Saturday, September 12, is part of the Heritage Open Days weekend.

As dusk falls, twinkling candles will illuminate the ruins, transporting visitors back to the times of the monks who lived there well before the advent of electric light.

The Priory by Candlelight event will be opened at 6 pm by Ruth O'Keefe - Chair of Lewes District Council - and entertainment throughout the evening will include drummers and local choirs. Stalls selling a range of food and refreshments will be on-site.

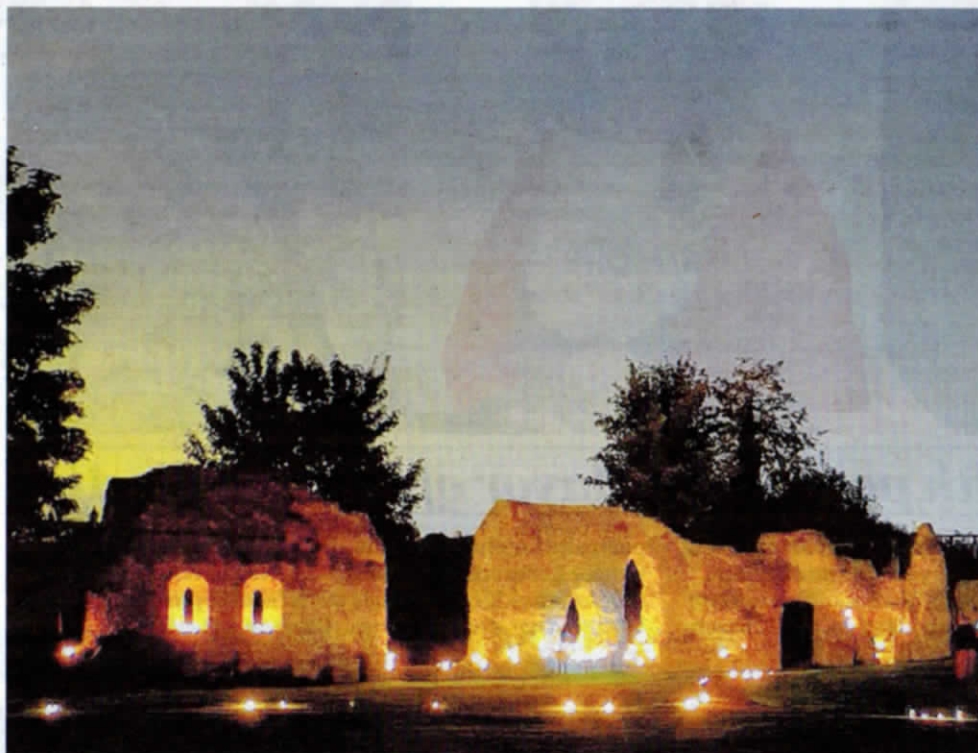
Chairman of Lewes Priory Trust, Sy Morse Brown, said: "We are delighted to be staging this magical, free event once again and to welcome the people of Lewes and beyond to our beautiful site. Last year was a resounding success and we are keeping our fingers crossed for good weather again for this year.

"Many volunteers, including our local Explorer group, are helping out in the candlelight celebration making it a great community occasion."

Lewes Priory Trust are appealing for clean jam jars (without lids) and will be collecting any donations at the Folly Tower, in Priory Park, on Saturday, August 29 and Saturday, September 5 between 10 am and 2 pm.

For more information contact Helen Chiasson on 01273 483462 or by email at helen.chiasson@btinternet.com.

The event will be postponed if the weather is wet.



Last year's Priory by Candlelight event. Photo by John Warburton.

Brief history of Priory ruins

The Priory was destroyed under the orders of Henry VIII in 1538, bringing to an end nearly 500 years of monastic life in Southover.

THE PRIORY OF ST PANCRAS WAS ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM DE WARENNE AND HIS WIFE GUNDRADA IN 1078 AND WAS PART OF THE CLUNIAC ORDER OF MONKS, PRESIDED OVER BY THE POWERFUL ABBOT OF CLUNY IN BURGUNDY, FRANCE.

Lewes Priory Trust continues these links with France and other Clunaic sites throughout the UK and continental Europe today and last year, presented a short film of the Priory by Candlelight event to a conference in Cluny.

THE PRIORY BY CANDLELIGHT EVENT IS SUPPORTED BY THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.HLF.ORG.UK.