

# Rochester

## CATHEDRAL BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral



### From the Dean's desk...

Last month saw the distressing closure of the Cathedral Tea Rooms and the end of a particular era. As with all bereavements, it was accompanied by tears and sad hearts, but after many years of struggling to make ends meet we simply couldn't go on. Despite the heroic efforts of the staff, the loss was too great for the Cathedral to bear and in the present financial climate, irresponsible to continue to do so. Our experience, however, is that of many Cathedrals who have gone the same way and where cafés or Tea Rooms survive they usually operate as independent concerns.

The Archbishops have recently set up a consultation to look into the long term sustainability of Cathedrals following recent media coverage of a number of Cathedrals near financial meltdown. The closure of the Cathedral Tea Rooms is set against this challenging background faced by all Britain's historic cathedrals. The committee will be chaired by the Bishop of Stepney, Adrian Newman, who is well known to friends and supporters of Rochester.

Rochester Cathedral is well positioned to face the financial challenges arising from the Hidden Treasures, Fresh Expressions project. We have good advice and support and a realistic strategy to increase income over the coming years through the use of the refurbished crypt and eventually the appropriate use of the Old Deanery (former home to the Tea Rooms and before that, the St Andrews Theological College). This building has had many uses since it ceased to be the home of Rochester Deans and we are confident that it will again as we respond to the call of God's mission. This is a time for prayer and hope as we consult and consider the next step in the history of this wonderful building, part of which is still home to pupils from our Cathedral School. We also hold in our thoughts and prayers those who over many years have worked in the Tea Rooms and made it such a place of welcome and hospitality.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh  
Dean of Rochester

Pledges and gifts for January to May 2017 are

# £78,164.37

PLEASE HELP US AND DONATE NOW By phoning 01634 810074 or go to: [www.justgiving.com/rochester-cathedral-trust](http://www.justgiving.com/rochester-cathedral-trust)

## Calligraffiti Workshop



A workshop organised by the Cathedral Education team, but led by local artist Nick Stewart entitled "Calligraffiti" was held in March. It was aimed at teenagers but also involved a few interested other participants who it could be said had left their teens behind! We began by looking at examples of calligraphy and how this had been used and developed across the ages. We were particularly interested in relating this to books in our own library – some of which were hand written and some printed to look like handwriting.



We then progressed to look at examples of graffiti – some from the Cathedral and others that we see on

buildings and other structures around us. Examples were then shared of a cross between the two - calligraffiti.

The students were encouraged to experiment with a variety of different writing implements and were then given the challenge of producing a word with an angel connection, using ink and bleach. Some of the results were stunning and surprised some of them as to how creative they could be.



The results of the work have been on display in the Crypt and will remain there until at least the end of June.

Workshops like this prove popular but are only possible due to funding through Heritage Lottery Funding.

**Sue and Helen**  
**Education Officers**

## Sweeps Festival 2017



*Photo by Sheila Thompson*

Rochester Cathedral welcomed just over 3,700 visitors during the annual Sweeps Festival. 485 people visited the newly reopened library, 158 visitors enjoyed the "Rochester's Mystery Book" exhibition and 171 took part in our specially devised nature themed highlight tours looking at grotesques, green men and the zodiac tiles. A dedicated team of volunteers worked hard to help us make the festival weekend a success. Canon Rachel threw herself into the festivities, tweeting pictures of Bishop Gundulf holding a chimney sweep's broom in place of his crozier and instigating an impromptu dance demonstration in the crypt.

## Text donations via Just Giving

Donating a small gift has been made even easier now. All you need to do is text the message **RCTR46 £10** to **70070** **JustGiving™** and you can make a difference via

## Hidden Treasures Fresh Expressions

Saturday 29 April saw the newly restored library open to the public for the very first time. It remained open to the public throughout the Sweeps Festival. During this long weekend approximately 600 people visited the library.

Our thanks go to our Volunteers, member of the Events Team and our Volunteer Manager, Lisa Johnson, who worked tirelessly to return the books they know and love so that they can share the treasures with many who may have had no inkling of the literary heritage the Cathedral houses.

The two pictures show the transformation of the old library from a darkened room to a beautiful room full of light. The roof is also now watertight under a splendid Kent peg tiled roof.

The three Georgian windows light the south facing wall and these retain their original shutters, which are still functional and serve a useful purpose in protecting the precious volumes from too much sunlight.



The library is resplendent inside with superb elm flooring that suits the size and dignity of the room. The shelving has

also been rebuilt and has been designed to allow proper display of the older volumes, which have been recatalogued by the University of Kent in a joint project that has enabled students to explore and appreciate some of the oldest and most interesting volumes in the collection. The library will be accessible to view even when it is not open as a glass screen replaces a 19th century lobby. In opening access to the library we are also able to highlight the splendid 14th century stone doorway built by Bishop Hamo de Hythe and showing, at the apex, his soul rising to heaven reduced to the innocence of a baby.

The library will partly be used as an area for academic work, building on the joint work with University of Kent, so that scholars can, for the first time for many years, use the library as a resource for research. There is a much wider purpose, however, in introducing everyone to the glories of the collection.



Other funding: Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Friends of Rochester Cathedral, Garfield Weston, Rochester Bridge Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Headley Trust, All Churches Trust, ChurchCare and Department for Culture, Media and Sport

## “Sponsor a Chorister” at Rochester Cathedral

The latest of our sponsored Choristers will be presented with her own very special medal at Evensong on Monday 12th June. Elizabeth Caithness, the talented recipient of “The Cooke Medal” is a member of the Girls Choir and is a Year 6 student at King’s School.

The fund raising initiative was developed so that sponsors could deposit an amount of £50,000 in the Music Endowment Fund, and the annual interest and gains made on this investment go towards the Choristers bursary payment each year. Because only the interest is used the capital stays invested and is always there.

Currently there is £870,425 invested in the Music Endowment. Our goal is to have every one of our 38 Choristers sponsored, and this will raise almost £2 million. This would enable the Music not to have to rely 100% on the Cathedral funds and these resources could then be put towards the maintenance and running of the building.

We currently have six sponsored choristers and as they grow and leave school the beautiful bespoke medals that they wear will pass to new Probationers, and so the cycle

will continue. This Chorister experience is life changing, and not only for the chorister themselves, but their whole family too.

Chris Royall, an ex Rochester Chorister from 1962 – 66 and now a member of “The Sixteen” said,

“I believe that the ability to sight read music quickly has been of vital importance in my life as a professional singer and this skill I learnt whilst being a chorister at Rochester Cathedral under the direction of Dr Robert Ashfield. In my experience our English Cathedral Choirs are the breeding ground for many of our finest professional singers and as such are the envy of the rest of the world”.

If you are thinking about a Legacy to Rochester Cathedral’s Music and would like to know more about this programme, please contact the Development Office at Garth House.

**Elizabeth Caithness**

**“The Cooke Family Chorister”**



# Diary of 2017 Events

The following are events that are firm in the Diary for the next few months, more to be added so please watch this space!

Wednesday 21st June 5.30pm	Speaker & Supper at Canterbury Christ Church University, Medway Campus. The evening will offer a drinks reception from 5.30pm followed by short talks from three very eminent professors. Professor Helen James will talk about “The New Engineering Hub”; Professor Rahul Kanegaonkar will talk about the Innovation and development of an App for Healthcare; and finally Professor Anan Shetty will talk about Bio-Engineering and Stem Cell Regeneration. We will be having a three course supper after the talks and you will have the opportunity to meet the speakers and to also have a look around the “Simulation Suite” (a replica hospital ward used for training). This event will finish by 9.30 and costs are just £35 per person. All are welcome.
Wednesday 6th September	Business Guild Annual Dinner in the Crypt. The first dinner to be held in the newly refurbished Crypt! Our after dinner speaker will be Rory Sutherland, one of the Trust’s patrons. He will talk about “How to be illogical – and when”. Reception at 6.15pm followed by dinner at 7.30pm. Tickets £75. Any profits made go toward the music running costs of the Cathedral.
Thursday 14th September	Business Guild networking breakfast at the Commissioner’s House at The Historic Dockyard in Chatham. Registration 8am. Subject is “Exporting Kent” and we are partnered with The Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

**For more information on events, please contact Lynne Bax on 01634 810074  
or email [development@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:development@rochestercathedral.org)**

## Rafael Klein Exhibition – Family Tree



You may remember back in the summer of 2014 we held an exhibition in the Nave of Rafael’s work “Moment to Moment”.

Following on from this, the artist has now designed a new series of sculptures and graphic work which relates to the theme of the Family Tree. The project explores the connectedness between people which flow and unite us, using the meme of a tree. Not just with our blood ties, but also with all of the Family of Man. It has been successfully exhibited in Portsmouth Cathedral for 5 weeks over Easter and we are delighted to be able to host the exhibition here for the whole of August.

Family Tree would be an exhibition of larger sculptures for display at Rochester Cathedral which incorporate this theme while at the same time exhibiting more art in the Gallery at Francis Iles, 103 High Street, Rochester, with the kind permission of Nettie Iles-North.

*Klein seems to think in sculptural terms as easily and directly as the bird sings’*  
– John Russell Taylor, The Times

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