

Rochester

CATHEDRAL BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral



From the Deans desk...

Thank you to those who sent cards and messages of support with respect to my institution and installation as Dean of Rochester. It was a truly moving occasion, made so by the presence of such good

friends and colleagues and their warmth and depth of feeling. It was one of those moments when all that is good about Rochester Cathedral was apparent. The worship was uplifting. The music was outstanding and reminded us, if we needed any, why establishing a musical endowment to preserve the choral tradition is so important. The staff were fantastic and despite major flooding in the crypt the day before pulled off all the logistics without a hitch. As we fought

back the surging torrent of water into the newly finished crypt it was literally all hands to the pump, but the commitment and strength of character of the vergers, gardeners and events team was truly heartening. This is the reason why being here is such a privilege. So another set-back, but not for long, as we hope to have a formal opening on November 1st this year. I hope that with the coming programme of events between now and Christmas I will have an opportunity to speak with you and, indeed, to show off the crypt and library, come rain or shine!

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh
Dean of Rochester



Pledges and gifts for January to end May 2016 total

£49,177.75

PLEASE HELP US AND DONATE NOW By phoning 01634 810074 or go to: www.justgiving.com/rochestercathedral trust

The Friends of Cathedral Music 'Diamond Fund for Choristers' launch concert at St Paul's

In April The Friends of Cathedral Music celebrated their 60th birthday by holding a concert in St Paul's cathedral. Choristers from many different Cathedrals in the country joined in the celebrations to mark the launch of The Friends of Cathedral Music's £10 million Diamond Fund for Choristers.

The Friends of Cathedral Music are great supporters of Rochester Cathedral, and in fact have already made an Endowment gift to fund the music in the Cathedral during the Easter Holy week in perpetuity.

The chorister from Rochester who was lucky enough to join Aled Jones and Alexander Armstrong at the Concert at St Paul's was 12 year old Temi Lasekan.

Alexander Armstrong is a great promoter of Choral Music and an extract of his speech is below.

"I owe my entire career to my experience as a chorister. It was where I learnt to perform, where I learnt to use the full range of my voice; where I learnt to listen, where I learnt to write comedy, where I learnt to carry a pencil at all times - but most importantly it was where I learnt the wonderful truth that something exceptional, something as beautiful as anything anywhere, can be created by just you and your friends. I remember on a choir tour to Salamanca, exploring the old cathedral with a couple of friends and finding ourselves alone in some sort of Chapter House, we fired off a Boyce 3-part canon just to test the acoustics. A terrible, toe curlingly self indulgent thing to do but what a sound we made! And what a thing to discover:

that we three - children essentially - carried between us all the components of something so joyous, so perfect, so complete.

I was lucky enough to be a chorister at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh which had a good mix of boy and girl choristers as is now fairly typical in cathedrals up and down the country. And both there and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where I ended up as a choral scholar, I sang with people from all walks of life (many of whom had their entire educations - at some of the country's best schools I might add - paid for by the music they had first learnt as choristers). I sang alongside some people of different faiths and plenty of none at all. And I am always heartened by the ethnic diversity in our cathedral and college choir rooms. So you see, you don't need to be a boy to be a chorister, you don't need to be a toff to be a chorister, you don't need to be religious, you don't even need to be Christian. Although as I say, there is a certain spirituality that all choristers come to know well - something that lurks in the silences of a darkening nave while rush hour traffic chugs about just yards outside the West Door. A spirituality that is wrapped up in the ritual, the mystery and the beauty of this ancient tradition we have become a part of. And I am going to call that spirituality The Privilege of Choristership. That is why we are here tonight to celebrate and to preserve for the future, 'throughout all generations'."



Music for a Summer's Evening

A concert of Light and Classical Music at Rochester Cathedral on Saturday 23rd July 2016. Doors open at 7pm for the concert to start at 7.30pm. A light refreshment and drink during the interval is included in the ticket price of £10 (£8 for Friends).

Tickets on sale now at the Cathedral Shop.

Friends of Rochester Cathedral tickets available from the Friends Office (please phone 01634 832142).

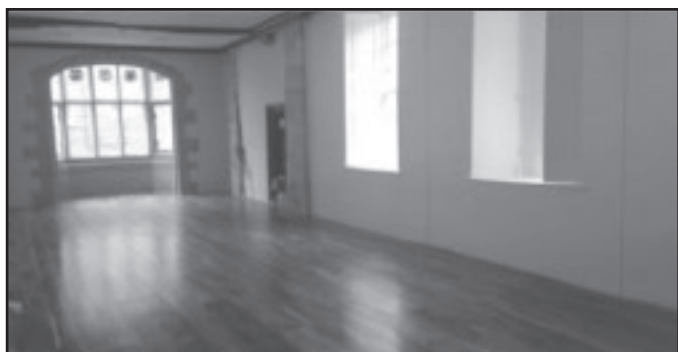
They will also be available at the door.



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

Hidden Treasures Fresh Expressions project Update June 2016

We now have a restored library, watertight under a splendid Kent peg tiled roof that sets off the beauty of the stone work, with the East oriel window clearly visible once more now that the builder's compound has been removed. The library is now resplendent inside, with superb elm flooring that suits the size and dignity of the room. 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 shelving is being rebuilt and has been designed to allow a 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



Anybody have a caption for this photograph?

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 and our volunteers are keen to return to 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 crypt is now enhanced by Purbeck stone flooring, more in keeping with size and dignity of this elegant space than the earlier concrete. Each gothic pillar is lit with a roundel of lights that highlight the ribbed arches and create a sense of infinite space. The lighting also enables visitors to see the restored ceiling paintings that survive in some parts of the crypt. Shadowy figures are visible, with the ribbed arches embellished by rosettes. While these are frustratingly faint and partial they feed the imagination to envisage the colourful splendour of the pre-Reformation crypt. This is an area of beauty and calm and the Ithamar chapel, which was created in earlier years at the East end of the crypt, now benefits from replaced leaded light windows that are protected by elegant iron work which serves as a barrier to unwelcome intruders. The oldest part of the crypt, built in the late 11th century by Bishop Gundulph, will house the exhibitions that are planned to showcase the Cathedral's more precious and interesting artefacts. The central exhibit is the Textus Roffensis, an inexplicably little known book that is the only existing written copy of the first codification of English law and which formed the basis for Magna Carta. It was written in Rochester during the 1120s and is in old English and Medieval Latin. This is undoubtedly the greatest of all Rochester's hidden treasures.

Gilly Wilford

Executive Director & Chapter Clerk

Future Fund Raising Events for the diary

Tuesday 5th July	Business Guild Summer Reception in the Crypt and Cathedral Roof Tour
Wednesday 14th September	Rochester Cathedral Business Guild Breakfast meeting at The Commissioner's House in Chatham Historic Dockyard. Speakers from Medway Council and KCC on the subject of "Selling to your Local Authority"
Friday 23rd September 	The Ruby Tuesday's Concert in partnership with Abigail's Footsteps with a tribute to the music of Adele. Tickets £10 (unreserved seating in the Nave) available from 15th August from: development@rochestercathedral.org or telephone 01634 810074 or 843366
Wednesday 16th November	Business Guild Seminar/ Workshop "Business Focus Day" at Chatham Historic Dockyard

For more information on events, please contact Lynne Bax on 01634 810074 or email development@rochestercathedral.org

Education News

If you are in the cathedral in the next couple of months you might see the exhibition on the hoardings in the North Quire transept.

This art work comes from a project entitled "Illuminating Beasts", which we were able to offer through our HLF work and funding. The inspiration came from Rochester Cathedral's hidden treasure, Textus Roffensis, which has one illuminated page. The giant letter R depicts the figure of Christ alongside three creatures, possibly dragons or basilisks.



The Illuminating Beasts workshops were offered free of charge to families, students and members of the general public. Working with local calligrapher and designer Nick Stewart, participants created their own illuminated letter R using coloured inks and bleach. Inspiration was drawn from unusual features found in and around the cathedral. From gargoyles, to green men, foliage to faces, beasts mythical and real, the Cathedral's rich canvas of decoration can be seen reflected in the participants artwork.



The response to this workshop was very enthusiastic with participants asking about future activities and events, unfortunately these sorts of further education and learning activities come at a cost and will need careful consideration, although they would be great to be involved in.

Sue Gray and Helen Bradshaw

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