



From The Dean:



Christmas comes very early to Exeter Cathedral. This year: 16th November. At least that's the day that the Christmas Market opened. Barely was Remembrance Sunday over before we were immersed in Christmas Carols and festivities; which leaves us with a bit of a dilemma. You don't want to dampen people's Christmas spirits, but how to do justice to the season of Advent, when you're surrounded with trees and lights and Christmas tunes?

I'm a big fan of Advent. I came to realise how important the season is when I went to visit Fiona, my new-born God-daughter, in hospital: a long time ago now. I remember saying to her parents: "I'm not quite sure how I'd cope with having my life turned upside down in this way." To which Maria responded: "Nor would we, if we hadn't had nine months to get used to the idea!" God in his providence gives us a period of preparation for the birth of a child, and a period of preparation for the birth of his Son. That's the season we call Advent.

Advent is not really like Lent, a time of penitence and fasting. Rather, Advent is a season of hope and expectation for the coming of Christ and the coming of God's kingdom. The Prophet Isaiah gets a lot of airtime in Advent, with his vision of a God who will come and save us: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ... Waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert." If ever you visit the Holy Land, the wilderness is a vast, rocky landscape, barren and bereft of water. But Isaiah portrays a new world order, where the burning sand shall become a pool, where sorrow and sighing flee away. That is our Advent hope and expectation, as we await God's coming kingdom.

Advent, then, provides plenty of images of what that kingdom looks like, fuels our hope, and draws us closer to God. A season too precious to lose. At least our Sunday services at the Cathedral allow us to switch off the lights on the

tree, to enjoy again our Advent hymns and music, and to look forward. So we pray that this season will inspire each one of us, and allow us to greet the Christ-child with joy and delight when 25th December finally arrives.

Jonathan Greener

Christingle 2019



We made it – everyone went home unscathed and I hope happy. It was a lovely service, the children sang beautifully under the tutelage of Tim Noon, and Canon Cate Edmonds made a wonderful Christingle with the help of Canon Morwenna.

It's just as well no-one was aware of the chaos on Friday, when we realised we had run out of sweets. There was nothing wrong with our

calculations – it's the supermarket (no brand mentioned) putting fewer sweets in the tubes. We gathered on Wednesday morning to make up cocktail sticks of jelly tots and sultanas, and then again on Friday afternoon to complete the Christingles. This is done in the South Quire aisle. We get so many comments from passers-by who say we remind them of their youth, and commenting on the wonderful aroma of oranges. This year we were exceptionally lucky to be able to listen to the Friday evening concert rehearsal – it really added to the festive mood.

Thank you to everyone who took part in whatever capacity. It takes a lot of organisation to pull off a service involving so many children and candles – not always a good combination.

Christine Lethbridge – for the Cathedral MU and friends

Tales from the Foodbank:

Another big thank you for such a generous number of items given in November. There will be no collection in December, but I know you won't forget those in dire need, and there are collecting points in supermarkets, with little priority stickers under items in Sainsbury's and Waitrose. The next Cathedral collection will be on **Sunday 26th January 2020.** **Felicity Cawthra**

A Mystery Worshipper

On Wednesday 27th November at the 5.30pm Choral Evensong, we were joined by a “mystery worshipper” from the Ship of Fools website. Here are edited highlights of the review that was posted online. This is most welcome, though the organists among our readers may not agree with every word!

Did anyone welcome you personally?

No welcome, which would have been quite out of place. People drifted into the quire and sank into prayer, or admired the scene, or both.

Was your pew comfortable?

Very.

How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere?

Silence in the quire. Chatter from the nave, where people were putting up Christmas trees and tourists were enjoying themselves. These two worlds co-existed quite happily.

What musical instruments were played?

None. The cathedral boasts three working organs, the grand organ being housed in a case dating from 1665 that the cathedral's website calls 'one of the most distinctive and striking organ cases ever built,' but all three remained silent this evening. The choir and clergy with vergers processed in while keeping silence. Even so, the entire service was beautifully sung, unaccompanied, by the choir.

Did anything distract you?

Wondering who Andrew Parnell was. He composed the anthem and he was introduced, but I didn't hear that bit. The anthem was very good and had a medieval heft to it (at least to my ears). In fact, though, he is still alive.

Was the worship stiff-upper-lip, happy clappy, or what?

Perfectly traditional.

Which part of the service was like being in heaven?

The choir sang beautifully throughout, but the psalms were especially memorable (to an Anglican chant I did not recognise).

And which part was like being in... er... the other place?

The contrast between the perfection of the service and the horrors of the world outside.

What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost?

I didn't. Nor did anyone else.

How would you feel about making another visit (where 10 = ecstatic, 0 = terminal)?

10 — Please have another organ holiday when I next come.

Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?

Extremely grateful that services like this still go on.

What one thing will you remember about all this in seven days' time?

No organ.

Oberammergau 2020 : Monday 18th-Friday 22nd May 2020 Once every ten year chance to be at the world-famous Passion Play!

The Pilgrimage to Munich and Oberammergau will be led by Bishop Martin and Mrs Elspeth Shaw: Monday 18th to Friday 22nd May 2020

The performance of the Passion Play is on Thursday 21st May, starting at 2.30pm, with an interval at 5.00pm, finishing at 10.30pm.

The play was first performed in 1634. In 1633, the residents of the village of Oberammergau vowed that, if God spared them from the bubonic plague ravaging the region, they would “for all time” produce a play every 10 years, depicting the life and death of Jesus. The town was spared! In 2010, there were 102 performances. Prior to our seeing the play, we shall be able to enjoy the picturesque village itself.

In the days before the play, we shall make a pilgrimage to Altötting, one of Germany's best known shrines. The Herrenchiemsee Palace of Ludwig II is on the beautiful island of Lake Chiemsee, which we will visit by boat, with a guided tour of the Palace and what was the Augustinian Monastery.

The Hohenschwangau and Neuschwangstein Castles, which from photographs seem almost impossible, are much sought after attractions. We shall learn about King Ludwig II (1845-1886), who created the castles, his relationship to the composer Richard Wagner and his huge generosity to those who lived on his land. Was he good - or mad - or both?

Cost of the trip £1,229.

Enquiries and Booking Forms: Bishop Martin and Mrs Elspeth Shaw.
amartinshaw@gmail.com Tel: 01392 663511.

Or

Directly to Pax Travel: Pax Travel Ltd, 2nd Floor, 102 Blundell Street, London N7 9BL. Tel: 0207 485 3003.



From the Library and Archives: World Class Policing Awards 2019

Readers may remember that in July 2018, the Exeter Synagogue suffered an Arson attack and the Library and Archives responded to an SOS call for secure storage for the Torah (Scrolls) and a candelabra which were deposited with us for 15 weeks. During those week's a friendship between the Library and Archives team and the Hebrew community in Exeter was established.

In April 2019 Canon Becky Totterdell and I were invited to the Rededication Service of the Synagogue conducted in both Hebrew and English. It was a very significant moment for me when the Torah were processed down the Aisle by the Elders and placed back in The Ark.

Early in October I received a phone call from Supt. Matt Lawler of the Devon and Cornwall Police, inviting me to attend the World Class Policing Awards. The local police had submitted a nomination recording the partnership established following the arson attack and it had been chosen as one of 54 finalists out of 117 nominations from 31 forces in the UK and five from overseas.

What is World Class Policing?

- *Innovative and inspirational*
- *Progressive and proactive*
- *Efficient and effective*
- *Collaborative and Cooperative*
- *Diverse and inclusive*

There was high security surrounding the event, but a small team from Exeter travelled to London on Thursday 14th November. Dressed in dress uniform or evening dress we arrived at the Grosvenor Hotel for the reception and dinner followed by the Awards Ceremony hosted by Jeremy Vine.

There was a showing of a short video of all of the 54 nominations. The ceremony moved on to the five nominations which had been Highly Commended before announcing the six award winners.

To the surprise of the Exeter contingent our nomination was called out and we found ourselves walking up to the stage and receiving a Highly Commended plaque which was received by Brian Nathan from the Synagogue. The award is for the collective community response undertaken by an extensive range of

partners - The City Council, Cathedral, Mosque, faith groups and local residents which was seen as a role model for how communities should respond to hatred.



Here we see Ann with, from left to right, PC John Heath, Rob Hannaford (former Lord Mayor), Brian Nathan (from the Exeter Synagogue), Supt Matt Lawler, and Stephen Kavanagh who presented our award.

You may also be interested to know that Devon and Cornwall Police won the outright winner's trophy for Operation Encompass, allowing children exposed to, or affected by domestic abuse receive the earliest possible support.

The honour of representing the Cathedral at this event is something I will never forget.

Ann Barwood BEM, Canon Librarian

You are invited.....

Dean Jonathan and Mrs Pamela Greener would like to invite you for a Christmas coffee and mince pies at the Deanery on Saturday the 14th of December from 10am – 11.30am. There is no need to reply, just turn up on the day.

Publication Date and Deadline for January 2020

We intend to publish the next edition of the News on 5th January 2020. Please send material by **Tuesday 31st December** to Heather Morgan (01392 877623, hmm53@tiscali.co.uk and Sheila Atkinson sm.a@blueyonder.co.uk.

From the Cathedral Bellringers

The Advent Procession is one of my favourite services at the Cathedral, a combination of the candlelight and beautiful carols, so it has been a delight over recent years to arrange special bellringing to herald the service. This year, a visiting band of peal ringers from Cambridge have been invited to Exeter Cathedral to attempt a full peal for Advent Sunday; although the core of the band will be from Cambridge, many friends and even some of our own local band were invited to form the team of twelve ringers. As I write, I am wishing them every success – they are planning to ring Cambridge Surprise Maximus with one person only ringing the tenor, so they could be there for nearly four and a half hours.

December continues to be a busy month. On Wednesday 4th December, the Cathedral bellringers gave one of the talks at the Town Hall staff and volunteer meeting. Several of us contributed to the talk, and sharing tales of how we came to ring at the Cathedral, and telling more about the unique bells that we ring, the art and skill of ringing, and how the bells form such an integral part of the liturgical year.

Christmas is almost upon us. We started the month in full festive celebration with the Devon Ringers Carol Service on Saturday 7th December, which Exeter Cathedral hosts biennially. This generous and special privilege is warmly appreciated by ringers from across the county as it brings together both traditions of bellringing in Devon – method ringing as practised here at the Cathedral, and represented by the Guild of Devonshire Ringers, and Devon Call Change ringing under the Devon Association of Ringers. The choir is formed entirely of bellringers, and aside from the familiar carols, handbells will also be rung during the service, with the Cathedral bells being rung both before and afterwards. It is always a very popular event in the calendar for Devon bellringers, and none more so than when it is hosted here at the Cathedral.

Finally, we will be anticipating our Christmas bellringing for you all. On Christmas Eve, we always enjoy ringing for the Grandisson Service, before returning later in the evening to ring for Midnight Mass, and then finally we ring out at 7am to welcome the dawning of Christmas morning. It is a moment when the voice of the bells seems more evocative and timeless than ever, ringing out across the wakening city.

The Cathedral bellringers extend their warmest season's greetings to one and all and hope that the bells will speak out in joy, hope and peace this Christmas as they have done for centuries past.

Clare Griffiths, Secretary, Exeter Cathedral Bellringers

What can I do about the Climate Emergency? Part 2

Or..... How can we work together to save our life-support system and cherish God's good creation? Last month I suggested starting by calculating your environmental footprint at footprint.wwf.org.uk. Secondly, take a Sabbath from consuming, because much of our activity and spending leads to carbon emissions. This month I'm suggesting coming at things from two directions.

3. Save energy in your home

It's that time of year when energy bills go through the roof, quite literally, if it's poorly insulated. On average, heating is responsible for nearly one-third of household carbon emissions. So insulating your home properly is a good place to start: draught-proofing is very cost-effective; look for eco-friendly loft insulation; there may be a scheme near you offering free cavity wall insulation; double or triple glaze your windows. Consider up-grading your boiler to the most efficient model (although note that it requires energy and materials to make a new boiler), cut down on your hot water usage in showers and baths, and sign up to a green energy supplier like Good Energy or Ecotricity for your remaining energy needs. For the more ambitious and creative, the Committee on Climate Change says that 1 in 20 homes with a gas boiler could join a local heat network, saving 2 tonnes of CO₂ per year. 1 in 4 homes currently using oil heating, and 1 in 3 homes using electric heating, could switch to a heat pump, saving 3.2 and 0.8 tonnes of CO₂ per year respectively.

4. Put pressure on the Government

All of our individual actions add up, and encourage others to do the same, but we also need massive structural change. Governments are reluctant to do anything without the support of the people that may or may not (re-)elect them. So use the run up to the General Election to challenge candidates about the climate emergency, and then hold the elected politicians to their promises. Through Write to Them (<https://www.writetothem.com/>) you can write to your MP, MEPs, city/district and county councillors, and the website provides advice on contacting the relevant members of the House of Lords. Hope for the Future (<http://www.hfff.org.uk>) has plenty of resources to help churches campaign on climate.

Clare Bryden

Harvest Appeal

In addition to the 86 kg of food, the special Harvest Appeal raised £618.20 for the Exeter Foodbank. Thank you very much to all for your generosity. The Foodbank staff are very grateful.

Heather Morgan, Chair of the Cathedral Community Committee

The Cathedral Flower Arrangers

The Winter Fair provided the flower arrangers with the chance to make small arrangements that we sold with prices ranging from £2 to £10. We had made some in advance, but we worked all the way through the Tuesday making as many more as we could. This is a valuable source of income to us, so we were pleased with the results!!

Remembrance arrangements followed with a fabulous threesome at the High Altar arranged by Tina – clever lady! It is difficult to make poppies look a little different, but I think they always look best done simply, as this year.



Since then, we have been working on our Advent still life, (*pictured left*), which I hope you all like. It is on a cold and frosty theme that Alison has designed for us and it goes well with the Angels throughout the Cathedral. It needs almost no maintenance as it is mainly dried material, and challenges us to think outside the box, as it lasts until Christmas Eve.

We entered into the “Angel spirit” outside the shop beside the Flower Box using silks, and mechanics (the building foundations of the arrangement) that are dried. We are re-using the wings from last Advent, together with some of last year’s

materials – making it cost effective for us, but hopefully providing something which requires you to use your imagination!

Our wreath workshop is on Wednesday 11th December at a cost of £35 – sign up at the Volunteers’ Office. Everything is provided – just bring scissors or snips.

On behalf of all the Flower Arrangers, may we wish you a Happy Christmastide, and hopefully a very calm and peaceful New Year.

Flick Evans, Exeter Cathedral Flower Arrangers

From Becky and Mike Totterdell

Dear Friends

It seems a very long time since my last service at the Cathedral - probably because so much has happened in the intervening weeks. Mike and I have settled well into our new house in Hemyock and into the communities of Hemyock, Culmstock, Clayhidon and Culm Davy. People have welcomed us very warmly, and it is a delight to get to know them. However, we want to thank you so very much for your amazing generosity in the leaving gift you gave me: not only the wonderful bouquet of flowers, but the recently received John Lewis vouchers for the amazing sum of £500. It was completely overwhelming and I thought long and hard as to how to use such a large amount. So I hope you will be pleased to know that it has enabled me to enter the 21st century by buying a contemporary mobile phone.

Besides being a personal help, the new phone will enable me to connect much more efficiently with the younger people in the Benefice and so be an aid to the churches' outreach. In a way, I see it as the Cathedral Congregations' ongoing support for the ministry and mission in these parishes - which are parishes in the Cathedral's patronage. So thank you!

We very much look forward to returning to the Cathedral from time to time, both for worship and special events, and to linking up with you again then. In the meantime, along with our thanks we send our love and very best wishes for a happy and holy Advent and Christmas.

Becky and Mike Totterdell

From the Company of Tapisers:

Thank you to everyone who supported us during the Winter Fair and throughout 2019. We are greatly encouraged by the positive response to our work.

The Company of Tapisers would like to wish you all a very happy Christmastide.

Diana Symes, Chairman of the Company of Tapisers

Ann Barter

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Ann Barter in the early hours of 29th December. Ann had worshipped regularly at the Cathedral since 1966. She was a much loved member of the Cathedral Community, who served in many areas of its life and ministry. Her funeral will be at the Cathedral on Wednesday 11th December at 3pm. There will be an appreciation of Ann in the January edition of the *News*.



Christmas Shoeboxes

On Advent Sunday, December 1st, 63 shoeboxes, filled by members of the wider Cathedral community, were blessed at the end of the 10am Eucharist. They have now been delivered to Copplestone, to start their journey to some of the deprived and lonely people in Eastern Europe.

My very heartfelt thanks to everyone who filled a box or two this Christmas. Although we never see our gifts actually being received, the charity assures us that they really are appreciated by the recipients, and often make a huge difference to those who feel forgotten.

Chryssa Turner

The Canon Steward

We have been delighted to welcome Cate Edmonds as our new Residentiary Canon, replacing Becky Totterdell. Though her arrival has prompted lots of discussion about what title to give her. And after much discussion, we have decided to move from the title 'St Peter Canon' used by Becky, and settled upon Canon Steward. It was agreed that this would sit more comfortably alongside the four 'ancient dignities' (see Statute X.2) of Dean, Precentor, Chancellor and Treasurer. Just to reassure you, we explored other ideas: Canon Pastor and Canon Missioner both clash with the role of our Canon Chancellor, we already have a Canon Librarian, and Canon Quintus/Quinta (i.e. the fifth canon) which is used in Bangor would imply that this canon is the last amongst equals. Hence our choice of Canon Steward, which we all agreed was sufficiently flexible to be able to encompass whatever role(s) the particular occupant might be called upon to fulfil, and is therefore sustainable as a title for the future.

You will be aware, I'm sure, that such matters are properly the remit of our Constitution and Statutes, and we are currently in the process of updating these - principally to advance some of the helpful proposals from the Cathedrals Working Group before these become enshrined in law in 2021. So, although in current use, the title Canon Steward will not in fact become legally official until these changes have taken place.

Jonathan Greener



**Focus: Michael Graham,
Tenor Lay Vicar in the
Cathedral Choir
And
Organist and Director of
Chapel Music
at the
University of Exeter**

'When in our music, God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride, it is as though the whole creation cried, Alleluia.

Let every instrument be tuned for praise! Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise! And may God give us faith to sing always. Alleluia.'

Words by F. Pratt-Green 1903-2003

At Evensong on Sunday, November 17th this year, we sang the words quoted above in the first hymn. We were celebrating the 25th anniversary of the inclusion of girl choristers, under their then director Stephen Tanner, into the Cathedral's Choir. The anniversary was indeed a very joyous occasion.

Here, unless they are on school holidays, we can weekly hear our choir of men, women, and boy or girl choristers singing at our Services; sometimes, at special Services with boys and girls together. Most of us are barely able to comprehend just how much thought, hours of practise and rehearsal time, let alone the commitment and determination that will have been, and still is being, invested into the consistent production of performances of outstanding quality and soul.

So, it is, I think, through this focus on Michael Graham, we have an opportunity to look more deeply into this area of the Cathedral's life.

Michael was born in the now demolished Old Royal Hospital in Liverpool in 1991. He is one of five children; he has two brothers, two sisters, and is the second eldest. His father is an engineer within the gas industry, and also used to have a Small Parts Retail business. His mother is a nurse. She took a break

from this to look after her young family and returned to it once the children reached a suitable age for her to do so. Michael's family still lives in Liverpool. *'I had a great childhood growing up in Liverpool with my brothers and sisters. We all got on well, even though I was the only one who was very enthusiastic about music.'*

Michael attended a Church of England Primary School, in Rainhill. Which is a town with a link into our transport history; the trial-runs for Stephenson's Rocket Engine took place in 1829 on the slopes of the hills around Rainhill.

Did he like school?

'Yes, and no! When I left my Primary School I went to De la Salle Roman Catholic Comprehensive School. It was not until my penultimate year at secondary school that I started to learn to play the piano; I was fifteen at the time. I 'd completed my GCSE's, which included GSCE Music, before I went to the 6th Form College in Rainhill. This was when I first started to play the organ. I did a lot of practising, which was rewarded when I was offered the position of organ scholar at St. Bartholmew's Church in Rainhill. This church had a two-manual Willis tracker organ. It was a wonderful instrument to learn on, helping me to develop my technique. I spent hours practising every day, as well as continuing to study for my A levels, one of which was Music. At the age of 17, I was awarded the organ scholarship at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, where I became a pupil of Timothy Noon, the current Director of Music at Exeter Cathedral!

The Metropolitan Cathedral was a wonderful place to work, and a really invaluable and enjoyable year. Up until that point, I was a complete novice in conducting choirs and teaching choristers to sing. The hours were long, and the scholarship only paid £1000.00 per annum; but, I loved every minute of it, even if it meant getting up at 5am in time for the 8am rehearsals in the choir school.'

By the age of eighteen, and having passed his Grade 8 in Organ Studies in 2009, Michael begun to realise that he liked working with choirs. In 2012 he became a tenor Choral Scholar at St. David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire.

'I was very focussed, because in order to progress I needed to hone my own skills. My musical journey was very different to most because it started quite late on in my teenage years. I learnt a great deal from working with other musicians and the competitive nature of the music industry kept me motivated. By this stage, I knew that I was interested in playing the organ, conducting choirs and singing.'

Michael found life in South Wales somewhat different to that in Liverpool. St. David's Cathedral was very different to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, but he quickly learnt to enjoy his time there, and grow as a musician. At St. David's Michael was greatly influenced by Daniel Cook, who was the organist at St. David's at the time, prior to becoming the Sub-Organist to James O'Donnell at

Westminster Abbey in 2013. Michael has remained friends with Daniel Cook, who is now at Durham.

'He was a virtuoso organist, gifted conductor, and also had a good tenor voice. He was the master of them all, and that was my aim!'

In 2013, Michael wrote to Andrew Millington, who was then our Director of Music, asking if there was a vacancy in the Choir.

'Potentially, yes!' was the reply, and Michael was invited to audition. He expressed his interests in singing, playing the organ, and rehearsing the choristers. He obviously made a good impression, because he was offered a position as organ/choral scholar. He then held the position of tenor choral scholar for two years before being appointed as a Tenor Lay Vicar.

How did he become the Director of Music to the University of Exeter Chapel Choir?

'James Theodosius, who was then the Chaplain of the Mary Harris Memorial Chapel on the university's Streatham Campus asked Andrew Millington if he knew of anyone who might be available to take over the Chapel Choir. At that time, it had four auditioned choral scholars who were paid, and the other members were all student volunteers. The choir did not have funds to appoint any additional scholars at the time.'

I remember Andrew saying to me "This is the right time, and the right place!"

In 2013, I was appointed Organist and Director of Chapel Music at the University of Exeter. I accepted the position alongside my commitments at the Cathedral.

Changes were made so that the student volunteers in the choir were all auditioned. From September 2013, there were 18 choral scholarships available, and the successful auditionees were each to be awarded a scholarship, given contracts, and paid £100 per annum.

I held the first auditions in the chapel, assisted by Andrew Millington.

By the start of the next academic year, the chapel choir's reputation had grown, the number of applicants had significantly increased, and the scholarship pay had also increased to £300.00. By the third year, the University, which is a secular place, was beginning to notice the changes in the standard of the Chapel Choir, and invited them to sing at the Graduation Ceremonies. The university offered payment for these ceremonies, which boosted the choral scholarships to £700.00 per annum. This encouraged a change in the choir's status, and it began to become akin to a professional choir. Multiple donors began to appear, and an endowment was offered in 2015.'

Matters now being very different, the Choir needed to be instantly recognisable; so in 2016 they invested in some new cassocks, in Exeter Green. Michael's conducting surplice once belonged to Andrew Millington, and David Davies, a past Assistant Director of Music at the Cathedral, is currently the Chapel's organist, even though he is now the Organist at Buckfast Abbey.

'If you want to have a professional choir, you have to have a professional organist! The Chapel's liturgical music is influenced greatly by my Cathedral experience.' How do you make the music sing? *'You do what your brain, and heart is telling you! Those are the perpetual questions.'*

This is a very busy man. As well as singing during the week and at the weekends with the Cathedral Choir, he rehearses the University Chapel Choir on Thursdays, and directs their Evensong Service every Wednesday. Michael is also the Director of the University Choral Society, who rehearse on Monday evenings, and the Budleigh Salterton Male Voice Choir, who rehearse on Tuesdays.

'Conducting Budleigh Salterton's male voice choir has really shaped my conducting! They're always watching me, because they specialise in giving performances from memory!! We do ten concerts a year, eight of which are for charity. The choir travel to various venues to partake in competitions. We have a regional reputation to maintain. I love it.'

How does this man relax?

'Well, I have Friday's off! I use this time to relax and go to the gym. I spend time with my girl-friend, Katie, who is a lawyer in London, but visits Devon at the weekends. I also enjoy going out for meals, and going to the pub. Sometimes I go to the cinema depending on what's on. I like cooking and often follow Gordon Ramsay's recipes. I also enjoy reading.'

Michael would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cathedral Community for making him feel such a part of it. He is especially thankful for their encouragement and welcome when he arrived aged just twenty-one. *'I've never felt lonely here; it feels like a very big family.'* He would, also, like to recognise the constant, loving support he has received from his parents, without which, he says, he would not have achieved that about which I have written. They can, surely, feel very proud of their son and all that he has achieved through years of hard work and application.

'I was a bit of a surprise element for them! My dad was the only one who had any interest in music, and that was opera.'

I will end with a question I've not asked anyone before in a Focus, let alone a musician. I asked if there had been any chorister who stood out in his memory more than any other, and his reply was swift.

'Yes! The one who stole my wallet from me whilst on the coach!! A real-life 'Artful Dodger'!

He's probably now grown up and a respected member of some choir! C'est la vie!

Thank you, Michael.

Rosemary Bethell

The Exeter Nativity

Sunday 15th December

A fun and engaging Nativity Play for all ages, with real LIVE animals!

Join us to walk around the city centre from 2pm and for the Nativity in the Cathedral at 3pm, including traditional carols.



Cathedral Community Committee (CCC)

In last month's *News*, I reported that the CCC was looking for a passionate leader and dedicated team to organise and promote the regular special appeals that now form the Cathedral's outward giving. We are delighted to say that we are over half way there! The Revd Canon Dr John Searle answered the call for help, and has agreed to lead this work; he has already recruited half the new team. We are very grateful to them all for taking this on. The next appeal will be during Lent and Easter.

Heather Morgan, Chair CCC

Quiet Day: 18th January 10am-4pm at St Rita's Centre, Honiton ***Be still, and know that I am God***

The Revd Elsie Howell has organised this Quiet Day, which will be led by Canon Chris Palmer, Canon Chancellor of the Cathedral. The cost will be up to £25, depending on numbers. Please contact Elsie at elsiehowell41@icloud.com for further details and to reserve a place. All welcome.

Christmas Services

Please see the website and the What's On leaflet for full details of Christmas, New Year and Epiphany Services. Highlights include on **Christmas Eve**, the Crib Service at noon, Service of Lessons and Carols with the Office of John Grandisson at 6pm, and Midnight Mass at 11.30pm. On **Christmas Day**, there will be Holy Communion at 8am, Choral Eucharist at 10am, Choral Mattins at 11.45am, and Choral Evensong and Carols from the Minstrels' Gallery at 4pm. On **Boxing Day (St Stephen's Day)**, there will be Solemn Eucharist at 11am.

News from Christians Together Across Exeter (CTaX)

9th December at 7.30-9pm at St Leonard's Church

Pray For Exeter Street Pastors

All Christian intercessors are invited to pray for the work of Exeter Street Pastors, on the second Monday of every month, at St Leonard's.

10th December at 12 noon-1pm at St Michael's, Alphington

Pray for Initiatives in Christian Education (ICE)

Prayer meetings at 12 noon on the second Tuesday of every month, hosted at St. Michael's Alphington, open to all to join with ICE in prayer for the next generation.

12th December at 12.30-1.30pm at Exeter YMCA, St David's Hill, Exeter

Exeter YMCA Carols

Join YMCA Exeter for our Annual Carol Service including your much loved carols, reading and free refreshments. We can't wait to get the festive celebrations started! Poster attached.

14th December at 11.30am in Bedford Square

Illuminate: street prayer, healing and prophesy

Illuminate has been invited to join evangelist Alex Bowler evangelist and Hope for Exeter in Bedford Square from 11.30am to offer prayer and ministry for the people of Exeter, revealing the heart of God and showing His love in this Christmas season.

14th December at 4-5pm at the Mint Methodist Church

Exeter Foodbank Carols by Candlelight

Please come along, the event will be suitable for all ages, it will last no more than 60 minutes, we will have tea/coffee and mince pies afterwards. We will NOT be taking up a collection as this is a celebration of Christmas rather than a fundraising event.

18th Dec at 7.30pm at St Michael's, Mount Dinham

St Michael's Lecture: *In Search of Ancient Gnostics*:

Speaker: The Revd Dr Alastair Logan

Alastair taught for many years in the Theology Department at Exeter University, and is the author of *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult (2006)*. In this lecture, he takes us on the search to identify this early Christian cult.

Sun 19th January 2020

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: United Prayer service at Belmont... more details to follow.

Co-working for Gospel growth: The Church of England has recently published a report on how much Church of England churches co-work with other churches, and whether this promotes Gospel growth. The project found that much missional activity by Anglican parishes is routinely undertaken in partnership with other churches, including many projects relating to evangelism and discipleship. You can read more here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/work-other-christian-churches/our-news/doing-mission-together-how-partnership-promotes-gospel>

General Election resources: the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church, are preparing resources to help churches and Christians engage with the 12th December General Election. Check

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/general-election-2019 to see as these become available

Prayer for the country: St Petrock's on the High Street (opposite McDonald's) is hosting a prayer space for anyone who wants to spend some time praying for our country. There are three prayer stations, around the themes of unity, peace and hope. The next time you're in the city centre, join in praying for our country – for unity, peace and hope. Open daily during working hours, except when in use for meetings. The prayer space has been created by Ross Maynard, the community minister from South Street Baptist Church - a good example of churches working together.

PRAY 2020: a prayer initiative calling on Christians to pray for 20 minutes, at 20:20, on the 20th of each month in 2020. More info https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/327007/Prayer_2020.aspx

Christmas with the Cathedral Choir: 7th, 12th and 13th December at 7pm

Please book now for one the highlights of the Cathedral year; the Cathedral Choir's Christmas Carol Concerts. Due to popular demand, we have three dates this year.

The adults and Choristers will be directed by Timothy Noon (Director of Music), and accompanied on the mighty Cathedral Organ by Timothy Parsons (Assistant Director of Music).

Tickets £13-£18, and £5 for under-18s. Available from 01392 285983 (Monday to Friday) or online.



Nick Horton

We were all shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden death of Nick Horton on 4th December. Nick was a friend to many in the congregation and a much loved member of the Cathedral Community Committee and the Pastoral Care Team, a duty chaplain, a guide, and much more. His sonorous reading of the lesson at the Choral Eucharist was legendary. We will pay a full tribute to Nick in the January News. For now, our deepest sympathy and prayers go to Katherine and all his family. Please see the Weekly Sheet in due course for details of the funeral.

Graham Stones

We were also very sad to hear of the death of the Revd Graham Stones on 2nd December. Graham was Bishop Robert's Chaplain, having retired from parish ministry served almost entirely in Devon-in Okehampton, Sidmouth and Teignmouth. Graham was a delightful, kind, and wise man, with a wonderful sense of humour. He was a superb colleague and friend. We remember Marion and all his family in our prayers. There will be service of thanksgiving for his life and ministry in the Cathedral at 11am on Wednesday 8th January 2020.



The Company of St Boniface

On 4th November, Bishop Robert invested nine people with the St Boniface medal, a new award which recognises outstanding service to the Church and to the wider community. It is a celebration of faithful and sacrificial service. Among the first recipients was Malcolm Pomeroy, who has been part of the Cathedral Community since 1976. He is a virger, server, sidesman, and a volunteer in the Library and Archives. Here we see Malcolm receiving his medal from Bishop Robert.

Malcolm has written:

A warm thank you to those who have congratulated me personally, sent e-mails and cards on my award of the St Boniface medal.

Choral Evensong: Wednesday 18th December at 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3

This is a service recorded on 12th November featuring the girls and adults of the Cathedral Choir. The music will include two pieces specially commissioned by the Cathedral; Nicholas Muhly's *Exeter Service* (first performed in public on 17th November at the service to celebrate 25 years of girl choristers) and Annabel Rooney's *Misterium mirabile*.



Angel Day (until 4th Jan)

Come and see the beautifully handcrafted Angels at the Golden Gates and around the east end of the Cathedral - all created by local groups, schools, individuals and our own volunteers and staff.

And as we prepare again to hear the message of the Angels, we send to all our readers our warmest greetings for Christmas and the New Year.