



Emerging from Lockdown

I never thought I would hear a Residentiary Canon, and a PhD at that, ask “What other theology do we need to forget?” But that’s the uncharted territory into which the events of recent months have brought us—more of forgetting theology anon.

Emerging from lockdown is exciting and daunting in equal measure. Too much has happened simply to carry on from where we left off in March 2020—even if that were desirable or possible. Out of necessity, new ways of worship, fellowship and engagement have emerged, and with them, new opportunities, not least in the online community that the Cathedral has gathered in the last few months, many of who had no previous contact with the Cathedral. How best can we respond?

We sought help from Professor Grace Davie, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Exeter, with a particular interest in the Sociology of Religion. Grace worships at St James, Exeter, where Mark, her husband, is a Reader. She kindly agreed to speak at the Zoom meeting of the Cathedral Community Committee (CCC) on 11th May. The question we asked her to address was “*How best can we can respond practically, theologically and ecclesiologically to the opportunity provided by the new online community that we have gathered during lockdown, and to integrate them with the wider Cathedral Community?*”

Those members of Chapter, the CCC and the leaders of volunteer groups in the Cathedral who attended were both inspired and challenged by her response. While Grace didn’t profess to know all the answers, she offered abundant observations, and questions, which provoked much discussion. We hope this summary will convey, and spread more widely, the thoughts that emerged.

Grace began by emphasising that in the Church as in other walks of life, the mix of online and face to face engagement is here to stay. In trying to make the best of both models, don’t try to do too much—that is unsustainable. Find the things you are good at, and do them better.

With regard to the diverse constituencies that make up the Cathedral Community, particularly the online community, Grace urged us to get as much information as you can. Who? Where? Why have they chosen Exeter Cathedral?



As for theology, the advice was to agree your theological starting point (easier said than done!) and from there work out a coherent policy, goals and priorities. While preaching works well online, incarnational and sacramental ministry is difficult. We miss the chance encounter or conversation at the church door; we don't notice who isn't there.

The evidence is that church is becoming a market rather than a public utility. Cathedrals sit at the crossroads of heritage and faith. People must choose to come to a Cathedral, which sits outside parish structures-why? How do we speak both to those who choose the Cathedral as the place to develop their Christian faith, and to those who drop in from time to time, while building a faithful community?

As for practical solutions...Encourage people. Invite them. Welcome them. One of the stars of online worship has been the beauty of the building-make the most of that. Offer stepping stones to make it easier for people to come into the beautiful building captured on camera. Use outdoor spaces. Let people know about the quieter midweek services. Make a real effort to invite people to particular services or events, preferably with personalised invitations. Encourage people so that they want to come to the Cathedral in person.

We must learn from the strange experience of the last few months. Build on the good things such as lectures, Holy Ground, Quiz Nights, the Lectio Divina Group, and increased numbers at Morning and Evening Prayer on Zoom. Don't stop doing what the Cathedral does best-the choral tradition and the regular rhythm of daily liturgy. These have been a great resource to the diocese during lockdown, part of our role as Mother Church.

As for forgetting theology, recognise that places and thought evolve. For instance, people are increasingly drawn to shrines. They meet a contemporary need. It appears that people have forgotten the theology which made such things unacceptable in Protestant churches after the Reformation- which brings us back to the question: what other theology might we need to forget?

As you see, even from edited highlights, this was a very fruitful presentation, full of ideas. We are very grateful to Grace for a terrific evening, for her encouragement, and for asking so many questions to set us on the right track. Now, we look forward to us all working together to find some answers, so we can seize this unique opportunity to renew the life of the Cathedral Community.

Encourage. Invite. Welcome. As a start, September will see the beginning of the Cathedral's Year of Invitation and Welcome. There will be a week of teaching on prayer from 26 September, to be led by Fr George Guiver CR from Mirfield, and Sister Elizabeth Jane CSMV from Wantage. In October, we're planning a Cathedral Community Party. May these be the first of many such stepping stones.

Heather Morgan, Chair, Cathedral Community Committee

Shop Snippets



Well...what a wild 4 weeks it's been.

It always amazes me how quickly time flies when there's so much to do, especially with something as important and exciting as re-opening the Cathedral and Shop to visitors. Joseph and I have both said it has felt like opening a new business from scratch! And it partly has with the arrival and opening of "Ten Fifty".

We've been battling the weather recently, so have had to close on a couple of occasions, but "Ten Fifty" should be standing (well, parked) proud on the West Front 7 days a week to serve our staff, volunteers, congregation, community and visitors alike. In good weather, there will be tables and chairs out, so you can take a seat and enjoy the Cathedral view. We've got a great new team of baristas so please do take a visit, say hello and sample the menu while you're there! Most of them only learnt how to make coffee a few weeks ago, so we are all learning and improving together.

Opening this van has certainly been a massive learning curve for me, and I couldn't have done it without a number of very important people. Firstly our suppliers, new and old, for sharing their knowledge and expertise with me, but also our own, usually unsung, heroes: Bev and the cleaning team, Seamstress Sue, Rob the electrician, Pippa & Mandy in Finance, and Anthony & Gary on the Maintenance team. It's the seemingly simple tasks that frequently go unnoticed that really make projects like this successful - from ensuring a continuous supply of clean cloths, fixing leaking pipes, and generally keeping each other sane! There are plenty more people I could thank, but I don't want this to turn into an Oscar's speech.

I'm sure you've all heard enough about "Ten Fifty" for now, so I'll quickly mention that the Shop is open 7 days a week again (Monday – Saturday 9:30am – 4:30pm & Sunday 11:30am – 3pm). We've got a fairly large sale happening, so do pop in and have a look, and we're still taking second hand books as well.

All the best,

Alice, Shop Supervisor

Don't Miss Out

Over the weeks around St Peter's Day 29th June the Cathedral has been loaned for exhibition the largest known painting of Exeter Cathedral. Measuring just shy of four metres high and two metres wide, the painting will be hung in the Presbytery near the High Altar.

An opportunity rarely given to see a painting of Exeter Cathedral viewed from the North East by the Devon artist John Shapland (1865-1929), this very large (11ft 4inch X 5ft 4inch) work came from a series of paintings of Devon originally hung in the Theatre Royal, Exeter. It closed in 1962 and was subsequently demolished. The paintings were removed from the theatre for auction by Bearnes, and some were purchased by Robert Hough, Chair of Devon Opera, for their music room in Chudleigh!

This painting was one of a series that decorated the Circle in the Theatre Royal in Exeter, close to the site of John Lewis. These paintings are on a monumental scale, and record some of the glorious scenes in Devon. John Shapland was a Devon artist, and the Principal of Exeter School of Art from 1899-1913. He is listed in the dictionary of British Artists, and he exhibited in the Royal Academy, the Walker Gallery in Liverpool, in Paris and the USA.

Robert has generously offered the loan of the painting to the Cathedral thanks to the suggestion of Anne Foreman, Vice-Chair of Devon Opera, with the intention that it will be in the Cathedral for the Friends of Exeter Cathedral AGM on Saturday 26th June and the St Peter's day celebrations on 29th June.

By the by, the next performance of Devon Opera will be *La Bohème* in July 2022!

Ian Morter, Priest Vicar

The July edition of *Cathedral News*

We hope to publish the next edition of the News on Sunday 4th July 2021. The deadline for material is **Tuesday 29th June 2021**. Please send any contributions to hmm53@tiscali.co.uk or to any member of the editorial team; Heather Morgan, Rosemary Bethell, Jenny Ellis and Sheila Atkinson.

90th Birthday

Long-standing members of the congregation may recall the Sisters from the Convent at Posbury, near Crediton (The Community of the Franciscan Servants of Jesus and Mary). The sole remaining Member of the Community, Sister Giovanna, will be 90 on Monday 31 May. Chapter Canons Trevor Jones and Jenny Ellis, both trustees of the newly formed Posbury St Francis Trust, will be going to visit Sister Giovanna that morning, and we are sure you would wish them to pass on best wishes on behalf of the Cathedral Community.

Living in Love and Faith



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

Living in Love and Faith is the Church of England's conversation about sexuality, gender, and identity. Five groups met during Lent for engaging and heartfelt conversations. Last month we heard from Carys Puleston about her experience of being part

of this conversation. This month we hear from a couple of others, one participant and one facilitator.

Lesley Robson, who joined the Sunday lunchtime group, writes:

I very much enjoyed the zoom group I attended. I thought the booklet we used together was clearly set out, and took us along a well thought out path. The discussion was broken up with various couples talking about their different beliefs and ways of living. I found this very interesting.

While I personally felt there was nothing radical said, it was good to reaffirm my ideas. Although we came from different backgrounds, we were very cohesive in our conclusions, and I would be interested in finding how other groups fared.

I understand that a combined report from our groups will go forward, and I wanted to "have my say". I am glad that I enjoyed doing this so much.

And Helen Taverner, who facilitated on Tuesday evenings, writes:

"We are running a course, Living in Love and Faith, would you like to co-facilitate and run a group?" was the email that Chris sent me. My initial reaction was delight at being asked, and then complete terror that this was something completely out of my comfort zone and feeling totally inadequate in my knowledge!

So, I did some reading, reflection, and some praying, and decided that this was something that I could probably do!

Zoom meetings then followed, teaming up with my co – facilitator, Phil Wales, and it all started to feel that it was possible.

Like many of us this last year, the challenges of Zoom is something we have had to learn and embrace, but I love a challenge! Practising delivering my sessions, and watching myself on the screen was enlightening!

However, once we started, and the initial apprehension started to fade, it honestly started to become enjoyable!

Meeting new people, discussing and sharing such important topics, discovering and learning so much about others and myself.

I found myself reading the course notes daily, enjoying preparing how and what we were going to discuss, listening to podcast, many hours of talking and sharing the journey with my husband Rob. This was turning out to be so much more than co-facilitating a course !

The course online, the video stories are all there to help and guide you through.

Sharing the role with a colleague is invaluable, preparation is key, but for me taking a leap of faith and saying “yes”, was one of the best things I have done!

And another chance to join in yourselves (but not the last)

A Living in Love and Faith group will meet on five Thursday evenings from 17 June, 7.00-8.30pm. The facilitators will be Howard Moffat and Alastair Endersby, and it will meet on Zoom.

If you would like to take part in this group, please email Canon Chris Palmer at pastoral.care@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

And we hope a bit later in the year – rules permitting – there will also be a chance to join in the conversation face to face.

Discover More on a Guided Tour

Our tours are back! With lockdown restrictions easing, we are delighted to announce the return of our ground level guided tours. Our dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteer tour guides are ready and raring to welcome visitors, eager to share the wonders of this awe-inspiring building.

Starting from 1 June (Monday to Saturday), there are plenty of time slots to choose from. There is no additional charge for the 60-minute tour (it's part of the £5.00 admission fee). It is a fantastic way to build a deeper understanding of the incredible people who built and endowed Exeter Cathedral all those years ago.

For more information about how to book your spot, the measures we have taken to help keep everyone safe, and what to expect when you arrive, please use the following URL link: <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/visit-us/guided-audio-tours/>

If you're looking for something a bit different, we also have a selection of special tours. They include the Lady Chapel and Bishop's Palace Garden Tour, Stones and Bones: The Cathedral Precinct Tour and our BRAND NEW Tour and Draw: Sketching in the Cathedral. For more information, please see: <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/visit-us/special-tours/>

Holy Ground : Sunday 13 June at 6.00pm on Zoom

Becoming Me

with Revd Prebendary Deborah Parsons and Revd Tanya Hockley-Still

Eugene Peterson says: “A story doesn’t just tell us something and leave us there, it invites our participation.” We are our stories. They’ve shaped how we see ourselves, the world and our place in it. How does the little story of our own lives connect with the bigger story of God’s love for us and what role do we have in that bigger story?

“Becoming Me” is an opportunity to listen to and reflect on the stories of two female minority ethnic clergy and their identity in Christ, to consider why some stories get traction and others don’t, and to reflect on where we’ve exhibited or experienced bias in our own lives.



Deborah Parsons is Diocesan Interfaith Advisor (Exeter), Rural Dean of Totnes and Team Vicar of Totnes.

She delights in discovering the sacred in the ordinary and is particularly drawn to monastic wisdom and contemplative prayer, relishing opportunities to engage with people, who would describe themselves as spiritual rather than religious. Her training with the One Spirit Interfaith Foundation in London helped her to find a new language for how to speak about God. Prior to becoming a priest, she taught English at Epsom College and was instrumental in pioneering co-education from 13+. She is passionate about formation, and enjoys supporting others in their vocational journey. Walking the coastal path and spending time with family and friends recreates her, and her lockdown gift has been to learn the baritone ukulele.



Tanya Hockley-Still is a Devonian by birth, being born in Plymouth and growing up there until going away to university. She was ordained in 2014 in Chichester diocese, and served her curacy just outside Eastbourne, before moving back to Devon to be Rector of St. Mark's in Exeter in 2017. Tanya is the Diocesan UKME (United Kingdom Minority Ethnic) Adviser, and has long been passionate

about encouraging UKME vocations and advocating for equality in all areas of Church life. To this end, she is also an Ordained Vocations Mentor listed on the national database. She has been married to Josh since 2016, and they are

expecting their first child in September. Her other interests include board games, fantasy and science-fiction.

Holy Ground gathers people in worship and reflection, with a speaker, around issues of justice, theology, and the arts. During lockdown, we have experimented with meeting online, and, although we have not shared the same physical 'ground', have found this space to be 'holy'. The evening will last 90 minutes, with a break for around 10 minutes in the middle.

Join on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81303370120?pwd=OzNjZTcrcXc2R3I3YThBK2lBd0Jldz09>

Meeting ID: 813 0337 0120 Passcode: 298140

From the Cathedral Flower Arrangers

How lovely to be going back into Ordinary Time, with the "Ten Fifty" van sitting on the cobbles to offer us coffee and cake!! As arrangers, in "normal" time on an arranging day, coffee time was very important! We gather about 9am, strip out the flowers, foliage and oasis block from each placement, including scooping out foul water remaining in the container – yuk! We then replace any oasis using fresh supplies, and share foliage for the eight arrangements. That's when the need for caffeine kicks in!! Our fresh flowers usually arrive about 10am, and we pop them into water for a little drink before we gather for ours.

It is a time for friendship, sharing ideas, some planning and catching up with one another; very valuable when you need to work as a team! Coffee done, we can return and arrange happily until all looks fresh and new. The new van "Ten Fifty" will allow us to restart this regular routine from this week.

It was great to be a team of four last week arranging for Pentecost. Linda was the lead, as we shared the few red flowers we had. We had completed arrangements in the Lady Chapel, St Gabriel's, and the Flower Box outside the shop the week before, so that visitors returning to our beautiful building were able to enjoy some of the "normal" that we offer.

Flick Evans

Albion Quartet at the Honeyeard Festival: 24th June at 7pm

Music by Haydn, Beethoven and Shostakovitch.

Tickets: £20 Adults, £5 Students and Under 18s, available online.

Proceeds from this concert will support the Exeter Cathedral Music Foundation Trust.



The Friends of Exeter Cathedral

Our Annual Report mailing will be dropping onto members' door mats about now, which includes details of our plans for Friends Day, which will take place on Saturday 26th June. This will, by necessity, be a scaled back event as, at the time of going to press with our Report and even now, we cannot be sure of the exact restrictions that may, or may not, still prevail from the 21st June.

As a consequence, we are asking all potential attendees to our AGM to book a place in advance, to help our planning in terms of numbers and seating.

Bishop Robert has kindly invited us to arrange a number of guided tours of his garden, for which places must be pre-booked, so we are very much hoping for fine weather.

There will be an organ recital in the Cathedral at 1.30pm, and anyone who would like to attend is welcome to do so. No pre-booking is necessary but, of course, could be limited by number should restrictions still prevail. At present, it is intended there will be a Eucharist at 11am and Evensong will be on Zoom-but please check on the Cathedral website nearer the time.

Our office has not yet resumed normal opening hours, but the phone is being monitored remotely, so if you have any queries please leave a message, and we will call you back.

Pete Privett, Office Manager

Thank you!

I'd like to place on record my enormous thanks to each and every Cathedral volunteer. The last 14 months have been incredibly challenging for us all but I am delighted to say that, slowly but surely, we are now re-emerging and returning to some semblance of normality.

While some volunteer groups have managed to continue doing their excellent work from home, I recognise that for many people they are returning to active Cathedral life for the very first time since the initial March 2020 lockdown. Although there are still restrictions in place, it's fantastic to see so many familiar faces around the building.

Whatever your role, seen or unseen, I really appreciate everything you do to help make this place run so smoothly.

If you have any problems or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail on: joseph.patkai@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

Joseph Patkai, Visitors and Volunteers Coordinator

From The Company of Tapisers

As you probably know, our Tapisers are all amateurs who enjoy sewing. None of them are professionally trained, but enthusiasm and experience have made our members skilled and able needlewomen. It may surprise you to learn that the number of different stitches they use regularly is fairly limited:

The Textile Group, who make vestments and banners, mostly use running stitch, blanket stitch and hemming stitch; the Canvas Group, who do tapestry work, use tent stitch, cross stitch and gobelin stitch; and the Whitework Group, who embroider altar linen, use chain stitch, satin stitch and running stitch.

I find it fascinating to think that the Tapisers are continuing an age-old tradition which goes back centuries! For example, tent stitch was used by the Ancient Egyptians to make and mend their tents; chain stitch embroidery has been found in excavated royal tombs in China, dating from 1100BC; and a Peruvian sampler using running stitch has been dated to 500AD!

The Company of Tapisers' regular meetings have been interrupted by Covid-19, although members have continued to stitch at home. The group are hoping to recommence meetings after the summer – if Covid permits! If anyone feels they'd like to join us – DO get in touch. We welcome anyone who is enthusiastic – and, remember, you don't need an extensive knowledge of stitches!

Diana Symes, Chairman of the Company of Tapisers

Devon Faith and Belief Forum: Thursday 8th July 2021 6pm–7.30pm Via Zoom

Guest Speaker Sara Khan: Challenging Extremism, Promoting Social Cohesion: The Role of Faith Leaders

Sara Khan is one of the UK's authoritative voices on countering extremism. In 2018, she was appointed by the Home Secretary to lead the newly appointed Commission for Countering Extremism. In March 2021, Sara was appointed by the Prime Minister as the Government's Independent Adviser for Social Cohesion and Resilience.

Sign up for tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sara-khan-tickets-147532827659>

The Zoom link will be sent out at midday on 8th July.

News from Education and Library & Archive Department

We are merging to form a Heritage Learning Department, with new staff and exciting programmes - more in the next newsletter about this and an opportunity to meet the team!



Coming in June - Love Your Burial Ground Week (5-13th June)

Neighbours Exeter Cathedral Library & Archives, the Education Dept and the Devon & Exeter Institution are joining together to celebrate Cathedral Green as a tree-filled green space in the heart of Exeter, and as the old burial ground for the city of Exeter.

Cathedral Green has been popular with generations of visitors as a place to enjoy a fine view of the Cathedral and the wonderfully varied architecture of the Close, as a meeting place for solemn and joyful occasions, and to enjoy some leisure time and eat a picnic. If visitors pause for a moment they will see that it is not only fine architecture on display, but also a wealth of different tree species. Join us this Love Your Burial Ground week to discover more.

This year:

- Follow the trail on Cathedral Green to find out more about the diversity of tree species, and a little bit of history.
- Visit the special exhibition of tree-themed poetry in the Devon & Exeter Institution (on from 17th May).
- See a special scrapbook giving a glimpse at life on Cathedral Green in the 1950s (on from 17th May).
- Join us for a day of family-friendly activities, including crafts and trails on Saturday 12th June 10am – 2pm

Look out next month for our new Summer Programme of Activities for children, families and the young at heart.

Trails, crafts, Tudor Time Travel, Archaeological Dig and more. Try your hand at Needle Felting, make Willow Dragon Flies or bring the youngsters along for a Night in the Cathedral.

Our Mini-Door Hunter Trail is back early this year, so don't wait until the summer to let the fun begin. Map / Quiz sheets can be purchased from the Welcome Desk at £2.50. Seek out the hidden doors around the Cathedral and answer the questions at each station. When you have completed the trail pop into the shop for your prize. Fun for all ages. Happy Hunting!



Welcome.....

A warm welcome to new members of the Cathedral staff.

Andrew Downton has been appointed to lead on music outreach (combining three smaller previous posts) in order to give the Cathedral more musical profile and presence around the county.

Jonathan Scott (ex-National Trust) has been appointed as Heritage Engagement Manager - on the retirement of Ann Barwood as Canon Librarian.

Bryher Mason, also from the National Trust, has been appointed to take a lead on our Activity and Outreach Programme, building partnerships with key players here in Exeter.

Sean Smith has been appointed as maintenance foreman, and **Mark Macrill** has also started to work alongside the existing maintenance team.

.....and Thank you

Warmest thanks and good wishes to **Ann Barwood** on her retirement as Canon Librarian. She will continue to work on special projects. Since 2003, when Ann was appointed, the changes in Library and Archives have been exponential, achieving the refurbishment of the West Wing and the fantastic book store, along with Archive Accreditation, and the entry of the Exeter Book on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. We are all deeply indebted to Ann, and hugely grateful for all she has given, and continues to give, to the Cathedral.

Thanks and all best wishes to **Christine Patterson**, who has retired from her post as receptionist in the Cathedral Office after many years. Christine has been a constant, cheerful and efficient presence, fielding all manner of enquiries and visitors. We will miss her.

Christianity Deanery Synod

Thanks and good wishes to Chris Hampton, Carys Puleston and Heather Morgan, who have been elected to represent the Cathedral in the House of Laity of Christianity Deanery Synod

From the Clerk of Works

In October 2020, Chris Sampson, Clerk of Works, reported to the Friends of Exeter Cathedral on the extensive work completed in the Cathedral during lockdown, and on future plans. In the May edition of Cathedral News, we published the first instalment. This is the second and final edited extract from his report.

In the last 2 years, we have undertaken minor works to the North Porch, repairing a fallen and damaged statue to St. Vladimir. We then worked to ensure all the other statues were safe and secured, as well as stage one of the cleaning and repointing of this prominent edifice.

It was at this point we discovered the presence of medieval paint hidden beneath the black sulphation deposits. This discovery, that the North Porch may have actually been decorated much like the West Front Image Screen, changed the whole dynamic and brief to the works.

This required the immediate attention of Eddie Sinclair, our polychrome specialist, who had a long-term working relationship with the Cathedral spanning some 40 years. Sadly, this was to be the last time Eddie would be involved with the Cathedral, when she was sadly taken from us after a rapid and terminal illness. This is a great loss to us all. Eddie's legacy will continue through all she has been involved with. Her knowledge of the Cathedral and her skills have brought us a deep understanding and learning about the appearance of the medieval Cathedral.

We have now completed the cleaning and conservation of the porch, with many discoveries on the way. Our team was challenged, and developed new techniques and skills, through this very delicate task of cleaning, while retaining and stabilising the small fragments of the medieval paints below. This project also saw the gates redecorated and refurbished, including the re-gilding of the florets and Cathedral emblem. It concluded with the replacement of the former foggy polycarbonate covering with safety glass.

This total makeover has returned the North Porch to the prominence and importance it deserves, giving those approaching the Cathedral from the North side of the Green an impressive welcoming feature; a prelude to the grandeur of the Image Screen sparking the visitor engagement at first sight of our special building.



Carved corbel before cleaning and repair



Carved corbel after cleaning and repair



Blind tracery carved finial with sulphation prior to cleaning



Blind tracery carved finial after cleaning revealing Medieval paint fragments on close inspection

We have continued with all our other maintenance demands and continue small improvements across the site and stone quarrying.

Our programme of repair and maintenance of the Cathedral monuments continues. We have also carried out repairs to the Anthony Harvey monument in the North Quire Aisle, again revealing some very interesting discoveries, complete with pristinely preserved medieval paint.

There have unfortunately been some things we will not be able to fulfil as planned, with the work to Image Screen now being rescheduled.

In conclusion, the Cathedral has not “stood still” during lockdown, and finds itself in a great position ready to welcome and enrich all, when life eventually returns to something more recognisably normal.

Chris Sampson, Clerk of Works

Refugee Week Destination – Devon. A Story of Sanctuary



from
2015

The long tradition of offering sanctuary to people in fear of their lives is symbolised by the Cathedral and all the other places of worship in Exeter, and its surrounding towns and villages.

On Saturday, June 26, the Exeter-based charity Refugee Support Devon, will be hosting a day-long event at the Quay to commemorate that long tradition, but also to celebrate the contributions that newcomers have made to the region over the centuries.

The day will start with the mid-morning arrival of two boats carrying Huguenots in medieval costume, a symbolic representation of their escape from religious and social persecution in 16th and 17th century France. They'll be welcomed at the splendid Custom House, which was a brand-new building when some families arrived in the 1680s.

The scene then shifts to the nearby Transit Shed, a 200-year-old open-sided building which was built for trade goods. Now the Shed lends itself to stories of human beings in transit as they flee for their lives from warfare and conflict, and find in our area a place to build new lives and add their influence to the multicultural mix we see today.

A genuine refugee tent from the United Nations' Refugee Agency UNHCR will be the centrepiece inside the Shed. Experts on refugee history and modern immigration policies will mingle with families who themselves came to the area as refugees – from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, from the Middle East and Africa to various parts of Asia. Poignant stories of unaccompanied children languishing in makeshift camps without education or health support, will be balanced by celebrations in song and dance from the families, who have made new homes here. And there will be food samples on offer from across the world.

The event reaches an exuberant finale with performances by Bengali dancers and a Filipino choir, linked together through Inclusive Exeter. And as the tent is furled to go on to yet another global hotspot, the sounds of a Salvation Army band will bring a reminder of how help is at hand, no matter how desperate people can be.

Jeremy Toye, Refugee Support Devon volunteer

RSD is celebrating its 20th year of supporting vulnerable people from all around the world to resettle in Devon. refugeesupportdevon.org.uk

From Canon Chris Palmer: The Labyrinth

What a joy to have created, walked, prayed, hosted workshops, and seen others enjoying the Labyrinth on the Cathedral Green; a pilgrim path for all who pass by.

