



From the Reverend Julian Ould, Priest Vicar



I must express a note of anxiety in writing this article, in that as a Priest Vicar, I don't necessarily have my finger on the Cathedral pulse in the same way as the fulltime clergy, and therefore wondered what I might write about.

However, the Moon has come to my rescue, for it is very topical, has made a significant impact, changed how being a Duty Chaplain has been for me, and, whilst I couldn't answer the innumerable questions about the Moon (I'm a clergy chaplain for goodness sake!), it has enabled a much easier dialogue with people. It has filled the Cathedral with excitement, wonder and in some cases laughter. This is not to say such reactions aren't common within the walls of our lovely building, but

the Moon has enabled more people to feel at home and enjoy the experience. One question that caused a lot of amusement, was: 'How did we get the Moon into the building?' Pleasingly I didn't laugh until afterwards, but didn't have the heart to point to the crate in the corner, and rather expressed dismay. Indeed, how did we get it in?

Last Tuesday, Jane, myself, my daughter and toddler granddaughter, joined the large queue of people waiting to get in to visit the Moon. Bryher is just 18 months old and we all wondered what she would make of it. It looks huge to us, so how would a toddler react? We will probably never know what she really thought, but there was clearly an open mouthed wonder, so even for a toddler

it produced a note of awe, and this was echoed by school parties, and the full spectrum of ages. It is striking and educational. I was also asked which was the dark side of the Moon and one of the stewards, overhearing this, quickly responded, 'it's an album by Pink Floyd', and of course it is, but it didn't help with the real question. Subsequent examination of the giant sphere does show darkness on the side closest to the West end of the Cathedral.

To return to my awareness of the change the Moon made to my duties as a Chaplain. Putting aside the questions about the Moon, people generally seemed more relaxed and were happy to talk about the Cathedral and what we did, and even about what they might, or might not, believe. The Dean in his address on Sunday made mention of the fact that the Moon had made the building accessible to everyone, and this is good news. Many came just to see the Moon, but then went on to explore the whole building and even join the free tours. Being on duty for three hours can sometimes seem a long stint, but the time just raced by, and I met some amazing people, many of whom were relatively local but had never been into the Cathedral before.

So has the Moon made a difference? Well, I believe it has, and many have come who might not have done otherwise. Does this mean we need to have a constant form of attraction? Not necessarily, as too much of a good thing can become tiresome. It is the one-off occasions that cause a stir. Do we need to have gimmicks to attract people? No, not really, but if on some occasions we do have something a little different then all well and good. For me, whilst some might fear this is affecting the true purpose of our building, I believe firstly, the building is a place with a welcome for all. Yes, it is a place to be still and for worship, but it is also a place to just 'be', and it is these people who were full of questions when I was last on duty, and quite deep reflections followed. Secondly, once someone has crossed the threshold, for whatever reason, it is then down to us to make those people feel they belong. In so many ways our Cathedral speaks for itself, in that it is steeped in generations of prayer and this can be felt; and this is the beginning of finding God. The Dean also expressed the Cathedral in terms of being a gateway to heaven. I feel this every time I go through the Golden Gates to Evensong, but there is so much our Cathedral can offer and does, once people have felt able to come in.

For me, as a relative newcomer, I have felt a tremendous sense of welcome, which has mattered. Perhaps because I am who I am, this has been easier for me. But to be truly welcoming is our job and no matter what brings a person in, it is then down to us. Whilst this might seem a big ask, to see the packed Cathedral this last week and the buzz of happiness and joy, it is well worth it.

Julian Ould, Priest Vicar

Cathedral Bellringers AGM

The Cathedral Bellringers were able to hold their AGM in January 'face to face' for the first time in two years. The Dean took the chair, and the Canon Precentor was also in attendance. There was not a great deal to report, because ringing had been limited by Covid-19, but there were some special events in the past year such as the visit of the Prince of Wales and the ringing for the COP 26 Climate Conference.

Matt Hilling continues as Ringing Master and Paul Pascoe is taking over as Secretary in addition to his duties as Deputy Ringing Master. The Steeple keepers, Andrew Digby and David Hird, also continue to serve and work tirelessly to keep the bells ringing.



It was with great regret that we received a resignation from our Treasurer, Pauline McKenzie, who has been a stalwart of ringing at the Cathedral for over 22 years, and our Treasurer for most of that time. Unfortunately, her recent illness has stopped Pauline from climbing the 100+ steps of the south tower to the ringing chamber, or even grip a rope firmly enough to ring. She was unable to be with us at the meeting, but we elected her as an Honorary Life Member and hope she will be able to join us socially for many years to come. She was visited the following day by two of the ringers, to present her with a bouquet of flowers and card, with grateful thanks from the members for all her hard work towards

bellringing at the Cathedral over the past 22 years.

In the future we hope to increase the number of services we ring for as the pandemic eases and more members return. We are also looking forward to a weekend away ringing in and around York in October, which has had to be cancelled for the last two years.

The Cathedral and its ringers are also hosting the National Youth Ringing Competition on 2nd July, when over 200 young ringers will be in the city competing and ringing at several of the local churches, but also having the opportunity to ring on the bells at the Cathedral. There will be lots of ringing activity on show in the nave, so please mark the date in your diary and come along to take a look.

Peter Bill

From the Chairman of The Company of Tapisers:

A conversation with the Dean's wife, Pamela, inspired me to do some research into the time it takes from a monarch's Accession Day to their Coronation Day.

Our present Queen had to wait 16 months from succeeding as Queen to becoming an anointed Queen. This time lapse was not unusual – the gap, traditionally, was to allow for an appropriate period of mourning before the celebrations of a Coronation were deemed acceptable. There were also myriad preparations to be completed and official protocols to be observed.

King George VI only waited 5 months because the preparations for his brother, Edward VIII's, Coronation were already well underway before he abdicated. The faces of the official portraits were repainted to change from Edward VIII to George VI and the coronation robes were 'recycled' (fortunately, the two brothers were similar in size!).

George V had to wait 13 months, Edward VII 20 months and Victoria 12 months. You have to go back a long way – well before Henry VIII, who waited just 2 months – to monarchs of the 11th and 13th centuries who were crowned on the same day they became king: from William the Conqueror to Henry III.

So, what preparations had to be made in 1952? Invitations were sent out to royalty and heads of state around the world; the State Crown had to be altered to fit the new monarch's head; robes made for peers and courtiers; rehearsals in Westminster Abbey and the processional route; the Golden Coach had to be reupholstered; coins minted and postage stamps printed; scaffolding erected in Westminster Abbey to increase the seating capacity as well as a huge entrance hall erected for the Queen and her entourage which took many months to build... and a Coronation gown, of course.

Norman Hartnell, a leading fashion designer, created the stunning gown: it took him 8 months of research and design (the final design which was accepted was his ninth version!), workmanship and intricate embroidery to complete. It was made of duchesse silk satin richly embroidered with emblems of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. The silk was locally sourced from Lady Hart Dyke's silk farm at Lullingstone Castle. Elizabeth was delighted with the gown which was completed just three days before the Coronation!

As the newly anointed Queen Elizabeth II departed from Westminster Abbey she wore an Imperial Robe – which also had to be made especially for her. It was a six-and-a-half metre long purple silk velvet robe trimmed with Canadian ermine, with an ermine cape. Twelve seamstresses from the Royal School of Needlework worked for over 3,500 hours embellishing the robe with ears of

wheat (symbols of peace and plenty) and a three-dimensional crown – all in fine, intricate gold embroidery. Invisible silk handles were sewn along the edges for the maids of honour to carry the weight of this long train.

The list goes on ... so it really is not surprising that the preparations for Elizabeth II's Coronation took so long to complete!?

Diana Symes

Pastoral Care and Christian Nurture

Pastoral Care

Canon Chris having become Canon Treasure has relinquished his oversight of Pastoral Care. Until the new Canon Chancellor is in post the Priest Vicars have assumed the pastoral care brief. Canon Ian Morter ian.morter@exeter-cathedral.org.uk will be the lead person but will be ably supported by The Ven. David Gunn-Johnson david.gunn-johnson@exeter-cathedral.org.uk and Preb. Julian Ould Julian.ould@exeter-cathedral.org.uk .

Christian Nurture Prebendary Julian Ould will be taking the lead role.

Pastoral Offices (baptism, confirmation, funerals) will be jointly held by the Ven David Gunn Johnson & Julian Ould. But in the case of holidays, all three Priest Vicars are covering each other's area of lead responsibility.

Weekly Notices

In addition to *Cathedral News*, another good way to publicise Cathedral Community events or activities is in the Weekly Notices. These appear in the Order of Service at the 10am Choral Eucharist, which is on the Cathedral website. If you have a notice suitable for the Weekly Sheet, please send it to Tom Salmon liturgy@exeter-cathedral.org.uk to arrive no later than 12 noon on Wednesday before the Sunday on which you would like the notice to appear.

The notices also include those who have asked for our prayers and who have agreed to their name being on the list, those who have died recently, and those whose anniversary of death is in the forthcoming week. If you would like to include someone in those lists, please contact Canon Ian Morter ian.morter@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

The March edition of *Cathedral News*

We hope to publish the next edition of the News on Sunday 3rd April 2022. The deadline for material is **Monday 28th March 2022**. 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.



The Reverend Elsie Howell

We are very grateful to the Dean for sending us a copy of his address at Elsie's funeral on 2nd February.

I have to say Elsie knew what she was doing when it comes to choosing scripture. Perhaps my favourite passage of all from the New Testament for this service: from St Paul's letter to the Romans:

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In some ways I should stop there. St Paul says all we need to know.

Strange as it sounds, I always enjoy a Christian funeral for a Christian person: the crowning of a life of service: we hand them back to God, with love and gratitude. It can be very painful having to let go of course - there's so much to be thankful for and so much we'll miss. But I hope you share my sense that it's for this moment that Elsie has lived and worked; and alongside seeking consolation for our grief, our job today is to thank God for Elsie, and to pray for her, and to be inspired by the many good bits of her life to live ours a bit better.

I came somewhat late to Elsie's party, arriving here in Exeter just over 4 years ago. As a new Dean, you couldn't help but notice her: always there, sitting near the front, singing every hymn with such gusto, but without a book. I never did quite find out whether she knew the whole hymn book off by heart, or whether she was assiduous in her homework, sussing out what we were to sing next Sunday, and practising in advance. But I suspect these hymns were deep-rooted; after life-long singing, they'd become a defining part of her and her faith.

Elsie used to come and talk to me over a cup of coffee, so I got to know her pretty well in a fairly short time. And although in some senses she was a shadow of what she had been, in her twilight years, nevertheless there was still very clearly something of that same energy and determination that have characterised her whole life. Elsie and I had lots of conversations about where she might live when selling up in Wellington, but Elsie knew very well what she wanted in her new home. Which was principally to be near this Cathedral, which she loved to bits... The place, the people, the worship, the hymns.

Elsie was a Devon girl, born in Plymouth in 1941, of Geoffrey and Serita Martin, with just the one younger brother, Harry. At school, alongside her passion for

sport, sat her Christian passion and commitment - with much involvement in the Scripture Union and Crusaders. She talked to me a lot about her early life in the church; and her very sad falling out with the vicar. He certainly wasn't thrilled when she decided to reconfirm her Christian faith by being baptised by total immersion; and when she started to raise the possibility of ministry - well that's when she left the Church of England to become a Baptist.

Of course in part I'm deeply ashamed the Church of England should have turned its back on Elsie; yet it was in so many ways the beginning of something beautiful. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies," says Jesus, "it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." As we've heard, Elsie was ordained in 1969. She was 28 years old. In the Church of England, the first women priests were ordained in 1994, 25 years later. We've heard from Peter about the abundant fruits of Elsie's ministry. So all of us here have to be grateful to the Baptist Church for welcoming and nurturing and ordaining and enabling Elsie from an early age to become the person and the minister who was such a blessing to many. Alongside Peter's tribute, it's worth placing some words that Elsie herself wrote: "I would like it emphasised that all ministry was a great privilege and responsibility, and I thank the churches that I pastored for all that we shared together over the years. God has been so good."

Clearly Elsie was deeply fond of the Church of England, I think all along, but I suspect that had she remained here throughout, she'd have been frustrated, and much of her pastoral ministry would have been curtailed. In thinking about pastoral ministry, I am reminded of something our Principal told us when I was at theological college: administration is a vital part of pastoral care, he said: no one wants a badly run church. Elsie though took that to new levels: when moving from Wellington, she told me she cleared out 13 filing cabinets. And as you probably all realise, she did so immensely reluctantly.

Think of Elsie and alongside administration sits activism - Elsie was very much a do-er. You may know that story of the vicar leaning on a garden gate, admiring the flowers. "It's amazing what the Lord does in creation," he said rather piously. "Yes," said the chap, fervently digging the beds, "But you should have seen this garden when we left it to the Lord on his own."

Elsie never left it just to the Lord on his own. She was one of his front-line troops, even in her final years, running prayer groups, acting as a day chaplain, leading our intercessions. She preached a first class sermon here at Evensong to mark 50 years of ordained ministry.

I have a lovely photo at home of David and Elsie together. He'd died before I arrived in Exeter, and Elsie was shattered both by his death, and by caring for him for so long with such care and devotion; but it didn't take long to learn

what a vital and life-giving person he'd been for her. According to Elsie their marriage in 1990 changed her life completely. Here's what she wrote:

"We worked together in ministry in many ways, complementing each other, and this has brought great satisfaction. He brought so much fulfilment and love to me, and was a 'true partner in ministry and marriage'. Obviously my unending love and thanks are to David for all his love, support and encouragement over the years and for all that we have shared together."

Watching someone's mental capacity diminish is very hard. Especially in the early stages. Lots of people would telephone me asking what are we going to do? And I didn't know how to help - in spite of my best efforts. Certainly I was terrified of seeing Elsie drive her new car - but not quite as terrified as my wife Pamela, who was picked up by Elsie at Tiverton Parkway, and only avoided a life-threatening collision with a white van by leaning over and taking control of the steering wheel. We like many of you here felt pretty helpless.

There was the occasional smile, however. Elsie asked me to pick up four computers she wanted to give the cathedral, so we dropped round. And we came away with two computers and an electric fan heater and a pair of bathroom scales. That was when we really knew Elsie was in decline. Though we were grateful for some new bathroom scales at home, and every time I weigh myself I think of Elsie. Praise God for The Lodge Care Home who took Elsie in - and where we knew she was safe and properly looked after. And it's here that her immersion in hymns and worship came into their own; surfacing whenever you gave her the opportunity to join in. And for the last year, Greenslades Nursing Home have cared for her just as well. As of course have Harry and Shirley.

I don't want you to think I've sold Elsie short by not preaching some great call to Christian living and action. You may know that plaque at St Paul's Cathedral for Christopher Wren the architect: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice" - "If you're looking for a monument, look around you."

Well if you want an inspiring Christian address: look at Elsie. She wasn't self-seeking or self-promoting. She was in some ways quite ordinary, with the same cares and worries as most of us. In my conversations she was worn out, having cared for David, and she often spoke of her struggles with her faith and with her prayers and her trouble sleeping. But she so clearly loved God, and knew he loved her, and she showed that through a huge amount of faithful hard work, her whole life long, and through her care for God's people. We're all here this morning because we've experienced that in Elsie in some way.

Thank you, Lord, for Elsie Howell. Our world and your church are both a bit better thanks to her. Look after her now, we pray, and grant her eternal rest. Amen.

An Invitation: Exeter Cathedral School Charity Concert 2022



You may know that Creativity & Performance is something we value very much at Exeter Cathedral School.

Founded in 1179 as a choir school for the Cathedral, we are now a busy place of learning and growth for some 270 girls and

boys. True to our choral roots, we continue to place tremendous emphasis on Creativity & Performance, meaning that within our broad and balanced curriculum runs a core strand focusing on Music, Drama and Art.

We are also determined that our school and its people be outward-facing; aware of themselves, of others, and of their individual and collective responsibilities to their community and wider society. Bringing both of these together, I am delighted to be writing to invite you to be part of our Charity Concert 2022.

This is our annual (though this will be the first one in 3 years – we are very excited) gala concert mounted by our Music Department in the spectacular setting of Exeter Cathedral. Taking place on the evening of **Thursday 31 March 2022**, every pupil in our Prep School (ages 7 to 13) and a wide range of ECS Ensembles, including: Big Band, School of Rock, Jazz Band, Orchestras, Flutopia, the Guitarmadillos, Recorder Ensemble, U-kan-lele, 3 Choirs - to name just a few, will be performing

Our charity of the year is Balloons – a remarkable organisation which works with children and young people in times of bereavement. Balloons aims to ensure that no child, young person or young adult in Exeter, Mid and East Devon goes without the bereavement support they need. We have worked with them since September and directed out fundraising activities towards them, and are pleased to be raising money for them this term via our Charity Concert. All proceeds from our Charity Concert – via our sponsored programme, ticket sales, and retiring collection – will be donated to Balloons.

Tickets are available from [TicketSource](#) and further information can be found on our [website](#).

If ever you want to find out more about Exeter Cathedral School, do be in touch at any stage – or follow us on social media:

Instagram: [@ecsprep](#)

Facebook: [@ExeterCathedralSchool](#)

Twitter: [@ECSPrepSchool](#)

We look forward to welcoming you at the end of March!

Town Hall Meeting 28th March 2022

We're trying for third time lucky!

There is a Town Hall Meeting on **Monday 28th March from 11am to 1pm**.

This is due to take place in the Chapter House, with tea and sandwiches provided afterwards.

If you would like to attend, please let the Visitors & Volunteers office, or Tina Robbins know. tina.robbens@exeter-cathedral.org.uk **no later than Monday 7th March**.

If you are a volunteer, you may already have received this invitation from the leader of your group.

Cathedral Community Committee 8th February 2022

At the February meeting we rejoiced that we were able to meet in person. We welcomed Peter Emmanuel, a new member, and Ann Barwood, who was attending her first meeting as Secretary.

We worked through the Action Plan for 2020-2021 for the benefit of new members, noting those things we had done, and those yet to be completed.

Arrangements for the CCC Awayday-26th March at Mill House, near Tiverton were agreed. The title for the day is the first point of the CCC Statement of Purpose "*How can we work with Chapter to build up the Cathedral Community in worship, discipleship and service*". Professor Grace Davie has kindly agreed to start the day with an exploration of the C of E post -pandemic.

The CCC agreed with the Chapter's provisional view, expressed by the Dean, that it is still too early to reintroduce Holy Communion in both kinds. Huge thanks were expressed to Felicity Cawthra for all her work over many years in organising the Cathedral Foodbank collection. We shared her view that as it is now possible to donate in most supermarkets, our separate Cathedral collections should end.

Heather Morgan, Chair CCC



Focus: Laurence John Organ Scholar 2021-22

'Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.' Plato.

One of the priceless joys for me when I arrive to do a morning stewarding session, and with the Nave almost empty, I can hear the mesmeric sounds of the organmost times it is our organ scholar, Laurence John, doing his daily practise.

So, it was on a beautifully sunny Sunday morning, that Laurence took me to the Richard Eyre Room, which is high up in the West Wing.

There is something very special about this room,

when the sun is pouring through the windows. It's the perfect place to engage upon a conversational journey.

Laurence was born in Hereford in 1997, his home being in Ross-on-Wye. He is the only child born to his parents, who claim not in any way to be musicians!

'Dad played the piano. My grandmother had been the choir mistress at the local Baptist Church.'

It was a very happy home.

Laurence was a rather shy and quiet little boy, and did not settle when he went to the local Primary School, where the class sizes were big, and there was an imbalance in favour of strong-willed little boys. So he was transferred to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, and it proved to be an important move. Later on, he went to St. Mary's Roman Catholic High School, where he first came in contact with his first organ teacher, Robert Lucas. He had started taking piano lessons when he was six, and it was during these years that he began to show a considerable talent, and one of the music teachers 'scented' that he might have a considerable ability with the organ.

'Come and turn the pages over, he said.' So he did, and very soon began taking lessons from Robert Lucas.

'It was fun. I joined the choir at our local Church of England parish church, where I received an excellent grounding in the Anglican Choral Tradition!'

By the age of fifteen he was playing the Post-Service voluntary, and soon after that for the whole Service. It was during this time that he took his Grade V1 Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examination in piano, passing

with the highest marks in Great Britain. His prize was £100 from The Sheila Mossman Memorial Award. He continued with his organ studies, becoming the organist at St. Mary's Church in Ross-on-Wye.

'The church was so very supportive.'

Laurence studied for his A levels at Hereford Cathedral School, one of his subjects being Music. This was a very rich learning experience. It was a co-educational school, and their Cantabile Girls' Choir, with Laurence as their accompanist, won the BBC TV Songs of Praise School Choir prize in 2014, and were successful again at the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen. Alongside all of that, he also studied with Henry Fairs at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

'My music making came on in leaps and bounds!'

During this time, he worked with many of the country's leading orchestras, one of those being the soloist with the City of Birmingham Orchestra in a performance of Saint Saens' Organ Symphony. In 2014, he travelled to Belgium with the Hereford Cathedral School Girls' Choir where they sang at the WW1 Commemorative Festival. On completion of his A level studies, Laurence became Hereford Cathedral's Organ Scholar under Peter Dyke.

In 2017, he was awarded an Organ Scholarship to study Music at The Queen's College, Oxford having achieved distinctions in organ, piano and singing. At Oxford his tutor was Stephen Farr, who is one of Britain's leading concert organists.

In 2019, Laurence was awarded the Sawyer/Durrant Prize for his performance in his ARCO (Associate of the Royal College of Organists) examinations. He accompanied The Queen's College Choir at concerts in Spain and the USA, and also at Westminster Abbey and HM Chapel Royal St. James's Palace. In 2020, he was awarded his BA in Music

'I was just about to do my finals when Covid started! I did my finals on the computer! I was meant to come to Exeter, but that was postponed so I began my studies for a Masters degree.'

This is probably an experience that did or could have 'wrong-footed' so many undergraduates and post-graduates.

When the restrictions were slightly lifted, Laurence was able to return to his 'organ post' at Pusey House, where they hold a Service every Sunday morning.

'I lived over the shop! It was a great community. I loved it, and the worship was wonderful!'

Then I saw the advert in the Church Times for the organ scholarship at Exeter. Exeter was known to the family...Tim Noon, my now Director of Music, was

brought up in Hereford, and was taught by my Great Aunt, who said..." I taught a little boy called Tim Noon!"

So he applied, and the interview day came. There were two other candidates.

'I played Bach's Dorian Toccata. When my parents came to collect me they commented that I must be tired. I replied that I wasn't at all, and had had a wonderful day.'

So now he is with us until the end of the academic year. I wondered how it had all been for him so far.

'It's been great working twice daily with the choristers..... early in the morning and just before Evensong. The mentoring of the probationers is something very precious, and I enjoy so much seeing them gain in confidence, begin to emerge from their shells which allows them to really sing. We are always looking for their potential, and encouraging them in their self belief. Not surprisingly, there are differences when you are working separately with the boys or the girls, but when they sing as a whole group of choristers, they are one group of choristers.'

It seems obvious to me that he really does have a full day one way or another. So, how does he refill his energy bank?

'Well, I don't listen much to other music!!!!!! I like walking, and bird watching, which is fairly easy to do here and around Exeter and Devon. I do like gardening, and enjoy helping with my family's allotment when I return home! I read quite a lot, especially about Theology. My Masters dissertation was about Olivier Messiaen's music and theology'

With such a wealth of music beneath his own belt, I asked if he had a particular favourite composition. After more than a few moments of thought, he replied *'That's difficult! But, it is Herbert Howells 'Like as the hart desireth the water-brook'*

Herbert Howells composed this in one snowy day, on the 8th January 1941 having had to leave his bombed home in London. It is thought that the death of his young son Michael in 1935 from polio, and the immense grief that followed, was the main stimulus for its creation, and also that of Hymnus Paradisi, written shortly after Michael's death, but was not released until 1980.

My final questions, as usual, concerned the best and worse aspects to the Cathedral in Exeter, and how does he see his future..

'The best is easy! The community and congregations have been so welcoming and helpful towards me. The worse is that it can sometimes be difficult to know everything that is going on in the Cathedral, and that's partly because there's so much! The future.... well it's back to the jobs' pages, seeking a full time organist appointment.'

Thank you Laurence for enabling me to write your story so far, hopefully enabling those who read this Focus can get some idea about the happenings and experiences you have enjoyed, and given to others; and especially the 'magic' you provide for us from the unique seat at the organ in Exeter Cathedral. I shall look forward to hearing much more about you.

Rosemary Bethell

Riddler in Residence

The Cathedral has a Riddler in Residence, of whom more next month. Here are two newly composed riddles based on those that are a feature of the Exeter Book. More on pages 16 and 18. Solutions on page 20.

Riddle 1

Emerging from the frosted clod
Assured & full of optimism
It's no surprise I've been adored
Everywhere my head has risen.

I shed the solemn wintry blues.
Bring in the new, banish the old
With my luscious yellow hues
(though some wise men have called it gold.)

David's favourite. Full of splendour.
Spring-bringer. Cloud-befriender

When my small trumpet sounds
Even seasons can surrender.

Riddle 2

To some, I am barbaric, jumbled.
A porcelain jungle of dusty un-necessity
A country without any visible borders
An ordered eruption of total banality

To others, I'm a treasure trove. A shrouded gem
Some past pleasure, patiently
Waiting to get held again

A love song to the pre-loved. A eulogy to tat
The last wonder of wet Saturdays
(And a pretty cheap one at that)

Scientists in Congregations

Scientists in Congregations are projects supported by ECLAS (Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science), SiC aims to bring church and science together. The Cathedral has received funding for a project on Climate Change; a unique partnership between the Cathedral, the University, and the Diocese.

The first event for our exploration of environmental issues took place on the afternoon of 17th of February. Local secondary schools were invited to send a few pupils to participate in an afternoon exploring climate issues... St Luke's, St Peter's, Westex and Exeter Schools sent representatives. We were fortunate that we could start our session with an exploration of the Museum of the Moon, which was much enjoyed by both students and staff, as you can see in the photo.



We followed this fun by input from Nicola Golding of the Met Office, who explained about the effect of the Moon on the Earth and the weather. After refreshments discussion took place about our responsibilities in stewardship of the climate. Emma, our librarian, and Lisa from Education joined us and gave a brief illustrated talk on items from our Archive which highlighted climate change and the effects of the weather. It was fascinating and all the students were intrigued by the ancient tomes. I have to say that, over several hundred years, we don't seem to have learnt much.

We finally had a “post it” exercise, where students were able to write down their ideas for change, and even how we at the Cathedral could be more environmentally friendly. I look forward to collating these ideas, so watch this space.

It was a very enjoyable afternoon and I'm glad to say they wanted more! All the students represented their schools well and it was a joy to welcome them to the Cathedral.

Canon Cate Edmonds, Canon Steward



Welcome to Emma

As mentioned in last month's edition, the Cathedral has a new Librarian, Emma Laws.

Jonny Scott, who leads the Heritage and Engagement team, writes:

Emma joins us from the V&A and the DEI where she was Director of Collections and Research and instigated a collections review for a successful lottery application, as well as regular displays and a digital presence.

The role of Librarian will tackle the development and professionalisation of the

internationally recognised historic library.

Areas of focus will include creating a suite of policies and procedures around collections management, access to book collections, and public engagement. Emma will be based with the Heritage and Engagement Team.

Riddle 4

Sometimes you seem like that one steady constant
a bright pebble in a brooding sea

other times you're slippy, mostly concealed
weighing in once work's done and the bars have all opened

you defy form:
manipulate liquids
hover like gas
hang

solidly still

you show yourself wholly on some certain nights
and just when I know you, you shed yourself slowly
until you're no more than a toenail floating

my face pains for you, like a child of the 60's
eyes pinned to their telly. Your name growing gobstopping
huge. Your face fading back into view

Year of Invitation and Welcome: Getting to know the Cathedral Community Better

One of the projects for the Cathedral's *Year of Invitation and Welcome* is "to enable different groups who connect with the Cathedral Community to know each other better". Canon Chris Palmer invited us to do this piece of work.

We first asked the question-What do we mean by the Cathedral Community? The current Cathedral Constitution and Statutes defines it as:

"Those who worship regularly in the Cathedral, or are engaged in work or service connected with the Cathedral in a regular capacity, or are parents of choristers and pupils at the Cathedral School".

In practice this translates into a complex, diverse and rich tapestry of governance, congregations, staff and volunteers. The extent to which these varied parts of the Cathedral body know each other, or are aware of each other's existence, is doubtful. It's easy to assume that everyone knows about the area Cathedral life in which we are involved personally, but experience suggests that is not the case. Our task, therefore, is to extend that awareness and knowledge, so that we all know more about the community to which we belong as we try to build a common sense of purpose and belonging.

We decided to start with an overview of the Cathedral Community-governance, congregations/worship, staff and administration, and volunteers and to deal with these in a series of articles. This first instalment is about Volunteers.

Volunteers are involved in all areas of the life of the Cathedral including governance, worship, outreach, visitor services, and events. Without them, much of what is done in the Cathedral could not be achieved. The time commitment and training requirements vary, but a common thread is a love of the Cathedral and its work. The volunteers groups include people from all parts of Devon and beyond, and provide an opportunity for making and deepening relationships within the Cathedral Community, with the diocese and with the people of Exeter and Devon. There is a recruitment process which follows the requirements of safer recruiting, including safeguarding.

Compiling a comprehensive list of volunteer groups dedicated to specific tasks is a potentially hazardous exercise because of the risk of leaving someone out. We decided that this is a risk worth taking, not least because if there are mistakes, we can be sure that someone will tell us, and we will end with a list that is correct! You may already know about all of these, but for those less familiar with the Cathedral, here they are-in no particular order:

Flower Arrangers, Tapisers, Stewards and Guides, Sunday morning coffee rota, Cloister Club, Chapter hospitality after services, Social Events team, Bellringers, Servers (sometimes known as Serving Clerks), Intercessors and Readers, Eucharistic Assistants, the Pastoral Care Team, St Peter's Singers, Sidesmen, Cathedral News editorial team, Duty Chaplains, Events Volunteers (concerts, exhibitions etc), Choir Chaperones, Safeguarding Champions, Wednesday Night Kitchen, Prison Prayer and Support Group, Contemplative Prayer Group, Prayers for Healing, Holy Dusters, those who help in the Cathedral Office, the Development Office and the Cathedral Shop, in the Cathedral Library and in Education activities, those who run prayer and study groups such as Lectio Divina, members of Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod, and General Synod.

If you would like to know more about any of these activities, please contact the Visitors and Volunteers' Officer, Julie Taylor – julie.taylor@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

Next month, we will have an overview of the life of the regular worshipping congregations, and have the first of a series of interviews highlighting one of the volunteer groups. **David Owen, Laurence John, Heather Morgan**

Riddle 3

I'm the best kind of chocolate cake, the soggiest of bottoms
The slow and sloshy sound two people make when they're besotten
The streaming down your nape when your umbrella is forgotten
The sister-word of squelchy and a synonym for sodden

I'm Mr Kipling's sex appeal
the way that frogs must sometimes feel

I'm the word you say you hate to hear but love to utter
I am bum sweat on a summers day, the smell of melted butter
I'm a cool refreshing ocean spray, the ploppiness of jelly
The gooey Bake Off favourite that's just oozing out your telly

I give meaning to muddy walks and damp toilet floors
Description to the sea sponges, snails, slugs and spores

I'm the epithet of wet tea bags
You say my name and start to gag

What am I?

Distractions in prayer

We live in a noisy busy world and we're all human. So when we enter our prayer time, it is probably not long before we get distracted by exterior or interior noise. But there are preparations we can make and tactics we can employ to reduce their likelihood slightly and to deal with them when they arise.

First, try to pray at a time and in a place where you are less likely to be distracted, with minimal artificial and human noise and conversation. Birdsong and gusting wind can be loud but are generally less intrusive. So prepare by telling your family, switching off your phone, removing the ticking clock from the room, and so on.

It is easier to be silent inside in a silent place, but we can be silent inside even in a noisy place. We are all different, so find something that works for you. Even in a silent place, we can be noisy inside. When I pray, it often doesn't take long for an internal monologue to pop up: thoughts about what I need to do today, or ruminations over a disagreement, or ...

Distractions happen! The tactics that help me start with entry into prayer: begin by asking the Spirit's help and consent to God's presence and action in your heart. Then, as and when you notice that you are distracted, the key is not to follow that noise or thought. A vague awareness or musing can be let go, but following it gives it solidity and might add emotion, and you can get stuck there. Also, try not to judge yourself. This is another way of solidifying distraction. As I said, we're all human. Simply turn your attention back to your prayer.

[Note that your deep mind might surface an issue you do need to look at, that needs healing or forgiveness, for example. In this case, stay with it and ask God to guide you, heal what needs healing, or help you to forgive or ask forgiveness. If need be, seek professional help.]

Last month, I described Centring prayer and the use of a sacred word. When you notice distraction, gently recall the sacred word once as a means of refocusing your attention. Sometimes you might sink deeply into prayer. Sometimes external noise can be helpful and make you realise you are distracted. Sometimes internal thoughts can drive you to distraction! Just keep on returning to the sacred word – it is a good thing to keep turning your attention to God.

Your surface mind is not a good gauge of the quality of your prayer time. You might feel as though you have been continually distracted, while in the depths beneath your surface mind you have drawn near to God. So at end of your prayer thank God for what you received, and pray for the grace to carry it through the rest of your day.

Clare Bryden

Explore Prayer on the Cathedral website – <https://bit.ly/exploreprayer2022>
Helpful external noise! – <https://graceupongrace.org.uk/the-gift-of-the-blue-bottle/>

Shrove Tuesday round the world
You are invited March 1st at 7 pm
in the
Chapter House
£5.00 payable on the night.

Come party before the fast! Visit Estonia and Mexico!
Cast off what is no longer necessary
Decorate your mask in Venetian style.

PLEASE

For catering reasons could you let us know if you are coming!
jgshayward@tiscali.co.uk or anne.eyre75@gmail.com or
amb@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

Ash Wednesday 2nd March

The Imposition of Ashes will be available at the Eucharist at 8.35am, 1.15pm and 5.30pm. The Cathedral Choir will sing at the 5.30pm service-music to include Allegri, Byrd and Tallis. For activities in Lent, please see the Weekly Notices and the Cathedral website.

Compline: A contemplative journey through Lent
8pm on the five Mondays of 7, 14, 21, 28 March, 4 April

The ancient close-of-the-day service of Compline, with plainchant and polyphony. Hosted by Margaret Aagesen Hughes (Soprano) and Clare Bryden (Alto).

Featuring the music of Barber, Bach and Pergolesi, and musicians Ruth Molins (Flute), Emma Welton (Violin), John Draisey (Organ).

St Olave's Church, on Exeter Fore Street

Free and unticketed, with retiring collection towards church upkeep.

We encourage you to wear a mask and recommend you wrap up warm!

Solutions to the Riddles: 1-Daffodil: 2-Bric-a-brac: 3-The Moon: 4-Moist