

BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral

AUGUST 2022

From the Dean's desk...



Building Bridges

We are pleased to be hosting the world's longest interlocking brick bridge in the nave of the Cathedral this summer. It will form the centrepiece of our August activities and we are grateful once again for the sponsorship and support of the Rochester Bridge Trust in making this possible.

More than 200,000 bricks have been clicked together by BRICKLIVE to create the bridge, which belongs to the Institute of Civil Engineers. A selection of hands-on bridge building activities will be available, and a bridge-themed adventure golf course will be situated in the Cathedral's Cloister Garth garden – suitably weather-proofed.

We know that the cost of living is hitting families hard, and some will struggle to pay for recreational activities this year. All these activities are free as a way of supporting the community and those most pressed by economic realities. At the Cathedral we remain committed to free entry and to providing opportunities for spiritual, educational, and recreational growth.

The Church Fathers had a term for recreational activity, *Otium Sanctum* (Holy Leisure), an essential way of clearing mental clutter and finding rest. This is not passive time but a time to recharge and regain perspective and creativity. It is a way to help cope with the busyness and stresses of everyday life. You cannot find a better place than Rochester Cathedral, with its stunning architecture and spacious grounds, to restore one's sense of well-being. Salvation is fundamentally about health and well-being. St John tells us that Jesus came that we might have life in all its fullness.

I hope you find time to rest this summer, to recharge, reflect and re-engage. Do visit the Cathedral and take time to be and to contemplate – which doesn't always require silence. Indeed,



it is said that contemplation is the highest form of human activity, so why wouldn't you practise it? We look forward to welcoming you and thank you for your continuing support, which enables us to be of service to the nation and community.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh DL
Dean of Rochester

Rochester
CATHEDRAL
Growing in Christ since AD604

Please note: You are receiving this newsletter because we think you have an interest in Rochester Cathedral and its events. If we have got this wrong please let us know by emailing development@rochestercathedral.org or telephone 01634 810074.

In order to process your kind donations, keep you updated with news and events, and carry out our work effectively, we will need to store and use the information you have provided to us. We are committed to treating your information with respect and in a transparent way. To find out more, please read our fundraising promise at <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust/>

Adventure Golf

This summer we are offering a bridge-themed adventure golf course outside the Cathedral in the Cloister Garth gardens.

The nine-hole course introduces golfers of all ages to the different bridge types, with information panels explaining their construction and where you can see real-world examples of each bridge.

The adventure golf will be open from 10am-4pm Monday to Saturday until August 29th. No pre-booking is required but we anticipate long queues, so please arrive early to avoid disappointment.

Please check the Cathedral website for the planned closures of this attraction at www.rochestercathedral.org/new-events/2024/1/2/all-about-bridges



Gaia

For 21 days in May and June, British artist Luke Jerram's amazing installation Gaia was displayed in Rochester Cathedral.



Measuring seven metres in diameter, Gaia featured detailed 120 dot per inch NASA imagery of the Earth's surface on an enormous floating globe. It was the focal point of a programme designed to raise awareness of climate change and environmental issues. Partnering with Medway Council's Climate Change Team, the aim was to inform and engage people in a discussion about global warming and the practical steps that can be taken to tackle it.

Over 51,000 visitors came to see Gaia in the Cathedral, including more than 2,000 children on school visits. These fantastic visitor numbers were no doubt achieved because of the excellent media coverage of the event. Gaia's launch event was featured live on the BBC Southeast news and on a day in June ITV's national Good Morning Britain show broadcast all of its morning weather bulletins from the Cathedral, with Gaia taking centre stage.

The Gaia at Rochester Cathedral project received grant aid of £5,000 from the Rochester Riverside Community Fund and £8,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'Together Our Planet' programme.



The New Bishop of Rochester

On Saturday 24th September we look forward to officially welcoming the new Bishop of Rochester, Dr Jonathan Gibbs. He and his wife Toni moved from Huddersfield in July and have taken up residence at Bishops Court in Rochester. The Bishop's Enthronement service marks the coming together of the Diocese as we inaugurate his episcopal ministry among us and pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the years ahead. We ask God's blessing upon Jonathan and Toni.

Silver Eco Church Award for Rochester Cathedral

We are delighted to announce that Rochester Cathedral has been awarded a Silver Eco Church Award for its efforts towards sustainability and conservation.

The Eco Church awards, initiated by the Church of England and managed by A Rocha UK, encourage churches and cathedrals to do their part to help climate change. The scheme celebrates the ways that church communities have been engaging with caring for the earth as a key part of the Christian faith.

The award comes soon after the Cathedral hosted the spectacular art installation Gaia, the focal point of a programme looking at environmental issues. The award announcement was made at a lecture under Gaia by Dr Ruth Valerio, Canon Theologian at Rochester Cathedral and Global Advocacy and Influencing Director at the Christian relief and development charity, Tearfund.

The Cathedral has recently made a number of changes to become 'greener'. Our gardeners are boosting the biodiversity of our gardens with grassy banks allowed to grow longer, encouraging wildflowers to grow. Habitats have been created for beneficial insects, including bug hotels and managed wood piles. The Cathedral now has two beehives, which produce the beeswax for candles sold in the Cathedral Shop. Inside the Cathedral an extensive new LED lighting system has been

installed, reducing energy output, and the ageing gas-fired heating plant is being gradually replaced. The Cathedral is even exploring the possibility of harvesting solar power on part of the roof.

Canon Precentor of Rochester Cathedral, The Reverend Matthew Rushton says "The achievement of a Silver Eco Church Award is cause for celebration and a significant step along the journey of caring for God's creation. Church and cathedral communities really can make a positive difference and help to raise awareness about – and take action against – the climate crisis. During the Gaia exhibition, we encouraged everyone to look at how we can each care for our precious, God-given environment. As we looked up at the illuminated globe of Gaia in the Cathedral's nave, we could not fail to be struck by the beauty and fragility of the planet and the creation of which we are a part – and we all have a part to play in caring for it."

This award is just the beginning of the journey for Rochester Cathedral. Work will continue behind the scenes to become more sustainable as the Cathedral works towards a Gold Eco Church Award.



Appointment of Director of Music and Organist

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Adrian Bawtree as Director of Music and Organist of Rochester Cathedral from September.

Adrian is currently Second Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral and is well known at Rochester, having worked at the Cathedral as Organist 2013-2015 and Interim Director of Music 2018-2019. On his appointment, Adrian said:

“I am delighted to have this opportunity to return to Rochester Cathedral and continue to forge new creative opportunities within – and without – the Cathedral walls, alongside preserving and developing the musical traditions of this historic place.”



The Reverend Canon Matthew Rushton, Canon Precentor, commented: “We are thrilled to be welcoming Adrian back to Rochester. The rigorous appointment process involved a number of high-quality candidates, and it was clear to the panel that Adrian had both a wealth of experience encompassing cathedrals, parishes, education and community music making, as well as the necessary vision, compassion and humour to lead the development of music at the Cathedral into the future. The Chapter, our musicians, King’s Rochester, and the whole cathedral community are looking forward to working with him, as we seek to grow in Christ in our worship and mission, as we have since AD604.”

The James Taylor Quartet return to Rochester Cathedral on 30th September



The James Taylor Quartet (or JTO) are a British four-piece jazz funk band who have for over 30 years set the standard for the coolest sounds in funky acid jazz. With dozens of mighty albums and their legendary gigs around the world, they’ve quietly become a byword for distinguished British creativity.

The group was formed in 1987 by Hammond organ player James Taylor following the break-up of his band The Prisoners. The current line-up is James Taylor (keyboards and orchestration), Mark Cox (guitar), Andrew McKinney (bass) and Pat Illingworth (drums), and features vocalist Yvonne Yanney.

For tickets please go to www.rochestercathedral.org/whatson and click 30th September on the calendar.

Music dates for your diary

We are approaching the final two dates of our Organ Festival series of concerts. Tickets are £10 or free to under-18s, doors open at 6.45pm and each concert lasts just over an hour.

Wednesday 24th August, 7:30pm

Jeremy Lloyd, Acting Director of Music here at Rochester Cathedral. He will be playing pieces by Saint-Saëns, Maurice Durufle, and Matthew Martin’s St. Alban’s Triptych.

Wednesday 28th September, 7:30pm

Timothy Parsons, Director of Music at St. Edmundsbury Cathedral. He’ll be playing Louis Vierne’s First Organ Symphony, culminating in the spectacular Finale.

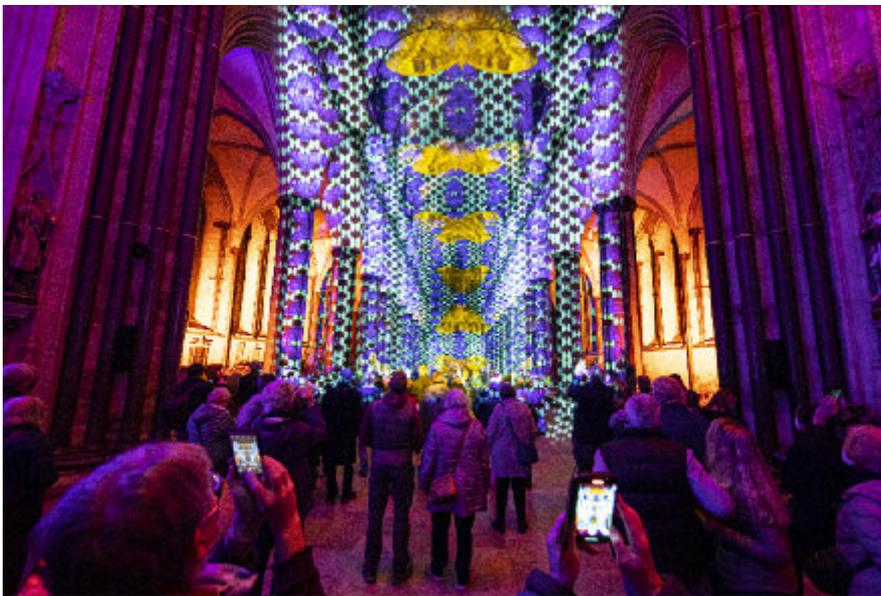
For tickets please go to rochestercathedral.org/organ

Life

A lightshow inspired by the beauty of our planet will illuminate Rochester Cathedral this autumn

This autumn Rochester Cathedral will be home to a stunning son-et-lumiere called Life. Journey through earth, sea and sky from sunrise to sunset with a spectacular world-themed light and sound show. Suitable for all ages, this stunning installation sees the inside of the Cathedral transformed into a visual journey to reflect upon life on today's planet in a single 24-hour period.

Witness the sun, the oceans and the clouds as you move through the building; sound and light art will be projected onto architectural features to transform the space, immersing visitors in soundscapes as they take a journey of exploration through the artwork.



The show has been created by Luxmuralis, the award winning artistic collaboration of sculptor Peter Walker and composer David Harper who brought the sell-out 'Space Voyage' to Rochester Cathedral in 2021.

Life will be at Rochester Cathedral from the 4th – 8th October.

Timed tickets must be pre-booked through the Rochester Cathedral website, with prices at £8 for adults, £4.50 for under 18's and £22 for a family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). Under 3's go free but must have a ticket.

Advance booking is recommended to avoid disappointment.

For tickets please go to www.rochestercathedral.org/life

Improving Sound and Vision in the Cathedral

The Cathedral infrastructure has been undergoing a transformation over the last few years. Easily the most visible (quite literally) element of this work has been the complete replacement of the Cathedral's lighting system, finished this summer. Even as the last light fitting was installed, work began to replace the Cathedral's ageing sound system and to improve the livestreaming and recording equipment that had been hastily installed at the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020.

Although the outgoing sound system included some very high-quality items, it did not provide full coverage of all of the Cathedral's spaces and had become increasingly prone to malfunctioning. About Sound Limited was appointed to design and install a brand-new sound and vision system, bringing technical specialism and an enviable track record of installing discreet audio-visual systems in iconic spaces such as King's College Cambridge, Christ Church Cathedral and Portsmouth Cathedral.

Before the end of September the old speakers and wiring will be completely removed and a new network with more discreet state of the art speakers will be installed. The livestreaming facility will be extended and updated to allow more services to be broadcast.

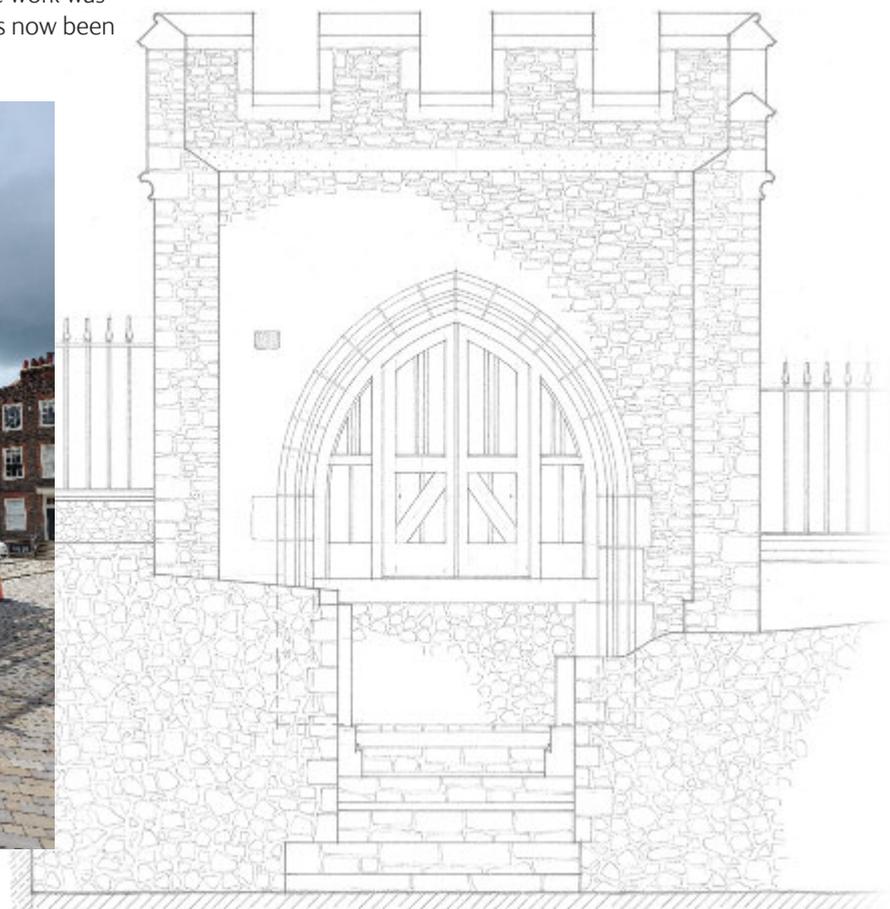
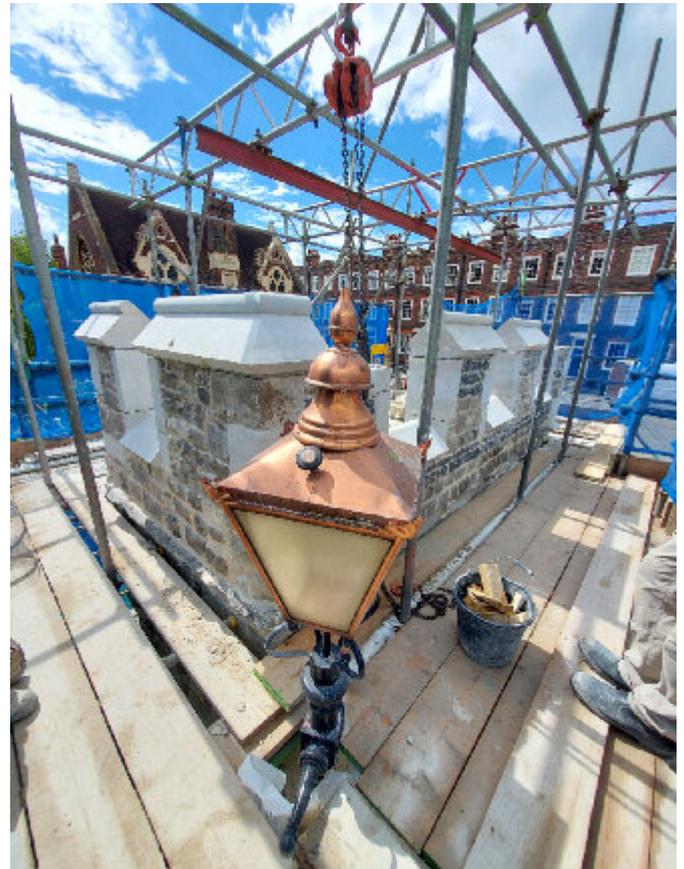
We look forward to showcasing the new sound and vision system in our spectacular autumn son-et-lumiere show, Life.

The Bishop's Gate Restoration is Complete

Over the course of the last few months, skilled masons from Sally Strachey Historic Conservation have been restoring the Bishop's Gate. This substantial structure on the south side of the Cathedral stands on the public highway and is opposite the site of the medieval palace of the Bishop of Rochester.

In 2018 the upper part of the Gate, which includes distinctive shapes called crenellations, was found to be unsafe and so each of the stones had to be removed and safely stored. Soon afterwards, the restoration of the Gate was highlighted by Historic England as a priority project for the Cathedral and work began to determine the scope and cost of the project. Following conservation principles of adopting a light touch when restoring historic structures, it was agreed that only the uppermost part of the gate should be restored, as the stones in the lower part of the structure were sound and could be retained.

The Rochester Cathedral Trust set about raising funds for the project, estimated at £47,000. In a first for the Trust, an online art auction was held. More than 30 artists, including Damien Hirst, donated artworks including drawings and paintings, a studio experience and ceramics. There were 39 lots in total and more than 3,000 visits to the auction website during the six-day process. Winning bids totalled over £18,000! After the Trust confirmed that further grant aid had been secured, work began in October 2021 using local Kentish Ragstone and many of the medieval stones that had been removed in 2018. The work was completed in June this year and the Bishop's Gate has now been restored to its former handsome appearance.



The Gundulf Society

Lars Lemonius, Chair of the Gundulf Society

Recent Gundulf Society events

In April the Gundulf Society visited Malling Abbey, another of Bishop Gundulf's buildings in Kent.

The Abbey is the home of an active Anglican Benedictine community, which has resided there since 1916. It is also home to St Augustine's College of Theology, a non-residential theological college. We were spoilt by the most wonderful weather and shown around this extremely special place by the knowledgeable and generous Mother Abbess. It was a fantastic day out and I would recommend any Gundulf Society member who did not manage to go, to book onto one of our future trips. A return trip is scheduled for September.



Above: Long Barn gardens

In June my wife Rebecca and I hosted an evening reception and historical talk at our garden at Long Barn.

The weather was touch and go up until the last minute but in the end it proved to be one of those wonderfully lazy summer evenings with just the right temperature and sun, providing a great environment for enjoying friends, drinks and a garden walk. We had a wonderful time and really appreciated so many society members attending despite some making a very long journey.

Future Gundulf Society events

We now look forward to our Annual Gundulf Society Evensong and Reception in October.

In November we are organising a trip to London to view Hogarth's Great Hall and Grand Staircase at St Bartholomew's Hospital. This venue was introduced by member William Palin during a talk he delivered to the society last year. It promises to be a very interesting visit and I hope to see many Gundulf Society members there.



THE GUNDULF SOCIETY

The Rochester Cathedral Trust offers membership to the Gundulf Society, an exclusive society for benefactors of Rochester Cathedral.

The Gundulf Society's objective is to support the fabric and musical traditions of the Rochester Cathedral by bringing together people who are well disposed to the Cathedral and at the same time providing a feeling of affinity between its members, in support of this wonderful cause.

The society is named after Bishop Gundulf, who presided over the building of the Norman Cathedral as the first Bishop of Rochester after the Conquest in 1075.

Dame Joanna Lumley is the Society's president, with founding members including Jools Holland and Sir Michael Palin.

To join the Gundulf Society please go to www.rochester-cathedral.org/gundulf-society

Alex Oak-Parsons

Development Manager at Rochester Cathedral



Please join us in welcoming Alex Oak-Parsons to the new position of Development Manager at Rochester Cathedral. Alex has a background in managing projects and change programmes in business and the public sector.

Alex's broad skills and experience make her a good fit for this multi-faceted role, reporting to the Chair of the Rochester Cathedral Trust and line managed by the Cathedral's Chapter Clerk - Executive Director.

Alex will be supporting the Rochester Cathedral Trust by writing bids for funding from trusts and foundations, and by raising funds from both established supporters of the Cathedral and those who are new to it. She will implement a system to hold donors' information that will allow the Cathedral and the trust to better understand and communicate with their valued supporters. Alex is Commissioning Editor for the Beacon newsletter and she coordinates the Trust's membership group, the Gundulf Society, whose members support the fabric and musical traditions of Rochester Cathedral and join together at exclusive events in support of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral Trust's priority project for 2022-23 is the restoration of the 12th Century Benedictine Chapter House and Cloister in the Garth Garden, and Alex is really excited about supporting this important project.

"I am looking forward to building strong relationships with supporters of the Cathedral Trust and contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Trust. It's easy to feel motivated to raise funds for the restoration of such a beautiful building with its unique heritage and very special place in the heart of our community," said Alex.

Please feel free to contact Alex for any cathedral development matters and Gundulf Society membership queries, and if you, or someone you know, may be interested in funding the Trust's important work looking after Rochester Cathedral for all of us now, and for future generations.

T: 01634 810074

E: development@rochestercathedral.org

Planning a Summer Garden Party?

Why not consider featuring the delicious Rochester Cathedral 604 gin alongside your usual refreshing cold drinks and help raise much needed funds for the Cathedral? This exclusive gin is inspired by historical recipes, using the botanicals: juniper, coriander, lemon peel, orange peel, orris root, and angelica root, and is produced in collaboration with the team at Copper Rivet Distillery in nearby Chatham.

604 retails at £39.99 a bottle with all profits going towards maintaining Rochester Cathedral and keeping it open free of charge.

To buy your very summery bottle of 604 gin, please come along to the Cathedral Shop.

