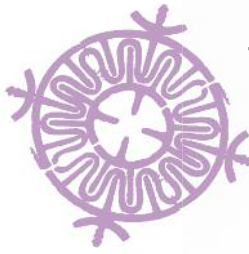


BEACON



The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral

DECEMBER 2021

From the Dean's desk...



Despite the challenges of this past year the Rochester Cathedral Trust has achieved much. There has been genuine excitement around the Gundulf Society and the re-launch of the Cathedral Business Guild as well as marvellous events which have reminded us of life before lockdown. This has been made possible by the dedication and commitment of Trustees and the Cathedral supporters alike.

I'm thankful to God that the 'friends' of the Cathedral are growing, and more people are discovering the wonders of Rochester Cathedral. Faced with the challenges of the Omicron variant, we continue to prepare for the Cathedral Concert on the 18th of December and the Nine Lessons and Carols on 21st and 22nd December and the celebration of Christmas itself. Occasionally a positive Covid test has meant that choirs have been stood down and services rearranged, but the worship of God goes on.

This Christmas will be Lynne Bax's last Nine Lessons and Carols as the Trust Development Officer. Lynne announced her retirement last month. Lynne has been the backbone of the Trust for many years, and I have asked her to read at one of the Cathedral's Carol Services this year. I know you will join me in thanking Lynne for her long service to the Trust and for helping to create some marvellous memories. Lynne has been a wonderful ambassador for the Cathedral, and we wish her a good and long retirement. We look forward to seeing her in a different capacity at future events.

The most recent event was the reception at the Mercers Hall which was quite exceptional. It was a delight to dine together in such spectacular surrounds. The Trust Royal Patron, HRH The Countess of Wessex was present to encourage and our guest speaker, Andrew Wilson, gave a succinct and entertaining address on his biography of Charles Dickens and Dickens' association with Rochester.

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Rochester Cathedral 604 Gin The Association of English Cathedrals

Rochester Cathedral has just launched a new gin to raise much needed funds following the pandemic. Rochester Cathedral gin, 604 is on sale now. The gin, called 604, celebrates the cathedral's heritage as England's second oldest cathedral and features its famous fresco on the bottle's label painted to mark the cathedral's 1,400th anniversary in 2004.

www.englishcathedrals.co.uk



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/>

Pledges and gifts from 1st January to end November 2021 is £422,867.68

The traditional Christmas, that is so familiar to us, was in some respects a creation of Charles Dickens. Certainly, we still live with much Victorian wrapping and that is no bad thing. Yet, at its heart, Christmas is about the love of God revealed to us in Jesus, the Christ Child, born into a wounded and fragile world. In the midst of our brokenness, love comes to heal and restore. Van Morrison sang, 'If love is the law, then love must conquer all'. Love, indeed, is the divine law and conquers all, but we must welcome and embrace love, with all its implications, if we are to make a difference.

I pray you have a wonderful Christmas when it arrives and wish you every blessing in the year ahead.



The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh DL
Dean of Rochester

Business Guild Dinner



Bob Russell; Brig Nick Baveystock; Dean Philip Hesketh

In October, David Ward, Chairman of Rochester Cathedral Business Guild hosted the Guild's Annual Dinner, and it was great to be back face to face at our first event since lockdown.

We were very pleased to have Rochester Cathedral Trust Trustee, Brigadier Nick Baveystock DL, talk to us after dinner on "The Engineer in the 21st Century and Reflections".

We were able to present him with the very first bottle of Cathedral 604 Gin, distilled by Bob Russell of Copper Rivet Distillery at Chatham Maritime.

We look forward to a full year of events in 2022 where we will have opportunity to network and meet new people.

Thank you to all who support us. We are especially grateful to our sponsors that make it happen:



Gundulf Society Reception

On the 12th November the Gundulf Society gathered for Evensong and their annual reception in the Crypt. We were so pleased to have Will Palin with us as our guest speaker and hear his presentation on the fund raising and huge project going on at St Bart's heritage in London. We too have a Gundulf connection!



Lars Lemonius (chair of the Gundulf Society), the Dean and Will Palin

Thank you to all our Gundulf Society supporters.

One Hundred Rochester Roses

AN UPDATE ON OUR NEW ROSE GARDEN

The existing Garth Garden on the south side of the Cathedral has been a place of tranquillity and beauty for many centuries, set within the ruins of the monastic cloisters. Some of the existing roses have come to the end of their natural life and so this is an opportunity to replace them in memory of those who have recently died. We have space for 100 new roses and hope that in some small way this will help re-create the garden afresh and remember loved ones in a fitting way. We are well on our way to getting these roses sponsored and our Gardener has already started work.



The roses have been specially chosen for their abundant fragrance: Chandos, Galway Bay and Paul Shirville. A donation of £30 will help cover the cost of a rose, preparation, planting and recording names.

We will have a Memorial Book in which the names of the donors and those being remembered can be included, and this will be on display inside the Cathedral. Thank you to those are supporting this project.

If you are interested in being part of this scheme please contact Lynne Bax on 01634 810074 or email lynne.bax@rochester-cathedral.org

Please Gift Aid your donation if you can.

Development Officer says Goodbye...

It is with sadness that I tell those that don't already know that I will be retiring at the end of February next year.

I have been honoured to have been working in this amazing building for the last 17 years and I hope that in some small way I have been able to leave a mark.

My job has been so interesting over the years and has morphed into what it is today. When I started back in 2005 the bank account had £3,400 in it!

From doing dishes at 11 o'clock at night after a scrabble evening to meeting Prince Charles and having a little chat, all the fund raising events have been great fun, and all just as important, and I have been delighted to take part and help where I can. It's not all about meeting celebrities and arranging big dinners, its about having a chat and maybe a cuppa with someone I bump into.

I start a new chapter in my life now with my partner Mike. We have our list of things to do and we need to get on and start doing them!

This comes with many thanks to all who have crossed my path over the years for making this such a special job. As at going to print my replacement has not yet been employed but I am absolutely sure that he/she will be able to take the Development Officer's role forward and grow it even more.

With warmest best wishes

Lynne Bax



Young Choristers in good voice for their royal appointment

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL'S YOUNG CHORISTERS PUT ON AN IMPRESSIVE SHOW FOR THEIR DATE WITH ROYALTY IN THE CITY OF LONDON.



Standing in front of the chapel (the only one belonging to a livery company), they sang several pieces under Francesca Massey, Director of Music for Rochester Cathedral, before the Countess chatted to them.

The dinner, held in chandeliered splendour, was hosted by the Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh, Dean of Rochester Cathedral and Cathedral Trust chair, Richard Oldfield.

Author A N Wilson gave a fascinating talk about Kent's famous literary son Charles Dickens, the focus of his latest book *The Mystery of Charles Dickens*. He recalled the author's close links with Rochester, highlighting *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as the novel most evocative of Rochester, the city disguised in the book as Cloisterham.



The Trust's ambition to raise £2 million for a music endowment fund has benefited hugely from their unique contribution to this glittering royal occasion.

Article and photographs courtesy of Trevor Sturgess

The boys and girls sang for HRH The Countess of Wessex GCVO and more than 100 guests at a gala dinner in the elegant and historic Mercers Hall, the historic headquarters of The Mercers' Company, founded in the 14th century.

Their appointment with the Countess, patron of Rochester Cathedral Trust, on November 23, 2021, brought warm applause from their royal guest and the black-tie audience.



The Dean thanked everyone for supporting the dinner before presenting the Countess and Mr Wilson with a bottle each of the Cathedral's 604 Gin, distilled specially by the Copper Rivet Distillery in Chatham Historic Dockyard.

It was an evening to remember for all who attended, not least the talented choristers who made such a good impression.



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL 2021

Christingle Service

Saturday 11th 12.30pm

Christmas Carol Concert*

Saturday 18th, 7.30pm

Tickets £20 | Children £12*

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd
December, 7.30pm

*Tickets available from our website and Welcome Desks.

All our Christmas services are free
and open to all, arrive in good time
to get a good seat and view.

Christmas Eve

3pm Children's Nativity Service

4.15pm Christmas Eve Carol Service in
the Quire sung by the Choristers

11.30pm The Eucharist of Christmas Night
(Doors open at 10.45pm)

Christmas Day

8am Holy Communion

10.30am The Eucharist of Christmas Morning

Boxing Day

10.30am Cathedral Eucharist
(St Stephen's Day)

This programme is subject to change based on the latest
advice from the government. Any changes to the advertised
programme will be found on our website. There will be no
social distancing at services or events. Mask wearing is
encouraged when entering and leaving the Cathedral.

Rochester
CATHEDRAL
Growing in Christ since AD604



www.rochestercathedral.org/christmas

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