

# ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL TRUST newsletter

Rochester  
CATHEDRAL  
Rochester Cathedral Trust



The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral

AUTUMN 2023

## From the Dean's desk...



**A**s we give thanks for the harvest and look towards Advent, we give thanks for another successful and creative summer at Rochester. The Fenland Black Oak Table has drawn thousands of visitors and been the focus for some amazing community events and dinners. We still do not know the next destination for the wonderful Table, but we are not in a rush to see it go!

In November the Table will be at the centre of our fundraising dinner attended by HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh, The Cathedral Trust's Royal Patron. The occasion is the launch of the fundraising campaign to raise 400K for a new Cathedral Song School to maintain and enhance our musical life.

Rochester has the oldest choral school in Britain mentioned in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*. This is a heritage for which we are truly thankful and appropriately proud. However, the rehearsal space for our girl and boy choristers in the Gundulf Tower was deemed to be unsafe for young children. Since the Covid pandemic they have been camping out in the Ithamar Chapel in the Cathedral Crypt – not ideal and an inconvenience for all. A new home needs to be found to provide a space for rehearsals, the music library, robing facilities, etc.

The intention is to repurpose a building which will be vacated by the King's School in March next year. This building needs to be reconfigured, redecorated, and fitted with appropriate access. The building is fortunately next to the Cathedral and has kitchen, office, and toilet facilities. This building will not only become the rehearsal space for our Cathedral choristers but the hub for all our musical activities and the Cathedral's outreach work and aspirations. The music hub will eventually become part of our long-term plans for enhancing wellbeing and mental health in the community.

In this respect, we are blessed in Adrian Bawtree the Cathedral's Director of Music who is not only a first-rate trainer/conductor and musician, but a passionate believer in music as a source of blessing and healing. Music transcends walls and boundaries, it

connects people, it helps express unexpressed feelings, strengthens self-confidence and boosts memory and co-ordination. Adrian has a background in working with Dementia and Parkinson sufferers and Forces Veterans. We have the right Director to embrace this wider vision – now we need the right facilities to implement this vision.

Music is simply a wonderful thing and I hope you will feel able to support this project in any way you feel possible.

**The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh DL**  
Dean of Rochester

## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR



**W**e have all been very busy as a Board organising successful and well attended events around the magnificent Table of the Nation and in our crypt; increasing our Gundulf membership, formulating initiatives for our strategic fundraising and cementing and fostering relationships at our business guild breakfasts.

Our first charity Golf Day at Rochester and Cobham Golf Club was a huge success in raising vital funds and introducing new people to the Cathedral Community. It highlighted our Cathedral Grounds and the work that has begun with our wellbeing programme within the peaceful and beautifully planted gardens.

The Cathedral is always busy with its vibrant programme of daily worship and music, concerts, educational visits, exhibitions and external events that bring people into our Cathedral from so many different walks of life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our amazing staff and volunteers who enable all of this to happen.

Rochester has been a vital part of Kent and Medway's Community since AD604 and we have the responsibility to look after it now and for future generations.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Cathedral very soon.

**Kate Fenwick DL**  
Chair of the Rochester Cathedral Trust

## 2 News from the Trust

### Charity Golf Day at Rochester and Cobham Golf Club

On 11th May we held a charity golf day at Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club. We had 22 teams of 4, so 88 players in total. Fortunately, the sun shone, and the course was in fabulous condition, everyone enjoyed the day and were very generous. It was lovely to have The Dean and Chair of the Trust with us to meet and greet the players and share information about the work of the Trust.

The Copper Rivet distillery kindly sponsored the refreshments on the course and gave Dockyard Gin and their special Masthouse whisky to offer to players.

The members of the club were very supportive not only by allowing us to use the course, but also entering a number of teams and making some goodies to serve at the halfway hut.

We had a raffle and auction which together raised over £12,000 which when added to the profit from the team entry fee and an extremely generous donation of £20,000 gave a total profit of nearly £35,000.

*Remony Millwater, Trustee*

**Find out more on the Rochester Cathedral Trust webpage**

[rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust](http://rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust)  
or email [becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org)



### Platinum Jubilee Tree planted at Rochester Cathedral

Rochester Cathedral was honoured to have been chosen to receive a hazel tree which formed part of a huge sculpture for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



Tree of Trees was a huge sculpture made up of 350 British native trees created by Heatherwick Studio. It was erected outside Buckingham Palace as part of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022.

The branches of the statue comprised of small trees in aluminium pots appearing to sprout from timber plank branches. These trees have been donated to various organisations across the country including Rochester Cathedral.

The tree was planted in King's Orchard on Thursday 29th June. It was planted by the Lord Lieutenant, Lady Colgrain. She was joined by other local dignitaries, staff and volunteers.

### Dean's Cathedral & Garden Tours

On a few dates in June Philip Hesketh, Dean of Rochester, took small groups on a very special tour of the Cathedral and the Gardens. His tours are always fascinating so no one was left disappointed. They were then invited back to the Deanery for a glass of bubbly.



### Upcoming Rochester Cathedral Trust events

The Rochester Cathedral Trust puts on a full programme of events through the year to help raise money to support the fabric and music of Rochester Cathedral, in particular the Song School Project.

#### **The Jubilee Oak Table Dinner 14 November 2023**

A once in a lifetime opportunity to dine upon the Jubilee Oak Table. A table made from the fossilised wood of a 5000 year old Black Oak Tree.

**PLACES ARE LIMITED:** To book your spot or find out more about attending events, please email [becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org)

FULLY BOOKED

## Gundulf Society: Our most recent events

### Talk in the Bridge Chapel at the Rochester Bridge Trust

On the 20th April, Gundulf Society members were invited to the Bridge Chapel and Chamber at Rochester Bridge Trust. Sue Threader, Chief Executive of the Bridge Trust spoke about the fascinating history of Rochester Bridge from Roman times to today, and members enjoyed the hospitality and warmth of the newly refurbished Chapel and Chamber. Canapes and drinks were served overlooking the Medway and Rochester Bridge, which had been especially lit for our guests.

### Reception at Yokes Court

On the 27th June, members met at the home of The Hon John Leigh-Pemberton and the Baroness Kate Lampard for a tour of their beautiful gardens and some delicious canapes made and served by Stella Grove of Stella Grove Catering. Kate recounted some of the history of this Grade II\* listed building and the Rochester Cathedral Choral Scholars performed a unique repertoire on the lawns in front of the house. It was an unforgettable evening.



### Glorious Rochester



On the 19th October, members were invited to a reception and a thoroughly enjoyable talk entitled 'Glorious Rochester' by historian, journalist and political commentator Simon Heffer (left). The Dean also took members to see the Reynold's painting of Dr John Thomas currently on display in the Cathedral. Delicious canapes and drinks were served to guests by *Emma's Table* catering on what was a magnificent evening.

### THE GUNDULF SOCIETY

The Gundulf Society is a small society for individual benefactors of Rochester Cathedral. Its objective is to support the fabric and musical traditions of Rochester Cathedral by bringing together people who are interested in preservation and conservation. The Society aims to ensure that members are invited to at least 2-3 Cathedral events each year and in addition, an annual exclusive Gundulf Society event in London or Kent.

The annual subscription to the Gundulf Society is currently £500. For more information, please email [becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org)

## Rochester Business Guild Breakfasts

### April Business Guild Breakfast

Entrepreneur Colin Jarvis has played a significant part in Medway's business life. He told his amazing story to a large audience at Rochester Business Guild's breakfast meeting in the Crypt of Rochester Cathedral on April 19.

Colin became quite emotional as he recalled his journey from local lad setting up a small electrical enterprise in 1978 to creating what is now the £32 million

business Mems Power Generation. It is a leading provider of temporary power solutions operating one of the country's largest diesel generator rental fleets. The strength of passion for his hometown shone through almost everything he said.

There were also presentations by Gulland's, David Coward, Clerk at The French Hospital and Superintendent Nick Sparkes.

Find out more about Colin Jarvis on our website <https://tinyurl.com/colinjarvis>



### July Business Guild Breakfast

For our July Breakfast we were delighted to welcome Becky Simms, CEO & Founder of Reflect Digital to talk about how to understand and measure the customer's digital journey. We also welcomed local Jeweller Piers Carpenter. He was the winner of the BBC Show 'All That Glitters' in 2022.

### ABOUT THE BUSINESS GUILD

The Rochester Cathedral Business Guild offers businesses across the Diocese of Rochester opportunities to entertain customers, suppliers or staff in a unique setting through a variety of events and networking functions. These include our always popular breakfasts.

Find out more about the Business Guild on our website [rochestercathedral.org/business-guild](http://rochestercathedral.org/business-guild)

# Textus 900 Celebrations

Rochester Cathedral is celebrating 900 years since the creation of the most exceptional item in its collections, *Textus Roffensis*, 'the book of Rochester'. Textus 900 is a programme of events and exhibitions taking place over the next 18 months.



**T**extus Roffensis is one of the most historically important medieval manuscripts in Britain and was produced in the 1120s by the Benedictine monks of the cathedral priory of St Andrew in Rochester. The first part of the manuscript is

an outstanding compilation of early English laws. This includes the only surviving copy of the law-code of Æthelberht, King of Kent, which was written in Old English around the year 600, making it not only the earliest set of English laws but also the earliest datable work composed in English. The whole compilation of early English laws was recently added to the UNESCO Memory of the World UK Register, a testament to its great significance.

A series of events are planned to take place in 2024 with more details to be released later in the year.

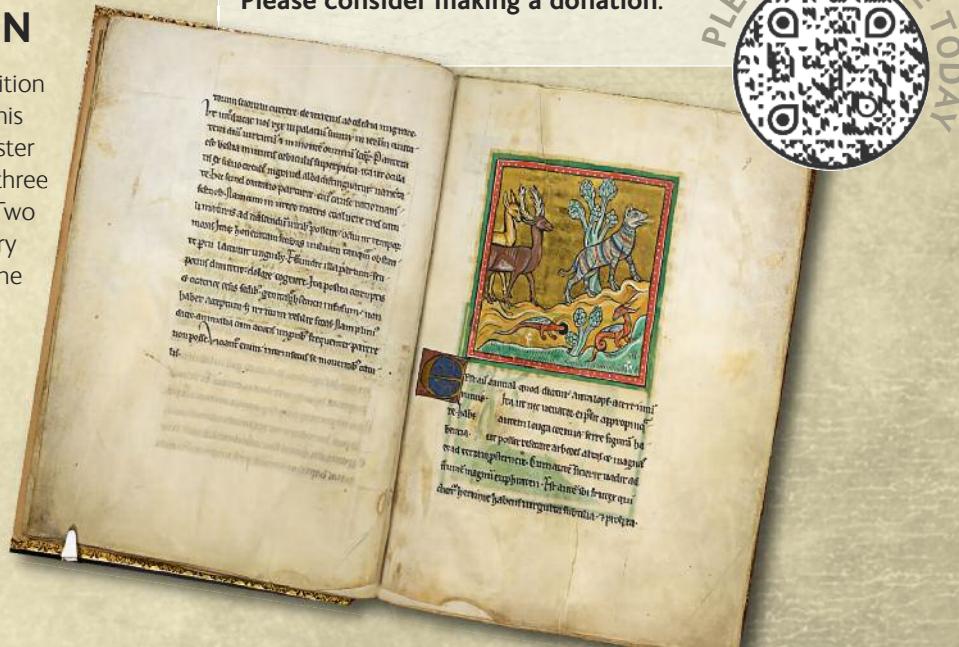
**Find out more about *Textus Roffensis* on our website**  
[rochesteircathedral.org/textus](http://rochesteircathedral.org/textus)



The Textus 900 programme begins with an exhibition in the Cathedral Crypt, 'Beauty and the Beasts'. This exhibition explores the medieval priory of Rochester where *Textus Roffensis* was written and features three significant items loaned from the British Library. Two of the British Library books were once in the priory library and are returning home to Rochester for the first time in nearly 500 years.

One of the loans is the incredibly beautiful Rochester Bestiary, produced around 1230, the book provides a visual and textual account of many wild and legendary beasts.

**The loans will be at the Cathedral until October.**



## Textus Roffensis talk for the Rochester Cathedral Trust

A fascinating and fact-filled evening was enjoyed by 64 guests in mid-September when the historical consultant, Dr Chris Monk gave a talk on the *Textus Roffensis*. Dr Monk specialises in the culture, texts, and everyday life of medieval England. His slide presentation and talk centred around the *Textus Roffensis* ("the Rochester book") which is the most important collection of Medieval English laws held by Rochester Cathedral. The audience also learned that this valuable document has now been added to the UNESCO Memory of the World UK Register. The evening was held by the Trust to appeal for help to fund the annual insurance costs involved in keeping this historical book at the Cathedral.

*Sponsored by MS Webb. Providing enforcement, security and support services for asset managers*



## Support Rochester Cathedral's greatest treasure

*Textus Roffensis* is a true treasure but the insurance costs of keeping the original manuscript in Rochester on public display in the Cathedral crypt costs £13k a year. The Rochester Cathedral Trust are fundraising to help keep this book safe for future generations.

**Please consider making a donation.**



## Dean Hesketh makes history in national rose competition

Dean Hesketh recently made history by being the first Dean of Rochester in over a century to enter a rose in a national competition. He follows his predecessor Dean Reynolds Hole who created spectacular rose gardens at the Victorian Rochester Cathedral. He was one of the founders of the National Rose Society.



## Rarely seen painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



A rarely seen portrait by renowned artist Sir Joshua Reynolds is to be displayed at Rochester Cathedral to mark the Tricentenary of his birth. The portrait depicts former Bishop of Rochester, Dr John Thomas and was painted in 1781. It reunites the Bishop with his Cathedral for the first time since his death in 1793.

The portrait depicts Dr John Thomas, Dean of Westminster (1768-1793) and Bishop of Rochester (1774-1793). It shows Thomas with Westminster Abbey in the background wearing his Order of the Bath regalia. Remarkably, parts of the regalia featured in the portrait are still in the possession of Rochester Cathedral and are on display with the painting.

The painting highlights the historic and living links between Westminster Abbey and Rochester Cathedral.

**The portrait will be on display until January 2024.**



## New Canon for Worship and Spirituality

Rochester Cathedral has welcomed Revd. Canon Christopher Dench as our new Canon for Worship and Spirituality.

Canon Chris was previously the Director of Formation and Ministry in the Diocese of Rochester. He has been a Residentiary Canon at the Cathedral since 2018. He will oversee the liturgical and spiritual formation of the Cathedral community, and be responsible for leading those who resource, lead and contribute to the daily worship of the Cathedral.

## Commemorating the lost shrines of Medieval Saints

Two shrine markers were dedicated at a service on Sunday 24th September. The shrine markers commemorate two early medieval saints whose shrines were lost when they were destroyed nearly 500 years at the English Reformation. St Paulinus and St Ithamar were Bishops of Rochester in the 7th century, nearly 1400 years ago. The shrine markers have been installed in front of the High Altar.

They were dedicated by the current Bishop of Rochester at a service where the Archbishop of York preached. This was particularly fitting as they are the contemporary successors of Paulinus and Ithamar.



## Celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla

Back in May the Cathedral marked the historic Coronation weekend with a Street party around the incredible Fenland Black Oak Table. Hundreds of people joined us – bringing along their own picnics. The Cathedral was decked out in bunting and the service was streamed into the Cathedral.



Photo by Steve Hartridge Photography

Some members of the extended Cathedral community were even closer to the action. Canon Ralph Godsall, a Cathedral Trustee, assisted at the Coronation. He writes, *'This was a moment of great renaissance for a renaissance King. English Coronations are a blend of tradition and innovation. They adapt themselves to changing needs and new conditions. We are so familiar with the passions and interests of this particular King. His life has already been one of public service. His specific commitments to opportunities for young people, to diverse communities, to the arts and music, to the world's great faiths, and perhaps most of all to the environment, mark him out as someone attuned to so much of what matters today. Somehow, all this resonated in the Abbey on 6 May. It was an immense privilege to find myself standing in the Sacrarium close to the spot where English Coronations happen and to support the King and Queen prayerfully from such close proximity.'*

# 6 News from the Cathedral

## Threads through Creation

In August, the awe-inspiring Threads through Creation exhibition went on display at Rochester Cathedral. Created by textile artist, Jacqui Parkinson, the exhibition consists of twelve enormous silk panels exploring the story of creation. It is estimated that there are eight million stitches in the artwork. Over 17,000 visitors came to see the beautiful artwork.



In early October, thousands of visitors came to marvel at 'Science'. A spectacular son-et-lumière experience transforming the internal space of the Cathedral. The immersive experience encouraged visitors to explore and contemplate the contributions of science and our understanding of the physical world around us.

*Thank you to ArcelorMittal Kent Wire for their support.*

### SPOTLIGHT ON

## Nicola Moy – Garden Projects Fundraiser

Nicola joined the team in May 2023 and is our Garden Projects Fundraiser. We asked Nicola a few questions so you could get to know her better.



### What does your job entail?

I am currently working with the Dean and Head Gardener at Rochester Cathedral to develop the scope of the Cathedral Gardens Project and to bid for funding to successfully deliver the proposals.

### Where were you working before?

I've had a variety of roles: A Development Scientist at Wellcome/GSK for 25 years where I worked on therapeutic medicines still on the market today. I then was a Project Manager on heritage projects at Medway Council for 9 years, followed by a year working as a Befriending Scheme Officer at Medway Voluntary Action. I am also a Trustee at Fort Amherst in Chatham.

### What would surprise people about what you do here?

Most people are unaware of the beautiful hidden gardens in Kings Orchard, so when they ask me what I am doing working at the Cathedral, they are almost always surprised.

### What are you working on at the moment? What's in the pipeline?

A big part of any project development is working with the stakeholders and people who will benefit from delivery of the project. I am introducing potential users to the wonderful surroundings of the gardens and exciting them with the possibilities for future uses. We are looking at creating a Sensory Garden as one of the areas within the footprint of the Cathedral gardens and that is the current focus.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy travelling/holidays and have been fortunate to visit many very special places such as Machu Picchu in Peru and Uluru in Australia. I am interested in history (museums and historic places) and am a keen gardener.

# November 2022: Priory wall collapses

## An urgent appeal to raise funds for our restoration project

The conservation and fabric of our Cathedral is paramount at the moment as we raise urgent funds for repairs to a portion of the Priory Wall that has collapsed in King's Orchard.

Initial investigations suggest it collapsed due to water ingress; a common problem where water seeps into stone. The water then freezes and thaws, gradually

weakening and cracking the mortar until it fails. Over the past few decades other smaller sections of the wall have failed. Further investigations have shown that

other parts of the wall also need repairing. Immediate safety work has begun to secure the foundations and the cost for this is £45,000. The cost to repair the whole wall is circa £500,000.

**Please do consider supporting our appeal to raise money to repair these historic walls.**



## We need your support!

You can find out how to support this particular project on our webpage: [rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust](http://rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust)  
Or email Becca Lowe at [becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org)  
See below for a summary of the Trust's objectives and how to donate.

If you believe you have received this newsletter by accident or no longer wish to receive it, please email the Development Office or phone the Cathedral on 01634 843366.

## Support the Rochester Cathedral Trust

The Trust's charitable objects include

- The endowment of the Cathedral's music, choral tradition, and musical outreach into the community
- The preservation and maintenance of the Cathedral's historic fabric
- The promotion of the Cathedral's heritage as a historic landmark and holy place
- The development of the Cathedral's estate, grounds and amenities

You can support Rochester Cathedral Trust through

- Regular giving
- Membership of the Gundulf Society
- Membership of the Business Guild
- Leaving a legacy

Every £1 you give to The Rochester Cathedral Trust will directly benefit the cathedral. Gifts by regular monthly direct debit or legacy pledges are especially powerful, no matter how small the amount, because they make it easier for the Trust to plan where it can allocate funds and make the biggest impact.

It could help the Cathedral to

- become a more resilient and sustainable organization
- maintain and improve its historic buildings, spaces, monuments, and collections
- provide permanent choristerships and endow its music
- build a living legacy for the future

## How to give to the Rochester Cathedral Trust

Donations are always welcomed by the Trust. Our account details are:

Bank: CAF Bank

Account: The Rochester Cathedral Trust

Account Number: 00036194

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Please consider gift-aiding your donation. For a Gift Aid form, email [becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org)

The Rochester Cathedral Trust (Reg. Charity No. 291616) was created in 1985.

## 8 Dates for your diary

# JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL november

**15** BILLY CHILDISH & THE CHATHAM SINGERS

**16** THE RONNIE SCOTTS JAZZ ORCHESTRA SOLD OUT

**17** JAMES TAYLOR QUARTET

**18** THE NIGEL PRICE ORGAN TRIO & CLAIRE MARTIN OBE

FEATURING RONNIE SCOTTS HOUSE DJ: SARAH WELLER

tickets and information  
[rochestercathedral.org/jazz](http://rochestercathedral.org/jazz)

15-18 NOVEMBER  
2023

Rochester  
CATHEDRAL  
Growing in Christ since AD604

### EVENTS AT THE CATHEDRAL

**Rochester Cathedral Jazz and Blues Festival**  
15 – 18 November 2023

Four gigs over four nights. Book online  
[rochestercathedral.org/jazz](http://rochestercathedral.org/jazz)

**Fenland Black Oak Table**  
until March 2024

See the incredible 13m long table  
made from the wood of a 5,000 year  
old fossilised black oak tree.

### Christmas Services

Join us this year, and make Rochester  
Cathedral part of your Christmas.

Details can be found at  
[rochestercathedral.org/christmas](http://rochestercathedral.org/christmas)

To find out more about events, sign up  
to the Rochester Cathedral newsletter,  
follow us on social media or visit  
[rochestercathedral.org/whatson](http://rochestercathedral.org/whatson)



## 604 GIN CELEBRATING ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL'S HISTORY

Inspired by historical recipes, **604 Gin** uses botanicals juniper, coriander, lemon peel, orange peel, orris and angelica root. This light and subtly citrus gin, is crisp and refreshing. It is best enjoyed over ice, with your favourite tonic water and garnished with a slice of fragrant lime.

Made by the team at Copper Rivet Distillery

All profits support Rochester Cathedral  
Please enjoy in moderation  
If you are lucky enough to appear under 21 our staff will require photo ID proof of age  
We reserve the right to refuse service