

From the Dean's desk...



Spring has brought a flurry of activity at Rochester Cathedral. The graceful array of 15,000 Peace Doves suspended over the magnificent 'Nation's Table' has stunned visitors with its majestic presence.

At the Cathedral we are looking forward to an engaging year of activities around The Fenland Black Oak Table and the excitement of making new connections and friends. Already people from very different backgrounds have been drawn together around its ancient span.

We feel privileged to be 'The Table's' present host. It perfectly aligns to our vision of the Cathedral being a place of inclusion, hospitality and welcome. Such a large table speaks of the liberality and generosity of the God who invites all to sit at the table and eat – there is a place for all.

It is for this reason that when I look at 'The Table' I cannot help but be reminded of George Herbert's marvellous poem, Love (III). Struggling with his own sense of unworthiness, George Herbert inevitably came to an acceptance that true Love embraces a multitude of failings and despite our reluctance bids us sit and 'taste my meat'.

At Easter the Church rejoices in the Love that in Jesus Christ conquers even death. Easter heralds the new creation when all nations and peoples will sit at a common table and share in the feast of the Kingdom.

Over this coming year I hope there will be many opportunities to meet with the friends and supporters of Rochester Cathedral and taste something of that reality now. To share together in the feast of the Kingdom prepared for all humanity.

I wish you all a very joyful Easter.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh DL
Dean of Rochester

WELCOME FROM Kate Fenwick DL



I am delighted and honoured to be the Chair of Rochester Cathedral Trust. 2023 promises to be an exciting year for the cathedral.

We will celebrate the 900th anniversary of its most significant medieval treasure, the Textus Roffensis, the oldest legal

manuscript of English laws, written by Benedictine monks at Rochester. This unique and historic document is intimately connected with the cathedral's rich history and is beautifully displayed in the cathedral's Crypt. During the year a 5000-year-old bog oak table, the 'Table of the Nation', will be in our custody. It will live in the Nave for all to see and enjoy and be used by the local community and visitors. The cathedral's rich musical tradition is flourishing under the excellent directorship of Adrian Bawtree.

The conservation and fabric of our Cathedral is paramount at the moment as we raise urgent funds for the stone wall that has collapsed in the Kings Orchards. Immediate safety work has begun to secure the foundations and the cost for this is £45,000.

We had a proactive and successful fund-raising appeal last year and raised £90,999 and was able to grant £458,930 to cathedral projects. Significant activities included the lighting project, the sound system, drainage works, repairs to the medieval Bishop's Gate, and financial support for cathedral's music, including the community choir.

I hope that you might be inspired to help the Trust to support the cathedral's music and maintain and preserve its historic fabric and estate for present and future generations to experience and enjoy. We greatly value and appreciate whatever support you can offer.

Kate Fenwick DL
Chair of the Rochester Cathedral Trust

2 News from the Trust



Table for the Nation arrives at Rochester Cathedral

A magnificent 13m long table made from the wood of a 5,000 year old fossilised black oak tree is now on display at Rochester Cathedral. In 2012 a giant black oak tree was discovered preserved deep in the peat where it had lain for 5000 years. Over 10 years, a team of privately funded specialist crafts people transformed the table into a stunning sculptured table which was dedicated to HM the Queen for her Platinum Jubilee.

The Fenland Black Oak Table was officially welcomed to the Cathedral at a special launch evening hosted by the Rochester Cathedral Trust.

Rochester Cathedral is only the second venue to host the table. Over the year the Cathedral will hold events around the table. On occasion, it will be available to hire for private dinners and receptions. Please contact our Events team for more details on hiring the table on info@rochester-cathedral.org.

The table will be at Rochester Cathedral until March 2024.

www.rochester-cathedral.org/fenland-black-oak-table





GUNDULF SOCIETY

Visit St Bartholomew's Hospital

Members of the Gundulf Society visited St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield on the 30th November. The visit was hosted by the CEO of the St. Barts Heritage Trust, Will Palin (son of Gundulf Society patron Michael Palin).

Gundulf Society

The Gundulf Society is a small society for individual benefactors of the Rochester Cathedral Trust. It's 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 current Gundulf Society annual subscription is £500 per year.

Email becca.lowe@rochester cathedral.org to find out more.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL 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.

Business Guild Breakfast

Members of the Rochester Cathedral Business Guild attended breakfast at Rochester Cathedral earlier this year.

These are a regular part of the calendar for the Business Guild and provide a perfect networking opportunity for local businesses.



Find out more about the Business Guild on our website www.rochester cathedral.org/business-guild



Wine tasting under Peace Doves

More than 70 guests were wonderfully entertained at a Wine Tasting evening on the Fenland Black Oak Table under the Peace Doves at the Cathedral last week, where they enjoyed delicious wines through the kind generosity of the Balfour and Gusbourne wineries.

The tasting of still and sparkling wines was guided by the enthusiasm and very knowledgeable Joe Fattorini, wine expert from 'The Wine Show' on Channel 5 and Balfour's winemaker, Fergus Elias. Guests learned about the particular properties of the Kent and Sussex terroir which goes to create such special grapes, as well as how to properly appreciate these premium wines.

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.

Email becca.lowe@rochester cathedral.org to find out more about attending events.

20 April Rochester Bridge Trust Talk
Reserved for Gundulf Society Members

11 May Golf Day at Rochester & Cobham Golf Club *Fully Booked*

27 June Garden Tour at Yokes Court
Reserved for Gundulf Society Members

19 October Gundulf Society Annual Reception *Reserved for Gundulf Society Members*

14 November Nave Dinner on the Nation's Table

4 News from the Cathedral



Goodbye to Canon Matthew

In March we said goodbye to Canon Matthew Rushton. He had been Canon Precentor here for six years. He has moved to Edinburgh where he has become Rector of Christ Church Morningside.

SPOTLIGHT ON Becca Lowe – Fundraising Administrator

We are delighted to welcome Becca Lowe as our Fundraising Administrator. She's been with us for just over a month.



We asked Becca a few questions so you could get to know her better.

What does your job entail?

My job involves working very closely with the Chair of the Trust and all the Trustees helping them arrange events they're hosting, all to raise funds for the beautiful Cathedral. I also get to help at the events thrown by the Trust and it's so interesting to meet new people and those who so generously donate.

Where were you working before?

Before this I was working for Democratic Services at Medway Council.

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

At the moment we're gearing up for a few events in the next couple of months so I'm busy helping to organise them and I'm also just finding my feet, working out how best I can help the Trust and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in!

What's your favourite thing about working at Rochester Cathedral

Just being able to say that I work here. My family and I love the Cathedral and being able to say I work for the Trust that helps support such a beautiful building is really cool.

Favourite fact about Rochester Cathedral

My favourite fact about the Cathedral is that it's leaning on the right hand side! I had never noticed that until I was given a tour and I've already brought a few family members and shown them too!

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time

My favourite things to do in my spare time are long country walks with my fiancé, spending time with family and friends and scrapbooking. We're also planning our wedding which is taking up a lot of our time, but it's so enjoyable!

Get in touch with Becca via her email:
becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org

Choristers reach the semi-finals of the BBC Young Chorister of the Year 2022

Late last year Rochester Cathedral celebrated two members of its renowned choir reaching the semi-finals of BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition. Charlie Binney and Ingrid Linn beat hundreds of other choristers getting through to the final 10.

Both have sung in the Rochester Cathedral Choir for a number of years. Charlie joined in 2019 as a chorister and is now Dean's Chorister. Ingrid joined as a chorister in 2017 and is now a Choral Scholar.

Director of Music, Adrian Bawtree says "Massive congratulations go to Ingrid and Charlie for their significant achievement in this competition. We are delighted for them and would like to encourage you all to visit this historic place and hear them and our choir sing together".



A poem by George Herbert

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here.'
 Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'
 'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
 So I did sit and eat.

Peace Doves

AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

During March and April Rochester Cathedral was transformed by 'Peace Doves' an artwork by Peter Walker Sculptor.

Bringing a message of peace and hope, the Peace Doves artwork is created from around 15,000 individually handmade paper doves, together they collectively form a beautiful artwork which as a whole reflects joining together in unity, peace and hope moving forward.

Peter Walker's beautiful Peace Doves exhibition leaves us on the 18 April

6 Support the Rochester Cathedral Trust



URGENT APPEAL

Collapse of Priory Wall

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.

In November 2022 part of the old Priory Wall collapsed. 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.

Support the Rochester Cathedral Trust

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

It'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;

NatWest Rochester Cathedral Trust
Sort Code 60-17-36
Account Number 68278772

Please do consider gift-aiding your donation. Email becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org for a gift aid form.

Event dates for your diary 7

Until March 2024

Fenland Black Oak Table

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

April – September

Rochester Cathedral Organ Festival Series



Hear our spectacular organ being played by internationally acclaimed organists.

26 April Adrian Bawtree

24 May Charles Harrison

21 June Jeremy Lloyd

19 July Ewa Belmas

30 August Jeremiah Stephenson

27 September William Fox

£10 for adults, under 18's free | Season ticket £45 | Book online

6 May

Coronation Street Party

We will be opening our doors all day on the 6 May for people to come and celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. Bring a picnic and a blanket.

Coming later in 2023

Behind the scenes the Cathedral team are working hard to finalise details for lots of exciting events. Here's a sneak peek at what's coming up later in the year:

August 2023

Threads through Creation

A spectacular sequence of twelve huge textile panels retelling the creation story in the book of Genesis. By artist Jacqui Parkinson.

3 – 7 October

Science – A lightshow by Luxmuralis

Luxmuralis return to Rochester Cathedral with another spectacular lightshow this October. Tickets will be released in the summer.



16 – 18 November

Rochester Cathedral Jazz and Blues Festival

Join us for a weekend of jazz and blues music by some of the greatest musicians working today. Three gigs over three nights. Starring Ronnie Scott's Big Band, the James Taylor Quartet and a not-to-be-missed very special guest.

To find out more about events at Rochester Cathedral sign up to the Rochester Cathedral newsletter, follow us on social media or visit www.rochestercathedral.org/whatson

Find out more about the Rochester Cathedral Trust on our webpage

www.rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust or email becca.lowe@rochestercathedral.org

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

2023 ORGAN FESTIVAL

Selected Wednesdays at 19:30

Tickets £10 / Season ticket £45 (18 or under, free)
visit rochestercathedral.org

26th April Adrian Bawtree
Rochester Cathedral

24th May Charles Harrison
Chichester Cathedral

21st June Jeremy Lloyd
Rochester Cathedral

19th July Ewa Belmas
Ukraine

30th August Jeremiah Stephenson
Concert Organist

27th September William Fox
St. Paul's Cathedral

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