

OCTAGON

MAGAZINE

EDWARD BEAR ADVENT POSADA

Page 4

THE NORTH RANGE BUILDINGS

Page 5

CROWNS & GOWNS - AN EXHIBITION

Page 9

FOCUS ON

THE CATHEDRAL CENTRE

Pages 10 & 11

Welcome from The Dean

I do hope that amidst all the hyperactivity that seems to be an inevitable part of this time of year, you will be able to find some time to join us at the Cathedral to draw breath, and to enter a little more into the depth and wonder that is at the heart of the Christmas message as proclaimed by St John *'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'*. We are told in the scriptures that Mary, the mother of Jesus, *'pondered all these things in her heart'* - she ruminated and reflected on them and came to a depth of appreciation of what was being asked of her and what was underpinning all things. Our services over this period are aimed at giving us all an opportunity to do that.



As always there are several carol services, as well as services and activities particularly aimed at children and young families - you are welcome at them all and I look forward to seeing you.

If you are looking for that moment of peace and quiet do try the Advent Tuesday evening Compline services in the Lady Chapel or Evensong at 5.30pm during the week.

Above all I wish you every blessing this Advent and Christmastide and pray that in these anxious and divided times there may be *'peace on earth and good will to all people'*.

A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to be 'Mark Bonney', written over a background of lit candles in a candelabrum.

The Very Reverend
Mark Bonney,
Dean of Ely

Regular Service Times

Sundays:

8.15am: Holy Communion
10.30am: Sung Eucharist
4pm: Evensong

Daily Services:

7.30am: Morning Prayer
8am: Holy Communion
12.10pm: Holy Communion
(Thursdays and Saints' Days)
5.30pm: Evensong

Canon Victoria Johnson to be Precentor of York Minster

On 20 October it was announced that Canon Victoria Johnson will be leaving us at the end of November to become the next Precentor at York Minster. This is very good news for York Minster, but very sad news for Ely Cathedral.

We knew Vicky would not be here for ever, and she has made a considerable impact through her ministry over the past four and half years. Vicky's primary role has been as Canon for the Congregation and Community which amongst other things has involved overseeing all our pastoral work, and making sure that everyone is cared for.

One part of her job description that has taken up much more time than was anticipated is that of Chapter Safeguarding Lead and we are hugely grateful for the conscientious way this important work has been undertaken; the very good SCIE Safeguarding Audit that took place in June was testament to her work here.

Vicky was also the mastermind behind the two very successful Science Festivals that have taken place and the creation of the Community Choir to name but two of her initiatives. Vicky is a fine preacher, and has exercised that ministry regularly beyond the confines of the Cathedral.



We are going to miss her greatly, but the exciting Precentorial role in York will be an excellent opportunity for her to further develop her ministry and skills. We wish her - and of course Percy - every blessing.

Vicky's last Sunday at the Cathedral was 24 November and she will be installed as a Canon of York on Saturday 11 January at 5.15pm in the Minster. A coach will be leaving the Cathedral mid-morning around 10.30am to York Minster for Canon Vicky's Installation and returning following Evensong. The cost of the coach travel is £20 per person payable with booking.

If you wish to attend then please send a cheque made payable to 'Ely Cathedral' or cash to Alison Binstead, Finance Officer at the Chapter House to reserve your seat.

We have arranged for free admission to the Minster for those wishing to visit prior to the service.

For further information contact Ed Gifford on 01353 968192 or 07711 384994

Welcome to the newest member of the Vergers Team



We are pleased to welcome Paul Butcher as the latest recruit to our hard working team of Vergers. Paul joined us in early August, which gave him time to find his feet over the summer months before the events and services began to flood into the Cathedral diary for the autumn. Having gained significant hands-on, practical experience in his previous employment, Paul is also currently a church warden at St George's Church in Littleport and an Authorised Lay Minister with responsibility for running the Youth group there. He therefore brings a range of valuable skills to the Team. Do please say hello to Paul if you see him around the building and we wish him every success in his important role in the Cathedral's worshipping and secular life.

Databases, Memberships and Training Officer

The Operations team in the Old Library have recently been joined by Martin Cox, who has been appointed as Databases, Memberships and Training Officer. Martin is responsible for the management and development of the Cathedral's Box Office systems, database, data integrity and compliance with GDPR and will provide support for the Friends of Ely Cathedral, the Order of St Etheldreda and Ely Cathedral Business Group. He has a background in data management, IT consultancy and a wealth of experience in the development and provision of training in software systems, which he will be putting to good use in rolling out training and support to the many staff and volunteers who use our systems. He is no stranger to the Cathedral and many of you may recognise his face as he has previously helped as a Volunteer at events including the Christmas Fair and has recently been helping the Vergers with event logistics.



New Technology Team Completed



Ben Prickett joined us at the beginning of November as Head of Technology. This is an entirely new role in the Cathedral. Ben will have overall responsibility for the Technology Department, with a special focus on hardware, software, network and telecommunications, as well as supporting the Cathedral's lighting and sound systems and the IT requirements of the Cathedral's users. Above all, he will also lead Chapter's strategy of modernising our present technologies and introducing new capabilities that will future-proof them. As one of the greatest Cathedrals in the land, Ely Cathedral needs to be in good shape to deal with the increasing opportunities and challenges of life in the 21st Century, notably in the areas of data and technology. Our hope is to delight the Cathedral's worshippers and visitors in a way that has not been possible hitherto. Ben has had many years of experience in systems and network management and will be undertaking a

thorough review of the Cathedral's technology needs. I am sure all our colleagues, volunteers and friends will wish to join Chapter in welcoming Ben.

Stephen Bourne

Sir Michael Marshall CBE DL

A memorial service for Sir Michael Marshall CBE DL will be held at Ely Cathedral on Thursday 16 January 2020, at 11.30am. Sir Michael sadly died in July aged 87. He had been a great supporter and deeply involved with Ely Cathedral for many years. He served as Vice Patron of the Order of St Etheldreda and was prominent in fund raising for the Great Restoration and many other projects at Ely. Those wishing to attend should apply for tickets in writing to: Teresa Ranson, Marshall of Cambridge, The Airport, Cambridge, CB5 8RX or by email: memorial@marcamb.co.uk



New Lay Clerk

The Cathedral Choir welcomed a new Lay Clerk at the beginning of term. Sam Madden comes to Ely from Peterborough, where he spent the previous year as a tenor Choral Scholar, however his original roots are rather further away. Sam hails from New Zealand, having begun his singing career there before coming to the Northern hemisphere. He is not the first Kiwi to join our back row. He joins fellow New Zealander and Senior Lay Clerk Karl Read. Sam's brother, Nick, also sang as a Lay Clerk here at Ely some years ago.

EDWARD BEAR ADVENT POSADA

Johnny Riches writes: When we moved to Ely in 2016, my wife, Alice, soon discovered the Edward Bear group at the Cathedral. Our son, Ned, had just celebrated his first birthday, and the group was a lovely place to meet other parents, children and members of the Cathedral community. One of the highlights has been the annual *posada* during Advent - a tradition we had heard of, but not taken part in before. Each night in the run-up to Christmas, the familiar characters of the Nativity story visit a different family and spend the night in their home, mirroring the journey which Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem. The beautiful knitted figures are particularly child-friendly. Soft and colourful, complete with sheep for the shepherds and camels for the Magi, they invite children to play with them, to interact, to get to know them. It is exciting to unpack the crib figures, which arrive with a collection of books and a journal to record the experience. The diary shows that each family welcomes them in their own way - some with songs, some with candles, many choosing to gather round and read or act out the Christmas story.

That first Advent, Ned's engagement with the *posada* was, as might be expected of a one year old boy, limited to scattering the figures around the room. By the next year, though, his response was more thoughtful, and in 2018 he welcomed the visitors as old friends, while his baby sister, Fritha, met them for the first time. This year was different: we had forgotten to sign up to host the *posada* during Advent. Not wanting us to miss out, the group suggested that we host the Holy Family over Christmas itself. What a wonderful opportunity - of course we said yes! They were our constant companions for three weeks, both at home and on our own travels. When we went to stay with family in the Lincolnshire Wolds, the *posada* came with us and visited the crib figures in the village church. The children also took them to visit their great-great-aunt who, aged 94 and suffering from dementia, has been bed-bound for some time and is no longer able to attend church herself. The figures sat next to her on her bed and acted as a bridge between her and the children - a reminder, perhaps, that whether we are young or old, Christ meets us wherever we are.



The Edward Bear Group for under 5s, parents or carers meets for worship, activities, stories and refreshments on Fridays, 10am - 11am during term time in Powcher's Hall. For further details please contact Angela Jones, 01353 665810.

THE NORTH RANGE BUILDINGS

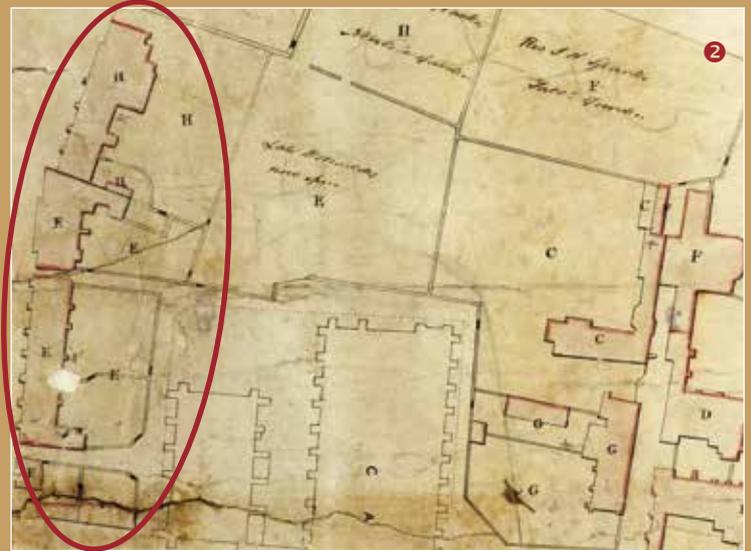
Elizabeth Stazicker writes: The ancient, fortress-like appearance of the High Street face of the College seemed to me, on a childhood visit in the 1950s, to be intentional, a defensive wall, to hide the Cathedral Chapter's important secrets. Nearly 40 years later (In 1986 and 1990), an ingenious architectural scheme revitalised the street front. Large windows were fixed around the existing openings and new entrance ways made for shops. Now the whole eastern end has been returned to its original glorious colour.



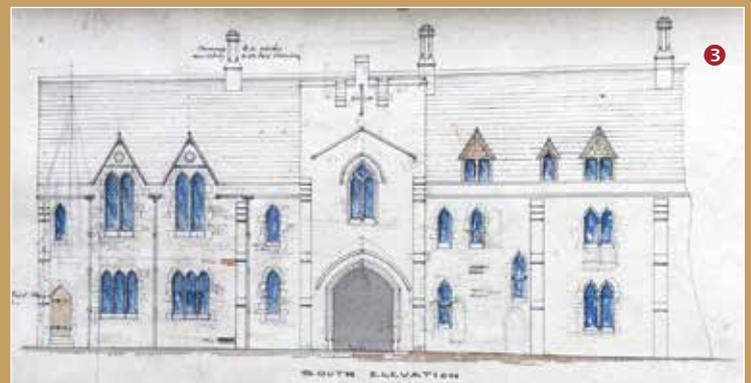
The antiquity of the gate tower is now obvious. It was built, sacrist Alan de Walsingham's account rolls record, in 1325-6, to provide a secure entrance to his works area and refurbished for building the Lady Chapel and Octagon. Walsingham purchased from the Bishop four houses west of the new gate. There he built a tower (with goldsmith's workshop below and Walsingham's counting house above). A new wall was constructed along the street boundary, to his new gateway. Stretching from the gate, almost up to the wall of the 12th century Almonry, he built a long hall building.

In 1541, after the dissolution of the monastery, the whole of the Sacrist's area was allocated as a Canon's residence. We know little about the subsequent alterations. In 1678, Chapter gave permission for two houses to the west and one to the east of the main house to be leased, and 18th century accounts show substantial sums spent on refurbishment, but how the building was altered is unclear. By the mid-19th century, a building had been squeezed between the Sacrist's Hall and the Almonry, the Sacrist's gateway had been blocked, and the precinct was reached from the High Street through two passages, west and east of the hall.² In the late 1850s, when the canon's house was no longer needed, Dean Peacock set about major changes. Buildings west of Walsingham's long building (by then including the porter's house) were demolished. Accommodation for the newly-founded choir school and a new house for the porter were built either side of the gateway.³ (This modern accommodation was intended to please the porter - it didn't!). The High Street façade, largely new built, was again contiguous to Goldsmith's Tower. In the remainder, the window openings were remodelled. About the same date a house for the organist was created in the refurbished building further east and the building between the Sacrist's Hall and the Almonry was apparently rebuilt. Some of those buildings which, as a 9-year old, I thought ancient did

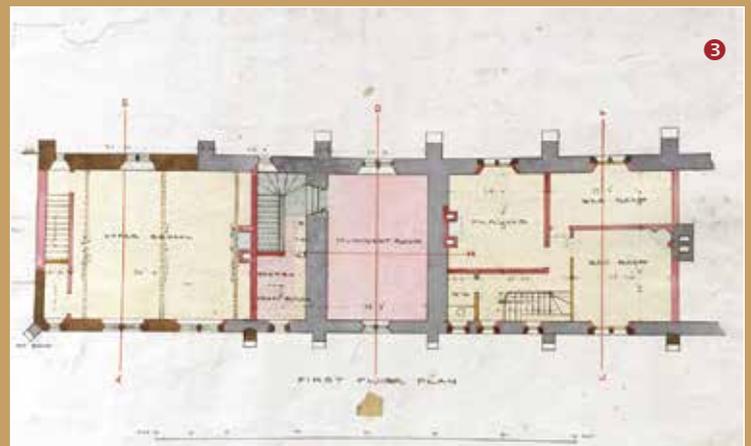
indeed date from the 14th century. Others were little older than my grandmother! The documentary information about the western buildings was confirmed and elucidated by archaeological work undertaken in 1990, when they were renovated. The less-well understood changes to the eastern buildings, part ancient, part much more recent, can now be contemplated from the north with greater ease and the 14th century gate and its carvings can justly be admired as an additional memorial to de Walsingham.



The Almonry (H) and other North Range buildings (E) c.1859, before Peacock's changes. From plan of the precinct, Cambridgeshire Archives 283/P38, by kind permission



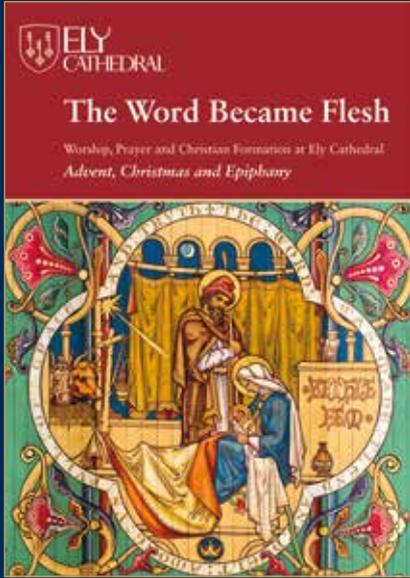
The 1860 new-build (brown on the plan below) and remodelled buildings: proposed south elevation (the north has not survived) and first floor plan (the completed building was slightly different), William Fawcett, architect, Cambridge. From the Cathedral Archive.



MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Advent to Candlemas Programme

'The Word Became Flesh'



These words open the Gospel of St John and are always read as part of the gospel at either Midnight Mass or Christmas Day Eucharist and make a perfect title for our programme this Advent to Candlemas. One of things that marks Christianity out from other religions is what we call the doctrine of the Incarnation. This teaching says that God came amongst in the person of Jesus Christ as

a human being, and that as a human being God showed in a very particular way what Love is all about. The book Genesis and St John's gospel share an opening 'in the beginning' - 'in the beginning God created...'; 'in the beginning was the Word'. The Christian faith takes the created and material world very seriously and it is very much through the material and physical world that God reveals himself, and in a very particular way in Jesus Christ. So our Advent sermons leading up to Christmas Day will explore that revealing of God, that presence through the challenges of the prophetic, through the contrary nature of the things that confront us not least when the call of God impacts upon us.



There are some extra services during this season; a Taizé service on 15 December at 6.30pm, many carol services to choose from, and also the beautiful service of Compline in the Lady Chapel on Tuesdays at 9pm during Advent. Our lives are pretty crowded, so we're not putting on a great deal of 'extra' things other than those that you would anticipate.

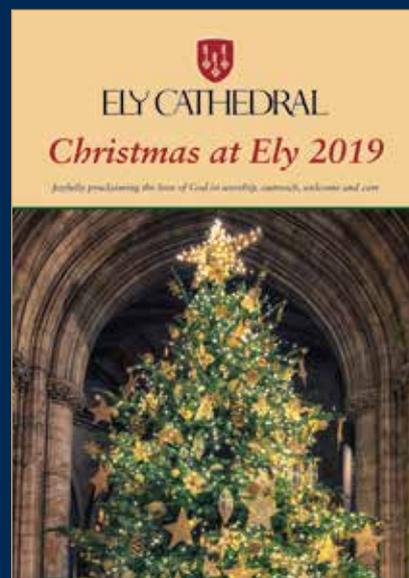


At this time of year we will hear people regularly say 'Christmas is for the children', and of course we love to see children's eyes light up as they take part in our crib services or at the lighting of the Christmas Tree. But 'Christmas is for Adults too' and that is the title of three bible studies and discussions that the Dean will be leading on Tuesdays 5, 12 and 19 December in

Powchers Hall from 7-8pm. The Biblical narratives around the birth of Christ are rich and complex texts. Do come along and explore more of them together.

We will be celebrating The Feast of Epiphany and visit of the Magi by transferring the Feast to Sunday 5 January.

The season will be rounded off by a very special Candlemas Sung Eucharist on the evening of 2 February - 40 days after Christmas Day - the Cathedral will be lit by hundreds of candles, the choirs will sing some stunning music to include Tavener's *Hymn to the Mother of God*, Langlais' *Messe Solennelle* and a setting of the *Nunc dimittis* by Sir Charles Wood will conclude the eucharist. We rejoice that Jesus is, in the words of aged Simeon, 'the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel'.



We welcome as our preacher the Very Revd Victor Stock who was Dean of Guildford and is always a captivating preacher. Do join us as we celebrate with joy that 'The Word Became Flesh'.

Pick up a copy of our Christmas at Ely leaflet from the Cathedral or browse a copy on our website.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP



The Autumn Term is traditionally the time when new recruits to the Cathedral Choir (known as probationers) begin their journey through the chorister ranks and embark on one of the best musical educations a child can have. All together 8 choristers have proudly sung their first services since September: the youngest are Junior Probationer boys aged just 7, while the oldest are girls aged 13 and 14.

Expectations around attendance and commitment naturally vary with age: while the very youngest boys only sing occasionally to start with, older girls usually sing at every service from the outset. However, all learn the same skills of good basic vocal technique, reading music and finding their way round the different services they encounter. After various milestones along the way including the awarding of a surplice (the white garment placed over their red cassock) they are eventually 'installed' just before Easter, receiving their medal from the Dean.



We are always actively looking for new recruits to join them, and are very pleased to hear from anyone with an interest in choristership at any time. We also organise special events to give prospective singers a taste of life in the Cathedral Choir. An event for potential girl choristers took place in September, giving them a chance to meet current members of the choir and sing with them

at Evensong. We are planning a similar day for boys early in 2020: Ely Cathedral's first ever "Chorister Experience" on Saturday 18 January will welcome boys from all over Eastern

England as they discover the Cathedral, and sing a service with the current boy choristers and Lay Clerks. The event is open to boys in Years 2 and 3 and you can find out more about it at www.thechoristexperience.org or by phone on 01353 660336 or by emailing music@elycathedral.org.



Many choristers will experience their first Christmas at Ely this year, with numerous and varied events involving all members of the Cathedral's Music Department. The boy choristers, lower voices, *Ely Imps* and Octagon Singers combine in the annual *Hark! the Herald* concert on Saturday 21 December, which this year also features Cambridge ensemble Prime Brass. The programme includes much loved favourites by John Rutter and David Willcocks, as well as tuneful works by Bob Chilcott and American composer Shawn Kirchner. The boys and lower voices return for the two Carol Services on 22 and 24 December and sing at Eucharist and Evensong on Christmas Day, with music by Mozart as well as a selection of familiar carols.

A particular highlight of any Christmas at Ely is the girl choristers' annual performance of Benjamin Britten's seminal Ceremony of Carols, a beautiful collection of seasonal texts with harp accompaniment. This year the famous work can be heard as part of Evensong on Sunday 15 December at 4pm. The Cathedral's Community Choir also enters into the festive spirit, performing once more at the Christmas Carol Singalong which takes place at 2pm on Saturday 14 December. They will be accompanied by Littleport Brass Band in a mixture of carols and other items.

Last but not least is a venerable post-Christmas tradition, the Come and Sing Carol Service on Sunday 29 December at 4pm. All keen singers are invited to take part, with a rehearsal at 2.15pm under the Octagon. Music is provided, though it's very helpful if those wishing to sing can come equipped with copies of Carols for Choirs 1 and 2. This event has become ever more popular in recent years, attracting a choir of over 100 in 2018, and offering everyone a chance to experience the magic of singing in Ely Cathedral at Christmas.

EVENTS / CONCERTS

THE CENTRAL BAND OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION 'CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR'

Saturday 7 December | 7pm



A rare opportunity to join The Central Band of The Royal British Legion for a very special night of Christmas music in the glorious surroundings of Ely Cathedral.

Under the baton of the energetic Captain David Cole, former Director of Music on HMY Britannia, the programme will include traditional festive favourites as well as modern day seasonal swing from composers such as Burt Bacharach.

The Central Band is a highly respected and in demand ensemble. Their busy schedule has seen recent performances at the Royal

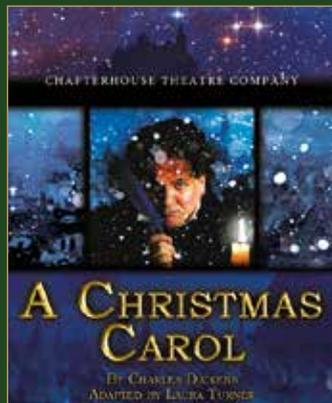
Albert Hall, the Championship Finals at Wimbledon, Westminster Abbey, London's Guildhall and joint projects with the London Mozart Players and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Central Band is the flagship band of The Royal British Legion. All band members are proud to support the Legion, helping Servicemen and women and their families in need and remembering those who have lost their lives in the service of their country.

Tickets £22.50, £16, £10

CHAPTERHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENT A CHRISTMAS CAROL - CHARLES DICKENS

Friday 13 December | 7.30pm



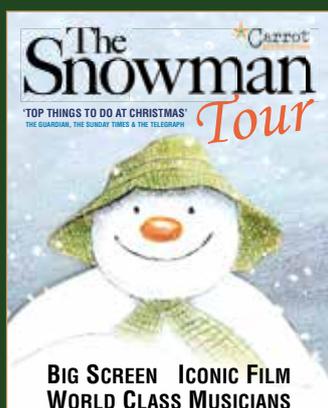
On Christmas Eve, the most magical night of the year, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is whisked away on a terrifying journey through the past and into the future, accompanied by three fearsome ghosts determined to make him realize the true meaning of Christmas.

Charles Dickens' classic ghost story is brought alive in this most traditional of productions, complete with beautiful period costume, song, dance and a magnificent, original musical score. Join critically acclaimed theatre company Chapterhouse as Scrooge's frozen heart begins to melt and he finally embraces the festive spirit in this most Christmassy of Christmas tales

Tickets £17 concessions £10

CARROT PRODUCTIONS PRESENT 'THE SNOWMAN'

Monday 30 December | 1.30pm, 4pm and 7pm.



Immerse yourself in the irresistible animated film of The Snowman this Christmas, accompanied by a live orchestra. A heart-warming experience that brings more than a snowman to life - and featuring the much-loved classic 'Walking in the Air' - it's a festive favourite for the whole family.

The programme also includes a second animation, The Bear and the Piano, an enchanting animated film of the award-winning book by David Litchfield. With mesmerising music by Daniel Whibley - and the unmistakable voice of Joanna Lumley narrating - it looks set to become a classic for the next generation.

Tickets: Adults £22, £19 and £15, Concessions £16, £13 and £10

All tickets available from Ely Cathedral Box Office 01353 660349 and at www.elycathedral.org

'CROWNS & GOWNS' AT ELY CATHEDRAL

We are very excited to tell you about a new exhibition 'Crowns & Gowns', which will feature amazing costumes and memorabilia from some of the most notable productions filmed at Ely.

It was with much trepidation that Ely Cathedral welcomed its first major film crew in 2006. For the staff, volunteers and community, it was certainly a baptism of fire, but one we somehow survived with a reputation for integrity and professionalism, which resulted in ongoing enquiries from film location scouts.

Elizabeth: The Golden Age (2006) was the first major film to use Ely as a location since 1985. With a stellar cast headed by

Cate Blanchett and Clive Owen the production consisted of over 200 extras and crew, many of whom were on site for over six weeks with The Lady Chapel and Nave featuring prominently. The exhibition will include three stunning dresses worn by Cate Blanchett in her role as Elizabeth I and one of the outfits worn by



Joseph Fiennes who plays Robert Dudley. The Cathedral itself was acknowledged in the making of the film and we were presented with an award for Best Film Location by Creative England.

Several other films followed with equally impressive casts and costumes. **The Other Boleyn Girl (2008)** is based on the popular novel by Philippa Gregory and is the story of Mary, sister to Henry VIII's second wife, Anne. The film starred Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson in the leading roles alongside Kristen Scott Thomas. The nave provided the backdrop for Henry VIII's court and Anne's Coronation. The exhibition features two fabulous Tudor courtier dresses plus the replica of the pearl 'Boleyn' necklace which Anne was famous for wearing in many of her portraits.

For **The King's Speech (2010)** the Octagon and Transepts were meticulously transformed into the interior of Westminster Abbey. This incredibly talented team of carpenters and designers had to ensure the set precisely emulated the BBC's archive footage and photographs of

the coronation of George VI. Filming took place over 3 days and these particular scenes included the actors Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Derek Jacobi. The two costumes we have as part of the exhibition are the formal military uniform worn by Colin Firth in many key scenes of the film, and a dress worn by Claire Bloom who played Queen Mary.

Macbeth (2014) was based on the Shakespeare play and starred Michael Fassbender in the title role and the actress Marion Cotillard as Lady Macbeth. Much of the filming at Ely took place over several nights in order to create the most suitable environment for the scenes. The Nave and South transept featured heavily while the Lady Chapel was transformed into the banqueting hall where the ghost of Banquo appears. Three costumes are on display from this film and include Macbeth's principal outfit and one worn by one of the three Witches.

The latest, and by far the most high profile filming to feature in Crowns & Gowns, is the Netflix TV series, **The Crown**.



Once again Ely portrayed Westminster Abbey for two scenes which depict significant events in the life of our Queen; her wedding and coronation.

Several extras were recruited to play VIPs and guests for the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Philip Mountbatten, Duke of Edinburgh, depicted by actors Claire Foy and Matt Smith. Other prominent members of the cast, who could be found chatting in the Refectory drinking tea, were John Lithgow and Dame Harriet Walter who played Sir Winton Churchill and his wife Clementine.

Crowns & Gowns will include several costumes from this production including the coronation dress of HM Queen Elizabeth and both her ceremonial crowns alongside the only official replica of the Coronation Chair. The original seat dates back to 1300 and has been used at the coronation of British monarchs when they are invested and crowned.

The 'Crowns & Gowns' exhibition, located in the Lady Chapel will be in situ from 1 February to 15 March 2020.

Ely Cathedral Conference Centre

Give us a brief history of the Cathedral Centre?

Ely Cathedral Centre was originally built to house 'Ely's impressive new branch library' as the article in the Cambs Times from April 1966 outlines. Surprisingly, for many, it has won approval from the Royal Fine Arts Commission and was commended for its cast walls which mirror Coventry Cathedral's styling.

The Cathedral Centre was purchased, by the Cathedral, in 2000 where it became the home for the Cathedral's Education provision. As you can see from the internal photos, ② ③ the Centre looks very different from when it was a library. Although if you look closely there are still a lot of original 'features' remaining today.

In 2016 Education was relocated to Powchers Hall and the Centre was repurposed solely as the conference centre we know today.

What is the Centre's main purpose and how does it support the Cathedral's Mission?

The Centre has a large flexible 80 seat conference room, with two smaller rooms that hold between 20-30 people. A kitchen area and local free car parking makes Ely Cathedral Centre an ideal location for any meeting, large or small.

The Cathedral's main purpose is to provide a welcoming facility for community based groups whilst making a financial contribution to the Cathedral's mission and outreach work through commercial bookings.

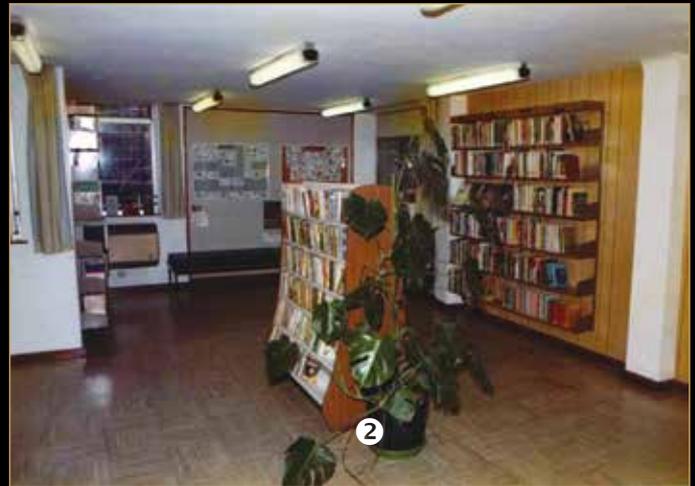
It continues to welcome a diverse range of commercial, community and Cathedral based (in-house) groups. Our 2018 'How did you hear about us' survey revealed 69% of our bookings were based on a repeat visit, 13% via a recommendation, 15% via a web search and 3% via the Cathedral's website or 'other website' so we must be doing something right!

Bookings reach a yearly average of 800, contributing to an estimated footfall of nearly 14,000 people coming through our doors!

Who are we and what are our roles?

There have been many staff changes at the Cathedral Centre over the last year. We are a small team comprising of:

- Claire Mills, Cathedral Centre Manager, who has strategic overview of the Centre
- Suzanne Holland, Cathedral Centre Coordinator, who looks after the day-to-day running of the Centre.
- Andrew White and Paul Butcher who care take the Centre out of office hours and over the weekend. This compliments their main roles as Vergers in the Cathedral
- Penny Crothers, who ensures the Centre is clean and tidy ready for the next group of clients.



The Etheldreda Room (top floor) pre 2000



The Ovin Room (café area) pre 2000

How does it support the community?

Over the past couple of years we have seen a significant increase in 'support type groups' using the Centre with a focus on counselling, mental health and wellbeing. These include groups such as Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation, Action for Happiness, Talking FreEly, Group Therapy and Illuminate. Feedback shows that they feel supported by the Centre to return time and time again, plus the view of the Cathedral helps to provide a calming atmosphere.

The most rewarding element of working at the Cathedral Centre is building up a rapport with our users. Now we are hosting so many support-type groups we can really use our knowledge of our regular groups to help new groups, or individuals, form links and make new connections with other existing groups or professionals helping to break down mental barriers and feel supported in making a decision.

We work closely alongside the resident Canons to further strengthen our outreach and links between these groups and the Cathedral. By utilising these opportunities we can not only support the Cathedral's Outreach and Welcome agendas, but also provide a consistent experience and better engagement when visiting Ely Cathedral.

How do you feel the Cathedral Centre could develop in the future?

We are finding that current market trends and pressures mean that the demand for commercial conference space is declining as companies tighten up the purse strings - external away days, for example, are being cut back along with extras such as buffet lunches, with the move for delegates to now bring their own.

With this in mind we are focussing our future development around community and outreach groups. We are in the fortunate position to be able to offer our facilities at a reduced rate to enable these groups to embed and flourish.

Our K9 Café, which runs every Thursday morning, is an ideal example of such a group that we have been able to support whilst it established, and now many years later, it is going from strength to strength with those initial users of the group now helping to run the café.

What's the most bizarre booking request you've had, and the most memorable?

Someone turning up with a library book to return nearly 20 years after the library closed was quite memorable!

We have been in a fortunate position to support many weird and wonderful groups over the years, so find it hard to pick out just a few.

Hosting Tiddlywink Tournaments have been pretty unique. The tournaments have been covered in various issues of the tiddlywinks journal Winking World. Their first booking was back in early 2017, which had a lot of people playing, even a couple of American players who happened to be around at the time.

No two days are ever the same in the Cathedral Centre! With evening and weekend bookings thrown into the mix, the Centre is always open. We never know what group will be turning up next! Who knows what 2020 will bring?

What are you looking forward to next year at the Cathedral Centre?

Our successful Cathedral Centre craft fairs will be in their 9th year with another three planned for 2020. We have a great turnout each time, with around 30 stalls located through the Centre and outside. Not only do they attract our regular crafters and buyers but encourage members of the public through our doors to see who and what we are, so in the future they may remember us for their next meeting, coffee morning or celebration.

In 2020 we will be launching our new marketing material for the Centre to promote our facilities to new commercial and community groups - so watch this space!



Claire Mills and Suzanne Holland



DECEMBER

Sunday 1 - 1st Sunday of Advent
6pm Advent Procession with Carols

Monday 2
7.30pm The Gesualdo Six Concert

Tuesday 3
9pm Compline (Lady Chapel)

Saturday 7
10am Ely Conference Centre
Christmas Craft Fair
12.30pm Walsingham Cell Mass (Lady Chapel)
3pm Children's Society Christingle
7pm Central Band of the Royal British Legion 'Christmas Spectacular'

Sunday 8 - 2nd Sunday of Advent
5.15pm The Big Christmas Tree Lights Switch-on Service!

Tuesday 10
1pm Pre-School Christmas Celebration
9pm Compline (Lady Chapel)

Thursday 12
11am Christmas Stories and Songs

Friday 13
7.30pm Chapterhouse Theatre Co present 'A Christmas Carol'

Saturday 14
2pm Community Christmas Carol Sing-a-long

Sunday 15 - 3rd Sunday of Advent
1.30pm Royal Papworth Hospital Charity's Annual Christmas Carol Service
4pm Evensong featuring Britten's Ceremony of Carols
6.30pm Advent Taizé Service (Lady Chapel)

Tuesday 17
9pm Compline (Lady Chapel)

Saturday 21
7.30pm 'Hark! the Herald' Carol Concert

Sunday 22
6pm Carol Service I

Monday 23
10am School Holiday Drop-in Session

Tuesday 24 - Christmas Eve
Midday Children's Crib Service I
3pm Children's Crib Service II
6pm Carol Service II
11.30pm Midnight Mass

Wednesday 25 - Christmas Day
8.15am Holy Communion
10.30am Sung Eucharist
Midday Community Lunch
4pm Evensong

Thursday 26 - Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr
12.10pm Holy Communion

Friday 27 - John, Apostle and Evangelist
12.10pm Holy Communion

Saturday 28 - The Holy Innocents
12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday 29 - 1st Sunday of Christmas
10.30am Sung Eucharist
4pm Service of Readings and Carols led by members of the local community

Monday 30
1.30pm, 4pm and 7pm
Carrot Productions present 'The Snowman'

JANUARY

Wednesday 1 - The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus
12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday 5 - The Epiphany

Saturday 11
12.30pm Walsingham Cell Mass (Lady Chapel)

Sunday 12 - The Baptism of Christ
4pm Epiphany Procession

Saturday 18
10.30am The Chorister Experience

Sunday 19 - 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Saturday 25 - The Conversion of Paul
12.10pm Holy Communion

Sunday 26 - 4th Sunday of Epiphany

FEBRUARY

Saturday 1 - Sunday 15 March
Crowns & Gowns - An Exhibition

Sunday 2 - Candlemas
10.30am Choral Mattins
6.30pm Candlelit Sung Eucharist

Saturday 8
12.30pm Walsingham Cell Mass (Lady Chapel)

Sunday 9 - 3rd Sunday before Lent

Saturday 15
7.30pm Warren Mailley-Smith
Sparkling Valentine's Concert

Sunday 16 - 2nd Sunday before Lent

Monday 17 & Wednesday 19
10am School Holiday Drop-in Session

Sunday 23 - Sunday next before Lent

Wednesday 26 - Ash Wednesday
12.10pm Holy Communion with the Imposition of Ashes
7.30pm Sung Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes

THE • WORD • BECAME
FLESH • AND • DWELT
AMONG • US • FULL • OF
GRACE • AND • TRUTH

Octagon Magazine

Copies are available in the Cathedral, Cathedral Gift Shops, Refectory Café and Almonry Restaurant. Electronic copies can be viewed at www.elycathedral.org. Comments or suggestions for Octagon are welcome. Please direct them to: news@elycathedral.org

Images © Ash Mills, Timothy Selvage, Keith Heppell, ECPL. Issue 11 - Spring edition available March

Ely Cathedral, The Chapter House,
The College, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4DL
☎ 01353 667735 | www.elycathedral.org
Follow us on    
Download the free Cathedral App