

Blackburn Cathedral
Annual Chapter Report
for *2016*



BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL
GOOD NEWS FOR LANCASHIRE



Blackburn Cathedral Annual Chapter Report for 2016

Introduction

I think it is fair to say that, when I moved to Lancashire to become the Bishop of Burnley, I was not expecting to find myself writing the Introduction to the Cathedral's Annual Report in the role of Acting Dean of Blackburn. Moreover, I would be guilty of falsehood were I to suggest that the two roles are entirely compatible. Nonetheless, I have been blown away by the vitality and energy of this Cathedral, and it has been a privilege to make a small contribution to its life in the months since the retirement of the Very Revd Christopher Armstrong. Our immense thanks go to him for all that he offered in his 14 years as Dean. Canon Peter Howell-Jones will succeed him during the course of 2017, and he will inherit a rich legacy.

The kingdom ambition of this Cathedral is inversely proportional to the resources it has at its disposal, and it demonstrates what can be achieved with imagination, vision and committed staff and volunteers. For example, whilst many Cathedrals want to restore their buildings, in Blackburn, we have to go one step further. Therefore, not only have we completed the stunning new Cathedral Court building, but we have also helped to regenerate much of central Blackburn. Or again, we lack a Choir School or a choral endowment, and many Cathedrals spend more on music than we turn over in an entire year. Yet our choirs, made up of hardworking volunteers and children from local schools, make a glorious sound and add richly to our worship.

Moreover, the pace of change is set to continue in the years ahead. We have recently been awarded a major Heritage Lottery Fund grant, which will fund a range of community based projects in a restored crypt, a WWI grant will continue the restoration of the Cathedral building, and talks are now underway to develop Church House. We remain enormously grateful to a large group of donors and supporters without whom none of this would be possible.

Perhaps what has impressed me most is the commitment of our regular congregation. They are remarkable in their generosity with their time, money and talents, and have a heartfelt love for worship and for the whole life of the Cathedral. Their high expectations and their responsiveness make Blackburn Cathedral a thrilling place to lead worship and preach.

We also take our responsibilities as the Mother Church of the Diocese very seriously. The Bishop of Blackburn has mapped out a strategy for growth in Vision 2026 which focusses on discipleship, witness and leadership. The Cathedral has responded positively to this strategy and has spelled out the contribution it believes it can make to its implementation. The new Dean has already spoken clearly of his desire to engage with the Diocese and its parishes in every way possible.

As those who have visited the building know well, over the west door of Blackburn Cathedral hangs John Hayward's colossal metalwork sculpture 'Christ the Worker'. Its depiction of a vast Christ, rising from the tomb, and set against a backdrop of the warp and weft of the cotton industry, is an overwhelmingly powerful reminder of our purpose. As those who find the risen Christ in the worship of the Church, it is our calling also to find him on the streets of Lancashire, in places of work, in homes and offices and in the faces of the poor. May that wonderful image go on inspiring all who look to Blackburn as their Cathedral, that the work of the Gospel may be done, and that all may find life in him whose sacrifice rescues us from meaninglessness and raises us to eternal glory.

Philip North
Acting Dean of Blackburn



CATHEDRAL COURT

THIS FOUNDATION STONE WAS LAID BY
THE BISHOP OF BLACKBURN
THE RT. REV'D JULIAN HENDERSON
ON SUNDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2015

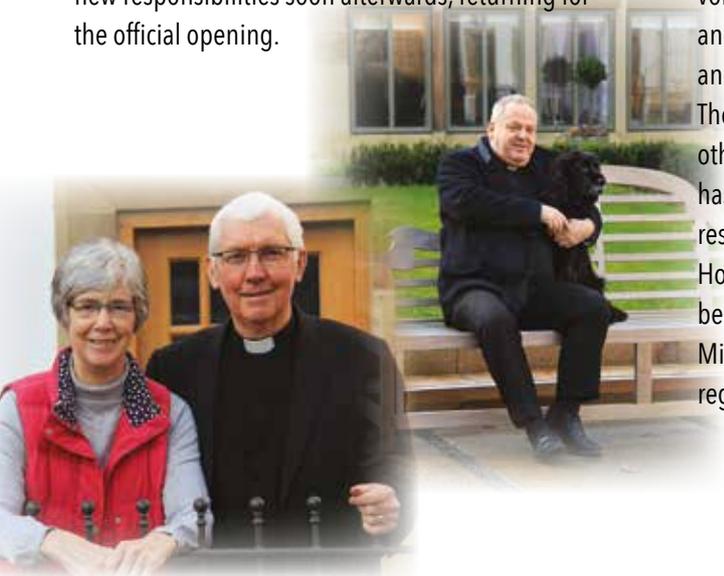
ARCHITECT: JAMES SANDERSON DEAN: CHRISTOPHER ARMSTRONG

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

The New Era of Cathedral Court

2016 has been a remarkable year for Blackburn Cathedral, ninety years on from its consecration. The new Cathedral Court development, dedicated by the Archbishop of York in July 2016, completes William Temple's pre-War vision of a Cathedral designed to serve all of Lancashire's communities. The Cathedral has, with Blackburn Cathedral Development Trust, been a catalyst for urban renewal, in strong partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Council, with private funders and other supportive bodies. The Cloister Garth and its buildings fit well with the Cathedral itself, offering additional resources for growth, income and engagement, providing new opportunities of Christian witness to God's concern for the whole of life.

From mid-April 2016 Cathedral Court began to be occupied by some of the Cathedral's staff - two residentiary canons, three virgers and our musicians. This is a major difference from last year - having a residential component of our Cathedral's life, a small mixed Christian community inhabiting this holy site. Canon Hindley, the Canon Sacrist, has taken a major role in seeing the Cathedral Court hopes come to fruition, and has attended to many practical building issues in the midst of his other responsibilities. It was fitting that Christopher Armstrong was able to see this project completed during his tenure as Dean, though he moved to new responsibilities soon afterwards, returning for the official opening.



A Time of Transition

It was plain that Dean Armstrong would not be moving into Cathedral Court, and by early May, the Cathedral, Diocese and County bade farewell to him, giving thanks for the creative developments that he had encouraged, supported and allowed during his time in Blackburn. With extended thanksgiving for what had been achieved, the Cathedral prepared for further transition, during a period of adjustment within a transfigured site and the further fitting-out and use of the newly created spaces, including the refectory, conference rooms and library. Residents too learnt how to negotiate their new environment.

The Dean's Virger comments, "The thought of living in the Cathedral development seemed to me like living in an open prison, but having spent some months here, it's actually a nice place to be, living alongside fellow Christians in a community, with a magical Lantern Tower lighting the way. I feel that we are part of something special - a kind of 'belonging', I guess."

Transition continued with the appointment of the Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, as Acting Dean. His Christian enthusiasm, lively thinking, spirited preaching and good humour have endeared him to the congregation, and he has appreciated the warmth of the Cathedral congregations, the quality of its worship and the commitment of its volunteers. During this time much responsibility and labour has been undertaken by Canon Sacrist and Canon Chancellor, the Revd Dr Ian Stockton. The availability of the Bishop of Burnley and the other residentiary, the Revd Canon Andrew Horsfall, has been limited greatly by their main responsibilities as Suffragan Bishop and Senior Hospital Chaplain respectively. Some support has been given by the retired clergy, the Revd Canon Michael Wedgeworth and the Revd Robert Moore, regular members of the Cathedral's congregation.



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Working with Vision 2026

The Cathedral is committed to the Diocesan 2026 Vision of making disciples, being witnesses and growing leaders, and has recently endorsed its response through a paper agreed by Chapter. We work not only at having healthy congregations, but as a resource for growth for other churches. In 2016 the Cathedral has created more Bible Studies and Spirituality Days as a way of developing discipleship, continued with its annual Stewardship Review and helped adults enquiring about Christian faith. The Cathedral Volunteer programme is a seed-bed for developing new leaders, and recently many people have taken on new roles. The work with children and young people is a high priority within the Cathedral's mission through its choirs, the music outreach programme, curriculum-related school visits, a creative Sunday School and preparation for Confirmation and Holy Communion. All this congregational and mission activity is set within an environment where community transformation is fostered through urban renewal. We look forward to seeing an earlier vision for mission in Lancashire further fulfilled in the years approaching our 2026 Centenary.

Faith, Culture and Community Cohesion

One of the striking things about the last two years has been the increasing African heritage element of the Cathedral Eucharist congregation. Africans from many different parts of that continent, who have settled in the UK for a variety of reasons have made their home among us, attracted by the Cathedral's welcome and worship. An African evening celebrated their presence among us. East Europeans are also part of our regular congregations, for acceptance and inclusivity are not only watchwords for the Cathedral, but also part of its faithful practice.

In spring 2016 the Community Canon and the Dialogue Development Officer were released from their responsibilities at Blackburn Cathedral. This difficult decision was made by the Cathedral Chapter, since the funding sources for these posts were far outweighed by expenditure. The Interfaith and Community Cohesion has continued not only through effective schools' work, but also through engagement with local Muslim leaders and a day workshop for faith leaders on community development, led by the Jewish peer, Lord Glasman. The commitment of an existing funder to continuing this work is appreciated, and this aspect of the Cathedral's outreach will benefit from both review and new financial resourcing.

Offering Hospitality

The Cathedral bears witness to the hospitality of God in Christ, and this is practised in a variety of ways and by a range of people, from virgers and clergy to stewards and welcomers. For many years the Cathedral has managed its Cafe in the Crypt, but the difficulties of access, under-investment and insufficient regular footfall meant that it was always a struggle to make the business financially sustainable. In June 2016 Café Northcote opened. Canons Hindley and Stockton, with the strong support of Blackburn with Darwen Council, negotiated for the Northcote Group to run a high quality café on the Cathedral site. Some members of the former Café in the Crypt are employed in the new café, including Ms Louise Yates-Maroudas and Ms Diane Wells. Café Northcote from the outset has developed an excellent reputation, and it enjoys a good working relationship with the Cathedral, serving the needs of the general public, large events, internal Cathedral bookings, business groups and a wide range of visitors, who are now able to find easy access through Marygate, as well as through the Cathedral.

In November 2016 Marketing Lancashire held its annual Tourism Awards at Blackburn Cathedral, with a dinner held in the nave for over 400 people. The food served by Café Northcote was superb, and the Cathedral was beautifully lit, with guests entranced by the setting and ambience. Other events have been held or arranged, and these have included the Hive Awards, at which Canon Hindley was presented with a prestigious award for service to the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen. The Cathedral continues to give attention to its marketing strategies for its new era.

An Amazing Flower Festival!

A major achievement in June 2016, when the facilities of Cathedral Court and Café Northcote were beginning to be used, was a Flower Festival, *Renaissance*, which was organised to a high level by Mrs Lowri Cope and Mrs Karen Brooke, supported by the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral and by a great pool of willing volunteers. The team worked well with Bill Dixon, the excellent artistic director, and the Cathedral was decorated to stunning effect, with floral responses to Penny Warden's paintings of *The Journey*. Visitors came from far and near and enjoyed the programme and its events. Through this creative initiative the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral gained a good income, which will be used to enhance the Cathedral and its activity.

Welcomers and Shop Volunteers

The Cathedral Gift Shop continues to develop the quality of its stock and to serve visitors, town centre shoppers, members of the Cathedral community and people from across Lancashire's parishes. This year the Shop will have made a small surplus, with high footfall during Advent, and especially during the Flower Festival in June. Kate Fulwell has introduced card payments and online ordering, and works with a varied team of volunteers. This year two post-Evensong cream teas, hosted at Café Northcote, were offered to Welcomers and Shop Volunteers as a thank you for their contributions to the Cathedral's hospitality and care. Additional safeguarding and security information has been provided for Welcomers in their frontline role.

A Place for Learning

Our Education Department sustains its high-quality educational provision, with visits to the Cathedral rising yet again, to 43 school visits and 1514 pupils during 2016. The funding of this work is of critical importance; at present our Educational Officer, Ms Joanna Booth, is employed for two days per week. The popular Christian-Muslim Trail and the successful Year 7 Spirituality Days, supported by our volunteers, have been taken up by a number of other English cathedrals. As a continuing part of our WW1 commemorations, the *Theatres of War* project elicited original, moving drama and music from primary and secondary schools. From 2016 the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford has recognised Blackburn Cathedral as an educational resource for its interfaith work.

Adult learning has included WW1-related lectures by Professor Mark Connelly and Professor Simpkins at the time of the Somme Centenary.

A well-attended Science and Faith Course was designed and led by the Revd Dr Michael Kirby. For Lent Canon Stockton wrote a Cathedral study booklet, *On the Way with Luke* and offered Bible Studies on St Mark's Gospel and King David during the autumn.

Ms Felicity Ackroyd leads a strong team of Sunday School teachers and helpers who have this year worked with the children on themes such as the Parables of Jesus and the Water of Life, as well as preparations for the major seasons. Often children of African heritage are in a majority.

A Place of Safety

The Cathedral's Safeguarding Committee has been strengthened this year. A new, sound and up-to-date-policy has been written and agreed during 2016, and is now being worked through. Judge James Prowse has contributed greatly to the latter stages of this work, with the administrative support of Mrs Gill Fourie, with Mrs Denise Sanderson and Mr Stewart Hopkinson serving as the Safeguarding Co-ordinators. With firm and generous support from the Diocese, through Ms Kayleigh Vaughton, many members of the Cathedral community have undertaken new safeguarding training.

An Army of Volunteers

Our rich array of volunteers include the Flower Arrangers and the Bellringers. The Flower Arrangers have used their skills to commemorate loved ones or special events, and have ensured that their weekly arrangements express the beauty of God in creation and are fitting for the seasons of the liturgical year. The generous donations given and comments made are much appreciated. The Flower Festival was an encouragement to our own arrangers, who give generously of their time.

The Bellringers have had a good year, recruiting new members, enabling eight or ten bells to be rung for Sunday services and practice evenings. Notable events included half muffled ringing for the Somme Centenary Service, ringing for the 200th anniversary of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and an attempted quarter peal for the Queen's 90th birthday. The Handbell Ringers have been outward-looking, taking their repertoire ringing of popular tunes to residential homes, especially at Christmas; they welcome others to join them, for all that is required is the ability to count.

Life Enriched by Cathedral Music

Blackburn Cathedral music department will probably never see another year quite like 2016, for its members, along with other parts of the cathedral community have been brought together by inhabiting Cathedral Court. Our director of Music, Mr Samuel Hudson comments, "It has changed how we interact and work with each other and our work. We now fulfil our individual roles with even greater sense of community and synergy, and this fundamental difference to our lives has a hugely positive impact on what we can achieve". Within a sequence of celebrations of the new building, our musicians offered a great summer gala concert in July, at which Haydn's *Creation* was performed, with the Eighteenth Century Sinfonia.



It has been a busy and fulfilling year for the cathedral's choristers. Recruitment has continued in earnest, with our latest recruitment scheme connecting effectively with the ever successful *Sing Together* music outreach project, which this year had more than ninety schools (and over 2500 children) taking part. This year, boys who were seen to perform particularly well in that project were invited to attend a 'Be a chorister for an afternoon' event in April, along with their parents. Through an afternoon of singing and conversation with the boys and their families, we recruited all at once twelve new choristers! Most of these boys, already awarded their surplice, are taking a full part in the cathedral choir's schedule. This was just in time, for the summer break saw a record nine boy choristers leave the choir stalls. This successful recruitment scheme has played a pivotal part in maintaining the stability of numbers in the choir's front row, though much work has been undertaken to give these newest recruits a 'fast-track' style training! A repeat of this successful formula is planned for 2017. In November 2016, fifteen choristers were entered for RSCM singing exams, and every one passed, maintaining the 100% pass rate we have achieved over recent years. In addition to the cathedral's immersive weekly routine of choral services, the choristers enjoyed other opportunities, such as singing on BBC Radio 3 in a live Choral Evensong broadcast in April, and in May travelling to Lincoln Cathedral to take part in the Sports Day and Evensong arranged by the Choir Schools' Association. In August, the Young People's Choir made radio appearances on two BBC Daily Service broadcasts – the first live, and the second pre-recorded. In October, the Girls' Choir accepted an invitation to sing Choral Evensong at St Peter's Church, Salesbury, where their singing was warmly appreciated. The Renaissance Singers have also been part of our outreach this year, with offsite events complementing their significant contribution to the musical life of the cathedral. In June, the celebration of the singers' Fiftieth Anniversary concluded with a performance of Mozart's Requiem, to which former members were invited back to sing. In the summer, the current members of the ensemble undertook a week of service singing at Wells Cathedral in Somerset – a wonderful experience on so many levels. In October, the choir was joined by numerous others from the City of Birmingham Choir, conductor Christopher Robinson, and organist David Briggs to record the latter's transcription of Mahler's epic 2nd Symphony – another incredibly moving and powerful experience. At the beginning of December 2016 the singers took part in an innovative performance of Bach's *St John Passion* in Blackpool

coordinated by English Touring Opera (ETO). It was a most successful first venture in co-operation with this organisation, which is keen to explore future collaboration.

July 2016 saw the retirement of Linda Bruce, our long-serving music department administrator, who has served the cathedral loyally and capably over many seasons of change. The community was united in expressing their thanks and best wishes to Linda, who, with her husband Andy, remains part of the cathedral's worshipping community.

September 2016 saw a new intake of scholars begin their work. Christopher Jones is our organ scholar this year, and Jordan McDermott and Ralph Williams are bass and alto choral scholars respectively. Gill Fourie, who continues to lead our extremely successful music outreach programme, has become our Music Administrator, and contributes to sound safeguarding administration.

Friends of Blackburn Cathedral



The Friends of Blackburn Cathedral have continued to carry out their objectives of raising the Cathedral's profile, stimulating public interest in the Cathedral, updating supporters about the Cathedral's activities and enhancing the Cathedral's fabric – all in support of its mission. The Cathedral is indebted to Judge Jeremy Duerden for ten years' committed leadership of the Friends, and he has been succeeded by Canon Andrea Titterington. The Friends and 160 volunteer stewards staffed the Flower Festival, supporting the leadership of two of its leading members. The event received strong local sponsorship, good media coverage, and touristic recognition. The Flower Festival was a finalist in the Lancashire Tourism Awards and contributed significantly to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Gold Medal in the RHS *Britain in Bloom* NW Regional Awards.

The Friends of Blackburn Cathedral have given generous financial support during this last year, including £26,000 for the provision of the Cathedral Garth fountain, which adds to that area's beauty and tranquillity, funds for the fit-out of a disabled toilet in the Crypt and the allocation of legacy funds from Canon David Galilee and Canon DF Rees to the installation of bespoke bookcases for the Library (Caedmon), and additionally planters for the Cloister Garth. Fundraising activities have included lunchtime talks, outings, a dinner and a Christmas stall at Blackburn with Darwen's Christmas Fair. The Friends have also paid for an updated Welcome Leaflet, which will be followed by an informative leaflet about Cathedral Court.

Keeping up Our Appeal

The Cathedral Appeal continues to develop under the chairmanship of Mrs Ann Dean and in enthusiastic co-operation with her trustees. There has been some re-assessment this year of the Appeal's strategy, but there is good confidence in future funding developments. Gifts from generous major donors are always appreciated, since some of the Cathedral's outward-facing work is dependent upon these sources of revenue.

Other Staff Changes

During the year Mr Maurice Maguire resigned as the volunteer Administrator. We have been fortunate that Professor Christopher Carr, Chair of the Cathedral Council, has been able to occupy this role in a very effective and generous way during much of the year, and interim arrangements are being made for the beginning of 2017. The Management Team meetings have been further streamlined and complemented by fortnightly clergy meetings. In recent months Mrs Pauline Rowe has been acting as the Office Manager. The Office staff have responded well to the demands of moving to new modern premises and other changes.

Our Financial Health and Challenges Ahead

Ms Anita Pattinson as Bursar and Ms Margaret Spencer as Finance Officer have now settled into the Cathedral's working life, a new budgetary structure is in place, providing department heads with effective control over their budgets and the facility of close and regular monitoring. After deficits in recent years, the Cathedral Chapter has set a surplus budget for 2016, and the Cathedral looks to appoint a paid Administrator during 2017.

The shortfall on the Cathedral Court development has been greater than anticipated and continues to present a major challenge, with negotiations continuing with Civic Engineering and John Turner, Builders. We are grateful for the work of Blackburn Cathedral Development trust, and to Canon Hindley for his labours beyond the call of duty. Church House lies vacant, and the feasibility of its use for apartments is now receiving serious exploration and support.

The next Dean, the Revd Canon Peter Howell-Jones, the Vice-Dean of Chester, will be installed in March 2017, and he will arrive among us at a most exciting time in the development of Blackburn Cathedral and its resources for its continuing mission as Lancashire's Cathedral.

Chapter membership:

- The Very Revd Christopher Armstrong,
Dean/Chair part-year
- The Rt Revd Philip North Acting Dean, part-year,
Bishop of Burnley
- The Revd Canon Andrew Hindley, Canon Sacrist
- The Revd Canon Dr Ian Stockton,
Canon Chancellor
- The Revd Canon Dr Shannon Ledbetter,
Community Canon, part-year
- The Revd Canon Andrew Horsfall,
Residentiary Canon, part-year
- The Revd Canon Michael Ainsworth,
Residentiary Canon, part-year
- The Revd Canon Andrew Sage,
College of Canons
- Mr Stuart Rothwell, Cathedral Community,
part-year
- Judge James Prowse Cathedral Community,
part-year
- Mrs Jean Duerden, Cathedral Community
- Mr Peter Jelley, Bishop's Council
- Mr Keith Roberts, Bishop's Council
- Ms Kate Thompson, Bishop's Appointee
- Mrs Marion McClintock, Bishop's Appointee

In attendance:

- Mr Maurice Maguire part-year
- Mrs Pauline Rowe part-year
- Mrs Karen Brooke part-year

"With you is the fountain of life, and in your light do we see light." Psalm 36.9

