



St Woolos Quarterly

The Newsletter of Newport Cathedral

Llythyr Newyddion Eglwys Gadeiriol Casnewydd

Summer 2015

At the end of April, Cristinel Pâslaru, from Iași, in Romania, set to work in the Cathedral creating a new piece of religious art. It is an 'icon' of Jesus Christ.

Icons are a form of religious art with long history in the Eastern Orthodox tradition of Christianity. Some readers will have seen them when visiting Greece and Cyprus or Russia, perhaps. More than mere pictures, icons are objects of deep devotion, often seen as conveying the spiritual presence of the subjects they depict and bringing those who pray before them into closer contact with what they are beholding. 'Windows into God' is one poetic description. In the past fifty years or so icons have been increasingly adopted as devotional symbols in Western Christianity, including the Protestant churches which have lacked a tradition of devotional representations since the Reformation. The fact that icons come from a tradition outside the controversies of the Reformation may have contributed to their adoption by mainline Protestant churches across the world.

Cristi's work holds a special place in regard to the Orthodox understanding of icons as bringing divine light to the one who prays. The faces of those he paints are often described as 'luminous', a quality which suffuses his compositions as a whole. His work in this country and in other parts of Europe has spread by word-of-mouth report of its quality and beauty.

Those who saw Cristi at work were enthralled not only by the patience and skill of the artist but also by the beauty of the emerging image. Cristi was particularly glad to have been able to get a feel for the Cathedral and its unique atmosphere and ambiance during his long hours of work in the building each day. He was clear that painting an icon where it will be installed imparts to the finished image something of the unique spiritual character of that place and he felt this very strongly in the case of St Woolos' Cathedral. What he has created seems already to 'be at home' in this place and amongst this community, so many of whom were delighted to engage with Cristi and to witness his God-given gift at work as his artistic creation began to emerge.

The creative process

Our icon is painted on a board of limewood produced by the monks of Stavnic monastery. The board was then covered with

layers of rabbit skin glue to seal any pores in the wood. Then canvas is glued into place to stabilize the whole work against cracking and flaking over the following centuries. Next is applied a coat of *gesso*, a white plaster mixed with glue, water and oil. The image to be painted on the icon is then sketched so that the painted and gilded areas are clearly distinguished.



A layer of 'size' then covers a layer of red paint which will produce a lustrous and rich finish to the gold overlay. 22-carat gold leaf is then carefully added by hand. What looks a simple procedure is not for the inexperienced hand, given the sheer cost of any mistake. After more than a week of work on the icon, the painting can then begin.

Layers of colour are added across the whole surface of the image, as required, building up the depth and complexity of what is required in the final depiction. Different shades of the same basic colour produce the effect of fabric with the play of light upon its folds.

Painting the face and hands of Christ is the most significant part of the entire work and is left until last. Cristi had to come back to the Deanery to paint at this stage because the excess of light in the chancel of the Cathedral made the location unsuitable for the delicate and skilled task of judging shade and tone.

'The Welcoming Christ'

The finished icon shows the face of Jesus and the open Gospel Book bearing words from St Matthew's Gospel (11:28). The image of Jesus is serene and compassionate and he gazes out to welcome all who come with their prayers and needs, their sorrows or joys, their anguish or hope, their guilt or their gratitude. His message is clear from the words on the Gospel Book, 'Come to me all who are weary or overburdened and I will give you rest'.

This beautiful image will be the first thing to catch the eye of someone coming into the Cathedral, perhaps as a visitor or pilgrim, perhaps when coming from the Royal Gwent or St Woolos' Hospitals, perhaps for a wedding or a funeral.

Blessed on June 7th in memory of the late Barbara Thomson, this generous gift from her lovely family will provide comfort and bid welcome to all for generations to come. Do come and see it.

Lister Tonge
Dean

Worship at St Woolos

Regular service times are below: on special occasions these may change

Sunday

8.00 Holy Eucharist
10.30 Sung Eucharist (also Sunday School)
6.30 Choral Evensong

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

8.00 Morning Prayer 8.15 Holy Eucharist
5.00 Evening Prayer

Thursday

8.00 Morning Prayer 8.15 Holy Eucharist
10.30 Holy Eucharist
5.00 Evening Prayer

Friday

8.00 Morning Prayer 8.15 Holy Eucharist
7.00 Choral Evensong

Worship at St Martin-in-the-Gaer

Sunday 9.30 Holy Eucharist

Welcome to the Summer 2015 edition of the Newsletter - starting our second year, and hoping that we are providing a useful, informative and encouraging publication. We aim to combine useful reference information - Clergy names and contact details, Service times and so forth - with recent news as well as background articles - history, architecture. We are always open to comments, ideas, and articles you may wish to write. Do a concert review, write up a Cathedral visit. Get in touch!

Cathedral Welcomers needed!

With our new website, more people than ever are wishing to visit our beautiful cathedral. We have a team of people who each offer 2 hours/week to welcome visitors as they enter, to greet them warmly, answer questions and hand out information leaflets. At present, we are short of people to fill all the slots, so please consider giving an hour or two of your time – it can be a most rewarding experience, and also quite surprising to become aware of the variety of people who visit, sometimes to see the building, sometime just for quiet prayer. There is no requirement to be a member of the congregation, just enthusiasm for your cathedral ... and training will be given!

Please contact Patricia Phillips e-mail: patricia_phillips2009@hotmail.com tel: 01633 264799

Upcoming events at St Woolos Cathedral :

Organ Recital - Dr Emma Gibbins - Saturday 4th July at 12 noon

Royal School of Church Music Festival - at the Cathedral Saturday 11th July 2pm - 6pm

Civic Service - Sunday 12th July 10.30 am

Art Exhibition and Book Launch - Friday & Saturday 17th & 18th July: Celia Jones
"Spiritual Healing and the Creative Process"

Newport U3A Choir - Saturday August 8th 12 noon

'Open Doors' - supported by CADW Saturday Sept 12th, includes concert by Gwent Schools Musicians
Explore the Cathedral; free tower tours and concert. Refreshments available.

Enquiries re concerts and recitals at St Woolos, to: brian.a.cox@sky.com

Restaurant



**Station
Approach,
Bassaleg**

Junction 28 is a tastefully decorated converted railway station, with the lower part of the restaurant decked out to represent an old-fashioned railway carriage. The restaurant is tucked away in a quiet corner of picturesque Bassaleg, on the outskirts of Newport, overlooking the River Ebbw. We aim to give you an excellent dining experience.

Reservations 01633 891891
www.junction28.com enquiries@junction28.com

The Cathedral is open to visitors:

Monday to Thursday 8am until 5pm

Friday 8am until 8pm

Saturday 9am until 4pm

Sunday 10am until 8pm

News at St Woolos

Don't forget to visit the new(-ish) Newport Cathedral Website - www.newportcathedral.org.uk

The Cathedral Pews - Faculty has been granted

Some eighteen months after the idea was raised by the Church Warden to replace the pews with chairs, and after a Diocesan Hearing held in the Cathedral in February, permission has been granted. There are a few minor conditions; and then the project will get under way. We will hope to bring you more on this topic, in our Autumn edition of the Newsletter.

The Cathedral Shop is open :

Mon - Fri 2pm - 4pm, Sat 10am - 12 noon, Sun -before & after services

The shop sells a wide range of greetings cards for all occasions, gifts and jewellery as well as a children's corner.

['We have signed the Fair Trade Pledge'](#)

St Martin in the Gaer

St. Martin-in-the-Gaer Church was built in 1957 to serve the people on the newly built Gaer Estate. From the beginning it was designated as the daughter church of St. Woolos' Cathedral, Newport.

Over the years, the role of all churches has changed and St. Martin-in-the-Gaer is no exception. Nowadays there is still a Communion Service every Sunday at 9.30 a.m. and people can be baptised in the church and hold funerals there but most of the ministry of the church now happens during the week.



The Harvest Mural, made on a Super Saturday

The hall part of the church, with its updated kitchen and toilet facilities, is used weekly by a Toddlers Music Group run (during term time) by Christians from Eli Music; rehearsals of the Gaer Community Choir; Slimming World; children's dance classes; and a monthly Senior Ladies' Wednesday Group. On some Saturdays the hall is booked for children's parties.

A few times a year we also run Super Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. These sessions, initially set up by Gaer Infant School consist of workshops for children – e.g. art, craft, cooking,

gardening, music, etc. Super Saturdays which are supported by as many as 25 children are now organised by the members of St. Martin-in-the-Gaer Church and are held particularly at Easter, Harvest, Christmas and in the summer holidays. Each July, Canon Jenny organises an incredibly popular coach trip to Weston-super-Mare for the Gaer community.

We have a Children's Christmas Service (at which the School Choir sings) as well as a Community Carol Service followed by mince pies and coffee. Keeping the school connection, Canon Jenny goes in monthly to both the Junior and Infant departments of Gaer Primary School to take assembly and she is a Community Governor.

When it was built the church stood prominently on a small incline and was easily visible. Since the building of the Hillview tower block of flats and the houses in St. Martin's Court, the church has almost been obscured from view. But we do remain as a reminder of the presence of God on and for the Gaer Estate and long may that continue.

Canon Jennifer Mole



Archway Vehicle Repairs

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Who's Who at St Woolos

The Dean	The Very Revd Lister Tonge	01633 259627 listertonge@gmail.com
Precentor & Archdeacon of Newport	The Ven. Jonathan Williams	01633 215206 archdeacon.newport@churchinwales.org.uk
Canon Pastor	Canon Ray Hayter	01633527883 raymondhayter01@gmail.com
Canon Residentiary	Canon Jennifer Mole	01633 258556 revcanjen63@btinternet.com
Associate Priest & Dir. of Ordinands	Revd Dr Paul Thompson	01633 252046 revpaulthompson@btinternet.com

The St Woolos Players Concert 26th April 2015

The last Sunday of April brought the ever-popular St Woolos Players back to the Cathedral for a concert on the theme of Dances. Presenting pieces by composers from several eras, they started by playing Gluck's Dance of the Furies, followed by the better-known Dance of the Blessed Spirits. The story of Orfeo and Euridice had been set to music many times, but Gluck chose to give it a happy ending!

Now their Conductor Tianyi Lu presented the young Australian guitarist Tristan Cozens - who played Vivaldi's Concerto for Guitar, originally composed for the lute and frequently heard performed. It was a wonderful rendition, even though at times slightly overpowered by the orchestra, and received warm applause. As did his 'encore', the guitar transcription of the Prelude from Bach's Cello Suite No.1 - a haunting work on either instrument and, here, sensitively played.



Otterino Respighi in 1917 wrote his Ancient Airs and Dances, a 'modernised' take on lute dances of the late Renaissance. These are a fascinating set of pieces, bringing out the simple form of dance melodies, set among modern but not overwhelming orchestration - the lower strings especially. I couldn't help noticing the two cellists digging gleefully into the rich depth of their contribution to the texture. Respighi seemed to want to ensure that every instrument 'had their say' and Tianyi Lu's conducting brought that out nicely.

After a break for refreshments and a chance for us to meet the musicians, they continued with the Liebeslieder Walzer. Generally these are performed as songs, but in the absence of a singer, we heard Jeanette Massocchi, their Musical Director, read from the pulpit the words of each song before it was played. Each is a brief, almost cameo, love song set as a waltz.

Finally, we were treated to Bartok's Romanian Dances. Bartok and Kodaly collected and studied thousands of folk tunes and these were Bartok's re-working of a handful. The program notes describe them as having 'a severe, crude quality that lacks any romanticised feel about them'. But, as Tianyi Lu suggested in her introductory words, you could well be forgiven for wanting to get up and dance in an ever-increasing frenzy to the climax of the piece. They sounded tricky to play, but not once did the orchestra seem to falter, and the applause was richly deserved.

And at the end of the concert an excellent piece of news was announced - that the St Woolos Players are to become the Cathedral's Orchestra-in-Residence. This means, for them, that they have a permanent 'home' - and for the Cathedral a first-class, local, group of musicians to enhance the ongoing programme of Music@St Woolos.

Brian King

Please feel free to send us items of interest that relate to the Cathedral - its past, current activities, or news. Articles should be kept short (300 words or less, as a rule) - they may need to be edited prior to publication.

Contact: Brian or Siân King -

contact@newportcathedral.org.uk