

Winter / Gaeaf 2023

O little town of Bethlehem

Do you have a favourite Christmas Carol? What is it about it that appeals to you most? In the same vein, do you have a hit list of those you'd quite merrily delete? And again, why? I said last year that the sound of Christmas morning for me is the final verse of 'O Come all ye faithful', only sung on that day, with that chord on "Word of the Father". Even the website 'In quires and places where they meme' agreed and produced a mug depicting it, which of course I bought. It's the verse that begins "Yea, Lord, we greet thee born this happy morning" and it's one of the few things we reserve only for Christmas Day itself.



At the other end, my naughty step is reserved for carols where the words are either too twee to be true or reflect a world that is just not where we are, the fantasy gets in the way. Christmas traditions run very deep and nostalgia mixes with faith and commemoration.

This year, I've heard a number of people calling for the words of 'O little town of Bethlehem' to be rewritten. It's not lying still and its streets are not peaceful, they haven't been for quite a long time. There is an enormous Separation Wall not far from Manger Square, splitting Palestinian communities in disputed territory. Banksy even painted a picture on it of a demonstrator throwing a bunch of flowers – an image calling for peace. It wasn't that peaceful at the time of Jesus' birth either. Israel was under Roman occupation and Luke's Gospel has Mary and Joseph travel several days donkey ride to satisfy the

requirements of a bizarre census.

Whether we re-write carols or just notice the dissonance, this year the Christmas story comes into a very troubled place – and by the time we get there, who knows how the conflict between Hamas and Israel will have developed, as well as in other places. We pray for peace and long for an end to all conflict.

This is the world into which the Christ-child comes. Not for nostalgia and fantasy, escape or distraction, but to bring true peace which goes much deeper than just a cessation of conflict. May your Christmas preparations and celebrations, with favourite carols as well as some



Flower thrower: Banksy (2003)

you don't like (along with Brussel sprouts), renew and refresh you in the hope of the one who crosses barriers and brings people together in a peace that reaches to the core of who we are.

Ian Black - Dean of Newport

[illegible]

Recent gems from our Visitor

We love keeping an eye on the Visitor Book placed in the Narthex. We have counted 320 in the past year, of which 46 are from overseas. There are recent entries from as far afield as New Zealand and Australia, Newport in Oregon (USA), Frankfurt, as well as all parts of the UK. And Newport itself! Irène from France writes: “What a beautiful church!! The organ lady was playing beautifully, it was lovely to hear ... on holiday in the area, this is a ‘must-see’”.



Worship at Newport Cathedral

Gwasanaethau yn y Gadeirlan

Regular Service times are as below: on special occasions these may change
Amseroedd Arferol y Gwasanaethau; gall y rhain newid ar achlysuron arbennig

Sunday	Sul	8.00 Cathedral Eucharist	10.30 Holy Eucharist	4.00 Choral Evensong
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday	Llun, Mawrth, Iau, Gwener	8.00 Morning Prayer	8.20 Holy Eucharist (but 10.30 on Thursdays)	5.00 Evening Prayer
Wednesday	Mercher	8.00 Morning Prayer	8.20 Holy Eucharist	6.30 Choral Evensong

Choir News

In August, seven members of the choir, 3 girls and 4 boys attended the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) residential summer course in Bath. We reported at length on last year's visit, but meanwhile here are some comments from those who went this time:

- "It was good to have the chance to sing and learn such varied music, including some styles that were a little different from what I'm usually used to."
- "Singing in Bath Abbey was a particular highlight, as was spending time with other choristers from across the UK."
- "The course is jam packed each day and that's the thing I love. You are submerged with amazing music and amazing people."
- "I really enjoyed having the opportunity to learn and develop my changing voice."

Cathedral Guide online

Visitors to the cathedral have sometimes found themselves a bit lost for information about the good number of features such as chapels, stained-glass windows, memorials and so forth that many of us are familiar with. It is now possible, as you enter, to use your phone to scan the QR code on display (and as shown here) to bring up a plan of the cathedral. From the plan you can select the area you are in and obtain images and descriptions to help you.



Upcoming events at Newport Cathedral - Diwyddiadau nesaf y Gadeirlan

*** Please check our website for details of Christmas Services and other events ***

For details of Special Services and Festivals, keep an eye on the website
www.newportcathedral.org.uk

- Monday December 4th at 7.00 pm: Tenovus Lovelight Concert
- Saturday December 9th at 12 noon: Music@StWoolos Midday Recitals - Ladies Choir from Chepstow
- Saturday December 9th at 7.30 pm: Cor Aduniad - Christmas at Newport Cathedral
- Sunday December 10th at 7.00 pm: Bach advent Cantata - with St Woolos Sinfonia (Service, not concert)
- Monday December 11th at tbc: MIND Christmas Concert - fundraising for Newport MIND
- Saturday December 16th 10.30 - 12.30: Coffee Morning - social chat, stalls, raise funds for new sign-boards
- Saturday December 16th at 7.00 pm: Welsh Hospitals Choir Carol Concert
- Saturday January 13th (2024!) at 12 noon: Music@StWoolos Midday Series - Gwent Baroque
- Saturday January 20th 10.30 - 12.30: Coffee morning, social get-together, chat, stalls
- Saturday February 10th at 12 noon: Music@StWoolos Midday Series - SOMA (choir)

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Who's Who at Newport Cathedral

Dean of Newport / Y Deon	The Very Revd Ian Black	01633 259990	ianblack@churchinwales.org.uk
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Assistant Priest	Canon David Neale	07912 104902	apriest@newportcathedral.org.uk
Admin & Events Co-ordinator	Luise Bannister	01633 267464	newportcathedral@churchinwales.org.uk
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Director of Music	Dr Emma Gibbins		emmagibbins1978@gmail.com

The Definition of a Rood - Canon Andrew Willie

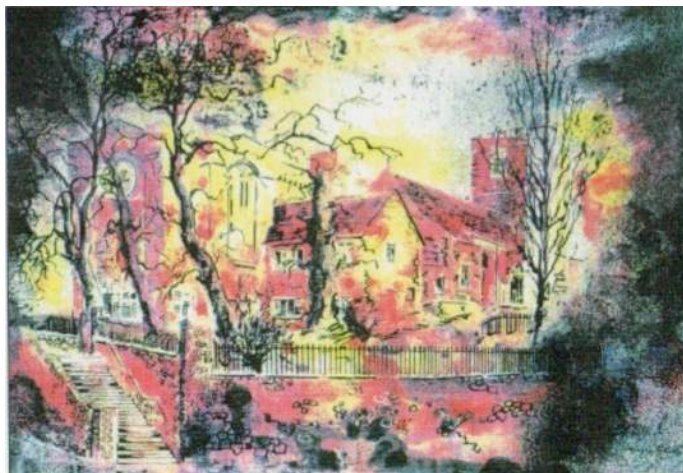
Currently there are three definitions of rood in use: the first is the traditional one, derived from the Anglo-Saxon word, *rod*, and describing a wooden post, such as the upright of the cross. This awaited the cross-bar which our Lord, injured and abused, carried on his shoulder to Calvary. In a natural progression, rood came to describe the crucifix, the rod and cross-bar with Our Lord's tortured body nailed to them. In the Middle Ages this surmounted a screen, which not only acted as entrance to the chancel, but was also surmounted by a loft; from the loft the gospel was read when the Mass was celebrated. Access to the loft was from a winding stone staircase still found in many medieval churches, including St Woolos (now Newport Cathedral) though the loft, screen, rod and crucifix survive in only a few of them. A third definition of rood is simply of the corpus, the body of Our Lord, as made for our cathedral by the artist Tay Swee Siong from Singapore.

Created from nails, it is as far from the nice, neat renderings of the Renaissance Crucifixions as it is possible to be. In fact the image it resembles in some ways is that on the Turin Shroud. The crown of thorns on both is not a neat circlet nicely woven, but bits of bush grabbed randomly for torture. The nails in hands and feet could have been placed as shown on the shroud, through wrists and ankles, to prevent the body from tearing away from the cross. Yet simply because of the way light permeates the structure, like the Shroud, Siong's

work not only speaks of the Cross but also of the Resurrection.

As to the simple Anglo-Saxon definition for rood, this was one that Maurice Barnes, an artist who was also Cathedral Warden, and who died in 1973, took very much to heart. For him, the rood was the trunk of a dead tree, found in the middle of the churchyard. This can be seen in the wonderful image, illustrated here, and which Barnes made after the cathedral extension was completed. The tree trunk subsequently became a danger and was removed.

Just before he retired, Archbishop Derek Childs, then our Bishop, had an idea, which he brought to the Diocesan Conference concerning the Cathedral Tower. He wanted Jasper Tudor replaced by a rood, an image of Our Lord on the cross. In response, the idea received what can only be described as a poor reception. This was particularly centred on the legend that Jasper Tudor's statue lost limbs as the result of its being shot at by a Parliamentary musketeer during the English Civil War. Alas the legend was wrong. Little bits of Jasper have been dropping off over the centuries, simply because of rainwater erosion. I am sure that Archbishop Derek would be pleased with Dean Lister's commission and the support Dean Ian has given it, and that Maurice Barnes, too, would have appreciated the return of the rood, albeit in another form.



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Ring in the New - a new bell for Newport Cathedral: Robert P. Bruce writes

Few events are guaranteed to cause more excitement in a tower than the arrival of a new bell! The last time the cathedral was augmented was 34 years ago in 1989 when the flat 6th was added to give us a light ring of 8 bells at the front. Now thanks to a private donor we have a new treble on the way, which will extend this ring to give us a

light 10, as well as a true ring of 13. This will put us in an exclusive club of only 23 towers out of 6000 worldwide that can offer such a choice of bells for full circle change ringing! The new treble was cast 6 weeks ago at the Royal Eijsbouts bell foundry in Holland, and has now been tuned at Nicholson Bell Hangers in Bridport Devon, ready for delivery to Newport Cathedral .



Casting the bell

This very special bell has been privately gifted in memory of Paul Williams, who was a member of the cathedral band for many years, and a nationally recognised ringer, once elected as master of the Ancient Society of College Youths. This honorary society was founded in 1637, and provides ringers for prestigious national occasions including at St Pauls Cathedral and Westminster Abbey . The new bell, now bearing Paul's name, will be dedicated in a Cathedral service on Sunday 22nd October, before being hoisted up the outside of the tower for installation above the existing bells. Volunteers from the band are already hard at work preparing the tower and will assist with the installation work, which should be completed by the end of November

The special combination of bells and ringers that Newport Cathedral enjoys, already make it the foremost tower for ringing in Wales. The addition of this new bell will further enhance that reputation, and in doing so, will add to the visceral part that bells play, giving voice to the life of the church within our local community. American author Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote of bells in his celebrated poem from "The Golden Legend" (1851).

The Golden Legend (1851)

For the bells themselves are the best of preachers;
Their brazen lips are learned teachers,
From their pulpits of stone, in the upper air,
Sounding aloft, without crack or flaw,
Shriller than trumpets under the Law,
Now a sermon and now a prayer.
The clangorous hammer is the tongue,
This way, that way, beaten and swung,
That from mouth of brass, as from Mouth of Gold,
May be taught the Testaments, New and Old.
And above it the great crossbeam of wood
Representeth the Holy Rood,
Upon which, like the bell, our hopes are hung.
And the wheel wherewith it is swayed and rung
Is the mind of man, that round and round
Sways, and maketh the tongue to sound!
And the rope, with its twisted cordage three,
Denoteth the Scriptural Trinity
Of Morals, and Symbols, and History;
And the upward and downward motions show
That we touch upon matters high and low;
And the constant change and transmutation
Of action and of contemplation,
Downward, the Scripture brought from on high,
Upward, exalted again to the sky;
Downward, the literal interpretation,
Upward, the Vision and Mystery!

*The new bell,
with its wheel, in
the cathedral in
readiness for the
baptism service*



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 (400-500 words or less, as a rule) - they may need to be edited prior to publication.
Deadline for copy for next edition: Tuesday February 20th 2024 Contact Brian or Siân King: contact@newportcathedral.org.uk
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