

The Revd Christine Bull Writes 'The Merry Month of May'



'Let no man boast himself that he has got through the perils of winter till at least the 7th of May.'

It can be a tricky month, May. I was brought up on the old proverb, 'never cast a clout till May is out' – wilfully disobeyed during Wakes Week and the Whit Walks, when new clothes- light and summery- were sported for the processions through the streets of Manchester, no matter the weather.

But Anthony Trollope's words (from his novel, Doctor Thorne) take on fresh meaning in the light of a General Election on May 6th. This year May is even more unpredictable than usual. The vagaries of the British climate are one thing; the problems of British politics quite another. There is unrest, volatility in the polls, and disillusion; some people say they are turned off by the whole affair - searching for a new vision but not convinced anything will change. So it is perhaps more important than ever that we think carefully about the issues, listen to the arguments put forward and make a decision informed by our Christian faith, about where to put our vote on the ballot paper.

There is a lot of agreement that there are many things wrong in our world today, and in British society as part of that world, but little agreement about what to do about it. Our obsession with economic growth, with marketing and consumerism creates greater and greater gaps between rich and poor. Words like freedom and choice and respect are frequently used but I think what more often happens is that we ignore other people's values and views; 'live and let live' can become a justification for suppressing legitimate disagreements and differences, instead of engaging with them.

Whatever our political allegiance, as Christians we look at the world through the lens of the Easter story. We proclaim Christ risen, the astonishing truth of God's unfailing love for us and commitment to us - a world made new. It is not always easy to see that in evidence but if we really believe in the resurrection we cannot accept the world as it is: as Easter people we live with vision and imagination for how things can be, and how we can contribute to making that a reality. Our national debate needs the input of serious-minded, theologically literate people - there is too much that is superficial, spin or trivialising.

In political terms, as in religious ones, the good life can never be purely a private affair. We can never be whole, or satisfied, while our neighbour suffers. Promoting mutual responsibility over self-interest, and hope over cynicism is important work for us. Faith is so much about hope - not pie in the sky when you die- but an imaginative and confident vision that there is love at the heart of creation, that goodness will prevail. That faith and hope determine how we vote.

May 7th may or may not herald the end of winter, but we will be in a new political landscape. There will be pleasure for some, disappointment and anxiety for others. It will be a good time to attend to each other's hopes and fears - to listen and perhaps to learn, and to continue the conversation about what sort of society we want to live in, what the good life will look like if it is to embrace everyone; to express what we want from our politicians, to share our vision, flowing from our joy and delight in the risen Lord.

Some of my favourite words in the Bible are from the Song of Solomon:

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;
for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land.



The Phantom of the Opera Saturday 1st May at 7.30pm

The original silent movie version of Phantom of the Opera is coming to Chester Cathedral!

Come along to watch the 1925 movie starring Lon Chaney in the title role as the masked and facially deformed 'phantom'.

Exciting live musical accompaniment will be performed on Chester Cathedral's Grand Organ by world renowned organist David Briggs, whose legendary skill of improvised accompaniment has delighted audiences all over the world.

You can get your tickets by calling the Chester Cathedral Box Office on 01244 500959 or ordering online at www.chestercathedral.com. Tickets range from £10.00-£20.00

Don't forget to Gift Aid!

If you are a UK Tax Payer, your generous donations go so much (28%) further if you fill in your details on the Gift Aid envelopes provided. You'll need a pen of course!

Thank you so much for your generous support—it all goes a long way.

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Refectory Recipe of the Month

Each month, we will be running a featured recipe from our Head Chef Andy Stokes' personal favourites. We are always looking for more recipe ideas so if you send one in and it is used in the Refectory, the donor will receive 4 main course vouchers.

Italian Chicken & Butternut Pie Serves 6. Takes 1.5 hours



Making The Recipe

1. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a large casserole & lightly brown the chicken. Lift out of the pan, tip in the pancetta, squash & onion. Cook for 8 mins. Stir. Return the chicken to the pan & add garlic & marjoram. Cook for 1 min. Pour all but 2tbsp wine into pan, bubble for 5 mins.

2. Blend the flour with reserved wine until smooth. Stir into pan with tomatoes, jelly and seasoning. Lower heat, half cover, then simmer for 30-40 mins until the squash is tender.

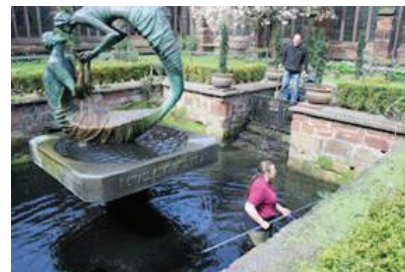
3. Preheat the oven to 220/gas 7. Lay the slices of ciabatta on top of the casserole. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil. Sprinkle with Parmesan and black pepper. Bake for 15 minutes until golden brown.

Ingredients:

- *3 tbsp olive oil
- *8 large skinless chicken thigh fillets—quartered
- *130g pack cubed pancetta
- *1 large butternut squash—flesh cut into 1 inch cubes
- *1 large onion—thinly sliced
- *2 garlic cloves—thinly Sliced
- *1 tsp dried marjoram
- *200ml/7floz Italian red wine
- *1 level tbsp plain flour
- *2x400g cans plum tomato
- *2tbsp redcurrant & cranberry Jelly
- *1 plain ciabatta sliced thinly
- *3 tbsp grated parmesan



The Garth Pond gets a Spring Clean



Cathedral team members Michelle Aird and Allan Howe out in the sunshine and getting their hands dirty giving the pond in the Garth a much needed seasonal clean out. Several barrow loads of pond weed later and it looks great.

Archaeology Explained



The trenches in front of the Cathedral are attracting lots of attention from passers by, particularly children, and form part of important archaeological investigations as to what lies under the War Memorial Garden. These investigations must be completed before any final designs or plans can be drawn up and will be used by planning authorities to determine how the Cathedral's aspirations to become more accessible might progress. Nick Fry is holding regular public sessions to explain the significance of the archaeology and discuss any interesting discoveries. Look out for updated bulletins on the Cathedral notice boards

Saturday Singing Club Don't forget the summer term starts again on 1st May at 10-11.30am in the Song School for all children aged 6-11 years, free of charge. Please contact Carmella De Lucia on 01244 324756 for more information.

Heal Our Land

Back in January, Liverpool Lighthouse hosted the preview of Heal Our Land UK, the interactive prayer musical, which some members of Chester Cathedral attended. The main Heal Our Land UK event is taking place at Liverpool Cathedral on 10th May in the hope of bringing together as many churches from across the North West to take part in the event. As there may have been some confusion regarding ticket sales, the process of purchasing tickets is made a little easier by asking that any churches who are interested in attending make a group booking for their congregation.

Tickets are £5 and can be purchased online from www.premier.org.uk/events or from Liverpool Cathedral bookshop www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk 0151 7096271 (the bookshop is happy to accept cheques as payment for tickets). It is hoped that as many members of Chester Cathedral can attend the event, as it is set to be a very enjoyable evening of prayer, worship and music. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Franki Burke via email or on 0151 476 2342.



Chester Cathedral's 'Garden of Distinction'

Chester Cathedral's beautiful Cloister Garden has now been officially recognised as one of Cheshire's exceptional 'Gardens of Distinction' by the local tourism board, 'Visit Chester and Cheshire'. Its position at the heart of the cloisters marks it out as something special, but what makes it truly remarkable is the extraordinary planting which enhances the inherent beauty of the site and turns it into a paradise of peacefulness.



Join us for Sunday Lunch in the Refectory

Starting on Sunday 11 April 2010

All the usual wholesome food and a delicious Sunday Roast from 12pm after Congregational Coffee

Cathedral Forum – 27th May 2010

A meeting of the Cathedral Forum will be held at 6.30 pm (after Evensong) on the evening of Thursday May 27th in the Chapter House. This will include the presentation of the 2009 Accounts and an interlude for discussions over sandwiches and coffee in the Cloister Room. An agenda and summary accounts will be issued on May 20th. The meeting will include the election of two Forum representatives to the Cathedral Chapter, two representatives to the Cathedral Council, and the Lay Chairman of the Forum. All those on the Cathedral Roll as of 1st May 2010 are eligible to vote. In accordance with the Constitution & Statutes of the Cathedral, nominees for Chapter must be lay persons who are actual communicants, elected by a meeting of the Cathedral Forum, who shall be members of that Forum, but shall not be paid employees of the Cathedral. This is for a three-year term of office.

Nominees for Council must be lay persons, representing the interests of the Cathedral community, and not paid employees of the Cathedral, elected by a meeting of the members of the Cathedral Forum. The term of office is three years.

Nominees for Lay Chairman must be lay persons elected by a meeting of the members of the Cathedral Forum. In line with the requirements of the Constitution & Statutes, new entry to the Cathedral Roll will be suspended from 1st May – 27th May 2010. The Roll will be reopened on the 28th May 2010.

Nominations open and nomination forms will be available from 1st May from the Cathedral Office and Vestry. Nominations may be made by any person on the Cathedral Roll. Nominations will close at and completed nomination forms must be received by the Returning Officer at 12 Abbey Square, Chester, CH1 2HU (the Cathedral Office) 12pm 10th May. All nomination forms from potential candidates will be publically available from 10th May from the Cathedral Office and Vestry. Voting will be conducted by private ballot at the Forum, and instructions on how to complete the voting form will be included on the form.

Postal votes may be made from 10th May and forms will be available from 10th May from the Cathedral Office and the Vestry. Completed voting forms must be received by the Returning Officer at the Cathedral Office no later than 9am 27th May. Voting will close at the Forum. The next election will take place in 2013.

Friends of Chester Cathedral Card

The card, issued to members of the Friends of Chester Cathedral entitles the holder, on presentation of the card, to 10% discount in the Cathedral Shop and the Cathedral Refectory Cafe and, again on presentation of the card, to free entry to the Cathedral with one guest.



Gone but not Forgotten.....



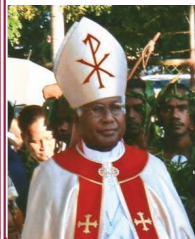
Many will remember Geoffrey Woollatt, the Cathedral's Organ Scholar from 2008- 9. Geoff was in Chester recently to play the organ at concert given by the Bach Singers in

St Werburgh's and called in at the Cathedral to see some old friends. After his time in Chester, Geoff moved up to Edinburgh to study for a B. Mus (Hons) at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music as well as taking up the post of Assistant Organist at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow. He also directs his own choir largely composed of students from the Academy, called the 'Sine Nomine' singers of Glasgow, which specialises in choral music of all periods.

Archbishop of Melanesia visits Chester

Archbishop David Vunagi and his wife Mary are visiting the UK during May.

The Archbishop will preach at the 10am Cathedral Eucharist on Sunday 16th May.



Handel's 'Messiah'

Chester Cathedral Nave Choir and the 18th Century Concert Orchestra will be collaborating here at the Cathedral on 22nd May to perform the full score of Handel's 'Messiah' - one of the most well known classical compositions of all time.

Directed by Ian Roberts, this is an event that should definitely not be missed.

The concert starts at 7pm—tickets are £15 (£13.50 concession) and £25 for VIP premium seats which include sparkling wine and canapés during the interval. Order from the Cathedral box office, online at www.chestercathedral.com, in person, or by telephone on **01244 500959**.

Trevor's Farewell Service

Canon Trevor Dennis will preside and preach at the Cathedral Eucharist on Sunday 13th June. The service will be at 11am, followed by a Congregational Lunch, for which you will need to buy a ticket in advance as places will be limited. Speeches and a presentation to Trevor will be made at the end of the service.

We hope that as many of you as possible will be here on 13th June to express our gratitude to Trevor and to wish him well in his retirement.

COLLECTORS NEEDED

This year Christian Aid Week runs from Sunday 9th until Saturday 15th May. Many hundreds of thousands of pounds are raised for very worthwhile projects across the world, making a real difference to the poor, needy and oppressed.

Canon Chris Humphries has collected in streets near the cathedral over the past few years, but more streets could be covered with the help of a few extra volunteers. If you think you can help, or would like more information, please contact him on 01244500967 or email canon.humphries@chestercathedral.com

Music News

The Friends of Chester Cathedral celebrate their 80th birthday this year, and in honour of this, to end the Cathedral's Easter festivities, the Cathedral Nave Choir will be performing Handel's Messiah in the Cathedral at 7pm on Saturday 22nd May. This popular and accessible oratorio reflects on the life of Christ from his birth to resurrection and ascension. The choir will be joined by professional soloists and the nationally renowned 18th Century Concert Orchestra. The fact that our cathedral musicians are performing Messiah is particularly noteworthy as there is a definite Chester Cathedral connection. George Frideric Handel visited Chester on his way to Dublin in 1742 and is reputed to have tried out a few of his choruses with the Cathedral Lay Clerks. Some accounts suggest that he may not have been too impressed with the standard of their singing! More than three hundred and fifty years later, we hope to showcase Handel's genius in a full Cathedral. On the same day, the Cathedral Choir will be singing Paul Ledington Wright's anthem *The water of life*. It was commissioned by the Friends of Chester Cathedral on the occasion of the retirement of The Very Reverend Dr Stephen Smalley, who was Dean of Chester from 1987 until 2001. It has subsequently been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and the choir is currently rehearsing the anthem in readiness for the service.



Canons in Residence:

MAY

1st-2nd	Canon Christopher Burkett
2nd-15th	Canon Trevor Dennis
16th-29th	Canon Christopher Burkett
30th-31st	Canon Chris Humphries

JUNE

1st-12th	Canon Chris Humphries
13th-26th	Canon Christopher Burkett
27th-30th	Canon Chris Humphries

Worship in the Cathedral:

Weekdays:

0730	Morning Prayer (St Anselm's Chapel)
1230	Eucharist (1130 on Thursdays)
1730	Choral Evensong (said service on Wednesdays)

Saturdays:

0900	Morning Prayer (St Anselm's Chapel)
0930	Eucharist
1615	Choral Evensong

Sundays:

0800	Prayer Book Communion Service (said)
1000	Cathedral Eucharist
1130	Sung Mattins (or Prayer Book Eucharist 3rd & 5th Sundays)
1530	Choral Evensong
1830	Evening Service on 1st and 5th Sunday

All subject to occasional variations.

Keep Chester Cathedral Running

Please sponsor Chris Walton and Martin Witty as they once again take up the challenge of the Chester Half Marathon on Sunday 16 May 2010. The 13 and a bit mile course starts and finishes at the Racecourse. You can sponsor them, with Gift Aid, if applicable, by dropping a donation envelope marked 10K into the Cathedral Office or by clicking on the link on the Cathedral Website Home Page. The aim is to raise £1000 towards Cathedral funds. **Thank You for your Support**



Friends of Chester Cathedral PLANT SALE

Friday 30 April & Saturday 1 May 2010

Please support our annual Plant Sale
For further information about the Plant Sale please call **01244 350293**.



Cathedral Passiontide Retreat - March 19th-21st at Foxhill

26 of us enjoyed the hospitality of Foxhill for a retreat preparing us for the events of Holy Week and Easter. The warmth of the welcome we received and the quiet, unobtrusive service were much appreciated. Three of the participants offer their reflections on the weekend:

"Enlightening, thought-provoking and spiritual describe what for me was a very enjoyable Passiontide retreat. The surroundings and ambience of Foxhill added to the weekend; we were brought closer to the Passion through some of the greatest artists in our history and also as a group in discussion, prayer and silent reflection." **Chris Jones**

"I spent an enjoyable afternoon at Foxhill some years ago so I was very impressed by the recent ambitious upgrading of the accommodation. Although it was a mainly silent retreat, there was opportunity to discuss the many interesting and challenging issues that arose as we examined some famous paintings in detail. The weekend proved to be a unique opportunity to get to know fellow-worshippers from the Cathedral. Companionship, silence, peace, beauty, worship, meditation, good food, fresh air, reading and contemplation- all to be experienced and enjoyed in two days!" **Dorothy Morris**

"For me, a retreat is time apart to get in touch with the deep, the real, with God. The natural world, art, poetry, music and silence have all shown themselves as effective aids to this process and, at our Passiontide retreat we were treated to all these things. Christine and Trevor, using music as well as words, led us in meditations on paintings that were as varied and fascinating as they were sensitive and profound. We looked at Stanley Spencer's almost contemporary Crucifixion, depicted in an English High Street. We looked at Rembrandt's Three Crosses and the Descent from the Cross, noting the fascinating change in the artist's portrayal of the scenes as his vision grew darker and less certain. We looked at Holman Hunt's iconic Scapegoat, and at Hieronymus Bosch's disturbing portrayal of an utterly defenceless Christ about to be crowned with thorns by four scheming, hate-filled representatives of the worldly orders. None of us, Bosch seemed to imply, can escape the scapegoating tendency, the desire to project onto others our own unacknowledged sin and malevolence. And only forgiveness, absorbing evil by paying the price oneself, as Christ did, can break the repetitive cycle of escalating violence. We were challenged deeply in this retreat, but we were also filled with hope. Setting foot outside on our final morning, on slopes carpeted with daffodils, under trees alive with birdsong, you could not fail to feel the promise in the Spring air. Our final Eucharist confirmed this. The sense of love and fellowship in our worship, and of something glimpsed and understood, even if only momentarily, was tangible." **Karin Lyle**

All three expressed their thanks to Foxhill and to Trevor Dennis and Christine Bull, who led the retreat. We hope a Cathedral Retreat will become an annual event. Look out for information and dates for next year.