



CHAIRMAN'S e BULLETIN

JANUARY 2017

Investors in Hope

As the 2018 centenary celebrations of Coventry Diocese approach, I am fascinated to read about the events that led to the foundation of Coventry Diocese in 1918.

Throughout the 19th century there was a great revival of religious life in our country. In the 70 years before St Michael's was consecrated as a cathedral thirteen new dioceses were created. The Bishop's literature of the time explained that the need for a breakaway Coventry Diocese arose from "a firmer grip, conscious or unconscious, of the meaning and value of religion".



The Act of Parliament that set out the pre-conditions for a new Coventry Diocese required a capital fund of £15,000 to be available and the new diocese needed an annual income of at least £2,500. The Bishop's appeal for these sums asked "not for money, but for the opportunity of doing spiritual work." The money was soon raised by voluntary subscription from organisations and private individuals.

Those were our first Investors in Hope.

News of the destruction of St Michael's in 1940 was broadcast around the world. That grim November day of history placed Coventry Cathedral on the world stage. At the same time it gave Coventry Cathedral a message to share with the whole world – a ministry of reconciliation.

The eyes of the world still look towards Coventry Cathedral for guidance and help for mankind towards a reconciled future. The question that arises is Can our Cathedral fulfil these expectations?

The humble origins of our Cathedral one hundred years ago did not provide the support of great financial resources. It was always a People's Cathedral. The excitement of Spence's new architecture aroused visitor interest that has helped to sustain our special ministry up to now, but over the years the reserves have increasingly been called upon and today are insufficient for practical purposes.

There is now the need for a new generation of Investors in Hope.

With this in mind the FRIENDS have joined with the Cathedral Chapter in the launch of an appeal called INVESTORS IN HOPE.

Together we are looking for a group of extraordinary people ready to commit themselves in their support of Coventry Cathedral and its inspirational work in the

years ahead. The aim is to raise an additional £200,000 each year to keep the Cathedral going by membership of a committed giving scheme.

The Cathedral's ministry of reconciliation in the world is a gift of its history, and is more needed today than it ever has been. When our divided world is crying out for help more loudly than ever, we need to find the resources to answer those cries.

Today's INVESTOR IN HOPE commits a regular monthly payment – anything from £5 per month, with no upper limit. The giving may be enhanced through Gift Aid.

If you wish to be a modern INVESTOR IN HOPE there is more information available online from

<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/wpsite/blog/2016/10/06/investors-in-hope/>

or from The Dean, Coventry Cathedral, 1 Hill Top, Coventry CV1 5AB.

Martin R Williams

Greetings from Old Friends

The Christmas season is a time when many of us make contact with old friends.

This year I visited two old friends of Coventry Cathedral both of whom asked me to pass on their best wishes to everyone who recalls them. The two of them are a good age – you might say almost within sight of the postman delivering a telegram from the Queen!



Jim Tysoe (*left*) was a probation officer in Coventry in the 1960s and I recall him at early morning communion services as a regular member of the congregation. He was ordained, and he acted as a chaplain to the Cathedral congregation for a number of years after his retirement from the probation service.

He left Coventry to join the retirement community at Wisma Mulia where he acted as the warden and helped to lead their worship. Wisma Mulia was founded by members of the Subud community. Subud is a spiritual discipline that is designed to help each individual to develop and grow in their old age.

Rev Geoffrey Beck made church history when in June 1965 he was appointed as the Warden of the Chapel of Unity, a post that he held for three years. He was head-hunted by Bishop Cuthbert Bardsley who led the Joint Council at that time. Provost Williams regarded him as a member of the Cathedral senior staff, and his language skills were put to good use on occasion to represent the Cathedral abroad.

The Chapel of Unity grew out of the impulse for Christian unity that inspired leading church figures in the 1940s. Their vision was to base a team of 12 Wardens in the

Christian Service Centre that formed part of the brief for the Coventry Cathedral architectural competition. The Joint Council of Churches was established to administer the Chapel and it was granted a lease of the Chapel, but the Christian Service Centre was never constructed.

Geoffrey (*right*) was the only Warden to be appointed. Provost Howard described him as the embodiment of all their post-war hopes and vision for Christian unity.

Geoffrey went from Coventry to Brighton as minister of the Brighton Central Free Church from 1971 to 1984. In retirement, he campaigned and raised funds to launch a scholarship at Mansfield College in memory of former student, Adam von Trott, a resistance worker during World War II and one of the leaders of the July 1944 plot to kill Hitler.



On 20th January 2014 Geoffrey was presented with Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit by Dr. Rudolf Adam, Chargé d'Affaires at the German Embassy, on behalf of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The ceremony took place at Mansfield College, Oxford, where Geoffrey had trained for the ministry.

Addressing Geoffrey Beck, Dr. Adam said, "Through your vision, through your devotion and inspiring efforts, the memory of Adam von Trott lives on today, symbolising peace and friendship between peoples – indeed it is a permanent reminder that there are eternal values that transcend individual human lives."

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Rev Jim Tysoe, Wisma Mulia, Bridge Rd, Frampton on Severn, Gloucester GL2 7HE
- Rev Geoffrey Beck, Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes, Eastbourne Road, Polegate, East Sussex BN26 5HB

FRIENDS OF COVENTRY CATHEDRAL *COUNCIL MEMBERS*

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Creator of St Michael



A fascinating response followed my eBulletin report of the visit by the Dean of Wellington, New Zealand. I wrote that Wellington Cathedral has the only surviving example of wood carving from St Michael's Church. The woodwork in Coventry burned in the November 1940 blitz.

I can now identify the wood carver. As WWI was coming to an end **Alec Miller**, the wood carver, received a huge commission to create new screens for the chancel, screens around the organ, a cross for the Children's Chapel and the Bishop's throne and desk. All this work was needed to prepare St Michael's to become a Cathedral. The work included the creation of a 12 feet tall war memorial figure of St Michael that was carved in teak and painted.

(LEFT) Alec Miller in his studio

Alec Miller is an unsung hero of the Arts and Crafts movement, which developed the idea that art and craft could be a real force in the amelioration of society's ills. The leading Arts and Crafts figure, C R Ashbee, founder of the Guild and School of Handicrafts was his mentor and Alec joined him when the Guild moved to Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds.

Graham Peel, the author of "Alec Miller – Carver, Guildsman Sculptor", contacted me with this interesting information. If you wish to read further, the Chipping Campden local history society has also published a book about Alec written by Jane Wilgress, Alec Miller's daughter.

Pride in our Past
Faith in our Future

AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE 2018 CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE FOUNDATION OF COVENTRY DIOCESE AND CATHEDRAL WE ALSO THINK BACK IN EACH eBULLETIN TO PARTICULAR MOMENTS IN THEIR HISTORY.

A Stable for our Bishop

The Bishop's House in Davenport Road, Coventry has not always been the official residence of the Bishops of Coventry.

The first Bishop of Coventry in 1918 was Bishop H W Yeatman-Biggs. As the Bishop of Worcester he lived in Hartlebury Castle, the palatial home of Bishops since the middle ages. (PHOTO TOP BELOW) The palace hit the headlines in 2012 when it was sold by the Church of England to Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust (a charity) for



£2.45m, the bishop having moved his residence some four years earlier.

When he moved to Coventry Yeatman-Biggs lived firstly in Astley Castle, near Nuneaton – a 16th century moated manor house. In those days the castle was still a private residence, before it later became a hotel, suffered fire damage and was transformed into today's Landmark Trust project. (PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT)



(Further information: <http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/news-and-events/visiting-landmarks/visiting-astley-castle/>)

In the meantime Canon A V Baillie, the Vicar of St Michael's (1912-1917), lived at 23 Davenport Road - a house that he built for himself. For a short time he had lived in Holy Trinity vicarage in the same road, but (in his own words) found "some admirable stables, which I bought and converted into a house suitable to my needs. But in addition to considering my new home in relation to my own work I also bore it in mind as a future residence for the Bishop, who, indeed, finally came to live in it." In 1917 Canon Baillie left Coventry to take up the post of Dean of Windsor and the house eventually became vacant.

In 1919 Yeatman-Biggs moved from Astley to Davenport Road and lived there until his death in April 1922.



During the vacancy that followed, the Archdeacon of Coventry held his Visitation and revealed that the Church Commissioners proposed to purchase the house in Davenport Road (**left**) as an official episcopal residence at a cost of £5,000. The upkeep of a house of that size was considered to be affordable for the incoming bishop whose stipend would be £2,500 p.a.

In 1922 the outbuildings of the house were altered and since that date it has been "**The Bishop's House**". At that time the lawn at the rear was a private tennis court owned by Maurice Lorrimer, a partner in the weaving firm of "Poole, Lorrimer and Tabberer" (Lockhurst Lane) and a member of one of the Cathedral guilds. In his will he later left it to the Bishops of Coventry.

FRIENDS EVENTS PROGRAMME 2017

Please make a note in your diary

6th February, 2017 10:30am

Friendly Monday Lecture Sarah Moss

Sarah Moss is a novelist, travel writer and Professor in Creative Writing at the University of Warwick. Her recent book, *The Tidal Zone*, is about Adam and his family and how they live with a sudden medical emergency and its longer term consequences. Adam is also an Art Historian researching Coventry Cathedral. The book was recently reviewed in *Cathedral Matters* receiving a strong recommendation.

6th March, 2017 10:30am

Friendly Monday Lecture Frederick Taylor

Frederick Taylor is a British novelist and historian specialising in modern German history. His most recent non-fiction book was "*Coventry: Thursday 14 November 1940*" and he has also written "*Dresden: Tuesday, 13th February 1945*".

3rd April, 2017 10:30am

Friendly Monday Lecture Eleanor Nesbitt

Eleanor Nesbitt is Professor Emeritus (Religions and Education) at The University of Warwick. Her specialisms are Sikhism; Hinduism; religious socialisation; Gujarati and Punjabi communities in UK; caste; mixed-faith families. Eleanor is also well known for her multi-faith walks around sacred spaces in Coventry.

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|----------------------------------|---------|---|
| 8 th May, 2017 | 10:30am | Speaker/activity to be announced |
| 17 th June, 2017 | 9:00am | Visit to Ely Cathedral Highly regarded by historians and architects from all over the world for its beauty and size, Ely Cathedral is the only UK building to be listed as one of the “Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages”. Visible for miles around, the Cathedral is often referred to as “The Ship of the Fens”. |
| 3 rd July, 2017 | 10:30am | Friendly Monday - Canon Sarah Hills Sarah is our own Coventry Cathedral Canon for Reconciliation Ministry. |
| 23 rd September, 2017 | 12:15pm | AGM, Lunch and Public Lecture Speaker to be announced |
| 2 nd October, 2017 | 10:30am | Morning tea/coffee followed by a guided `tour of Holy Trinity |
| November 2017 | | “Behind the Scenes Tours” of the Cathedral Date and details to be announced |

Saint Michael's Singers

SPECIAL PRICES FOR FRIENDS


One of the many benefits of membership of the **FRIENDS** is a reduced price for tickets to Cathedral concerts organised by St Michael's Singers.

On the 28th January 2017 Saint Michael's Singers introduces their third **Discover the Classics**, a family concert packed full of Classic FM favourites designed with GCSE and A-Level music students in mind. The programme includes popular classics from Rossini and Mozart to Cole Porter – from Stravinsky to The Sound Of Music and The Legend Of Zelda.

Featuring:

- Saint Michael's Singers
- Nadine Benjamin
- Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Paul Leddington Wright



Coventry Cathedral
January 28th 2017 at 5pm

A varied and eclectic programme of music with something for everyone.

Over 100 junior school children sing in addition to the full orchestra and choir.

Including songs from "The Sound of Music" led by Nadine Benjamin.

Tickets
£15 (£13)
Under 18s & students £5
Book Tickets
0844 477 1000
www.ticketweb.co.uk

In order to take advantage of the FRIENDS special price, tickets should be ordered direct from Jill Pacey, the choir member who is responsible for direct ticket sales.

Her contact email address is - Jill.pacey@btinternet.com.

Have you an interesting memory of Coventry Cathedral to share?

If you have suggestions or comments about the eBulletin or if you wish to help the FRIENDS in other ways, please get in touch with the Chairman.

**Contact details: – Martin R Williams,
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