



THE QUEEN'S CHAPEL *of the SAVOY*



Newsletter 2021

Welcome from the Chaplain



The Reverend Canon Thomas Woodhouse.

Despite the extraordinary challenges of the past year, we continue to face the future with faith, hope and love. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect many aspects of our lives: personally as well as professionally and economically; physically as well as emotionally and spiritually. No one under-estimates how difficult it has been, and continues to be, to remain positive and hopeful in the face of a global pandemic which has had a significant impact on our daily lives and particularly on the lives of those who are most vulnerable amongst us.

We must however never lose sight of the support networks that surround and sustain us. We are all members of several different communities – at home, at work, within our family networks and of course in our faith groups. The support, companionship and mutual respect at the heart of these communities is vital to our wellbeing, lighting our way in times of uncertainty or hardship.

Speaking on the Eve of Easter, Her Majesty The Queen drew our attention to the importance of lighted candles in our Christian witness, *"As darkness falls on the Saturday before Easter day, many Christians would normally light candles together. In church, one light would pass to another, spreading slowly and then more rapidly as more candles are lit.*

It's a way of showing how the good news of Christ's resurrection has been passed on from the first Easter by every generation until now. As dark as death has been – particularly for those suffering with grief – light and life are greater. May the living flame of the Easter hope be a steady guide as we face the future."

My first task when the Chapel re-opened for prayer following the UK's national lockdown was to light five candles. These reflect prayers offered daily for Her Majesty The Queen, members of the Royal Victorian Order, members of the Chapel's worshipping community, the Duchy's Council and staff, and colleagues within the family of the Chapels Royal. We are all one community and our strength and our resilience is rooted in the support we offer to one another in times of difficulty and hardship.



The lighted Paschal Candle stands to the left of the altar – a living flame.

Although many of you may have been unable to attend the Chapel in person for much of this year, the voice of prayer is never silent, the strains of praise never die away. In a special broadcast to mark the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in May 2020, Her Majesty The Queen reminded us all that we can come together spiritually as well as physically, saying: *"Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead we remember from our homes and our doorsteps. But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other."*



Her Majesty The Queen with a message of Easter hope.

Recalling the events of the Second World War reminded us what can be achieved when communities work together. Many found the simplicity of the United Kingdom's opening act of remembrance, led by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, very moving, reflecting as it did the silence and stillness which has characterised daily life for many of us during the past year.

It is an enduring privilege for those of us who minister in The Queen's Chapel to hold in our hearts people of many nations and faiths, people of every imaginable profession. It is a Christian place of worship and a house of prayer for many people across the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond. *How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. (Genesis 27.17)*

By continuing to support each other in our prayers and acts of remembrance, we will not only ensure our own wellbeing but will encourage all those in need to join our community of worship, wherever they are.



Five candles reflecting specific prayers associated with the Chapel's life.

*The Private Chapel of Her Majesty The Queen in right of Her Duchy of Lancaster
Chapel of the Royal Victorian Order*

The Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood

It will come as little surprise that all investitures were cancelled this year due to Coronavirus. In addition, the Order normally holds an annual Evensong Service and Reception for new members and medalists and despite our efforts to plan a socially distanced and compliant service this too fell victim to increased restrictions in London. Investitures and services will resume in the future; we just do not know when.

The re-development of York House in St James's Palace has meant a temporary relocation of the Chancery to Apartment 15, which overlooks both Colour and Friary Courts. There is nothing like packing up an office to ensure all the cupboards are gone through. As part of the re-development we have agreed to give up the attic space which has housed our archives and which can be better used as offices.

At the time of writing the Central Chancery team are sorting 1,800 boxes of archive material so that when it is moved to storage in Windsor we know where to find everything.

The archive tells much of the story of the State Honours system and is a treasure trove of eavesdropping on history. We receive regular research queries from the public, historians and Government Departments, which often want to know why things are the way that they are.



*Top Row (L-R): Rebecca Ashton, Stephen Segrave, Angela Turnbull, Shazzadur Rahman.
Bottom Row (L-R): Guy Blanch, Jessica Sorrie, Andrew Basson, Jonah Woolf.*

Recent enquiries have covered: the exchange of the Albert Medal and the Empire Gallantry Medal for George Crosses; correspondence on the change of colour for the British Empire ribbon from purple to pink and grey; and the Garter delegation led by the Duke of Connaught to the Japanese Imperial Court in 1912.

We look forward to our return to York House, the preservation of the archives and the pleasure of running investitures again.

Virtual Services

One of the new things we have had great success with during the Covid-19 lockdown has been our podcasts. These took the place of services in the Chapel and, at a time when the voice of prayer seemed silent, they spoke of God's presence.

An important feature of the podcasts was being able to listen to voices of the gentlemen and boy choristers. The recordings provided us with an opportunity to share our services with many – some of whom were sharing in worship from the Chapel for the first time.

I am particularly indebted to members of the RVO and the Duchy staff for recording the lessons each week to provide us with a range of voices for the readings. Covid-19 restrictions mean that worship in the Chapel may continue to be suspended from time to time. During these periods we will continue to make podcasts available.

If you would like to listen in, these can be found on Spotify and other podcast platforms under '**Royal Chapel Savoy**'.

The Chapel's Celestial Ceiling

The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy is the last remaining vestige of The Hospital of St John the Baptist in the precinct of the Savoy. This was constructed as a charitable foundation by order of Henry VII to provide a night's lodging for 100 '*pour and nedie men*'. Part of the ancient inheritance known as the Duchy of Lancaster it forms part of the Savoy Estate in London which extends from the Strand down to the Embankment alongside the Thames.

Although the Chapel holds many treasures, including artefacts which chart the history of the Royal Victorian Order, visitors are almost always struck first by the majesty of the Chapel ceiling. This dates from the nineteenth century, and is believed to be a faithful representation of the original Tudor ceiling which was destroyed by fire in 1864. It was restored in 1886, 1905 and again in 1999.

The distinctive background colour of cobalt blue has been faithfully reproduced and provides an excellent foil for golden quatrefoils bearing a series of shields.

These represent the coats of arms of the earls and dukes of Lancaster and the Monarchs who have a historic connection to the Savoy.

The section above the chancel features a series of Christian symbols and sacred monograms, while a frieze at the top of the wall depicts angels holding the instruments of the Passion of Christ. These include the cross, three nails, a spear, a whip, a ladder, a sponge on a stick, a garment, dice and a crown of thorns.



The Chapel ceiling today.



Organ Scholars Bursary

A new bursary has been awarded by the Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund to music students wishing to study the church organ at Lancaster's Priory Church adjacent to Lancaster Castle.



The Priory Church of St Mary, Lancaster.

Under the direction of the Priory's Director of Music Ian Pattison, three young students will receive weekly tuition on the new Willis-Harrison-Wells organ installed here in 2012.

Built by David Wells of Liverpool, this is said to be one of the finest organs in northern England. It restored to use two fine but redundant instruments which are now linked into one scheme played from a single detached console.

Rick Wakeman gave a candle-lit recital on this instrument in 2016.

The Priory Church was one of the first places visited by the Chaplain after the Spring lockdown.

Awards To Duchy Staff

The Duchy's Chief Executive Nathan Thompson was made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in the 2020 New Year's Honours List at the start of the year.

Then, in The Queen's Birthday Honours announced in October, its former Financial Controller, Steve Davies (pictured right), was advanced to Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order.

One of Steve's duties during his 35 years of service was to oversee the financial affairs of the Chapel. He was made a Member of the Royal Victorian Order in 2010.



Research Project to Explore the Great Cowcher



The Great Cowcher, produced circa 1402 and held at The National Archives.

Working with academics, archivists and heritage professionals from The National Archives, Lancaster University and Lincoln University, the Duchy of Lancaster is supporting a major new research project into the origin and meaning of the Great Cowcher – the equivalent of the Domesday Book for its medieval estates.

The aim is to create an interactive, community-focused edition of the famous book available to everyone free of charge online.

The research project will focus primarily on the earldoms of Lancaster and Lincoln exploring the relationship between these historic lordships and their local communities

from the origin of the Duchy in 1265 to around 1399 when Henry Bolingbroke (Henry IV) acceded to the throne.

Specialist teams at The National Archives will also undertake non-invasive multi-spectral imaging and pigment analysis of the original book to discover more about how this highly illustrated and detailed compendium was produced.

The Great Cowcher was created circa 1402 on the orders of Henry IV. Its purpose was to record the deeds of all Duchy of Lancaster possessions. It spans two illuminated volumes, both of which are kept at The National Archives in Kew.

New Chapel Council Member

Following the retirement of Mr Guy Morrell, the Duchy has appointed Mrs Claudia Ogunyemi to the Council of The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy. Mrs Ogunyemi is a native of New Jersey in the USA although she has been resident in the UK for over 17 years and currently lives in Beckenham with her husband and two teenage children. She first came to The Queen's Chapel in 2017 when her teenage son joined the choir as a Wakeham Chorister.

Mrs Ogunyemi holds a BSc in Economics and Finance and a MSc in Information

Management and Finance. She has 10 years' experience of working in accounting roles for a variety of different companies. Interested in all aspects of retail businesses, Claudia currently works as the Operations and Logistics Manager of an online retailer and distributor in the health and beauty sector.



Duchy Crest Restored and Repainted

Two final year students studying for a Conservation Studies degree at the City & Guilds of London Art College have expertly restored the stone-carved crest above the front door of the Duchy's London offices at 1 Lancaster Place.

This was the Duchy's first partnership project with the College and supplements the annual bursaries and scholarships awarded to a number of teaching institutions across its rural estates.

Skillful restoration of the Duchy crest by final year students from the City & Guilds of London Art College.



RVO Weddings 2020

With the restrictions on the number of guests attending weddings this year, we had the opportunity to create an intimacy not always afforded or even looked for in a wedding ceremony. From the comments we received this was much appreciated, especially for those couples where a parent had died.

Three of this year's weddings were Royal Victorian Order weddings, two with close links to the Duchy of Lancaster and Lancashire. These were the marriages of Harry Bunbury to Alice Martin (*pictured above*), Alexandra Holme to David Reed (*pictured above right*) and Louisa Barnett to Julian Leeper (*pictured below right*).

Harry Bunbury's father, Sir Michael Bunbury Bt KCVO served as a member of the Duchy Council from 1993 and was Chairman from 2000 until he retired from the post in 2005.



Alexandra Holme's late father, James Holme MVO was Principal Lieutenantcy Officer in the Lancashire Lieutenantcy.

Louisa Barnett's father, Charles Barnett CVO was the Chief Executive Officer of Ascot Racecourse.

Hands Across The Water

The Chaplain was delighted to be able to join the Royal Victorian Order Association of Canada via video link in October.

Zoom and Teams have become essential communication tools during lockdown and a valuable way of staying in touch. They provide a splendid opportunity to reach out and strengthen the bonds of friendship across our little community.

Among the many topics discussed at the meeting, the most important piece of business was to record our formal thanks to the founder of the Association Michael Jackson CVO (*pictured above*) as he retired from the post of Chairman after 12 years. Christopher McCreery MVO has been elected to pick up the baton in his place.

It was wonderful for me to be able to 'meet' so many members of the Association online, despite a physical distance of almost 3,000 miles.



Thank-you, Goodbye and Good Luck to Thomas and Pam Leyland



In April we will say goodbye to our much-loved Steward Thomas Leyland. After 9 years of service at the Chapel, Thomas and Pam are to finally enjoy a well-earned retirement.

I know that you will all want to join with me in thanking Squadron Leader Leyland for all his hard work, commitment and dedication. Many of the innovations we have been able

to introduce at the Chapel over recent years have been at his instigation and all of us have benefited hugely from his experience and technical expertise.

We will miss him greatly and hope that both he and Pam will continue to play an active part in the life of the Chapel community – albeit at one step removed. We salute you, Thomas.



The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy

Putting People at the Heart of our Christian Witness

Chaplain: The Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse

Steward: Squadron Leader Thomas Leyland, BSc, RAF (retd)

Master of the Music: Philip Berg, MVO, FRCO, ARCM

Email: chapel@duchyoflancaster.co.uk

Telephone: 020 7836 7221 or 020 7379 8088

Facebook: Queen's Chapel of the Savoy

www.RoyalChapelSavoy.org