

**DEAN JOHN SAUL HOWSON (1867-1885)
AND THE RENOVATION OF CHESTER
CATHEDRAL'S FABRIC AND WORSHIP**

**A Guide to the Exhibition at
Chester Cathedral Library
to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Installation of
the Very Revd John Saul Howson as Dean of Chester
and his Establishment of the Nave Choir**

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in collaboration with Peter Bamford
and Claire Bridge, Andrew Wyatt and Paul Stockbridge**



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PREFACE

This is the eighth in a series of annual exhibitions at Chester Cathedral Library in which we have exploited significant anniversaries to stimulate reflection on issues of importance to the Church:

2011: for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, the theme was Bible translation.

2012: for the 350th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer, the theme was liturgy.

2013: for the 450th anniversary of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the theme was doctrine.

2014: for the 300th anniversary of the death of Matthew Henry, the theme was Bible commentary.

2015: for the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, the theme was the Church and the State.

2016: for the centenary of the Battles of Jutland and the Somme, the theme was the Church and war.

2017: for the 70th anniversary of the first discoveries of Dead Sea Scrolls, the theme was the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible.

2018: for the 150th anniversary of the first year of John Saul Howson, DD, as Dean of Chester (1867-1885), with particular celebration of his establishment of the Nave Choir and the commissioning and installation of mosaics in the Cathedral.

2017 marked the 150th anniversary of the Installation of John Saul Howson as Dean of Chester and his establishment of the Nave Choir. Howson was a Dean with immense energy and he set about a major refurbishment of the Cathedral and a reorganisation of its worship. The establishment of the Nave Choir in November 1867 was part of his plan for rejuvenated worship in the Cathedral Nave. Very swiftly, according to some reports, the Sunday evening services led by the 200-strong Nave Choir were attracting as many as 2000 worshippers in search of good music and quality preaching.

Dean Howson had the insight to know that any refurbishment and restoration of the fabric and structure of the Cathedral needed to reflect and be reflected in its purposes for worship. He was determined to give back the whole Cathedral, especially the nave, to the people of Chester for worship, rather than “for loitering.” And in Howson’s opinion such right worship would be based on proper preaching, worthy prayer, and wonderful singing led by a large choir.

To that end his three most dramatic moves were, first, the general renewal of the stonework and structure of the Cathedral; this was then accompanied by the decorative embellishment of the Cathedral, including the various mosaics.

Second, as such renovation was under way, Howson from the beginning of his Deanship renewed the life of the worshipping community in multiple ways, including the establishment of the Nave Choir. He wanted the whole of the Cathedral to be for the whole of the Diocese of Chester. Eventually, as a mark of that, he had the wooden wall removed which for centuries had separated off the South Transept as the parish church of St Oswald from the Abbey of St Werburgh and subsequently the main body of the Cathedral, in effect separating regular parishioners from the much smaller congregation that worshipped in the Cathedral proper. Howson wanted no more of such separation.

Third, he turned large parts of the dilapidated old Bishop's Palace in the south-western corner of Abbey Square (now mostly occupied by Barclays Bank) into a new set of buildings for the King's School, including the building of a library which has now reverted to the Cathedral to function as its own library; in moving the School into its new buildings he was able to restore some other rooms to function as part of the Cathedral's own estate.

Such moves were not without controversy, in part giving rise to questions in Parliament about who should control the heritage of the English Cathedrals. However, Chester Cathedral as it stands today is very much the legacy of John Saul Howson and the team he put in place to manage the renovations, especially George Gilbert Scott. The Nave Choir, the longest-serving choir of its kind in the British Isles, is also a remarkable feature of one hundred and fifty years of continuity with Dean Howson and his vision for Cathedral worship.

We would like to thank the Chapter, and above all the Acting Dean, Canon Chancellor and Canon Librarian, Jane Brooke, for their continuing support for our efforts to integrate the Library into the mission of the Cathedral. Once again, we owe special thanks to the library helpers for the work they have done in suggesting and finding items, as well as helping to mount the display. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Nick Fry in the checking of some details. We are grateful too to the Cheshire Records Office for the return loan of a memorandum concerning Howson's installation written by the Chapter Clerk. Thanks are also due to Gareth

Rainsforth for fine images of the mosaics in the North Aisle and to Will Hay for a splendid array of photographs of the Nave Choir over more than a decade. Howson would be very pleased to know that he had left such a legacy.

Permission from the editor, Mrs Sooty Asquith, to reprint the text of the article by Claire Bridge, Andrew Wyatt and Paul Stockbridge, “The Nave Choir at Chester,” *Cathedral Music: The Magazine of the Friends of Cathedral Music* 2/17 (November 2017), pp. 38-39, is duly and gratefully acknowledged.

Finally, we would like to note that the exhibition supports the Cathedral’s Wednesday Bible Talks, which in Lent 2018 are on “Picturing the Bible: The Chester Cathedral Mosaics.” The Mosaics were commissioned by Dean Howson during his refurbishment of the Cathedral. We are delighted too that Chester Retreat House is offering a mosaics workshop on Wednesday 21st March 2018, and The Chester Theological Society, a joint ecumenical venture between the Cathedral and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Chester, is also holding a related lecture on Tuesday 6th March 2018: Professor Philip Alexander FBA, Consultant to Chester Cathedral Library, “Frederic Shields and Evangelical Iconography: The Chapel at Eaton Hall, Cheshire.”

George J. Brooke
Library Consultant

January 2018

John Saul Howson: A Summary Biography

- 1816 Born at Giggleswick-in-Craven, Yorkshire, on 5 May.
Educated at Giggleswick School of which his father was headmaster.
- 1834 Trinity College, Cambridge (B.A. 1837; M.A. 1840). Norrisian Prize Winner.
- 1838 Tutor to George John Browne, 3rd Marquis of Sligo (1820-1896).
- 1841 Tutor to George Campbell, Marquis of Lorne (1823-1900), later 8th Duke of Argyll.
- 1845 Senior Classical Master, The Collegiate Institution, Liverpool (under W. J. Conybeare; The Collegiate Institution had opened in 1843).
- 1849 Principal, The Collegiate Institution, Liverpool.
- 1851 Married Mary Cropper (b. 2 Nov 1821; d. 30 Dec 1885). Mary was the eldest granddaughter of the Liverpool ship owner and philanthropist James Cropper; her father, John Cropper, was wealthy enough to retire early from his business affairs to devote himself to charitable activities.
- 1853 Daughter: Mary Georgina Howson born 1 Jan (d. 1935).
- 1854 Son: George John Howson born 1 May (d. 1943). Archdeacon of Warrington (1916-1933); Archdeacon of Liverpool (1933-1934). His son George Howson was the founder and chairman of the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory.
- 1855 Son: Edmund Whytehead Howson born 18 July (d. 1905).
- 1856 Son: James Francis (Frank) Howson born 20 Sept (d. 1934). Archdeacon of Craven (1928-1934).
- 1858 Daughter: Anne Margaret (Maggie) Howson born 20 Oct (d. 1896).
- 1861 Awarded D.D. from Cambridge.
- 1865 Resigned from Liverpool Collegiate Institution.
Honorary Chaplain of the 1st Lancashire Rifle Volunteer Corps.
- 1866 Vicar of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.
- 1867 Installed as Dean 31st July. Nave Choir inaugurated on Advent Sunday.
- 1868 Launched campaign to fund Cathedral restoration, the feast of the Conversion of St Paul. The Cathedral was fully re-opened on the same day in 1872.
- 1885 Died at Bournemouth on 15th December. Buried in a specially consecrated corner of the Cloister Garth. His wife and daughter Maggie are buried in the same grave.

JOHN SAUL HOWSON (DEAN 1867-1885) AND THE RENOVATION OF CHESTER CATHEDRAL'S FABRIC AND WORSHIP

2017-2018 marks the 150th anniversary of the first year in office of the Very Reverend John Saul Howson, DD (1816-1885), as Dean of Chester.

Howson's installation as Dean on 31 July 1867 is recorded in a memorandum probably written by the Chapter Clerk:

“Installation of Dean Howson. July 31, 1867.

The whole of the members of the Chapter with the Hon^y Canons, Archdⁿ, King Scholars and every one connected with the Cathedral met at the Chapter House at 9.30. The Chapter Clerk and Vergers fetched the Dean from the Vestry. The Bishop's Mandate was read by the Chapter Clerk. He was at once sworn in and seated in the Dean's seat in the Chapter House. A Procession was then formed as follows passing round the Cloisters and into the nave by the N door, the choir from that point singing an Introit. The several members of the Procession then took their places with the exception of the Canons. The Dean was installed by the Vice-Dean, Canon Blomfield, in the usual form appended. After service in which the Dean read the 2nd lesson, a return was made to the Bishop's Mandate and signed by the Vice-Dean in the presence of the Canons, Chapter Clerk, Bishop's Registrar. The Officers of the Chapter were then introduced to the Dean and the usual Chapter Business was gone into.

Order of Procession

Beadsmen, King School, Choristers, Lay Clerks, Minor Canons, Schoolmasters, Precentor, Archdⁿ and Hon^y Canons, Vergers, Canons, Dean, Chapter Clerk and Bishop's Reg^r and Secs.”

Howson worked tirelessly from the moment of his appointment. Howson's predecessor, Frederick Anson (1779-1867; Dean 1839-1867), had had extensive surveys of the Cathedral structure and fabric undertaken: the east end and Lady Chapel were in a parlous state and a print from Anson's time shows how much that part of the building was out of line. Dean Anson had really laid the foundations for all that Howson was to undertake, but he had not lived to act on his work. Howson did not delay and immediately acted on the recommendations. Not only was he very active in his concern for every aspect of the restoration of the Cathedral, but he accompanied that with profound concerns both for the beautification of the Cathedral as a

sacred space for worship and also for the practice of worship in ways that would be of the widest appeal. In addition, he was active in representing the Cathedral in Chester and beyond. He also maintained a vigorous speaking and writing schedule, publishing numerous scholarly and popular works.

Before coming to Chester, Howson had travelled widely, especially during school holidays, and was often invited to lecture and preach. Such invitations continued during his time at Chester, and he was often away from the Deanery. He visited the United States in 1871. His longest single period of absence was a three-month trip to North America in 1880 during which he was accompanied by his daughter Maggie, then 21, and her friend Connie Dobie, the daughter of the family doctor. Howson gave a series of lectures and preached at the Diocesan Convention of Connecticut, as well as on many other occasions; he even preached at the Sunday service on the ship on the passage out. The party travelled south from New York, staying with relatives (Howson's brother Harry lived in Philadelphia; and there are still Howsons in the United States today), friends and acquaintances, and even meeting the President, Rutherford Hayes, in Washington, and some members of the British royal family in Quebec as well as famous academics and literary figures at both Harvard and Yale.

Apart from the Vice-Dean, at the time the residentiary canons were accommodated in rotation in one house in Abbey Square, and so it was that there was generally only one canon in Chester at any one time to support the Dean. The oversight of the restoration work and the running of the Cathedral fell chiefly on Howson's shoulders. Moreover, the raising of money to finance the restoration work was his concern. Between 1868 and 1878 he raised about £100,000 and is reported as having the nickname bestowed upon him by one of his wealthier donors of "the best beggar in Christendom." And after 1878 he continued to raise funds, especially for various artistic installations such as the mosaics. In a report for Chapter written from Bournemouth a few days before his death, Howson notes that up to December 1885 over £150,000 had been raised for the general repair and renovation of the Cathedral, a sum that seems not to have included several individual donations, such as those of the Platt family, for particular art works. After his death, the banks wrote to the Cathedral authorities asking for over £1,000 still due from Dean Howson for settling accounts for Cathedral repairs; the claim was on Howson's personal estate, so it seems that much of the financing of the repairs was managed through his own bank accounts and included his own substantial generosity. All that seems to be a further indication of how much he himself personally carried the burden of responsibility for what he had undertaken in restoring the

Cathedral to the condition much as it is today. And such responsibility inevitably wore him down.

Howson seems to have overworked himself with all his many activities. It is possible that he suffered from occasional bouts of depression. After sixteen years as Principal of The Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, he resigned in 1865 partially because of exhaustion. He took a six-month break before taking up an offer from the Bishop of Ely, for whom he was examining chaplain, of the living of Wisbech, near Cambridge. It seems that a similar pattern of overwork was to emerge in Chester. By the end of 1884 it was clear that the Dean was not in good health and was exacerbating his decline by attempting to complete the many projects he had begun. There were reports that his sermons were less audible and his hand-writing increasingly “wretched” when he submitted items to the local printers.

In the spring of 1885 he was recommended to rest and took a long holiday in Scotland. On his return in October he was clearly very pleased with the opening of the baptistery with its splendid floor (not currently visible), one of his pet projects for which he had acquired an ancient font—but his health was not good. A complete change of air was recommended, six months in Bournemouth from the middle of November, but departure was delayed because Mary Howson fell and broke her leg and the Dean determined to stay in Chester to vote in the general election at the start of December. The family doctor accompanied the Dean to Bournemouth immediately after the vote, but a few days after they arrived the Dean’s condition suddenly worsened. Mary Howson, broken leg notwithstanding, set off to Bournemouth with their daughters. On arrival, on the 12th, she found the Dean unconscious; he died in the evening of Tuesday 15th December 1885.

The funeral was set for Saturday 19th at 12.30 pm. Howson had expressed the wish to be buried in the Cloister Garth, but this was un-consecrated ground and permission had first to be obtained from the Home Secretary. Permission arrived on Friday evening and relays of workmen worked through the night to dig the grave, most of it in solid rock; they finished at 11.00 am on the Saturday. The Dean’s body arrived back in Chester on the Friday evening and was taken through the city for a ceremony in the Chapter House at which the *Last Judgement* by Louis Spohr (1784-1859) was sung. The coffin was laid overnight in the Lady Chapel.

Howson’s funeral, presided over by the Bishop, was held in a packed Cathedral, attended by the Mayor and Corporation, the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, William Gladstone (between administrations as Prime

Minister), and hundreds of local people. His widow did not attend and news of the occasion was conveyed to her by the long-standing family friend Henry Butler, then the Dean of Gloucester. Howson was a Tory in his political sympathies, but he had known Gladstone, the most important local politician, for forty years, since Gladstone's visit to the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, in 1845. Gladstone wrote in his diary for 19th December 1885: "11½ - 2¾ went to Chester for the Dean's funeral. Most solemn & seemly."

Almost immediately the Howsons had to prepare to vacate the Deanery and the stress of a visit on the 28th December from those responsible pushed Mary Howson to collapse. She died less than two days later on 30th December. Mary Howson's symptoms suggest that she probably died from a pulmonary embolism brought about by inactivity after her fall and aggravated by the stress. The funeral was taken by the Bishop once again, on Saturday 2nd January 1886, with almost as many people in attendance as for the late Dean.

The grave in the Cloister Garth also contains the body of their daughter, Maggie who died in 1896; she had spent the rest of her life living in rented Cathedral property on Northgate Street. The inscription on the grave is in Latin, but at each end are phrases in Greek: "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10) and "a helper of many" (Romans 16:2). The former, "faithful unto death," comes from a passage commending the church in Smyrna for its perseverance through affliction, a perseverance which is rewarded with the crown of life: such is a fitting tribute to John Howson's persistence in many tasks. The latter, "a helper of many," comes from Paul's description of Phoebe: John Howson did much to forward women's ministry of several kinds and had Phoebe included amongst the women depicted in the mosaics of St Erasmus Chapel in memory of Maria Brassey (née Faringdon) who had died in 1877. Those who drew up the epitaph for Mary Howson obviously thought the designation a fitting tribute to her too.

Howson was appointed Dean by the Prime Minister, Lord Derby. In his letter of appointment there was reference to his excellent work at Liverpool College—Derby, then as Lord Stanley, had laid the foundation stone of the College. In Howson's obituary the *Chester Courant* (23 Dec 1885, p. 6) noted the excellence of the appointment: it was welcomed "by all classes of churchmen and others even outside the establishment who take an interest in church matters. [He] was hailed as a sound and moderate Churchman, an excellent preacher, a thorough scholar, and a tolerant and sensible man."

John Howson is commemorated in the Cathedral itself by a brass plaque placed in early 1887 in the North Choir Aisle, designed by the Cathedral Architect, Arthur Blomfield. Over £2,000 was subscribed for it, though it only cost about £100, the remainder of the money being “paid over to Dr Howson’s representatives.” The inscription reads:

To the Memory of
JOHN SAUL HOWSON, D.D.,
late Scholar of
Trinity College, Cambridge,
and from 1867 to 1885
Dean of this Cathedral Church,
which, mainly by his strenuous and devoted efforts, was during those
years recovered from decay to a state of beauty, and fitness for the
worship of GOD, and for the ministry of the Word. Ob. Dec. 15, 1885.
“Crux est potestas Dei”

The Latin phrase, “the cross is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18), was adopted as the Howson family motto. Howson’s interest in the life and writings of St Paul, which lasted his whole adult life is marked by his enthusiasm for the commemoration of St Paul in the windows of the Lady Chapel, part of the first round of renovations he oversaw, as well as his use of the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul (25 January 1868) to launch the appeal for the restoration fund as well as to mark the reopening of the Cathedral with an octave of services and sermons in January 1872. Howson’s middle name was Saul; his New Testament hero was Saul, “also known as Paul” (Acts 13:9). He wrote several books on St Paul and his co-authored work (with W. J. Conybeare) *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* went through multiple editions over many years and is still readily available both new and second hand.

Case One **The Mosaics**

The mosaics in Chester Cathedral are a striking and extensive feature of the decoration of the restored cathedral which Dean Howson had initiated very shortly after his appointment. In addition to the mosaic floor of the central crossing, three mosaics from Howson's time survive, mostly in good condition. The mosaic panels on the eastern wall of the Lady Chapel, designed by Arthur Blomfield, the Cathedral architect after Scott, no longer survive. They depicted the Annunciation, the Salutation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt. The wrong kind of mortar was used in their construction and very shortly after being put in place they began to suffer deterioration. Let us focus on some of the key elements in what remains.

(1) The Mosaic Reredos

The *Art Journal* of 1876 contains an unsigned single page description and comment on "The New Mosaic Reredos in Chester Cathedral." The echoes of Leonardo da Vinci's fresco of the Last Supper gives rise to a comment on the superiority of mosaic to fresco as a medium and a note on the excellence of the work of the Salviati Murano company. As to the artistic merit of the mosaic, the writer notes that it has "attained to a degree of artistic excellence that in the most strict truthfulness leaves nothing to be desired."

"The cartoon for the Chester reredos is from the pencil of Mr. Clayton, the gentleman whose name is so well and honourably known in connection with that of his able and accomplished partner, Mr. Bell, as an artist in painted glass; and Mr. Clayton never has produced a more excellent work, or one with which he may be better satisfied that his name should be associated. ... It must be kept carefully in mind, however, that the very excellence of Mr. Clayton's cartoon would have been the most decided reason for its own failure in mosaic, had it been placed in the hands of mosaicists of inferior ability. The cartoon, to become a picture in mosaic, required technical treatment of its own high order. And, to the technical treatment which from the artists of the Salviati company this fine work has experienced, it is indebted for being what it is. Nothing can be more admirable than the gradations of the tints, and the manipulative dexterity with which the *smalti* have been made to assimilate their combinations to the most effective brush-work. Thus this mosaic picture is a work of Art

throughout, the hand, and also the feeling, of a true artist being everywhere palpably present.”

The reredos stands in the tradition of the Albert Memorial in London which was unveiled in 1872. Designed by George Gilbert Scott, the cartoons for its mosaics were drawn by Clayton and Bell and made by the Salviati Murano workshop. The same combination of designer, drawer, and manufacturer is present in Chester. The Chester reredos was paid for by Mr and Mrs Platt of Stalybridge who also paid for the mosaics in the North Aisle.

But, for all the artistic merit of the Chester reredos, its theological significance should not be underestimated. Dean Howson was broadly evangelical in his sympathies and his own theology was rooted in the people and places of the origins of Christianity. Although he encouraged the application of the Gothic revival in Chester, he was not in sympathy with those in the Oxford Movement who were its chief promoters. In 1875 he published a book *“Before the Table”: An Inquiry, Historical and Theological into the True Meaning of the Consecration Rubric in the Communion Service of the Church of England* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1875). The book was an appeal to moderate high churchmen and a forthright but very well-mannered attack on those more extreme high churchmen who were promoting a view of the Eucharist as a sacrifice and the necessity of the priest facing eastwards, as a priest before the altar. The installation of the reredos at the same time as the publication of that book provides an insight into Howson’s thinking. In the reredos, the depiction of the Last Supper as a meal which the whole worshipping congregation is invited to join diminishes the sacrificial aspect of what is taking place and stresses the link between the Eucharist and the Last Supper.

However, the larger setting of the reredos mosaic also needs to be taken into account. In his book *“Before the Table”* Howson argued that architectural design was often surreptitiously promoting theological views that were not consistent with the Anglican Reformation. He was clearly aware of the need to think through the theological issues of his reordering of the choir and sanctuary of Chester Cathedral. To that end Howson commissioned a new holy table to be placed in the front of the reredos; he paid for this himself. It is seldom seen today because of the use of altar frontals. It is made up of various woods from the Holy Land which anchor it significantly with the places where Jesus walked and with that same historical Jesus who is depicted in the reredos mosaic. Howson concludes his book: “In the Eucharist we call Christ to *remembrance*, but we are

living in the dispensation of the Spirit. While Christ is absent, the Spirit is present.” In that statement is Howson’s view of the real presence and his promotion of remembrance as the key to Holy Communion. And in the centre of the Choir, place was made in the plan of the decoration of the floor for the large lectern: the ministry of the Word was to be seen as equal to or perhaps of even greater significance than the ministry of the sacrament.

(2) The Mosaics of St Erasmus Chapel

The subjects of the mosaics of St Erasmus Chapel were almost certainly chosen by Dean Howson. Like the reredos they were designed by Clayton and Bell and executed by Salviati of Murano, Venice. They are described as follows by Edward Barber (“Chester Cathedral: The Mosaics,” *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, New Series, 16/II [1909], 97-111): “Sir Gilbert Scott ... reconstructed the Early English Apse here, having first pulled down the Perpendicular extension of it, like that which still remains in the North Choir Aisle. This work was done by Lord Brassey and his brothers, in memory of their father, the eminent contractor, who was a native of Cheshire. The Mosaics were placed there in loving remembrance of their mother. They represent three female characters from Holy Scripture: the Widow of Sarepta, with Elijah in the centre; and on the two sides, Phœbe receiving the Epistle to the Romans from S. Paul; and Priscilla with Aquila instructing Apollos. Woman’s work as a sustainer, a messenger, or a minister, and as a teacher is thus represented. The decorative portion around these pictures gives us the Beatitudes, and allegorical figures indicating the graces of the Spirit, as enumerated in the Epistle to the Galatians. Here again the pieces used in the Mosaic-work are very small, and the greatest care and skill must have been required in putting them in their proper places, as well as in the selection of them.”

Barber makes no mention of Howson’s concern with the scheme of the decoration, perhaps because there is no record of it. However, it can be readily supposed, that as with the Last Supper reredos and the North Aisle mosaics, Howson had a hand in the selection of the subject matter. Thomas Brassey died in 1870, leaving an estate of over five million pounds; Maria Brassey died in January 1877. The commemoration of their mother must have given Howson the nicest opportunity to convince her sons that a theme of women’s ministry would be entirely suitable to mark all that their mother had contributed in supporting one of the Victorian era’s wealthiest self-made men.

Howson had written several works on women's ministry and is credited with being the strongest promoter of women's ministry in the Church of England in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. His concern was not with ordination, but with many and various kinds of supporting ministry which as a man of his time he recognized women performed so well. His own wife was just such a woman. Partly to that end, even while at Liverpool Collegiate Institution he had been heavily involved in initiating and providing for a similar establishment for girls; and in Chester in 1877, at the very time the decoration of St Erasmus Chapel was in his mind, he had been the chief instigator of the establishment of the Queen's School to be the counterpart to the King's School which he spent much time reorganising and rehousing. Howson had encouraged the Bishop to chair the initial committee concerning the school and he was probably responsible for having the Duke of Westminster not only donate land for the location of such a school within the city walls, but also to approach the Queen for permission for her title to be used for it.

The widow of Sarepta (Zarephath; 1 Kings 17:8-24) was Howson's choice also for one panel in the subsequent Elijah mosaic in the North Aisle; the topic must have intrigued him as an Old Testament counterpart to later narratives depicting the support offered by women to various men, as well as being a prefiguring of the interaction of Jesus with the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17). As for Priscilla and Phœbe one can only suppose that Howson's first thoughts, as often seems to have been the case, went to St Paul and from Paul to those women whose ministry had been of particular significance to him. In his publications on deaconesses and women's ministry he writes in summary form of the women of the New Testament in ministerial roles. Though he bases his argument primarily on the Pastoral Epistles, he nevertheless has a whole section on women mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and the major Letters of Paul. He writes: "Now, in the first place, we cannot fail to be struck with the large number of women who were engaged in the work of spreading the Gospel, aiding the first Christian missionaries, or supplying the wants of the poor around them. In the Acts of the Apostles there are – *Dorcas*, of whom we know nothing except her good deeds; *Priscilla*, who travelled with her husband (note: Acts 18:2, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19); ... There are others noticed in the Epistles, ... especially *Phœbe* of Cenchreæ, who has the official title – lost, indeed, in the English version, but in the original Greek, the official title – of "Deaconess" (note: Romans 16:1, 2; It is important to notice that she is called "a deaconess *of the church of Cenchreæ*," implying a local connection with a definite community. Cenchreæ was not a very large place, and it is natural to suppose that larger churches had several officers of this kind)" (John S. Howson, *Deaconesses; or the Official Help*

of Women in Parochial Work and in Charitable Institutions [London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862], pp. 52-53). And in his book on *The Companions of St Paul* (London: Strahan & Co, 1871) he has extensive chapters on Phœbe and Aquilla and Priscilla.

The allegorical figures representing the graces of the Spirit as enumerated in Paul's Letter to the Galatians (5:22-23) similarly seem to derive from Howson's preference for the insights of Paul. In the mosaic frames they are in the order, from left to right: faith, love, peace, meekness, and long-suffering. In the King James Version of the Bible the fruit of the Spirit is rendered as "**love**, joy, **peace**, **long-suffering**, gentleness, goodness, **faith**, **meekness**, temperance."

(3) The North Aisle Mosaics

In a printed report of 5th May 1883 Dean Howson noted that a generous gift of £2,000 from Mrs Platt was to underpin the monies needed for providing his scheme of mosaics for the North Aisle of the Nave (eventually, she seems to have paid about £3,000). The Platts had paid for the mosaic reredos, the renewal of the vaulting in the North Aisle, the restoration of the Baptistery, and other items (more than £17,000 in total). It is fitting that a tablet recording their generosity is located between the Baptistery and the North Aisle mosaics: "This tablet was here placed AD 1890 by the Dean and Chapter in memory of Robert Platt of Stalybridge in this county who died AD 1882 and of Margaret Platt his wife who died AD 1888. They offered willingly to the Lord giving him the glory due unto his name adorning his house with goodly stones and gifts." Mrs Platt never saw the completed mosaics. Her brother, Henry Higgins, much admired them and gave the windows above the mosaics in her memory in 1890.

In the same 1883 report Howson noted too that the subjects for the mosaics had already been chosen (by him): Abraham, Moses, David, and Elijah. Howson has left no explanation for his choices of Old Testament figures, nor for the various incidents assembled in each set. The choice of the Old Testament in the Nave probably reflects his broader knowledge of Christian iconography in which from the west end of churches to the east the images commonly offered for view run in sequence from creation to the last judgement, though often with variations and certain scenes given priority in certain places of the building; in some churches the sequence runs with the Old Testament on the north of the nave, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus at the east end, and then scenes from the New Testament on the south side (the side of the light).

It would be a very worthwhile project to try to establish what contemporary Old Testament commentaries Howson was reading and to investigate his choice of subjects in light of the Old Testament scholarship of the latter half of the nineteenth century. One wonders, for example, whether Howson chose deliberately to avoid any depiction of the accounts of Creation in order not to provoke any debates about the scientific origins of humanity.

Whatever the case, it is likely that several of Howson's theological concerns lie behind the various scenes. It is notable, for example, that all four sets contain significant depictions of women. As is very explicit in St Erasmus Chapel, Howson's concern with women and their work and ministry was very widely known from his writings and his practical commitment to offering women opportunities for education and service.

With reference to the David panels, it is also possible to suppose that the large depiction of the enthroned Saul (a Benjaminite: 1 Samuel 9:21) is a reflection on the character behind Howson's own middle name—and the wolf on the shield of the Israelite soldier (cf. Genesis 49:27: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf"), is then possibly also a subtle reference to the Duke of Westminster (heir to Hugh Lupus, the Wolf) who was his most generous supporter. Another Saul was also a Benjaminite, namely Paul (Romans 11:1). The mosaic scene is based on 1 Samuel 17:57-58: Abner, the commander of the army, brings David before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand: "Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' And David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite'." The other large David panel depicts the highly charged emotional moment of David's grief on hearing the news of Absalom's death from the Cushite (2 Samuel 18:33). Howson was consistently keen that discipleship involved the whole person, emotions and all, and was not an intellectual matter alone. Was such a concern behind his choice of scene?

Edward Barber, Archdeacon of Chester and Residentiary Canon (1886-1914), in his article on the Cathedral Mosaics, wondered firstly whether Howson had in mind the list of faithful figures in Hebrews 11: Abraham and Moses figure significantly there, but David is merely mentioned and Elijah not at all other than in the general designation of prophets. Barber then conjectured, secondly, whether Howson had certain virtues in mind: "Abraham, the friend of God, the father of the faithful; Moses, the man very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth; David, the man after God's own heart; and Elijah, the stern rebuker of sin." The conjecture is not unreasonable given Howson's reflections on the character of Paul in his five 1862 Hulsean Lectures: tact and presence of mind,

tenderness and sympathy, conscientiousness and integrity, thanksgiving and prayer, and courage and perseverance. However, it is difficult to be precise about which characteristics are being presented. In addition, Abraham, Moses and David are commonly understood to represent three forms of the Covenant, but Elijah has no such association. All four figures are mentioned in the New Testament, though not in one place such as Matthew's genealogy, and that alone might be a key to their selection.

Howson not only selected the four figures to be depicted, but also outlined the particular incidents which the artist should endeavour to portray. In the Abraham set are the sacrifice of Isaac and the burial of Sarah; with Melchizedek and Sarah in the upper register. In the Moses set are the finding of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter and the upholding of Moses's arms by Aaron and Hur; with Jethro and Joshua in the upper register. In the David set are David before Saul with the head of Goliath and David's reaction to the news of Absalom's death; Samuel and Solomon feature in the upper register. In the Elijah set the Angel of the Lord appears to Elijah as he sleeps under the juniper tree and Elijah denounces Ahab; the widow of Sarepta and Elisha feature in the upper register. In the sets of Moses, David and Elijah the figure in the top right represents the succession, but such is not the case in the Abraham set, perhaps because Isaac already features prominently in the left-hand major panel.

The North Aisle mosaics cover four bays of the Nave, a length of seventy-two feet. They are nearly fifteen feet high. The mosaics differ from the reredos and those in the St Erasmus Chapel. Those are made from glass pieces, whereas in the North Aisle the mosaic pieces are marble, "nature's own colours." Barber has noted: "In marble Mosaic the sources of colour are discovered in nature only. The range of tints, therefore, at the service of the artist is restricted to the limited varieties afforded by the quarries; no factitious material being employed in these pictures. A difficulty was found in the case of blue, so recourse was made to Lapis Lazuli, of which there are altogether about fifty superficial feet, or more than a twentieth part of the whole surface. These Mosaics, therefore, have been wrought under a severe denial of colour effect; and when this is borne in mind, the result is remarkable and surprising. The cartoons were designed by Mr Clayton (of Messrs. Clayton & Bell), the subjects having been suggested by Dean Howson; and they were translated into Mosaics by Messrs. Burke & Co., of Newman Street, London, and of Paris; the workmen employed being Italians, who would be familiar with such handicraft. ... The resultant effect is seen in the subdued arrangement of colour, and in the absence of gold, suggesting, without imitating, the appearance of tapestry. By such treatment the gravity and repose of the Cathedral wall are not disturbed, as

would have been the case had a more pronounced system of colour been attempted.” Perhaps Barber’s positive evaluation of the tone of the mosaics was to counter those who had considered them a bit dowdy.

Barber concluded his description with some interesting details: “The work occupied three years in execution. The pictures were put together in London, and brought down here in sections, and then fixed in their places. The spaces they were to occupy were carefully prepared and made smooth; nails were driven in in various places, round which copper-wire was stretched, thus forming a hold on the lime or cement to which the mosaics were to be affixed. The sections were then carefully applied, and pressed upon the cement, pressure being continuously and evenly directed until the mortar had set. Some months after, when the exudations from the lime had created a film or excrescence, the surface was carefully cleaned and rubbed down with boiled oil, thus bringing out the colours more distinctly. That operation has been repeated, and will probably be repeated from time to time, so that the effect of the pictures may be enhanced and improved.”

In the *Chester Diocesan Gazette* (16 Dec 1886, pp. 11-13) there is an extensive note on the Mosaics upon their completion: “There has just been finished in Chester Cathedral an extensive work in marble mosaic, exceeding in importance and aim and extent of area any similar work of modern times. It occupies the entire length of the nave, embracing the whole of its four bays, presenting a wall space 72ft. in total length, by nearly 15ft. in height. While equalling in scale, it differs in mode of execution from the marble pictures in the Albert Memorial Chapel, Windsor. The latter are in fact a work of Intarsia, executed in marble, and, as in the case of old Intarsia executed in wood, dependent for the expression of its drawing and details upon the engraver. On the other hand the Chester work is of true mosaic, in which every expression of form and color is wrought in countless tesserae.”

In the following issue of the *Chester Diocesan Gazette* (15 Jan 1887, p. 1) it is noted: “To the account of the Mosaics in the Cathedral, we wish to add that the necessary stone work was carried out by Mr. W. Haswell, of the Kaleyards, Chester, from drawings of Mr. Blomfield, the Cathedral Architect.”

Case Two
John Saul Howson



2.5 © National Portrait Gallery

Upper Shelf

2.1 John Saul Howson, Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool. Photograph taken by Elliott & Fry, 55 Baker Street

Joseph John Elliott (1835-1903) and Clarence Edmund Fry (1840-1897) established their photographic studios and business in 1862. The business was taken over eventually in 1963. This portrait belongs to the first few years of their operation.

2.2 Memorandum of the Installation of John Saul Howson as Dean

Written most probably by the Chapter Clerk shortly after the event as an appendix for the Minute Book of the Cathedral Chapter. On return loan from Chester Diocesan Records Office.

“Installation of Dean Howson. July 31, 1867.

The whole of the members of the Chapter with the Hon^y Canons, Archdⁿ, King Scholars and every one connected with the Cathedral met at the Chapter House at 9.30. The Chapter Clerk and Vergers fetched the Dean from the Vestry. The Bishop’s Mandate was read by the Chapter Clerk. He was at once sworn in and seated in the Dean’s seat

in the Chapter House. A Procession was then formed as follows passing round the Cloisters and into the nave by the N door, the choir from that point singing an Introit. The several members of the Procession then took their places with the exception of the Canons. The Dean was installed by the Vice-Dean, Canon Blomfield, in the usual form appended. After service in which the Dean read the 2nd lesson, a return was made to the Bishop's Mandate and signed by the Vice-Dean in the presence of the Canons, Chapter Clerk, Bishop's Registrar. The Officers of the Chapter were then introduced to the Dean and the usual Chapter Business was gone into.

Order of Procession

Beadsmen, King School, Choristers, Lay Clerks, Minor Canons, Schoolmasters, Precentor, Archdⁿ and Hon^y Canons, Vergers, Canons, Dean, Chapter Clerk and Bishop's Reg^r and Secs."

2.3 Virginia Williams-Ellis, *The Howsons: Lives and Letters* (2003)

This privately published family biography (Cerne Abbas: Privately Published, 2003) is written by the wife of one of John Saul Howson's great-great-grandsons. Its narrative depends upon many items, especially letters, in the possession of the family. Some of the opening narrative of this catalogue depends heavily on information put together by Virginia Williams-Ellis. The book is open to show a portrait of Mary Howson, the Dean's supportive wife.

2.4 John Saul Howson, "*Samuel among Them that Call upon His Name,*" *An Inaugural Sermon Preached in Chester Cathedral on Sunday, Sept. 29th, 1867* (Chester: Minshull & Hughes; London: Longmans & Co., 1867)

Howson spent much of August and September 1867 moving his family from Wisbech to Chester. His inaugural sermon was preached at the end of September. Howson interpreted the character of Samuel: "If we were to attempt to sum up that character in one word, it would be described by the word *consistency*. ... Let this be our concluding thought. Many lessons might be drawn from the biography of Samuel. ... But we may limit ourselves to this one point of consistency, as presented by the example of this prophet. Seek, my brethren, by a steady faith in God, to be consistent. So you will be ready for any changes that may come. So will you accept the new without giving up the old. So will you rise above the littleness of partisanship. So will you be trusted and respected by those around you. So will you help others, and strengthen them, and console them. So will you honour God, and secure and enjoy His perpetual blessing."

2.5 John Saul Howson, DD

This photographic portrait is © The National Portrait Gallery. It is by Lock & Whitfield, published by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington; in woodburytype, published 1882; 4 1/2 in. x 3 1/2 in. (114 mm x 90 mm) image size; acquired from an unknown source, 1883.

2.6 Bernard Wall, *Tales of Chester, Volume 2, Cathedral Cameos* (Market Drayton: S.B. Publications, 1992)

This popular book describes the partnership between Dean Howson and George Gilbert Scott (d. 1878) in the renovation of the crumbling Cathedral, highlighting how much change Scott introduced in the Lady Chapel and by moving the organ to the north in order to create the “Long Vista.” The book is open with a picture of Howson’s grave with the inscription in Greek, “Faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10) clearly visible.

(b) The Restorer and Renovator of Chester Cathedral

2.7 Print of Chester Cathedral in the Early 1860s



In this print from the early 1860s it is possible to see how much the south-east end of the Cathedral needed underpinning and how much Gilbert Scott did to adjust the Lady Chapel into its present shape and design. He also cut off the ambulatory, by creating St Erasmus chapel, so that it was no longer possible to walk round behind the high altar. On the outside, he also restored the stonework, in effect by shaving it down so that it was an even and more weather-resistant smooth surface and he added buttresses. He also added crenellations all round and turrets to the main tower. He had hoped (as did Dean Howson) that a spire could be added on top of the tower, but restoration never got to that stage, Howson preferring to prioritize the decoration of the inside of the Cathedral.

2.8 John S. Howson, *Notes on the Restoration of Chester Cathedral* (Chester: W. F. Healey, 1873).

In this booklet Dean Howson describes in a set of ten republished reports how the Cathedral restoration had proceeded, beginning with the launch of the funding campaign on the eve of the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul (January 25th), 1868.

The major project for the restoration of Chester Cathedral had thus been publicly announced on 24 January 1868. Within four months of his installation Howson had been instrumental in securing approval from his colleagues for the restoration. He seems to have seen this as particularly auspicious in its date, namely the eve of the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. From his academic publications, it is clear that he had a great affinity for the life and work of St Paul, and his association of his restoration project with the Saint is explicit in several matters.

In Paper II he notes that the special sermons inaugurated by the Archbishop of York to illuminate the progress of the restoration had begun on 25 January 1872 and that during the fifth year of the project windows depicting the life of St Paul had been installed in the south side of the Lady Chapel. He completes the Introduction to this set of ten papers on the same date in 1873.

The initial cost of the envisaged restoration as based on the survey by Ewan Christian, the architect of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and George Gilbert Scott, had been budgeted at £55,500. In 1868 £10,000 had been promised from the Commissioners themselves and a further £20,000 was raised by public subscription.

2.9 John S. Howson (ed.), *A Week in Chester Cathedral, Being the Sermons preached at the Re-opening of Chester Cathedral, on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1872, and subsequent days* (London: Griffith & Farran; Chester: Phillipson & Golder, 1872).

This volume of sermons, beginning with one by the Archbishop of York on the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, 1872, marked the reopening of the main Cathedral at the start of that year after four years of major restoration work. Howson's own sermon was based on a text from 2 Chronicles 24:5, "See that ye hasten the matter." Howson had certainly not hung around or delayed in proceeding with restoration work. His sermon begins with a threefold declaration of what he considers cathedrals to be: (1) they should be places of diligent preaching; (2) they should be places of education; (3) they should be the "Senate of the Diocese."

2.10-2.12 John S. Howson, *Hand-Book to Chester Cathedral: Short Chapters on its History, Architecture, and Recent Restoration, with special Reference to its Restoration between 1868 and 1876* (Chester: Phillipson and Golder, 1882).

In this handbook Dean Howson provides a historical guide to the Cathedral and justification for the changes involved in the restoration and renovation of the Cathedral's interior. In the Preface he writes very aptly: "An English Cathedral, connecting together memories of the past with present usefulness, has a varied and living history: and every part of that history ought, as far as is possible, to be maintained in its freshness." The three copies of this work show the title figure, the plan of the Cathedral by George Gilbert Scott, and the view of the North Transept with Bishop Pearson's tomb with its canopy (now removed).

2.13 Print of Chester Cathedral (late 19th Century)

This print, whose perspective is precisely the same as that of 2.7, shows the work of George Gilbert Scott complete, with the major renovation of the Lady Chapel, the creation of St Erasmus Chapel, the buttresses, crenellations and the turrets. The graveyard is still in place.

Lower shelf

(c) Scholar of St Paul

As has been mentioned several times so far, Dean Howson tied the restoration and renovation of Chester Cathedral closely to the life of St Paul. He was pleased that the first set of new windows in the restored Lady Chapel depicted the life and journeys of Paul. He announced the Cathedral fund-raising campaign on the eve of the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul in January 1868 and he organised the celebration of the re-opening of the Cathedral on the same Feast in 1872. He completed his notes on the Cathedral restoration on the same day in 1873.

Howson did not try to create any kind of systematic view of St Paul's theology. He was much more concerned in all his lectures and sermons with Paul's experience of faith and how that should be received as exemplary for all Christian disciples. He played down his own intellectual contribution that he made to the study of Paul's language and thought, and paid attention rather to Paul's life and ministry, his encounters with others, his responses to his circumstances. Howson was concerned with the right attitude and moral character of believers, even their emotions. Belief should be visible in right behaviour towards others, rather than in the pride of intellectual prowess.

2.14-2.15. John S. Howson (with W. J. Conybeare), *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853).

Although the title page of this well-known work puts the names of the authors in alphabetical order, it was Howson who insisted on writing the narrative of Paul's life; Conybeare was responsible for the editions of the Epistles which are spread through the narrative and some of the comments on them. Conybeare was a long-standing friend of Howson from their Cambridge days. He was the first principal of the Collegiate Institution in Liverpool and invited Howson to become a teacher of Classics at the School in 1845. Howson took over as Principal in 1849 and it is widely acknowledged that it was Howson who put the Institution on to a sound financial basis after there had been over-expenditure on its initial construction.

The work in several varied editions was reprinted and reworked very many times and is still in print on demand, as well as being readily available second hand. The British Library national catalogue lists reprints almost

every year during Howson's lifetime and indicates at least 9 editions. Howson introduced many minor corrections himself up until his death in 1885. The work is the progenitor of much British scholarship on the life and letters of Paul right up to today. The successors to the volumes include the studies by Sir William M. Ramsey, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder, 1895), F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), and Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989).

The illustrations in the volumes are also significant as landmark contributions to drawings and engravings produced by many artists who travelled to the Levant in the mid-nineteenth century in search of authentic portrayals of the setting of the biblical stories. They are not from any single artist, but selected from the works of several as appropriate for the place depicted. Among the artists who feature are combinations, such as those of W. H. Bartlett (draughtsman) and A. Wilmore (engraver); Devereux (the draughtsman) and E. Brandard (the engraver); and of L. de Laborde (archaeologist and draughtsman) and D. Cousen (engraver). Amongst the artists who worked in this tradition were David Roberts who had travelled to Egypt and the Holy Land in 1838-1839 and whose prints are still on sale in gift shops there today, and William Holman Hunt who first visited the Holy Land in 1855. These illustrations were the power point presentations of their day; they frequently have a romantic quality, bringing the past to the present through the study of ruin and decay.

2.16 John S. Howson, "On the History of Naval Terms," *Proceedings and Papers of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Session V (Liverpool: T. Brakell, 1853), pp. 176-186.

In addition to Howson's interest in Paul's travels and experiences, much in Howson's writings on St Paul is concerned with terminology, such as Paul's metaphors or his characteristic virtues. This interest probably derives from his philological training in Classics. There is no finer attestation of his concerns in this matter than this essay on naval terms, displayed here to exemplify his etymological skills.

2.17 John S. Howson, "The Shortness of Time," *A Sermon Preached by the Revd. Dr. Howson on Sunday Evening, April 10th, 1864, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London* (London: J. Paul, 1864) = *The Preacher* 178 (1864), pp. 894-900. (NOT ON DISPLAY)

Howson must have rejoiced that he could preach on a text from St Paul in no other place than St Paul's Cathedral! "The time is short" (1 Corinthians

7:29) provides Howson with permission to talk extensively about the apt kinds of human character needed to make the most of one's allotted time. He refers to contemporary intellectual debates, but insists that "a faith which is merely intellectual, without any root of experience, is liable to be dispersed of every wind." Here are echoes of what marked out his own attitude: effective faith was affective faith, based in human experience and human emotion.

2.18-19 John S. Howson, *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul and Their Religious Lessons* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1866)

These two reprints of the same book represent summaries by Howson of some of the key points of his earlier work with Conybeare. The religious and moral lessons to be learnt from St. Paul are drawn out all the more forcefully and in a summary and more direct fashion. The artist for the volumes was Paolo Priolo (1820-1890) who was known for his respectability. Amongst other commissions he provided illustrations for several Victorian poets. On display are the drawings of the Conversion of St Paul (Howson's favourite moment) and of Priscilla and Aquila, with Priscilla in a maternal pose, though Howson thought she was much more significant for supporting Paul than as a mother alone.

2.20 John S. Howson, *A Sermon: "Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building"* (1 Corinthians 3:9)

In October 1867, just a few weeks after his installation, and three weeks after his inaugural sermon Dean Howson was preaching at the consecration of St Bartholomew's Church, Sealand. Not surprisingly, he took as his text a verse from one of Paul's letters. Even on the opening page (displayed), it is easy to see how he sets about providing an exegetical homily by contextualising the verse. He then proceeds to suggest that such contextualisation can be directly applied to similar phenomena in the modern situation. There should be no place for religious parties; it is people who make the church, for all that new buildings are very worthwhile.

2.21 John S. Howson, *The Metaphors of St Paul* (London: Strahan & Co., 1870) (Inscribed by the author)

In this book Howson engages with the images and terminology employed by Paul in four categories. He outlines Paul's use of military, architectural, agricultural and athletic language. The copy on display is signed by the author "with my kind regards" (Aug. 21. 1872). Howson concludes the work with: "Look at the Bible in a new light, and you straightway see some

new charm. This is true, even in regard to minute particulars. The view from a commanding Alpine summit, which has been climbed by great labour, and where half a kingdom is spread before you, is very glorious and not to be forgotten: but the quiet footpath along the slopes of the lower eminences may also be full of beauty at every turn. And such has been our modest course in these essays. It is something to have obtained a deeper conviction than before of the inexhaustible charms and advantages of even the byways of Scripture.”

2.22 John S. Howson, *The Companions of St Paul* (London: Strahan & Co., 1871).

The book has twelve chapters, one each for Barnabas, Lydia, Luke, Apollos, Titus, Phœbe, Felix, Julius, Onesimus, Epaphroditus, Aquila & Priscilla, and Timotheus. The copy displayed is open at the chapter for Phœbe where the chapter heading is a quotation from Romans 16:2: “A succourer of many, and of myself also.” The first part of the phrase was used on the grave in the Cloister Garth as an epitaph for Mary Howson.

2.23 John S. Howson, *The Character of St. Paul, Being the Cambridge Hulsean Lectures for 1862* (London: Strahan and Co, third edition, 1873).

The title page on display indicates the titles of the five lectures: Tact and Presence of Mind; Tenderness and Sympathy; Conscientiousness and Integrity; Thanksgiving and Prayer; Courage and Perseverance. Howson’s attention to such matters in his Hulsean lectures reflects a combination of concerns, namely his interest in certain designations and terminology on the one hand, and his concern for virtue and character on the other. Such a combination is apparent too in the mosaic frames that support the portrayals of Phœbe, the widow of Sarepta, and Priscilla in St Erasmus Chapel.

The Preface to the third edition of the book contains remarks on his dislike of the term broad-church and a comment that references to contemporary scientific debates have been taken out because “the practical work of saving souls must ever be the main business of those who are engaged in the Ministry. And this work is directly accomplished by the Spirit of God, without the intervention of Science.”

Case Three

Upper Shelf The Nave Choir

3.1 Claire Bridge, Andrew Wyatt and Paul Stockbridge, "The Nave Choir at Chester," *Cathedral Music: The Magazine of the Friends of Cathedral Music* 2/17 (November 2017), pp. 38-39.

This 150th anniversary article refers to several early sources. It is reprinted in full as an appendix to this catalogue.

3.2-12 The Nave Choir: Its Recent History in Pictures by Will Hay

3.2 May 2005 at St. Asaph Cathedral – Director Ian Roberts

3.3 August 2006 at Ripon Cathedral – Director Ian Roberts

3.4 August 2007 at Tewkesbury Abbey – Director Ian Roberts

3.5 June 2009 at Chester Cathedral with the 18th Century Orchestra under Ian Roberts

3.6 August 2010 at Southwell Minster – Director Ian Roberts

3.7 August 2011 at Brecon Cathedral – Director Laurence Lyndon-Jones

3.8 August 2012 at Westminster Abbey – Director Ben Chewter

3.9 Christmas 2012 in Chester Cathedral – Director Ben Chewter

**3.10 April 2013 in Chester Cathedral – Director Ben Chewter
Radio 4 "Sunday Worship" Broadcast**

3.11 September 2017, Chester Cathedral Nave Choir – Director Andrew Wyatt.

3.12 Christmas 2017, Carol Singing at Storyhouse Live, Chester – Director Andrew Wyatt

Lower Shelf

Dean Howson, Theologian for the People and a Man of Place

(a) Theologian for the People

3.13 John S. Howson, *Hymns for Special Services* (Chester: Phillipson & Golder, 1867)

Within a few weeks of becoming Dean, Howson had compiled and printed this collection of *Hymns for Special Services*. It was intended principally for use at the evening services being led by the new Nave Choir. The following year he published a second collection: *A Selection of Hymns Compiled for Use in Chester Cathedral* (Chester: Phillipson & Golder, 1868).

As a Bible scholar with a keen interest in liturgy, it is perhaps not surprising that he helped in the compilation of the libretto for the oratorio *The Three Holy Children* which was set to music in 1885 by Charles Villiers Stanford.

3.14. John S. Howson, *At All Times Praise the Lord*

This hymn was printed in a range of hymnals. Howson is said to have composed it about 1880 when suffering from a bout of depression. It is commonly sung to the tune Pastor Bonus by Alfred J. Caldicott (1842-1897). The hymn fell out of use in the 1930s, probably because of the style of its language.

3.15 John S. Howson, *Deaconesses; or the Official Help of Women in Parochial Work and in Charitable Institutions* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862).

This book developed from an earlier paper in the *Quarterly Review* of September 1860. The paper and subsequent book were highly significant contributions to opening the discussions, both formal and informal, in the Church of England about the ministry of women. In addition to supporting the education of girls and young women, as is attested by his work in founding the Queen's School in Chester, the mosaics in the Cathedral give prominent places to women. In St Erasmus Chapel the mosaics recall Phœbe, the widow of Sarepta, and Priscilla; and in the North Aisle there are women in every set of panels. Howson was not concerned with the formal ordination of women; he wrote that the ministerial orders as established by the time of the Pastoral Epistles should be taken as a normative guide. However, he was enthusiastic that the contribution of

women to the life of the church should be formally recognised in ways that reflected the contribution of women in the first Christian centuries and he recommended the establishment of Deaconess Institutions and Sisterhoods.

3.16 John S. Howson, *Meditations on the Miracles of Christ* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1871).

This volume is a set of short meditations on the miracle stories of the Gospels. The book is a classic form of mid-nineteenth century evangelical piety which promotes a spiritual reading of the texts, deriving some moral or pious conclusion from each incident that is rehearsed. Questions that might challenge the historical veracity of the narratives are studiously avoided. Everything is “a system for the recovery and rebuilding of the soul.” The book is aimed especially at the lonely and sorrowful who are encouraged to identify with the characters in the Gospel stories whom Jesus helps and heals. Perhaps Howson’s own moments of depression and his sense of needing healing lie behind some of the retellings.

3.17 John S. Howson, *Sacramental Confession* (London: W. Isbister & Co., 1874).

Not surprisingly, this little book is an argument against the need for individual sacramental confession. Howson appeals to basic Reformation principles throughout the book, arguing that the individual needs no mediator with God. “As to the present position of the Anglican Church in reference to this subject, we are now in what may be called the Romance of the Confessional; and it cannot be out of place to invite attention to its sober and sad realities. The whole matter, with us, at present, is incipient; and it is well to show what “Sacramental Confession” really is in its maturity. I can quite understand the attractiveness of flowers in early spring; but of far greater importance is the ripe fruit in the late autumn. My conviction is that, in the present case, the fruit on the whole is unwholesome and bad.” In such attention to unmediated individual salvation, he differed in several ways from the Christian Socialism of his colleague Charles Kingsley—they seem to have agreed to differ on theological essentials, but to work closely together on several things, such as addressing the social problems of the Chester Races or the establishment of local educational initiatives. In part because of his version of Christian individualism Howson was a staunch Tory, whereas Chester generally returned Whigs to Parliament, not least with Gladstone living nearby.

3.18 John S. Howson, “*Before the Table*”: *An Inquiry, Historical and Theological into the True Meaning of the Consecration Rubric in the Communion Service of the Church of England* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1875).

This book is a lengthy and learned argument against those who would promote the idea that the priest at the Communion service should face eastwards. With a careful consideration of both early Christian and Reformation ideas, he constructs a strong case against seeing the Communion service as a sacrifice. It is worth keeping the strong feeling that underlies this book in mind when one thinks of the reordering of the sanctuary by Howson. The Salviati mosaic of the Last Supper is erected specifically to promote a particular view of the Lord’s Supper principally as a communal meal of remembrance. Howson himself kept to the prayer book practice of presiding at the north end.

(b) A Man of Place

3.19 John S. Howson and Alfred Rimmer, *Chester As It Was* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1872). Printed in Chester by Phillipson & Golder of Eastgate Row.

This short guide to Chester with illustrations by Alfred Rimmer was produced with visitors to Chester in mind, especially, as the preface states, Americans. In the description of Bishop Lloyd’s House, Howson offers a brief survey of the seventeenth-century bishops of Chester, especially John Bridgeman (1577-1652; Bp. 1619-1652, but deprived) “whose life was spent in the very midst of the ecclesiastical storm. After being deprived of his office by Cromwell, he died in obscurity at Morton, in Shropshire. The Lady Chapel of the Cathedral contains a memorial of him in the fine woodwork of his pulpit, which formerly stood in the Choir; and, **now that crowded congregations meet every Sunday evening in the Nave**, it is interesting to recall what we are told of this good bishop, that he wished Sermons to be preached in that large space, but that the proposal was not then acceptable to the citizens” (p. 34).

3.20 John S. Howson, *The River Dee: Its Aspect and History with Ninety-Three Illustrations on Wood from Drawings by Alfred Rimmer* (London: Virtue, Spalding, & Co., 1875).

The River Dee: Its Aspect and History is largely descriptive, taking the reader on a journey down the river from Bala Lake to the Estuary. The

descriptions are replete with subjective comments and it is easy to discern Howson's historical and romantic preferences. Two chapters on the Halls and Castles on the Dee were written by Alfred Rimmer; Howson wrote the rest. In the conclusion Howson compares a river with human life but also summarizes some key concerns. Amongst those are the restoration of the Cathedral which he notes has been ongoing for seven years at a cost of £55,000 and the need for yet further work costing £20,000. He also comments on the development of the King's School, the new buildings for which will come to occupy the place of the old episcopal palace on the south side of Abbey Square. The Library built for the School is now the Exhibition Library of the Cathedral Library.

3.21 John S. Howson, "On the Associations of Milton with the River Dee and Cheshire," *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society, for the County, City, and Neighbourhood of Chester, Parts X and XI* (Chester: At the Courant Office for the Members of the Society, 1876), pp. 409-418.

This short paper is a piece of light entertainment, not least since Howson affirms that he cannot tell whether Milton ever set foot in Cheshire. However, in addition to reflecting on Milton's thoughts about rivers, not least what he called the "hallowed Dee," he also offers some thoughts on two of Milton's close friends who had experience of Chester and its river. He concludes by discussing the family connections of Milton's third wife who came from Wistaston and spent her widowhood at Nantwich.

(c) A Man of Administrative Competence and Sound Finance

3.22 *First Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of Cathedral Churches in England and Wales. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1882).

Open at the pages that contain the "Replies from the Dean" to questions posed by the Cathedral Commissioners and at the Appendixes delimiting A. the number of Honorary Canons; B. the words of their installation; C. the constitution of the greater chapter; and D. the list of preachers and hymns from Advent to Ascension 1878-1879. On the previous page of the Report, it is noted that the gross average income for the Cathedral over the previous three years was £7,504 8s. 11d per annum with average expenditure at £6005 5s. 0d. Howson was running a profitable enterprise, with everything ship-shape.

Concluding Reflections

The purpose of this exhibition, as with the earlier exhibitions in the Cathedral Library, is to stimulate reflection, in this case on the role of church refurbishment and liturgical renewal. As in the other exhibitions we conclude the Guide with some thoughts that may be helpful towards this end.

The first and most remarkable feature of John Howson's time as Dean is his energy in moving ahead with restoration work that was sorely needed. However, whereas in recent years several Cathedrals have overstretched themselves financially, Howson kept the renovations within budget as monies were raised. At his death in 1885, less than 1% of the total expenditure was outstanding and that was settled immediately from monies available in his personal estate—he seems to have run some of the Cathedral funds through his own accounts (something not recommended nowadays!), but was himself a generous benefactor of the Cathedral. He might have wanted to do more, such as add a spire to the Cathedral tower or enclose the cloisters, but he worked within his means, making appropriate priorities. He was a gifted fund-raiser and interacted well with local benefactors, especially the first Duke of Westminster.

Second, Dean Howson was aware that a Cathedral should serve its local community as well as the Diocese. His understanding of such service was that the building was for the worship of God. For him worship needed to consist of very high-quality music and excellent preaching. He set an example in both respects. His establishment of the Nave Choir was inspired and soon it had up to 200 members with those attending the Sunday evening Nave services reportedly regularly numbering over a thousand. For such services, he swiftly created a hymn book so that the tools for the job were on hand. The organ was moved and rebuilt into one of the most splendid instruments in the country. Likewise, his preaching was learned but accessible, even if nowadays it reads as belonging to its time as rather wordy and a little turgid. In fact, Howson was sought after as a preacher and was often away from the Deanery in the pulpits of Oxford and Cambridge chapels and in many other places.

Third, John Howson was fully aware that all that might happen in the Cathedral in terms of its renovation and restoration offered a chance for the construction of something reflecting a particular theological point of view. He was a broad-church evangelical, though he disliked the label (as most people do when labelled by others), and he argued that the Cathedral's spaces, together with their artwork, should echo the best of the Anglican

Reformation, over against certain tendencies amongst high churchmen. Perhaps in conversation with Bishop Jacobson, an expert on the Apostolic Fathers, he saw to it that the Greek and Latin church fathers were given due place in the Choir (Athanasius and Chrysostom for the east; Ambrose and Augustine for the west; 1876). He preferred to speak of a table rather than an altar and he argued against the Eucharistic president facing east. He promoted the supporting ministry of women. He yearned to see the energy and mission of St Paul and “the power of the cross” in all around.

And yet, fourth, Howson’s creative agenda shows that some of the best artistic innovation cannot be held to belong to any particular churchmanship. Although some might claim that the neo-Gothic movement had high church promoters at the outset, it is clear that the way it was used at Chester Cathedral, together with the finest embellishments of the arts and crafts movement, had little to do with churchmanship, but was for Howson an opportunity to show that “an English Cathedral, connecting together memories of the past with present usefulness, has a varied and living history: and every part of that history ought, as far as is possible, to be maintained in its freshness.”

Fifth, Howson had been the Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, for many years before he became Dean. That seems to have given him a sense that Cathedrals should give significant priority to Education. He set about re-organising the King’s School, providing several new buildings for it in Abbey Square. He initiated the establishment of a similar foundation for girls with the setting up of the Queen’s School. He pursued a vigorous publishing schedule, with many works for popular consumption. He collaborated enthusiastically with Charles Kingsley (residentiary canon 1870-1873) in the setting up of the Chester Society for Natural Science, Literature and Art which with the Chester Archaeological Society led to the founding of Chester’s Grosvenor Museum.

Sixth, Dean John Howson was outward-looking from the Cathedral. He was a man of place and he developed a deep appreciation of Chester and its surroundings. His writings show a concern for local people; he was particularly anxious about the many social problems associated with the Chester Races. His enthusiasm for the area is visible in his reflections on Chester and the River Dee. All this sense of belonging and loyalty was recognised by the people of Chester with affection: they supported his restoration project generously and they turned out in crowds for his funeral. Perhaps Howson’s way of interacting with the local population of Cheshire and beyond is one positive model for how things might still be done today.

List of Exhibits

Case One

- 1.1 The Chester Cathedral Reredos in its Liturgical Context.
- 1.2 Article: "The New Mosaic Reredos in Chester Cathedral," *The Art Journal* 2 (1876), p. 351.
- 1.3 The Mosaics of the St Erasmus Chapel: Phœbe being handed the Epistle to the Romans by St. Paul; the Widow of Sarepta asking an old Elijah to heal her son; Priscilla seated between Apollos and Aquila.
- 1.4 Article: The Ven. Edward Barber, "Chester Cathedral: The Mosaics," *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, New Series 16/II (1909), pp. 97-111.
- 1.5 The Mosaics of the North Aisle: Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah. Photographs by Gareth Rainsforth.
- 1.6 Article: "Chester Cathedral: The Mosaics on the North Wall of the Nave," *Chester Diocesan Gazette* 1/10 (December 16th, 1886), pp. 11-13.

Case Two

- 2.1 John Saul Howson, Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool. Photograph taken by Elliott & Fry, 55 Baker Street.
- 2.2 Memorandum of the Installation of John Saul Howson as Dean.
- 2.3 Virginia Williams-Ellis, *The Howsons: Lives and Letters* (2003).
- 2.4 John S. Howson, "Samuel among Them that Call upon His Name," *An Inaugural Sermon Preached in Chester Cathedral on Sunday, Sept. 29th, 1867* (Chester: Minshull & Hughes; London: Longmans & Co., 1867).
- 2.5 John Saul Howson, DD © The National Portrait Gallery.
- 2.6 Bernard Wall, *Tales of Chester, Volume 2, Cathedral Cameos* (Market Drayton: S.B. Publications, 1992).
- 2.7 Print of Chester Cathedral in the Early 1860s.
- 2.8 John S. Howson, *Notes on the Restoration of Chester Cathedral* (Chester: W. F. Healey, 1873).
- 2.9 John S. Howson (ed.), *A Week in Chester Cathedral, Being the Sermons preached at the Re-opening of Chester Cathedral, on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1872, and subsequent days* (London: Griffith & Farran; Chester: Phillipson & Golder, 1872).
- 2.10-12 John S. Howson, *Hand-Book to Chester Cathedral: Short Chapters on its History, Architecture, and Recent Restoration, with special Reference to its Restoration between 1868 and 1876* (Chester: Phillipson and Golder, 1882).
- 2.13 Print of Chester Cathedral (late 19th Century).
- 2.14-15. John S. Howson (with W. J. Conybeare), *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853).
- 2.16 John S. Howson, "On the History of Naval Terms," *Proceedings and Papers of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Session V (Liverpool: T. Brakell, 1853), pp. 176-186.
- 2.17 John S. Howson, "The Shortness of Time," *A Sermon Preached by the Revd. Dr. Howson on Sunday Evening, April 10th, 1864, in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, London* (London: J. Paul, 1864) = *The Preacher* 178 (1864), pp. 894-900.
- 2.18-19 John S. Howson, *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul and Their Religious Lessons* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1866).

- 2.20 John S. Howson, A Sermon: “Ye are God’s husbandry; ye are God’s building” (1 Corinthians 3:9).
- 2.21 John S. Howson, *The Metaphors of St Paul* (London: Strahan & Co., 1870)
- 2.22 John S. Howson, *The Companions of St Paul* (London: Strahan & Co., 1871).
- 2.23 John S. Howson, *The Character of St. Paul, Being the Cambridge Hulsean Lectures for 1862* (London: Strahan and Co, third edition, 1873).

Case Three

- 3.1 Claire Bridge, Andrew Wyatt and Paul Stockbridge, “The Nave Choir at Chester,” *Cathedral Music: The Magazine of the Friends of Cathedral Music* 2/17 (November 2017), pp. 38-39.
- 3.2-12 The Nave Choir: Its Recent History in Photographs by Will Hay
- 3.2 May 2005 at St. Asaph Cathedral – Director Ian Roberts
- 3.3 August 2006 at Ripon Cathedral – Director Ian Roberts
- 3.4 August 2007 at Tewkesbury Abbey – Director Ian Roberts
- 3.5 June 2009 at Chester Cathedral with the 18th Century Orchestra under Ian Roberts
- 3.6 August 2010 at Southwell Minster – Director Ian Roberts
- 3.7 August 2011 at Brecon Cathedral – Director Laurence Lyndon-Jones
- 3.8 August 2012 at Westminster Abbey – Director Ben Chewter
- 3.9 Christmas 2012 in Chester Cathedral – Director Ben Chewter
- 3.10 April 2013 in Chester Cathedral – Director Ben Chewter
Radio 4 "Sunday Worship" Broadcast
- 3.11 September 2017, Chester Cathedral Nave Choir – Director Andrew Wyatt.
- 3.12 Christmas 2017, Carol Singing at Storyhouse Live, Chester –Director Andrew Wyatt
- 3.13 John S. Howson, *Hymns for Special Services* (Chester: Phillipson & Golder, 1867)
- 3.14. John S. Howson, *At All Times Praise the Lord*
- 3.15 John S. Howson, *Deaconesses; or the Official Help of Women in Parochial Work and in Charitable Institutions* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862).
- 3.16 John S. Howson, *Meditations on the Miracles of Christ* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1871).
- 3.17 John S. Howson, *Sacramental Confession* (London: W. Isbister & Co., 1874).
- 3.18 John S. Howson, “*Before the Table*”: *An Inquiry, Historical and Theological into the True Meaning of the Consecration Rubric in the Communion Service of the Church of England* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1875).
- 3.19 John S. Howson and Alfred Rimmer, *Chester As It Was* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1872). Printed in Chester by Phillipson & Golder of Eastgate Row.
- 3.20 John S. Howson, *The River Dee: Its Aspect and History with Ninety-Three Illustrations on Wood from Drawings by Alfred Rimmer* (London: Virtue, Spalding, & Co., 1875).
- 3.21 John S. Howson, “On the Associations of Milton with the River Dee and Cheshire,” *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society, for the County, City, and Neighbourhood of Chester*, Parts X and XI (Chester: At the Courant Office for the Members of the Society, 1876), pp. 409-418.
- 3.22 *First Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of Cathedral Churches in England and Wales. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1882).

The Nave Choir at Chester
Claire Bridge, Andrew Wyatt and Paul Stockbridge

From *Cathedral Music: The Magazine of the Friends of Cathedral Music* 2/17 (November 2017), pp. 38-39. Reprinted by permission.

Chester Cathedral Nave Choir, which is reputedly the longest continuously-serving cathedral voluntary choir in the country, in November 2017 will be celebrating 150 years since its founding and initial service on Advent Sunday in 1867.

When new dean, John Saul Howson, arrived at Chester Cathedral in July 1867, he found the building in disrepair. Amongst other things, the nave was not used at all for services and was not, as it stood, practical. Services took place in the quire and were attended only by the elite.

Changing this was a priority for Howson. At the Chapter meeting immediately following his installation the order was given for the nave to be fitted out to hold services for a greater number of people. This was considered a positive move, viz the announcement made in the *Chester Chronicle* on 3 August, in which it was also stated that a new choir would be necessary for the larger scale of these services:

“To give full efficiency to them, it will be necessary that the choir of the Cathedral should be considerably supplemented by volunteers. No doubt there are many young persons in Chester, well affected towards the church, who will be glad to give their aid to this good work and join the voluntary choir.”

The next few months saw considerable work done to make the nave fit for the inaugural service on Advent Sunday. The area was filled with seating to accommodate 1,500 people, a new heating system was installed and curtains hung over the west doors to keep out the draught. The cathedral organist supplied an organ which appears to have been his personal property. Along with these improvements, a new choir was recruited. The *Chester Chronicle* published this advertisement in two of its October editions:

CHESTER CATHEDRAL
SPECIAL EVENING SERVICES IN THE NAVE
The kind Assistance of LADIES, GENTLEMEN AND BOYS is solicited to
form a VOLUNTARY CHOIR for these Services. All who are willing to

*give their help are requested to send their names and addresses to the
Rev. the PRECENTOR, Abbey Court, Chester.
Accommodation will be appropriated for 150 singers.*

It's obvious that the service was to be conducted on a grand scale, aiming at congregations of over 1,000 with a choir of proportionate size – way beyond the existing Cathedral choir of just six lay clerks plus boy choristers.

The inaugural service was greeted with enthusiasm if the report in the *Chester Chronicle* is to be believed.

A literally overflowing congregation assembled ... the temperature of the place is very agreeable ... there was a congregation of some 2,000 persons ... while crowds were unable to gain admission.

Praise is given to the choir members, who 'acquitted themselves remarkably well in their performances', although, frustratingly, beyond the mention of ferial responses, nothing is said about what they sang.

It was intended that these services should be set apart from the other activities of the Cathedral. Duties were undertaken by cathedral staff on a voluntary basis, in addition to their paid work. An attendee at a service in May 1870 commented that the choir was well trained and well led by 'the musical officers of the Cathedral'.

It was perhaps inevitable that this informal arrangement could not last. In November 1870 it was agreed that the musicians who assisted at the nave services should be paid extra and by 1873 it was decided that 'All the Minor Canons and Lay Clerks who shall be admitted on & after this day, shall be required to attend & give their services at the Sunday evenings in the Nave'. The Nave Choir, as it became known, thus appears to have been a combination of cathedral professionals and volunteer amateurs, but by this time it had a regular conductor – lay clerk and master of choristers, Edward Cuzner. Cuzner conducted the Naves until his retirement in 1900, by which time he had been at Chester Cathedral for 50 years and conducting the Naves for 31.

Some comparisons can be made between the choir 150 years ago and the choir today. Whilst it has shrunk considerably from the 150 voices attending its debut service (now numbering ~ 24), it is still entirely voluntary and maintains the high standard of singing that was evident at the beginning. And although it is a fundamental part of the cathedral's

musical offering, it is both connected with, and separate from, the Cathedral Choir, because it is conducted by Andrew Wyatt, the Assistant Director of Music and accompanied by Rachel Mahon, the Assistant Organist. However, lay clerks are no longer required to assist! Another difference between then and now is in the temperature of the building during the winter, which these days is not so much 'agreeable' as 'arctic' (particularly in the quire)!

The Nave choir is now extremely busy. It still sings a regular Sunday evening service during term time, usually Compline, and sings for many of the major liturgical services within the cathedral such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. It also sings the main Sunday services when the cathedral choir has been busy with concerts or is otherwise engaged and sings at other churches within (or occasionally outside) the diocese. The choir also has a programme of concerts which it sings within the cathedral and at other churches, and has sung live on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday Worship*.

One of the highlights of the year for the choir is the annual summer tour. Recent visits have included singing in the three cathedrals in Edinburgh, in Southwark Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Isle of Man (a very well attended outdoor Mass in the ruins of the old Peel Cathedral accompanied by seagulls being a surprising highlight!), Ripon Cathedral and, most recently, Malvern Priory and Worcester Cathedral. The choir have also recently toured to Munich and Hildesheim, where they were enthusiastically received by congregations and audiences alike.

As the Nave Choir approaches its 150th anniversary, plans are afoot for an exciting year of musical celebrations. The Sunday evening service singing will continue, with the addition of Sung Vespers to run alongside Sung Compline. This gives a variety to the services as well as opening up new repertoire to the choir. On 26 November there will be a 'festal compline' to mark the start of the year, on 9 June 2018 the Naves' summer concert will be held at Chester Cathedral. This will be with chamber orchestra and might feature a new composition for the Nave Choir to mark the occasion. Much more is in the pipeline, details of which will be available on the Chester Cathedral website in due course.



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