



TEULU ASAPH

GROW **FAITH** • BRING **HOPE** • DEMONSTRATE **LOVE**

CONNECTING OUR DIOCESAN FAMILY

HAF 2026 | SUMMER 2026



Gwasanaeth y Cablyd Brenhinol: Rhifyn Coffaol

Royal Maundy Service: Commemorative Edition

AM DDIM | FREE



FROM THE EDITOR

This is a very special, commemorative edition of *Teulu Asaph*, dedicated to the Royal Maundy Service at St Asaph Cathedral in April. It was an honour and privilege to host the service and *Teulu Asaph* wanted the opportunity to show-off the photographs and hear some of the stories and memories of the day.

I'm sure there will be plenty of people you recognise in this edition as those from St Asaph Diocese who received the Maundy Money from His Majesty The King are included, along with those who provided the music, the flowers, the organising and much more. Alongside this magazine, the Church in Wales is launching a film revealing some of the behind-the-scenes activity which

took place to ensure the service ran smoothly. This is available on YouTube and other social media platforms.

The Autumn edition will be back to our usual format so please do send me your contributions for next time!



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Page 4



Page 8



Page 16

CONTENTS

- 3 Gair Gan yr Esgob/Bishop's Word
- 4 Royal Maundy at St Asaph Cathedral
- 6 The Royal Maundy Experience
- 10 Sound and Ceremony: Music at the Royal Maundy Service
- 12 Flowers for the Royal Maundy
- 13 Ysgolion/Schools
- 14 A View from the Canon Stalls
- 15 A Royal Occasion for Our Tearoom
- 15 Honorary Chaplain to The King
- 16 The Children of the Royal Almonry

Cover image: Yeoman of the Guard carrying gold plates containing the Maundy purses in St Asaph Cathedral. © Ginger Pixie Photography

© Diocese of St Asaph 2026 *Teulu Asaph* is edited by Karen Maurice, designed by Daydream Designs and printed by Harlequin Printing and Packaging. The deadline for content and images for the next edition is Monday 20 July 2026. Please send copy and high-quality images to karenmaurice@cinw.org.uk for inclusion. While we welcome all contributions, unfortunately we are not able to print everything.



GAIR GAN YR ESGOB

Gorchymyn Iesu i Ni Garu'n Gilydd

Mae Cadeirlan Llanelwy wedi gweld llawer o ddigwyddiadau o bwys yn ei hanes ond, hyd y gwyddom, ni chafodd seremoni frenhinol ei chynnal yma o'r blaen. Gallwn ymfalchïo bod y Brenin wedi dewis cynnal ei Seremoni Cablyd Brenhinol yn y gadeirlan eleni. Ac yntau'n frenin Cristnogol, roedd y Brenin Charles yn dilyn traddodiad ei ragflaenwyr ac yn ufuddhau i orchymyn Iesu i ni garu'n gilydd a'n gwasanaethu'n gilydd yn wylaidd. Gwnaeth hyn drwy anrhydeddu 77 o ddynion a 77 o fenywod (gan ei fod yn 77 oed) am y ffordd y maent wedi gwasanaethu eraill dros y degawdau. Cafodd holl esgobaethau Cymru, a'r rhai agosaf at Llanelwy yn Lloegr, enwebu rhai i dderbyn yr anrhydedd, a chan fod y gwasanaeth yn cael ei chynnal yma, cawsom ni'r fraint o enwebu 19 o ddynion ac 19 o fenywod. Mae tipyn o sôn am y gwasanaeth a'r rhai oedd yn cymryd rhan yn y rhifyn hwn.

Gwasanaeth Cristnogol yw'r ddolen gyswllt rhyngddynt. Mae pawb a anrhyddedwyd yn y gwasanaeth wedi rhoi'n hael o'u hamser a'u doniau i'w heglwys ac i'w cymuned heb ddisgwyl gwobr – heb feddwl am funud y byddent yn cael eu hanrhydeddu fel hyn ryw ddiwrnod. Dangosodd Iesu ei wyleidd-dra drwy olchi traed ei ddisgyblion yn y Swper Olaf, a dysgodd i ni ddilyn ei esiampl. Mae'n annhebygol y daw Seremoni'r Cablyd Brenhinol Llanelwy fyth eto, ond gall pob un ohonom anrhydeddu gorchymyn Iesu yn ein ffyrdd ein hunain – nid yn y gobaith o gael saith deg saith o geiniogau arian, ond allan o gariad. "Yn hyn y mae cariad: nid ein bod ni'n caru Duw, ond ei fod ef wedi ein caru ni, ac wedi anfon ei Fab yn iawn dros ein pechodau. Gyfeillion annwyl, os yw Duw wedi ein caru ni fel hyn, fe ddylem ninnau hefyd garu ein gilydd."

(1 Ioan 4:10–11)



BISHOP'S WORD

Jesus' Mandate to Love

St Asaph Cathedral will have seen many events of consequence in its history, but, as far as we know, it has never before been host to a state ceremony. We are proud that The King chose the cathedral this year for the Royal Maundy Ceremony. As a Christian monarch, King Charles was following in the pattern of his predecessors and observing Jesus' mandate to love one another in humble service. His act of service was to honour 77 men and 77 women (equal to his age) for their own acts of service over the decades. All the Welsh dioceses, and St Asaph's neighbours in England, were able to nominate recipients, and, as the hosts, we had the privilege of nominating 19 men and 19 women. Aspects of the service and its participants feature in this edition.

The common thread is Christian service. All the people honoured in the service have given generously of their time and talents to their church and to their community for no reward – unsuspecting that one day they might be honoured in this manner. Jesus himself took the lowly option of washing his disciples' feet at the Last Supper, and taught us to follow his example. We're unlikely to host the Royal Maundy ever again in St Asaph, but all of us can find our own ways of honouring Jesus' command – not in the hope of seventy-seven silver pennies, but out of love. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

(1 John 4:10–11)



For the first time in its 800-year history, the Royal Maundy Service came to North Wales this year. It was a huge honour for St Asaph Cathedral, which effectively became the Chapel Royal for the day, welcoming Their Majesties, The King and Queen and hundreds of people from across Wales and beyond. *Teulu Asaph* had a glimpse of what it takes to plan a service like this.

As the host Cathedral, we nominated 38 people from across north-east and Mid-Wales, including several from other denominations. Each nominee could bring a guest who would be seated directly behind them. In addition, the Cathedral could invite its own guests from the local community and civic representatives, and ensure there was space left for members of its own congregation.



Preparations for the Royal Maundy Service on 2 April were a year in the planning. The Dean, the Very Reverend Nigel Williams, had been invited to Durham Cathedral for the Maundy Service in April 2025 to see for himself the scale of the event. Alongside a handful of colleagues from the Church in Wales, planning started. The intention, through the liturgy, the music, the flowers and the locality was to ensure that the St Asaph Maundy, only the second time the service has ever been held in Wales, showcased the very best of Wales and guaranteed an unforgettable day for the 77 men and 77 women receiving Maundy money. By February, invitations had been sent from Buckingham Palace to people nominated by their local mission area.

Meetings started being arranged with members of the Chapel Royal and Royal Household, along with the local police, to plan not only the service, but how the Royal Party would arrive, if local roads needed to be closed and where crowds could gather. We also had to consider how the Crown Jewels would arrive and how they would be kept safe under armed guard. The large gold plates, holding the Maundy purses and carried by the Yeomen of the Guard, are part of the Crown Jewels, usually on display in the Tower of London. Two days before Maundy Thursday, a rehearsal took place in the Cathedral for all the musicians involved in the service. This included the Cathedral choir who sang



alongside the Chapel Royal Choir, Mared Emyr Pugh-Evans, the Official Harpist to The King, and Rebecca Evans CBE, soloist. In addition, a programme of music was devised to showcase local young talent, and this was performed inside the Cathedral as people gathered to take their seats ahead of the service. At the same time as the rehearsal, microphones and cameras were being positioned so BBC1's *Songs of Praise* and S4C's *Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol* could film at the service.

The day before Maundy Thursday, a full rehearsal took place with everyone involved in the service. There was a walk-through from start to finish so people would know their place on the day. Members of the diocesan office team and local police representatives acted as "stand-in recipients" for the rehearsal.



The day itself started at 6am for some members of the team with a security briefing. By 8am a handful of people had started to line the streets outside to welcome Their Majesties. Throughout the morning, the crowds grew and north Wales came out in style to welcome The King and Queen, as we will read throughout this magazine.



Lists, Lists and More Lists!

Much of the organising and logistical planning for the event were handled by the Cathedral's Administration and Business Officer, Jackie Feak. She worked alongside Dean Nigel, Bishop Gregory, The Lord Chamberlain's Office (which plans and runs ceremonial events such as this) and the Chapel Royal to ensure everything was ready for the day. This is her reflection.

My main memory of the time leading up to the Royal Maundy was lists... so many lists – the tasks we would need to do, who would lead on those tasks, the guest list, the address lists, the lists for the police, the lists for the palace, the lists of people needing access to the cathedral at different times, the lists of my jobs and the lists of jobs for other people – it was never ending!

We sent invitations, collated responses, allocated seats, designated parking, sent tickets, added instructions, responded to questions (so many questions), let people into the cathedral at all times of the day and night and had countless meetings.

But through all this was the joy and pride of everyone involved in arranging or volunteering at the service that such a prestigious event was coming to our little cathedral. We pulled together and pulled it off.

The day itself was beautiful. The weather was extremely kind, everything went according to plan, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. The whole atmosphere was like that of a festival or party, everyone was beaming and so pleased to be involved. It is certainly a time that will stay long in my memory!



The Royal Maundy Experience

People from across Wales and the neighbouring English counties travelled to St Asaph to receive their Maundy Money from The King. On the day, 139 people received Maundy Money with a handful having to decline the invitation due to ill-health. Those people will receive their Maundy Money from their local bishop. The next few pages are dedicated to those from the Diocese of St Asaph who received Maundy Money. Congratulations to everyone. The list includes the reasons for their nomination and a few share their memories of the day.



John Allan from Pen-y-lan has been a stalwart supporter of his local church and community all his life, offering a warm welcome to all who come to the village.



Joan Baker from Bodelwyddan is the current President of the St Asaph Mothers' Union. She has been Mayor of Bodelwyddan and continues as a town councillor.



Olive Birch from Bronington is a hospice volunteer and has been a church organist for more than 50 years. She is quietly involved in everything in the community, identifying people in need of support or a pastoral visit.



Jean Carthy from Belgrano, near Towyn is a dedicated church and Mission Area Warden. She was involved in setting up a Hygiene Hamper project during Covid which continues today.

Vivian Craig from Pantymwyn near Mold has been a leading encourager of Messy Church in the Mission Area. She encourages children through cookery and craft.



Elizabeth Day from Kinmel Bay is a valued contributor to our diocesan Spirituality Group. She has provided inspiration and created resources to assist people in prayer.



Patricia Chapman from Deganwy writes: Receiving the letter of invitation to the Maundy Thursday service was completely unexpected and a great honour.... The service was very moving

and very colourful with Yeoman of the Guard carrying the large gold plates with the Maundy bags on them. I've been at All Saints' Church, Deganwy, for many years and churchwarden since 2011. Most of the work is "behind the scenes" and ensures the smooth running of services and events in the church. I'm a Pastoral Assistant and I was also Mothers' Union Branch Leader from 2020 until 2026. I have also researched the names of the 107 men on the First World War memorial in church to give each individual an identity and highlight their sacrifice.

Reg Davies from Rhuddlan has worshipped at St Mary's since he was a choir boy. Since then, he's been a Town Councillor and Captain of the Belltower, teaching others how to bell ring.

Phyllis Brown from Welshpool is a strong supporter and leader of Mothers' Union.



The Revd Linda Mary Edwards from Llandudno Junction offers counselling and supports those affected by trauma and mental health issues.



Leonard Ellis from Abergele is a long-serving treasurer/church warden at St Michael's in Abergele and for neighbouring Pensarn. He has been an organist for 70 years.

The Revd Alyson Goldstein from Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd gives tirelessly of her time and energy to encourage lay forms of ministry across the diocese.



Leslie Graham from Penyffordd has been an active member of Hope Church for almost 60 years. He continues to give hours of his time as the Verger.



Maryon Hughes from Dyserth is a dedicated Pastoral Assistant and led a volunteer group when a redundant church was re-commissioned as a Pilgrim Church.

Bleddyn Hughes from Llanrwst (above) writes: On opening the letter, I was overwhelmed to be informed that I had been nominated to be a Maundy Recipient. There was no-one present in the house at that moment for me to share this exciting news. My family were at work and how I wished that Maureen, my dear wife who passed away in 2019, could have been there.

At precisely 11am the fanfare sounded, the congregation rose and the first hymn was sung. The King and Queen arrived at the West Door and were presented with nosegays by the Children of the Royal Almonary. The King's Procession headed by the Cross of Wales, first seen at the King's coronation, moved to the front of the nave and was immediately followed by the Royal Almonary Procession with Yeomen of the Guard carrying the Alms dishes.

The service (hymns, prayers, readings) was conducted bilingually. Following the first lesson, the Maundy Gifts of red and white purses were distributed to the recipients on the south side of the Cathedral by the King. Similarly, following the second lesson, recipients on the north side received theirs. Presenting and clutching the purses in my hand the King thanked me personally for all the good work I had done for my church and community. I thanked him in both English and Welsh. The Dean of St Asaph led the final prayers, and the Bishop of St Asaph gave the blessing. The Welsh National Anthem and the King's Anthem were sung followed by a Fanfare. The processions moved through the Cathedral to the West Door. I, like many others, were truly impressed with the music, pomp and ceremony of this magnificent Royal Maundy Service and truly honoured to have been part of it. Diwrnod anhygoel na fyddaf byth yn ei anghofio / An amazing day I'll never forget.



Jonathan Major from Llanynys is the Mission Area Treasurer for Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area.

Janet McTear from Hawarden (above) appeared on the *Songs of Praise* programme all about the Maundy Service. She writes: The service was such a wonderful occasion and to be part of it was extremely special.

At the beginning of the service, The Lord High Almoner introduced the service with the words "Jesus said: I give you a new commandment, Love one another, as I have loved you, so you are to love one another." This to me was why we were being honoured in such a special way, receiving the Maundy coins from King Charles himself, for our Christian beliefs.

At the end of the service, I then had the pleasure of being interviewed by Aled Jones from *Songs of Praise* to talk about the Sunday luncheon I have been doing for over ten years for people who live alone. This has brought so much joy to lots of people who have formed firm friendships and to share God's love in this way means so much to me.

The day was such a memorable experience which I will treasure always. I am so very grateful and feel extremely proud to have been nominated.

Anne Morgan from Dyserth has been at the centre of lay worship during a time when two clergy have been diagnosed with terminal conditions.

Peter Morris from Llangedwyn provides discreet and loyal pastoral support for those facing challenges both in ministry and in the community.

Allan Jones from Rhuddlan runs a group for older men, calling themselves the "geriatric gardeners". They carry out repairs for local churches and keep the churchyards tidy.



Colin Pengally from Castle Caereinion (above) writes:

On arrival the sight of so many happy smiling faces from guests and officials confirmed this to be the start of something big. We sat to the left just inside the West Doors which offered exceptional views of the Yeomen of the Guard, uniformed attendants, bishops and clergy, not forgetting Their Majesties as they entered. Throughout the two hours before the service, we listened to wonderful music from young soloists, harpists and instrumentalists and received our 'instructions' from the Royal Lord High Almoner, Bishop Graham Usher.

The experience of the music, watching the pageantry and the expectation of finally being greeted by His Majesty underpinned the importance of the purpose of the ceremony of presenting the Maundy Money... a New Commandment given to us by Jesus himself.

It is difficult to describe the emotions within the liturgy of the service that included many great and wonderful hymns, specially written music, readings and prayers, as well as shaking hands and receiving the Maundy Purses from The King. Each of us received a short thankyou from His Majesty to which I replied, "thank you too your Majesty, please keep on doing it!"

My overwhelming summary for the whole occasion came following the conclusion of the singing of the National Anthems. As the final chords died away, I uttered WOW!

Brian Read from Bryneglwys has worked hard to keep his local church open as congregation numbers fell.

Nick Rees from Pen-y-Bont and his wife Heather are Worship Leaders who have done pretty much every role in St Ffraid's Church in Llansantffraid. They are greeters, lead intercessions, make coffee, and help with Messy Church and Brunch Church.



Ffrangcon Roberts from Prestatyn is currently a churchwarden and brings wisdom, leadership and a strong spirit of service to every task he does.



Bethan Roberts from Bodelwyddan has been President of the St Asaph Mothers' Union.

The Revd Canon Robert Rowlands from Rhos on Sea is a retired priest who has offered sensitive pastoral care for both congregations and communities wherever he has served.



Pamela Smith from Hawarden is a keen organist. She has recently been the lynchpin in securing National Lottery funding for the re-ordering of the church.



Elizabeth (Buzz) Squires from Llandudno is a former HR adviser who gives freely of her time to support clergy facing personal challenges in their ministry.

Mary Steel from Bodfari is a faithful Worship Leader who has assisted in the discernment and vocations programme.



Alan Story from Wrexham is a Worship Leader and Church Treasurer at St Mary's in Minera who quietly works at maintaining both the church building and its graveyard.



Peter Thompson from Newtown (above) attended with his wife, Pam. Peter writes: What an honour and a joy it was to be going to the Cathedral on a bright and sunny morning in early April. Our tickets and ID were checked before walking into the Cathedral which was already quite full and busy. We were shown to our seats to join other recipients and companions. The Bishop of Norwich, the Lord High Almoner, spoke to everyone to explain how the service would proceed. He made us all feel at ease especially after his amusing anecdotes about previous mishaps!

At precisely 11am the fanfare was played by the Royal trumpeters at which point The King and Queen entered the Cathedral to take their places.

The music, singing and soloists were exceptionally good, and it was wonderful for all in the congregation to be able to sing in a completely full cathedral.

Part way through the service, after the first and second readings, The King and his supporters carrying the trays of Maundy purses proceeded to distribute them to the recipients and we were humbled that he spoke to everyone as he gave them their purses.

We have been overwhelmed again by the support of our church members in Aberhafesp, in the Cedewain Mission Area and the local community who attended the Thanksgiving service for us (see page 14) and all volunteers who work so hard for churches and communities here. We feel we are accepting this honour on behalf of all those who serve others.

Michael Vellacot from Wrexham is an active Licensed Lay Minister who, alongside his wife, leads Alpha courses to help give a better understanding of Christian faith.

John Williams from Mold has been a bell-ringer for more than 60 years.



Joan Winwood from Llangollen is a volunteer chaplain in HMP Berwyn, supporting a restorative justice programme. She is also a member of the Mothers' Union which helps with a project to ensure children of men serving in HMP Berwyn receive a Christmas Present from their dad every year.



Hilary Wiseman from Mold served as deputy chair of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, providing wise counsel on both financial and strategic matters.

Ecumenical representatives

- **Sheila Johnson from Rhyl** offers a Roman Catholic presence as part of the multi-faith chaplaincy team at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.
- **Brian Matthews from Wrexham** is a retired Presbyterian minister, who serves as chair of Cytûn and helps support those who are homeless in the city.
- **Keith McDonogh from Wrexham** has been a faithful church-goer for more than 40 years and is a governor of a local primary school.

- **Mary Pugh Jones from Denbigh** is an active member of the community having served as a police officer, lollipop lady and volunteers with the League of Friends in a local hospital. Mary's story featured on S4C's *Dechrau Canu, Dechrau Canmol*.





When it came to shaping the music for this year's Royal Maundy Service at St Asaph Cathedral, every note was chosen with purpose, writes Canon Professor Paul Meall LVO.

Alongside Grahame Davies

and Paul Booth, we set out to create a soundscape that would complement – not compete with – the liturgy. We considered how music would travel through the cathedral's remarkable acoustics, how voices and instruments would interact with the space, and how each piece could deepen moments of reflection and celebration.

A defining feature of the process was the personal involvement of His Majesty The King. His thoughtful engagement – discussing, suggesting and approving repertoire – ensured the programme reflected both the dignity of the occasion and its strong Welsh identity. This was never just a performance; it was a shared national moment.

Setting the scene

Before the service even began, the cathedral was alive with music. Performers from the Denbighshire Music Co-operative delivered a vibrant prelude from the high-energy DMC Fusion Band and Ysgol Esgob Morgan's Samba Band outdoors, to an eclectic indoor concert showcasing emerging local talent. Highlights ranged from jazz standards by Ambrose to standout solo performances: Llio Salisbury's expressive vocals, Llion Barker's assured trombone, and Mali Tudur's virtuosic piano. The programme moved effortlessly between styles, culminating in a heartfelt tribute to Welsh hymn writer Ann Griffiths.

My contribution

Composing for the service was both an honour and a responsibility. My aim was to write music rooted in tradition yet alive with immediacy. Collaborating with Grahame Davies, we created *A Sacred Benediction* – a concise but deeply resonant text set to music for this special occasion. We were privileged to have soprano Rebecca Evans CBE as soloist, accompanied by The King's Harpist, Mared Emyr Pugh-Evans, alongside the combined choirs of St Asaph Cathedral and His Majesty's Chapel Royal. Under Paul Booth's direction, the performance brought a rare sense of intimacy to a grand occasion.

I was also commissioned to compose a new psalm chant for future use by the Chapel Royal – an enduring legacy of the day. Drawing on memories of my own time as a chorister, I blended Anglican chant with the spirit of Welsh hymnody to create something both familiar and distinctly national.

Music in the service

From the first fanfare by the State Trumpeters, the tone was set: ceremonial, confident and uplifting. The processional hymn *Praise to the Holiest* – enhanced by a newly written descant by Paul Booth – captured that balance of tradition and freshness. Welsh language and heritage were woven throughout, notably in Psalm 138, sung to my new chant. The programme also honoured the Anglican choral tradition, with music spanning centuries – from Thomas Tomkins to Handel's *Zadok the Priest* – alongside Welsh composers including Morfydd Owen and William Mathias.

As the Maundy distribution unfolded, the music turned reflective, with works by Orlando Gibbons and Samuel Sebastian Wesley underscoring the solemnity of the ritual. The service concluded in style, with national anthems and a



triumphant flourish: Richard Strauss's *Vienna Philharmonic Fanfare* performed by a brass ensemble from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and Herbert Brewer's *March Héroïque*, performed with full organ by Christopher Enston.

A proud moment

The result was a programme that felt both timeless and immediate – deeply rooted in tradition, yet unmistakably alive. Above all, it was a showcase for the exceptional musicianship of St Asaph Cathedral Choir, whose precision, energy and professionalism carried the day.

For everyone involved, it was an occasion to remember – and one that resonated far beyond the cathedral walls.

A reflection from the St Asaph Cathedral's Director of Music, Paul Booth

All the musical preparations had been made: the music selected and approved by His Majesty The King, rehearsals completed, and there we were ready to give the very best of ourselves as a choir at this most historic of occasions.

The excitement grew as we lined up with singers from HM Chapel Royal, St James' Palace, and we processed proudly into a full Cathedral. We were ready!

The State Trumpeters heralded the arrival of The King and Queen, and we broke into song, singing John Henry Newman's wonderful hymn, *Praise to the holiest in the height*.

The service and its music went without hitch. Everyone, from the youngest chorister at 8 years old, to our adult singers, totally focused on the job. The choirs were magnificent and raised the roof with committed singing of great quality. Our soloists, Abigale, Anastasia, and Zoe, all from the St Asaph

choir, sang beautifully and in such a professional manner without any hint of nerves!

Following the service The King and Queen generously took time to speak with the choir, giving them thanks for their contribution and complimenting them on their fine singing. It was wonderful to see the Choristers and Lay Clerks so happily engaging with The King and Queen in making memories that will stay with them for ever.

Memories from our Cathedral Choristers

Zoe, 13: "In the weeks leading up to The King's visit, there were lots of rehearsals and a sense of excitement as everything started to come together. As a chorister I was preparing a solo, so spent extra time practising. On the day itself, the atmosphere in the cathedral felt very different from normal; the cathedral felt very grand, with the ceremonial guards in uniform and powerful brass fanfares. Before the service I felt quite nervous about my solo but excited to see The King and Queen's arrival! The service went smoothly and all our rehearsals paid off. I enjoyed singing with the Chapel Royal choir and it was exciting to be part of a such special service and an honour to meet The King and Queen. Overall, it was an experience I'll never forget!"

Evie, 13: "Amazing experience, I wish I could do it all again!"

Eliza, 9: "I was so excited to sing in front of The King and Queen."

Catherine, 14: "It was great and exciting speaking to The King."

Denver, 9: "I really liked meeting The King and he asked me about Easter."

Anastasia, 13: "I was delighted to sing for Their Majesties (specially as I had a little solo). It was great that the BBC recorded our singing. This is a day I will always remember."



It was a privilege to be asked to create the floral arrangements and 'nosegay' bouquets for the Royal Maundy service at St Asaph Cathedral, writes professional florist and member of the Cathedral congregation, Kate Jordan from The Craft Shed Flowers.

After my initial reaction of "you must have the wrong person", I found myself in conversation with Royal florist Shane Connolly, who introduced me to The King's sustainability initiative. I went away considering how I could work it into my designs and that's when the idea of living plants rather than cut flowers for the interior displays was born.

St Asaph Cathedral may be small compared to others, but it carries a quiet grandeur. I felt strongly that the designs should reflect that. I kept the palette soft: greens and neutrals with touches of seasonal colours. As a Welsh 'gal', it felt important to me that the designs captured the wild, natural beauty of Wales – not showy but reflecting our heritage and strong pride, through foliage plants, spring bulbs and emerging blossom.

The interior plants were supplied by Huw and Rachel at Jones Premier Plants in Gorsedd, whose support was invaluable. From sourcing to logistics, they played a huge role in bringing everything together.

After months of planning, borrowing pots from the local community, and many visits to Jones', installation took place on the Monday of Holy week. It was a long and physical day of lifting, placing and 'tweaking', but made special by the people involved. Everyone contributed – plants, pots, time, encouragement – and completely embraced the vision. What emerged was more than just

a floral scheme – it became a celebration of seasonality, sustainability and community.

The plants were later sold at a plant sale, where it was so moving to see the local community wanting to 'own a piece of history' and continue the legacy of the service. What began as a sustainable design approach came full circle, with the plants finding new homes to be enjoyed long after the day itself.

The traditional presentation 'nosegay' bouquets were made the day before the service, using locally grown stems. Many were supplied by Hannah Barrow of 'Violet and Daisies'. Once again, I wanted to keep everything natural to reflect the season. We used lots of foliage, herbs, spring blooms, including daffodils, to continue the Welsh theme.

I was incredibly fortunate to be at the service. I'd be lying if I said my heart wasn't in my mouth as Their Majesties were presented with the posies. Are they tied tightly enough? Might they be too tight? I needn't have worried. The wonderful Welsh stems truly spoke for themselves, and I've had messages from all over the world about the work. My work?! I'm still pinching myself.

From beginning to end, this has been an experience I will never forget. What could have felt overwhelming became something truly joyful, thanks to the kindness, trust and support of the clergy, diocesan and cathedral team, Shane, and the Royal Household.

There were so many unforgettable moments, but one will stay with me forever: the Welsh National Anthem filling the Cathedral. The sound, the emotion, the pride – it was overwhelming. In that moment, it was clear to everyone present that they were somewhere truly special.



Welcoming The King and Queen

Children and teachers from eight local primary schools were invited to welcome The King and Queen outside St Asaph Cathedral for the Maundy Service. Children from St Asaph VP School, Ysgol Trefnant, Ysgol St George, Ysgol Borthyn in Ruthin, St Mary's VA Primary School in Nercwys, Nannerch VC Primary School, Ysgol Trelawnyd and Ysgol

Cefn Meiriadog had a prime spot on the grass outside the Cathedral to watch The King and Queen arrive.

After the service, King Charles and Queen Camilla spent time talking to the children and their teachers, before heading onto the High Street to meet hundreds of local people who had gathered.



Samba Band Sounding a Welcome

The Samba Band from Ysgol Esgob Morgan in St Asaph heralded the arrival of the Royal couple at St Asaph Cathedral. The band, made up of 15 young people, played a medley of well-known and lively tunes to keep the crowd entertained. Their music also helped to drown-out shouting from the *Not My*

King Republican group who had gathered across the road from the cathedral. Their music, along with the Denbighshire Music Co-operative Fusion Band, which performed from a marquee outside the cathedral after the service, contributed to the carnival-feel as The King and Queen met the crowds who had gathered.



Kate is planning to run a Sustainable Church Flowers demonstration, presented by Royal Florist, Shane Connolly, on Saturday 18 July in St Asaph Cathedral. Look out for details on StAR. Find out more about Kate's work at www.thecraftshedflowers.co.uk



A View from the Canon Stalls



What an honour to be invited to attend the Maundy Thursday Service at the Cathedral this year, writes the Revd Canon Nia Wyn Morris from All Saints' Church, Newtown. On receiving the invitation, I did

consider whether to attend or not as we had to be at the cathedral an hour and a half before the service, and it is a two-hour car journey from Newtown. I am so pleased that I made the decision to attend – I would have missed an unforgettable experience and a very special service. I had no idea at the time that Peter Thompson and his wife Pam, from my local congregation, were present and that Peter was to receive the Maundy Alms. They thought I knew but had had to keep it confidential!

I hadn't expected to see much of the service or the royal couple, as my Canon stall is in the chancel, and is quite hidden from the main body of the cathedral. Fortunately, there was a large screen for us to follow the service, and we had the honour of having a good view of the Yeomen of the Guard carrying the dishes containing the alms.

The service was altogether very moving with wonderful music and singing – the Cathedral Choir made us proud.

After the service, I joined the other Canons in gathering by the royal limousine – a fine-looking vehicle that none of us will be able to afford! Then we made our way to the crowd where we believed The King and Queen would pass by as they left. I found myself standing next to a group of young servers and Archdeacon Andy and the next thing King Charles greeted me and shook my hand followed by Queen Camilla.

A moment later, Olwen, our Diocesan Secretary, tapped my shoulder and shared with me the photo she took while King Charles shook my hand – a photo to treasure! Then Archdeacon Andy and I were challenged to stand by the Yeomen for a photo. Andy did ask their permission!

It was a great day and made even more special when I learnt that Pam and Peter Thompson were present and had received such an honour. Later in April, we held a service in St Gwynog's Church in Aberhafesp to give thanks and celebrate the service of all who dedicate time and energy to their church and community in the Cedewain Mission Area, and especially to celebrate with Peter and Pam.



It was wonderful to see a large congregation with representatives from most of the churches in the Mission Area. Both Peter and Pam have worked tirelessly with enthusiasm and commitment at St Gwynog's Church and within the Mission Area. They well deserved the honour bestowed upon them at the Cathedral on Maundy Thursday 2026.



A Royal Occasion for Our Tearoom



Translators' Tearoom had the great honour of being invited to provide lunches and refreshments for the Royal Maundy Service, attended by Their Majesties The King and Queen. For Hannah Watson, Tearoom Manager, it was exciting to be part of such a special and historic occasion.

We prepared a buffet lunch for the Royal Household and the many people involved in organising the service, as well as providing packed lunches for the team and the royal choir to enjoy on their journey back to London. The feedback we received was truly heartwarming – everyone expressed their gratitude for the welcome they received and how much they enjoyed the food.

It was especially meaningful to hear that the hospitality and warmth experienced throughout the cathedral was the best they had encountered, with every detail thoughtfully considered. The Maundy Service itself was beautiful, and

we felt incredibly proud hearing our cathedral choir sing so wonderfully alongside the royal choir.

We were also very fortunate to meet King Charles and Queen Camilla following the service, while serving well-earned tea and biscuits to staff. The King showed a genuine interest in the tearoom and seemed particularly impressed that all of our cakes are homemade – especially our much-loved scones.

As Tearoom Manager, I couldn't be prouder of our amazing team. Everyone pulled together brilliantly, with some starting as early as 6am, many volunteering their time and coming in on their days off to ensure everything ran smoothly.

A special thank you goes to Rebekah, Andrew, Gaynor, Margaret and Ginny for their hard work, dedication and teamwork in making the day such a success.



Honorary Chaplain to The King

A Canon at St Asaph Cathedral is one of six senior clerics to become an Honorary Chaplain to His Majesty The King, the first time clergy of the Church in Wales have been appointed. The Revd Canon Michael Balkwill was presented to King Charles at the end of the Maundy Service, along with the five other Chaplains. Each received a badge with the Royal cypher, and they will be invited to preach at a Royal Chapel during their period of appointment. Canon Michael, who is also Bishop Gregory's Chaplain, said: "I feel both honoured and humbled to have been invited by the King to become a member of his Ecclesiastical Household. It will be a joy to serve His Majesty in this capacity in the Diocese of St Asaph."





The Children of the Royal Almonry



Four local children were selected to be the Almonry Children for the Maundy Service. This involved presenting a posy of flowers, known as a nosegay, to The King and Queen as they arrived inside the Cathedral at the beginning of the service, and joining the processions. At the end of the service, the Almonry Children were part of the "official" Maundy photograph, taken outside the West Door and used widely in newspapers and magazines around the world.

Afterwards, the children were presented to the King and Queen in the marquee outside the West Door, along with their chaperone, Alison Matthias.

Thomas Ainslie, aged 10, said: "Being chosen to take part in the Royal Maundy Thursday service as one of the children of the Almonry was amazing. I felt very nervous at first, but everyone was so kind and helpful and once the service started I was so proud, happy and excited to be taking part. It was definitely a once in a lifetime experience and a real honour. The whole day was amazing, and speaking to The King and Queen was really special."



Kevin Beretchi aged 7, was the youngest of the Almonry Children.

Ruby Chapman, aged 9, has framed all her Maundy memorabilia. She said it was such a special day and she felt so important being a part of it. She was honoured to meet The King and Queen and will remember it for the rest of her life.



Ruby Williams, aged 9, drew a picture which she presented to The King. She said: "I wanted to make a portrait of The King and Queen, so the palace kindly granted me permission to pass it on to them on the day. King Charles asked me what my favourite subject was in school and when I said art he said I should carry on as I'm very good. The King and Queen were both very nice and I'm so happy I got the chance to meet them."

