



# PRESS INFORMATION

<b>To:</b>	News Desk	<b>From:</b>	Christine Doyle
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	<b>Tel:</b>	07769738180

**As work begins to make the Undercroft of the old Cathedral watertight, archaeologists have made some interesting discoveries which they will be sharing with the public on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 1pm.**



For the first time in 75 years, the original stone floor of the medieval Cathedral can be seen.

The floor is made up of memorial stones including some dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (one of which was a woman aged 100) and will be visible for the next two weeks. Also visible is the burnt wooden base of the Rood Screen.



Also uncovered is a wall of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the Hill by the Cemetery. Whilst archaeologists expected to find parts of it, they can now confirm that it was a two storey building - the top floor of which was removed as the Cathedral was expanded over it.



From research completed before the project, the Cathedral team had hoped to discover a third concealed Crypt similar to the Wyley Chapel . No Crypt has been discovered; instead there was a small space into which rubble from the interior of the ruined Cathedral had been placed. Most of the rubble was broken down after the Second World War and so this carved masonry is a 'time capsule' of rubble from

the time. Also in that space are two Victorian vaults.

“The main purpose of the project is to make the spaces underneath the stone floor watertight - the first step to reopening these amazing spaces to the public,” explained the Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry. “The archaeology which has been discovered is an added bonus which gives us fascinating of the lives of those who have worshipped on Hill Top up to 800 years ago.”

The archaeology will be visible for the next two weeks before the new watertight membrane and drainage system is installed. The lead archaeologist will present two 30 minute talks to the public on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 1pm in the Ruins.

This project has been generously funded by Churchcare from First World War Centenary Repairs Fund, the Allchurches Trust and WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Limited).

There is no charge, donations will be welcome.

**-ends-**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **The Wyley family**

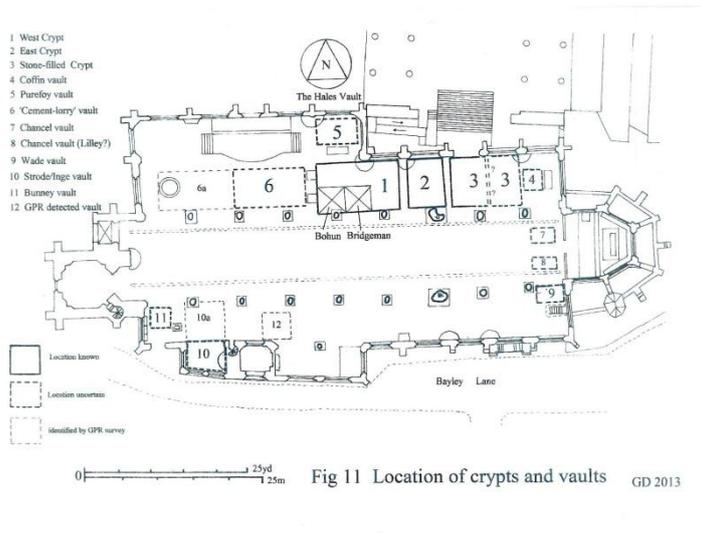
Col. W. F. Wyley became a leading light in the life of the city. He was a founder of the Chamber of Commerce, and was the organisation's second president 1904-6. He served as Mayor of Coventry 1911-12.

#### **WREN**

WREN is a not-for-profit business that awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK from funds donated FCC Environment as part of a voluntary environmental tax credit scheme called the Landfill Communities Fund. Since 1998, WREN has granted over £200m to more than 6500 projects which benefit people living within 10 miles of a FCC Environment landfill site.

#### **An illustration showing the various crypts and chapels underneath the ruins**

The area of excavation and repair are numbers 1, 2 and 3 on the plan below. Number 1 is the Chapel of the Cross and number 2 the Wyley Chapel. Number 3 is what we thought was a crypt but only has small vaults within it.



Please contact Christine Doyle on 07769 738180 if you have any questions. Anyone attending the site for filming or photography is invited to wear sturdy boots.