Cathedral Archaeologist

Application Pack

1926:2026

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

blackburncathedral.com/**vacancies**

Welcome from the Interim Dean

Thank you for your interest in becoming the next Blackburn Cathedral Archaeologist in this, our centenary year. Blackburn Cathedral is one of England's newest cathedrals, yet one of the country's oldest places of Christian worship. There has been a place of worship on the site of Blackburn Cathedral for over 1500 years, and we are a vibrant community serving the people of Lancashire.

Following the announced retirement of our current and long-standing archaeologist, Graham Keevill, we are seeking our next Cathedral Archaeologist as a contracted retained consultant.

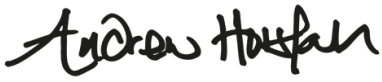
The work of the Cathedral Archaeologist is a statutory role as set out in the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011. The Cathedral Archaeologist will be responsible for the archaeological remains in and around the Cathedral building, its estate and is required to provide an annual report to Chapter.

As Cathedral Archaeologist, you will work alongside the Chief Operating Officer and closely with the Cathedral Architect which is also a statutory role.

During Graham's tenure of 22 years, he has provided extensive support of the Clergy Court development which was most valuable. All of Graham's projects are fully reported with copies captured in the Cathedral's archives.

If you are inspired by the prospect of becoming the next Cathedral Archaeologist, helping to care for the Cathedral and its estate for future generations, then we would be pleased to hear from you. Interested applicants are recommended to read through the Care of Cathedral's Measure 2011 (a link to which can be found to at the end of this pack).

We look forward to receiving your application.



The Revd. Canon Andrew Horsfall
Interim Dean of Blackburn

A Short History of Blackburn Cathedral

The history of many buildings is complex and Blackburn Cathedral is a space built and furnished in several stages from the nineteenth century onwards but which was preceded by other church structures going back many hundreds of years.

Blackburn Cathedral was formerly the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, becoming a Cathedral in 1926, when the Diocese of Blackburn was created. Essentially a Georgian building, designed by John Palmer and consecrated in 1826, it stands on a site reputedly associated with early Christianity. The foundation is believed to date from the year 596.

The earliest documentary evidence of Blackburn is in the Domesday Book, which was compiled in 1086. This shows that the church had been established by the reign of Ethelred the Unready (978 – 1016). The chronicles further state that in the reign of King Edward the Confessor (1042 – 1066) the church was already dedicated to St Mary and known as the 'Inn of the Lord'. Patronage passed to the family of de Lacey, by whom it was presented in the 12th Century to the Cistercian Abbey of Stanlaw in Cheshire. In 1283 the monks persuaded Henry de Lacey, Earl of Lincoln and Lord's of Pontefract and Clitheroe, to grant them the valuable Rectory of Whalley in Lancashire where they relocated.

Earl Henry stipulated that the bones of his ancestors and others buried in Stanlaw should be interred at 'The Blessed House in Whalley', and this was done. Whalley appears to have been dependent on Blackburn, but with its advancement the position was reversed, and St Mary's became subservient to the monastery. Eight c15th misericords have survived from Whalley Abbey and are installed in Blackburn Cathedral.

It is believed that in this period a Norman church stood on the Saxon site. When the foundations of John Palmer's church were being dug, in around 1820, there came to light blocks of stone incised with Norman patterns and carved capitals. The architectural history of the church is known with certainty from the fourteenth century, when it was rebuilt in the decorated style during the reign of King Edward III. Fragment of medieval glass from this church are preserved in a window in the South Transept of the Cathedral.

In common with other important medieval churches, St Mary's was enriched with Chantry Chapels, where priests prayed for the souls of the donors. In common with other such foundations the chantry was dissolved in 1547 and the endowments used to found Blackburn Grammar School, which was granted a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth I.

During the time of the battle of Preston, during the Civil War, the church was despoiled by Cromwell's soldiers. The most treasured relic the Cathedral owns is the 15th Century Pax, a small gilt tablet engraved with the Madonna standing on a crescent moon holding the baby Jesus, which was kissed by priest and congregation at the moment of the peace in the Mass. Most of these were destroyed at the Reformation, and as far as is known, only eight now exist in England. The Blackburn Pax had been hidden in a gravestone in the churchyard and came to light in 1820 when the stone was being moved to make way for the new church.

By 1818 the old church was in disrepair, and it was decided to build a completely new building. John Palmer was asked to build the new church. A pioneer of gothic revival of which St Mary's must have been a very early example; it was still a Georgian church. This building forms the Nave of the Cathedral and was adorned as we see it today as part of the 'completion scheme' of the late 1960's by the Architect Laurence King and rededicated in 1965 in the presence of HRH Princess Margaret.

It was William Temple, when he was Bishop of Manchester, who decided that Blackburn Parish Church should become the Cathedral for the new Diocese of Blackburn. One of the reasons was that the large churchyard sharply fell away to the East and therefore any extension would not only create space at Cathedral level, but also space at undercroft level, giving a large number of rooms under the Cathedral. In the original scheme, drawn up by the Architect WA Forsyth in 1933, there was space for a Refectory, Library and Chapter House. Temple's ideal was that as well as being a place of daily worship, it would also be 'a centre of influence on all aspects of people's lives'.

Becoming a Cathedral

The 1933 scheme for which all the money had been raised was for a grandiose Cathedral using the old parish church as the Nave. The style was 'modern gothic' reflecting the simpler and more severe contemporary style. There was to have been a huge central tower and large transepts and a long chancel. The Foundation stone for the building was laid in November 1938 by the Countess of Harewood. The outbreak of war meant that work drew to a near standstill. And it was not until 1950 that work could really begin in earnest and by then inflation and rising costs meant that the original scheme had to be curtailed.

Laurence King was appointed architect to the Cathedral in 1961 and it fell to him to adapt the design. He solved the problem by substituting the iconic Lantern Tower for the massive structure proposed by Forsyth, placing the Sanctuary directly beneath it in the central crossing. This meant that wherever people are seated, the drama of the liturgy is visible. It was during this time that the dark Victorian windows were removed from the Nave and the floor of Derbyshire polished limestone installed.

The Sanctuary furniture with the striking Corona, both a crown of suffering and a crown of glory, and the angel pendentives are by the artist John Hayward who also designed the Worker Christ at the rear of the Nave. From the Corona our eyes are taken upwards by the intentionally thick cables to the central boss of the Lantern Tower depicting the Holy Spirit. Looking down over the whole Cathedral is the Rood, the work of Advent Hunstan, the famous woodcarver.

21st Century Developments

Cathedrals are ever changing places, responding to the needs of people they seek to serve. In 2001 it was decided to try to realise William Temple's aspirations set out in 1933 in a way which would meet the needs of the 21st century, by restoring the heartbeat to Blackburn town centre. For 14 years the Chapter have worked in partnership with the Borough Council and others to regenerate the Cathedral Precinct and the surrounding area now known as the Cathedral Quarter.

These plans came to fruition in the £33m regeneration scheme, completed in 2016 including a new hotel and office block as well as a new eastern precinct for the Cathedral. It also houses a library, refectory, teaching and meeting rooms and offices. There are also ten residences for clergy and lay staff, a Cloister Garth and 50 space underground car park.

Role Context

The Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 requires that no works be implemented which might materially affect the archaeological character or any archaeological remains in or under the cathedral church or within the precinct of the cathedral, including works to the fabric of the cathedral church and any other buildings in ecclesiastical use, unless the proposals have been approved under the Measure. Certain buildings within the precinct may be listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Care of Cathedrals Measure states that it is the duty of the Chapter of a cathedral to appoint a Cathedral Archaeologist unless, in the view of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, the archaeological significance of the cathedral does not justify it. All Cathedral Archaeologist appointments therefore have a role in statutory planning regulation and a responsibility to uphold the requirements of the Care of Cathedrals Measure as they relate to archaeology.

All cathedrals also appoint a Cathedral Architect or Surveyor to the Fabric, who holds a similar statutory role as regards the standing buildings and setting. In most cathedrals there will be overlap in the interests and jurisdiction of the Cathedral Architect and Cathedral Archaeologist.

Whilst an individual will be appointed as Cathedral Archaeologist as required under the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011, we recognise that many archaeologists work as part of a practice which can offer additional support as and when project demands require. Therefore, we have considered the role specification both individually and as a practice. Please note applications from individuals will not be at a disadvantage in this process, but they should make it clear how they would call on support if required in an area outside of their expertise and/or capacity.

The Church of England is for everyone, and we want to reflect the diversity of the community the church serves across the whole country, whether through age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and gender. We see this appointment as an opportunity to seek to diversify and include these groups and whilst appointment will be made on the meme of the application, we would strongly encourage all to apply regardless of background.

Blackburn Cathedral is a complex building, and access can be challenging (including accessing spaces at height). Blackburn Cathedral will ensure that there will be an opportunity to discuss alternative access arrangements by others and/or rationale for anyone who may have difficulty accessing any spaces within the Cathedral to allow for all applicants to apply for this role.

Role Scope

The Cathedral Archaeologist is concerned with:

1. What is defined in the Care of Cathedrals Measure as "archaeological remains" meaning the remains of any building, work or artefact, including any trace or sign of the previous existence of the building, work or artefact in question.

2. Below ground evidence (including human remains), standing structures, the Cathedral precinct and its historical development, and artefacts associated with the Cathedral.

3. Understanding these historic elements and the potential impact of change on them.

4. Communicating that understanding as appropriate to others including those responsible for outreach.

5. All aspects of the archaeological process from initial identification of significance through to publication and archiving of results from investigations.

6. Working with professional colleagues having a shared interest in archaeological matters broadly defined, such as the Cathedral Architect.

Please note that Chapter reserves the right to appoint another archaeologist to work on specific projects but will consult the Cathedral Archaeologist before such an appointment is made.

Role Description

The Cathedral Archaeologist is required to:

1. Act as the professional advisor to the Chapter on all matters for which it has archaeological responsibility.

2. Attend, *ex officio*, meetings of the Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) as the Chapter's professional advisor and a non-voting member.

3. Produce an annual report to the Chapter summarising works carried out and outlining how identified archaeological priorities are being addressed.

4. Initiate assessments and/or strategic plans for the management of the Cathedral's archaeology, including the development of research agenda.

5. Respond to consultations on proposals for works, whether recommended by the Cathedral Architect or Surveyor or authorised by the Chapter to be carried out by its works staff, or the local authority, or statutory undertakers.

6. Prepare initial appraisals and assessments for proposed works that might destroy, reveal or conceal material of potential archaeological significance, advising on the likely scope, outline costs and timescale of any required work.

7. Organise and carry out small-scale programmes of archaeological recording and reporting.

8. Prepare briefs for further desk-based assessment, field evaluation and major programmes of excavation and recording by appointed contractors in mitigation of impacts by works or for other purposes; to review their Written Schemes of Investigation recommending their approval or otherwise to Chapter.

9. Advise Chapter on the best available quality and value of archaeological work when an external archaeological contractor is to be appointed.

10. Monitor work by appointed contractors, ensuring it has clear aims and objectives, includes adequate post-excavation analysis, generates a sufficient project archive and concludes with appropriate publication of results.

11. Ensure in conjunction with appropriate colleagues that the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England is aware of the archaeological dimension of proposed works and projects and of results arising from approved archaeological work.

12. Liaise with the Architect or Surveyor over preparation of the Quinquennial Inspection Report, progress with current projects and preparation of new ones.

13. Advise the Chapter on the development of a policy for the deposition of archaeological archives (paper, electronic and finds) in a suitable place.

14. Advise the Chapter on the relevant sections of the Inventory and on the proper storage and curation of archaeological material registered on the Inventory including finds made during project work.

15. Ensure personal continuing professional development with regard to research and methodologies for cathedral archaeology generally.

16. Advise on relevant legislation and permissions in relation to proposals for works, and on relevant legislation, such as Health and Safety regulations, Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations, Ministry of Justice regulations concerning human remains, listing and scheduling controls, ecclesiastical legislation, etc.

17. Advise upon contingency arrangements for disaster planning.

18. Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time as agreed with the Chapter and the Chief Operating Officer.

Person Specification

The Cathedral Archaeologist is likely to be able to demonstrate all or most of the following:

Essential

- A graduate or post-graduate qualification, in archaeology or a related discipline.
- Proven experience in the survey and analysis of historic buildings and archaeological sites, with special reference to church archaeology (as appropriate to each particular cathedral).
- Proven experience of working successfully in an archaeological curatorial capacity.
- Knowledge of the legislative and planning framework as it pertains to archaeology.
- Familiarity / capability with standard and relevant specialised IT packages.
- Ability to conduct excavations and recording work including working at heights and on scaffolding.
- A positive approach to team-working with Cathedral staff and other professionals.

Desirable

- Membership of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).
- Current active research interests in relevant aspects of church archaeology including an established record of academic publication.
- Motivation and skills for communicating the interest of cathedral archaeology to non-specialist audiences.
- Knowledge of ecclesiastical buildings legislative systems and duties.

Additional practice support could also bring:

- The ability to call on other archaeologists or practitioners that will support Chapter's needs.
- Be able to service the precinct, estate, as well as the Cathedral on any larger projects.

The Cathedral Team

Whilst the Archaeologist is ultimately responsible to Chapter, on a day to day basis they will liaise with the Chief Operating Officer who oversees the fabric of the Cathedral and the estate which includes all archaeology.

The Dean is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the Cathedral, is the Chair and an executive member of Chapter (the board of Trustees). Primarily he leads on mission and ministry and strategic planning. The COO and Dean oversee the Cathedral's finances. These roles are members of the Executive Management Team (with delegated operational control of the Cathedral). The Archaeologist will be expected to provide ad hoc reports as required.

Other key relationships

- **Members of Chapter** - both exec and non-exec trustees of the Cathedral.
- **Executive Management Team** - delegated day to day operational management of the Cathedral and its estate includes Chief Officers, Directors, and Executive Members of Chapter.
- **Cathedral Fabric Committee for England** - statutory body with regulatory functions. Also promotes the care and conservation of Cathedrals.
- **Fabric Advisory Committee** - advising Chapter on matters relating to the care, conservation and development of the Cathedral.
- **Cathedral Architect** - Statutory role advising Chapter of the fabric of the Cathedral
- **Virger and Estate Team** - Cathedral staff and volunteers instructing and undertaking works in relation to the Cathedral and its estate.
- **Local & Regional Educational Facilities** - To offer expertise and extend working relationships with other local and regional educational facilities that work alongside Blackburn Cathedral.
- **Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council** - a semi unitary rural borough council providing archaeological conservation and planning advice and services.
- **Historic England** - helping deliver schemes that bring buildings into use, tell the stories of communities and their spaces, and restore pride in local heritage.

Contract Retainer Amount

It is expected that the consultant architect will be engaged on the basis of a retainer for pre-agreed services. An annual retainer will be paid (applicants should quote for this), which is expected to cover:

- Attendance at the meetings identified and the production of any related reports.
- Ad hoc support, enquiries, telephone conversations and support, as well as short papers and reports and the early-stage development of projects - some of which may not come to fruition.
- The retainer fee implies that work for Chapter is given priority and that Chapter, and its officers may seek and receive advice without incurring fees.
- Expenses.

Some reports, watching briefs and studies, or more substantial project scoping work, may fall beyond the retainer. Applicants are asked to indicate report(s) that might fall under this heading and provide indicative costs and rates.

We will expect applicants to set out a schedule of fees for ad hoc additional work as described above (including time charge rates for wider practice staff if relevant), along with a proposal as to their approach for bigger and more developed projects.

Meeting Attendance

The Cathedral Archaeologist will be required to attend the Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) meetings which are held quarterly (4 meetings per year), working closely with the FAC Chair and its committee. Ad-hoc attendance to other meetings and committees may be required from time to time as required or when necessary.

Application Process

To apply for this post, applicants should submit the following:

- A completed **application form**.
- A covering letter enclosing a CV (with 2 referees). The letter should address the appointment criteria described herein, explain your suitability for this role, and how your experience makes you think you would enjoy this challenge.
- A completed **Church of England Confidential Declaration Form**.
- An **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form** (completing this form is voluntary and non-completion/submission will not affect your application).

Submission Deadline

Applications should be sent via email to: **coo@blackburncathedral.co.uk** marked for the attention of Ian White (Chief Operating Officer) and must be received by midnight, **Sunday 3rd May 2026**.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will take place on **Wednesday 6th May 2026**. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a formal in person interview no later than the end of business on **Thursday 7th May**.

Interviews

Interviews will take place w/c **Monday 1st June** or w/c **Monday 8th June** dependent on candidate and interviewing panel availability. Those not shortlisted will be notified following the interviews.

Selection Process

On the day of the interview, we will take candidates round the Cathedral accompanied (even if the candidate knows the Cathedral well already) by some of the key people with whom they will work.

An interview panel of four people is likely. Chapter or its representative will be in the chair, the Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee will be represented as the appointee will be a member *ex officio*. A member of the Church of England Cathedral's Fabric Commission will also be represented.

Candidates will be asked to make a short presentation, with or without Powerpoint, on a pre-arranged topic at the start of their interview. This topic will be clarified if the candidate is short-listed. It is not anticipated this will require any new work to be undertaken and will likely focus on a topic related to the role as Cathedral Archaeologist.

Following interview, the successful candidate will be appointed to commence from **1st July 2026** for which a handover with the current archaeologist is envisaged.

Equality Statement

The Dean and Chapter recognise that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce.
It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Safeguarding

Blackburn Cathedral is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff and volunteers to align with this and our recruitment processes reflect this commitment.

Pre-Employment Checks

Please note that all offers of employment are subject to pre-employment checks which will include receipt of satisfactory references and, where required, either basic or enhanced DBS clearance.

Further Information

The specific expectations of the role of Cathedral Archaeologist, in accordance with the Care of Cathedral's Measure (2011), are listed within this pack. Other documents to be aware of:

- **Care of Cathedral Measure 2011**
- **Cathedrals Measure 2021**
- **The Role and Duties of the Cathedral Archaeologist** (CFCE)

If you have any further questions, please contact the Cathedral Office on 01254 277430.

Should you wish to come and visit us ahead of submitting an application, please contact Ian White (Chief Operating Officer) by email: **coo@blackburncathedral.co.uk**