

# LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

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Mercury News

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The capsule sits in its new home – a replacement buttress – with the stone which will seal it in pictured in the foreground. (AK200210-0205A)



The Lady Chapel is undergoing major restoration work. (AK200210-0210A)



Students and teachers inspect the restoration work – and marvel at the views. (AK200210-0215A)



One of the replacement pieces of masonry soon to grace Lichfield Cathedral. (AK200210-0204A)



King Edward VI School students, head of History Andy Bowman and assistant headteacher Jenny Varley scaled the scaffolding with guidance from contractors MCL. (AK200210-0201A)

## Church walls to carry message to the future

by Alex Keller  
NEWS REPORTER

STUDENTS from King Edward VI School took a leap into the future by planting a time capsule at Lichfield Cathedral. With the building's ongoing restoration project in full swing on the Lady Chapel, the capsule was buried in the new stonework.

And as the masonry has an expected 800-year lifetime, the capsule is likely to sit sealed in the buttress until 2800. Cathedral leaders invited youngsters at the Upper St John Street school to choose items to be tucked away for the future.

Students took part from across the school year groups and included Liz Bains, Meg Brett, Hannah Fekete, Gemma Kain, Laura Kain and Fiona Davis.

Assistant headteacher Jenny Varley said: "For the past month, the students have discussed time capsules in their history lessons and chosen items during tutorial time.

"It has proved incredibly difficult to choose items that reflect our lives now in 2010 but which are likely to last the length of time before the



This snap of master masons from Midland Conservation Ltd has been included in the time capsule. (A9)

capsule is uncovered in about 2800.

"Who is to say what will last? Previous hoards have contained metallic artefacts, but will the plastic and paper in our hoard stand the test of time?"

In choosing items, students took several themes and looked at life in school as well as in Lichfield, the rest of the UK and the world.

Their goal was to find information and objects exemplifying young people today, their fears and hopes for the future.

"We chose a mixture of paper-based information – newspapers, information about illnesses and photos of local sites, some of which were laminated in the hope they would last longer," said Mrs Varley.

"Other information was put on to a USB memory stick with the hope that, whatever technology is in place in 2800, those who follow us will be able to retrieve the data.

"Some items will enable the

chip, the USB stick itself and other less glamorous items such as a low energy light bulb – we can only guess at what they make of that in 2800."

Last Thursday, students and teachers met with Canon Pete Wilcox from the cathedral before experts from masonry contractor Midland Conservation Ltd guided the group up to the burial spot, via scaffolding.

There was ample time to inspect the restoration work, as well as officially deposit the capsule into its new home.

"The capsule itself is no beauty, being a length of grey plastic pipe," said Mrs Varley. "But its contents mean very much to those involved in choosing and collecting the items in it and who consider themselves to have been incredibly lucky to be a part of this experience."



From left: Students, back row, Liz Bains, aged 18, and Meg Brett, 16, with front row, twins Laura Kain, 12, Gemma Kain, 12, and Hannah Fekete, 11, at Lichfield Cathedral. (AK200210-0216A)

### Factfile

- The time capsule's contents
- Relating to students and school:
- School diary, badge and tie;
- Lichfield Mercury article about the school;
- Photos;
- Letter from the students to 'whoever opens the time capsule';
- Orders of service for latest carol service and Dedication Service at the cathedral.
- Relating to Lichfield:
- Photos;
- Map.
- Relating to England:
- Examples of current coinage;
- Front page of the Times from early March;
- Information on illnesses (swine flu);
- Fashion;
- Relating to global issues:
- Examples of stamps;
- Information on Afghanistan;
- Front page of an international newspaper from early March.
- Relating to current science and technology:
- Mobile phone;
- Solar powered calculator;
- Touch thermometer;
- Computer chip;
- Low energy light bulb;
- USB memory stick containing information on climate change, latest scientific issues, photographic images and web pages.
- Seeds;
- Paracetamol;
- Plastic toothbrush;
- Photos of current technology and transport.
- From Midland Conservation Ltd:
- Photograph of the masons;
- Wage slip.
- Relating to Lichfield Cathedral:
- Friends of the cathedral leaflet;
- Sunday service booklet for Passion Sunday, March 21 2010;
- Services, addresses and events throughout Holy Week and Easter 2010;
- Music list for Passion week 2010;
- The Staffordshire Hoard, exclusive film screening leaflet;
- Welcome to Lichfield;
- Information leaflets;
- Spotlight newspaper;
- Memory stick containing images of the cathedral.