

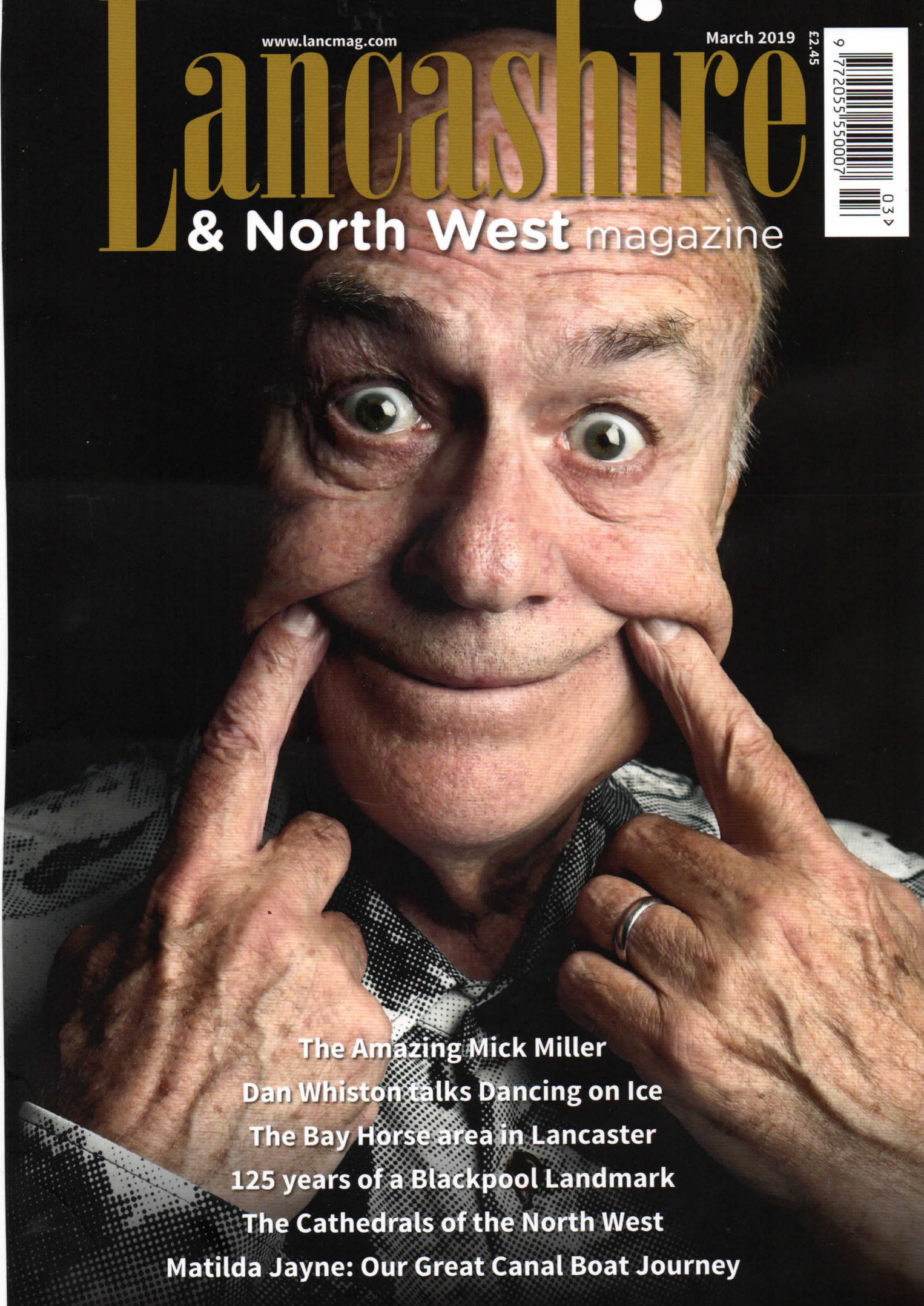
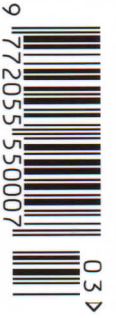
Lancashire

www.lancmag.com

March 2019

& North West magazine

£2.45



The Amazing Mick Miller
Dan Whiston talks Dancing on Ice
The Bay Horse area in Lancaster
125 years of a Blackpool Landmark
The Cathedrals of the North West
Matilda Jayne: Our Great Canal Boat Journey

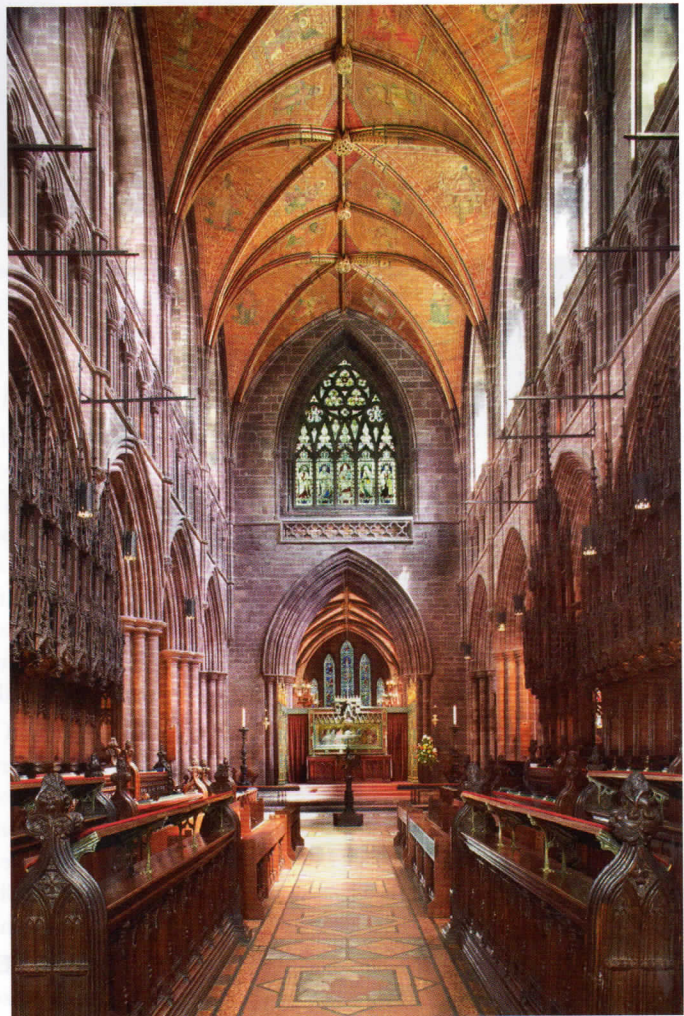


TOP: Carlisle Cathedral. Picture courtesy of John Cheal, Verger. ABOVE: Inside Carlisle Cathedral by John Cheal.

The Cathedrals of the North West

by Andrew Harris

Our region is blessed with seven cathedrals although their civic significance is often misunderstood. When your columnist was asked to lead the campaign to achieve city status for Preston the most frequent comment in public meetings was “*You need to have a cathedral to be a city.*” It is, however, usually the other way round: most cathedrals are in municipalities which were cities long before the cathedral was consecrated – because that was where they wanted to be. Our exception is Blackburn where their beautiful cathedral graces a mere borough. Preston’s later status as a city resulted in the parish church becoming a minster which is normally a northern cathedral which was built as part of a monastery but it has come to mean a large or important church. Churches are very good at defining status!



TOP RIGHT: Chester Cathedral.
RIGHT: The interior of Chester Cathedral.

All of our cathedrals have an interesting story to tell – now told from the oldest to the youngest.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL – The Augustinian Priory which became Carlisle Cathedral was begun in 1122 by Athelwold who became the first Prior and then the first Bishop of Carlisle when the church was raised to the status of a cathedral in 1133 – 886 years ago. It is the second smallest of England’s ancient cathedrals but is distinguished by figurative stone carvings, a set of medieval choir stalls and the largest window in the flowing Gothic style in England. The architectural style is Norman with features such as solid masonry, large round piers, round arches and round headed windows preserved in the south transept and the remaining two bays of the nave. The cathedral was built using local red sandstone which is much discoloured and affected by subsidence. The piers lean at different angles.

The best feature of Carlisle Cathedral is the East Window. The tracery - or ornamental stone openwork – is in the most complex of English Gothic styles known as Flowing Decorated Gothic. At 51 feet high and 26 feet wide it is the largest and most complex such window in England. The tracery of the window still contains much of the original medieval glass.

Carlisle Cathedral was damaged during the English Civil War but restored between 1853 and 1870. It is the seat of the Anglican Diocese of Carlisle and its formal name is the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL – The present cathedral – the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary –

forms part of a spectacular heritage site which includes ancient monastic buildings . The cathedral itself dates from between 1093 and the early 1500s although it has been modified many times. It was consecrated as the seat of the Bishop of Chester in 1541 making it the second oldest cathedral in the north west. As a result of these origins the present cathedral is a fascinating combination of all the major styles of English architecture from Norman to Perpendicular. More recent



TOP: Manchester Cathedral.
ABOVE: Inside Manchester's
Cathedral.

additions – like a war memorial in 1922 and a Belfry Tower in 1975 – ensure that it isn't just the hymns which are ancient and modern in Chester Cathedral.

Chester Cathedral was built using Keuper (Red) Sandstone from the Cheshire Basin. What makes it good for detailed carving makes it vulnerable to erosion by wind, rain and pollution. For this reason Chester is one of the most restored cathedrals in England. This mainly happened in the 1800s resulting in many new details and refacing.

The façade of Chester Cathedral is dominated by a large recessed 8-light window above a recessed doorway in a screen-like porch all designed, it is thought, in the early 1500s. The cathedral site in Chester is like a journey through the ages.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

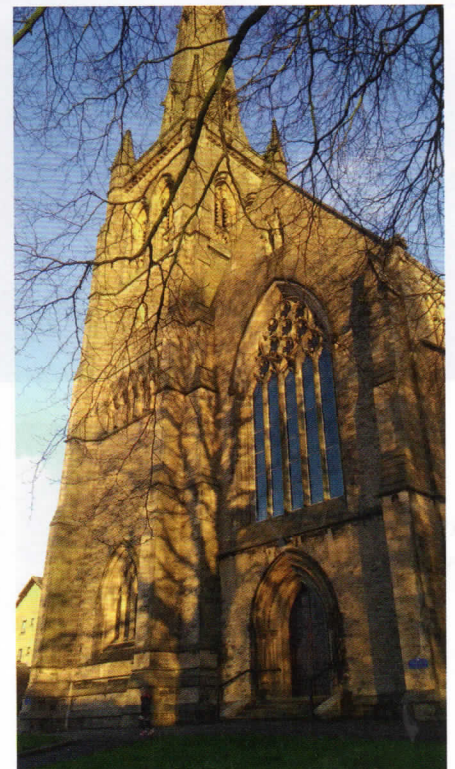
– With a predecessor church mentioned in the Domesday Book then construction and restoration between 1421-1882 and after World War 2, Manchester Cathedral is the history of Manchester and the industrial revolution. It is an exemplar of the Perpendicular Style woven into the fabric of modern Manchester – the Arndale Centre and National Football Museum are neighbours.

Manchester grew with the industrial revolution and vice versa. This inspired the creation of the Manchester Diocese in 1847 when the present building was consecrated as the Manchester Cathedral – the region's third oldest. It hasn't had an easy life. In the 1940 blitz a bomb severely damaged the cathedral and demolished the medieval Lady and Chantry Chapels. Repairs took nearly 20 years to complete then the cathedral was damaged again by the IRA in June 1996.

A spectacular feature of Manchester Cathedral in the £3 million Visitor Centre which was opened by Queen Elizabeth II. The main attractions are the exhibition room, a shop and the Hanging Bridge from the 1400s – a scheduled monument that was once the main approach to the cathedral but buried for more than 100 years.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

– Formally known as the (Anglican) Cathedral Church of Christ in Liverpool, Liverpool Cathedral is the largest cathedral and religious building in Britain. At 207 yards / 189 metres long it is the longest cathedral in the world but in overall volume it drops to being the 5th largest in the world. The (Roman Catholic) Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral is only half a

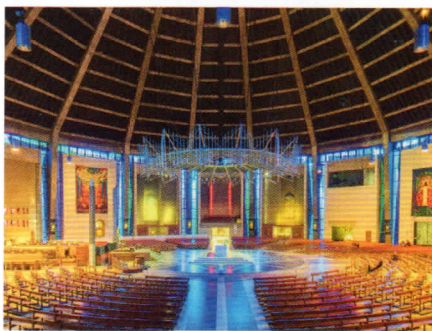


mile away and the two are linked by the wonderfully-named Hope Street. Sadly this is less meaningful than it sounds as the name came from local merchant William Hope long before either cathedral was built.

The construction of Liverpool Cathedral was long and difficult. Work started in 1904 using pinkish-red sandstone from the suburb of Woolton but was limited during the 1914-18 war. The chancel, ambulatory, chapter house and vestries formed the first section

of the main body of the cathedral - enclosed by a temporary wall - and this was consecrated as Liverpool Cathedral in the presence of King George V and Queen Mary and church leaders from around the world on the 19th July 1924. The aim was to finish the whole structure by 1940 but work slowed during the 1939-45 war when the cathedral was damaged by bombs. Work fully resumed in 1948 but the bomb damage wasn't fully repaired until 1955. The cathedral was completed in

TOP: The scale and the setting of Liverpool Cathedral. LEFT: Inside Liverpool Cathedral with Tracey Emin. ABOVE: Lancaster's Roman Catholic Cathedral.



TOP: The Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral at dusk.
ABOVE: Inside 'Paddy's Wigwam'.
 Picture courtesy of Mark McNulty.

1978 with the largest belltower in the world housing – at 220 feet- the world's highest and heaviest ringing peal of bells.

This enormous cathedral has many

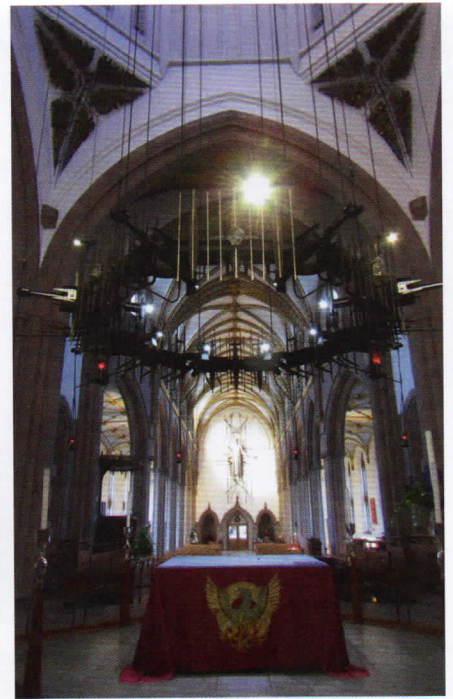
special features. In 1931 a series of 50 sculptures were commissioned and it took 30 years for these to be completed with memorials and reliefs. In 1993 a large bronze sculpture called “*The Welcoming Christ*” was installed over the outside of the west door just days before the death of the sculptor Dame Elisabeth Fink. In 2003 Liverpool artist Don McKinlay was commissioned to model an infant Christ to accompany the 15th century Madonna by Giovanna now situated in the beautiful Lady Chapel.

LANCASTER CATHEDRAL
 – Completed in 1901, this Roman Catholic parish church was elevated to the status of a cathedral in 1924 when the Diocese of Lancaster was created. Formally known at the (Roman Catholic) Cathedral Church of St Peter

it was built using sandstone ashlar to a Gothic Revival design with a 5-bay nave, octagonal baptistry and a tower supporting a spire which rises to a height of 240 feet or 73 metres.

Inside the cathedral are 6-bay north and south arcades and a west gallery carried on marble piers. Along the sides are chapels and confessionals. The Lady Chapel is at the north east of the cathedral. The old sanctuary has been converted into the Blessed Sacrament Chapel which features paintings on the walls.

Lancaster Cathedral was designed as a parish church by E. G. Paley and has been described as his “*masterwork as an independent church architect*”. When awarded Grade 11* status in 1994 it was described as a “*particularly important*



ABOVE LEFT: A splendid view of Blackburn Cathedral. ABOVE RIGHT: Inside Blackburn Cathedral.

building of more than special interest” – a distinction enjoyed by only 5.5% of buildings in this category.

LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL – This is the seat of the (Roman Catholic) Archbishop of Liverpool, the mother church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and affectionately known as “Paddy’s Wigwam”. The unique design followed a worldwide competition won by Sir Frederick Ernest Gibberd RA and was started in 1962 and consecrated as a cathedral on the 14th May 1967. Unlike other cathedrals it was built using concrete with a Portland stone cladding and a roof covered in aluminium. The requirement was to accommodate a congregation of 2,000 who should all be able to see the altar. The resulting structure is conical to a height of 195 feet / 59 metres topped by a tower in the shape of a truncated cone. This imaginative building is supported by 16 boomerang-shaped concrete trusses held together by 2 ring beams. Flying buttresses are attached to the trusses which give the building its tent-like appearance. Like a wigwam.

The circular building has 13 chapels around the perimeter. The crypt under the cathedral was the only part of the cathedral built to the earlier design by Sir Edward Lutyens which proposed a massive structure with the world’s largest dome. Wartime restrictions forced Lutyens’s project to stop and it was later considered too ambitious and costly. Hence the competition and

the more modest but imaginative and wonderful cathedral we see today.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

– Formally known as the Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin with St Paul this church has only been a cathedral since 1977 – but it has a long and confusing history. When the Diocese of Blackburn was created in 1926 – by separating it from the Diocese of Manchester – the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin in Blackburn which had been built in 1826 was raised to cathedral status. After 12 years funds had been raised to enlarge and improve the building to match its status as a cathedral. Work was delayed by the 1939-45 war but continued through the 1950s and 1960s producing the wonderful lantern tower with 56 different panes of coloured glass and the slender aluminium spire all completed by 1967. Further work transformed the old church and the completed new cathedral was consecrated in 1977.

Since 1998 the lantern tower – originally built in concrete - has been restored using natural stone and the windows have been replaced. Following this the east end roofs and parapets have been rebuilt to blend them into the main structure of the cathedral. Only after this work was the cathedral deemed complete after more than 70 years of construction.

Special features of Blackburn Cathedral included the massive steel and copper external sculpture *The Healing of Nations* which contains

thousands of fibre optic lights providing an ever-changing display. Many consider it was one of the most innovative examples of modern sculpture at any English cathedral. The top of the cathedral features the emblem of the Lancashire Rose. Your columnist feels that Blackburn Cathedral is the most successful of our seven cathedrals in blending into the centre of the host town and being part of it.

One day your columnist would like to review the best of the region’s cathedrals that never were. In the meantime we have much to celebrate with the seven gems in this article.



Andrew Harris – www.andreweharris.co.uk - gratefully acknowledges the many sources of information for this article. The pictures of Chester, Liverpool and Blackburn Cathedrals plus the external view of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral are courtesy of the cathedrals named. The pictures of Manchester and Lancaster Cathedrals are by your columnist.