

## THE ROYAL MAUNDY AT ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL



For only the second time in the history of the Royal Maundy, the Monarch came to Wales to distribute the Gifts. Queen Elizabeth II did so in St David's in 1982 but St Asaph was chosen for 2026. As well as His Majesty, himself an Honorary Royal Liveryman of the Worshipful Livery Company of Wales, four current Liverymen were involved. Maureen Mainland was one of the team of flower arrangers who turned the stone window ledges of the Cathedral into delightful Spring hedgerows of shrubs and flowers. John and Rosie Solbé were Stewards for the occasion, guiding the Recipients, their Companions and others to the West Door and to their allocated seats within the Nave and the South Chapel. Most importantly of all, Paul Mealor wrote a new setting for Psalm 138 which will now be used in indigenous languages at His Majesty's Chapel Royal.

Over a dozen members of the Choir of the Chapel Royal joined the 30-plus members of the Cathedral Choir in this joyous service. Paul also conducted the Brass Ensemble of the Royal College of Music & Drama in the stirring Vienna Philharmonic Fanfare of Richard Strauss, arranged by Paul for the occasion. Lastly, Paul composed a setting for a new work by Grahame Davies: 'A Sacred Benediction', written for the service and sung most beautifully by Rebecca Evans. Other Welsh composers and musicians featured, including William Mathias who had such a strong connection to St Asaph Cathedral

This year, the King is 77 and so he distributed gifts, borne by the Yeoman of the Royal Almonry on 'dishes' dating from the time of Charles II, to 77 men and 77 women, chosen this year from The Church in Wales and The Dioceses of Sodor & Man, of Chester, of Litchfield and of Hereford. To provide 154 places accessible to the King and the procession in such a small building was, to say the least, a logistical challenge but the Cathedral staff rose to the occasion.

The King and Queen Camilla made time to talk to all those who made this such a glorious and happy event.

**CA Professor John Solbé**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026**