

# Listening to Cathedral Visitors to.....

## “Space, the Universe and Everything!”

PG Learning Community (incl CSRM), Liverpool Cathedral  
26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2023



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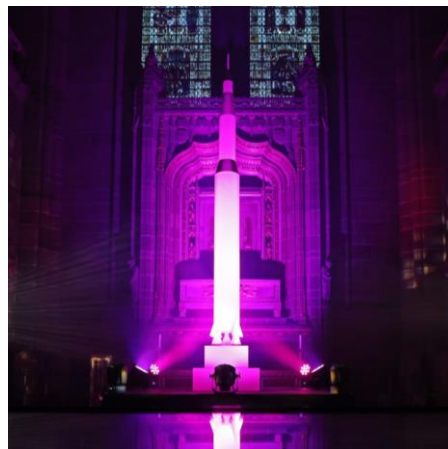
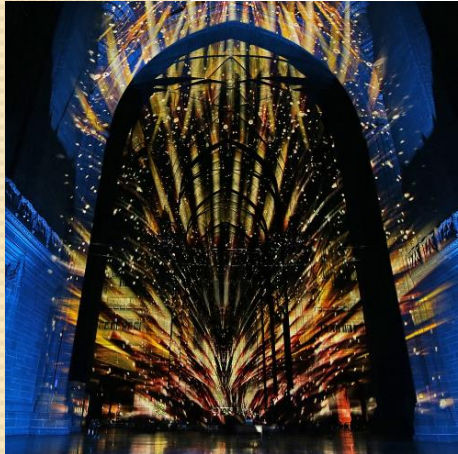
# Background

- Against a well-established background of Cathedral Studies, great interest in exploring and mapping the characteristics and motivations of cathedral visitors
- Exploring the reach of cathedrals – through different and innovative events and installations
  - Examine, listen to and learn from the thoughts and reflections of such visitors

# Motivation and Research Question

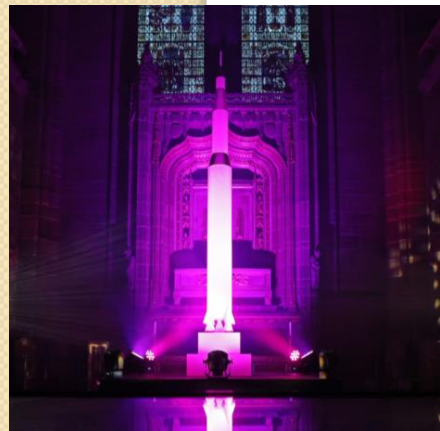
- No systematic research examining visitor characteristics for such Cathedral events with a scientific theme
- Focus on installation (18-27 Feb 2022) entitled “*Space, the Universe and Everything*”; A Light and Sound show created by Luxmuralis, drawing on skills of modern sculpture artist Peter Walker with sound composed by David Harper

# Son et Lumiere



# Methods

- During online booking for tickets, people were invited to give assent to receiving a follow-up survey from the cathedral team to assess their experience
- Invitation emailed out six months after the installation



# Instrument

- Qualtrics Platform
- Link – emailed out using the contact list released by Ticket Quarter; sent out via the Diocesan Comms team (so all responses were completely anonymous to the researchers)
- Three sections
  - Section 1 – demographics and background
  - Section 2 – 57 Likert items, 5 point scale (SA – SD); exploring
    - self-assessed religiosity,
    - intrinsic religious motivation,
    - quest religious orientation,
    - experiencing the cathedral,
    - perceived impact on well-being and
    - views on connection between science and religion
  - Section 3 – The Francis Psychological Type Scales; assessing orientations, perceiving functions, judging functions and attitudes
  - Closing section – open invitation for free-text comments





# Analysis and presentation here

- This presentation addresses just sections 1 and 2; and some of the qualitative responses, especially those specifically related to the connection between science and religion
- 2481 email recipients
  - 1213 (48.9%) opened the emails
  - 302 (12.2%) clicked through
  - 283 completed responses for this analysis...an effective response rate of 11.4%



# Results - Demographics

## Sex

	N	%
Male	65	23
Female	211	75
Other / missing	7	3

## Age

	N	%
Under 20	2	1
20-29	4	1
30-39	15	5
40-49	27	10
50-59	95	34
60-69	90	32
70-79	40	14
80+	4	1
Missing	6	2

## Education

	N	%
No formal education	5	2
School-level	50	18
Certificate/diploma	85	30
University (bachelor)	84	30
Masters degree	46	16
Doctorate	5	2
Missing	8	3

## Connection with Liverpool

	N	%
Live within ten miles of cathedral	190	67
Live over ten miles away	85	30
Missing	8	3

## Connection with Liverpool Cathedral

	N	%
Member of the congregation	4	1
Regular visitor	58	21
Occasional visitor	200	71
Visiting for the first time	12	4
Missing	8	3

## Planning the visit

	N	%
<i>In deciding to visit this event what is more important to you?</i>		
The nature of the event	179	63
Its location in Liverpool Cathedral	79	28
Missing	25	9
<i>In visiting Liverpool Cathedral which is more important to you?</i>		
The building	166	59
The fact that it is a cathedral	101	36
Missing	16	6



# Results – Religious Profile

## Religious affiliation

	N	%
None	69	24
Christian	189	67
Buddhist	5	2
Jewish	4	1
Muslim	1	0
Other	8	3
Missing	7	3

## Public worship attendance

	N	%
Never	107	38
At least once a year	76	27
At least six times a year	32	11
At least once a month	17	6
Every week	43	15
Missing	8	3

32%

## Self-assessed religiosity

	%
I am a religious person	39
I am a spiritual person	69
I believe in God	55

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

## Intrinsic religious motivation

	%
My religious beliefs really shape my whole approach to life	41
I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life	37
I allow almost nothing to prevent me from going to church on Sundays	12
The church is important to me as a place to share fellowship with other Christians	34
I pray at home because it helps me to be aware of God's presence	40
I pray chiefly because it deepens my relationship with God	32

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

Most (5/6) >~1/3<sup>rd</sup>

## Quest religious motivation

	%
I was driven to ask religious questions by a growing awareness of the tensions in my world	28
My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious beliefs	47
I value my religious doubts and uncertainties	55
For me, doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious	46
As I grow and change, I expect my religion to grow and change as well	51
I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs	37

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

~50%

# Results – Impact of the Visit

## Experiencing the Cathedral

	%
I felt a sense of peace in the cathedral	94
I felt a prayerful atmosphere in the cathedral	69
I felt God's presence in the cathedral	41
I found the cathedral awe-inspiring	97
I found the cathedral uplifting	95
I found the cathedral spiritually alive	75
I felt moved to pray	44
I felt moved to worship God	38

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

**Powerful Impact**

Fisher's four domains for Spiritual well-being; results show a positive impact in all domains. Those  $\geq 50\%$  indicated

## Perceived impact

## Spending time in LivCath has helped me....

	%
<i>Personal</i>	
to reflect on my personal wellbeing	72
to feel better about myself	70
to feel less stressed about myself	69
to open my eyes to the good in myself	37
to connect better with my inner self	55
<i>Communal</i>	
to reflect on my relationship with other people	66
to feel better about my relationships with other people	59
to feel less stressed about my relationships with other people	56
to open my eyes to the good in other people	57
to connect better with other people close to me	49
<i>Environmental</i>	
to reflect on my relationship with the world	70
to feel better about my relationship with the world	57
to feel less stressed about my relationship with the world	50
to open my eyes to the good in the world	61
to connect better with the natural world	52
<i>Transcendental</i>	
to reflect on my relationship with God	44
to feel better about my relationship with God	39
to feel less stressed about my relationship with God	33
to open my eyes to the good in God	40
to connect better with God	36

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

# Results – Science and Religion

## Reflecting on the place of Science within a Cathedral

### Visiting the exhibition

	%
<i>Visiting the exhibition has helped me to:</i>	
Reflect on the benefits of science within our world	78
Reflect on the dangers of science within our world	36
Reflect on the limitations of science within our world	46
Reflect on the benefits of religion within our world	44
Reflect on the dangers of religion within our world	28
Reflect on the limitations of religion within our world	33

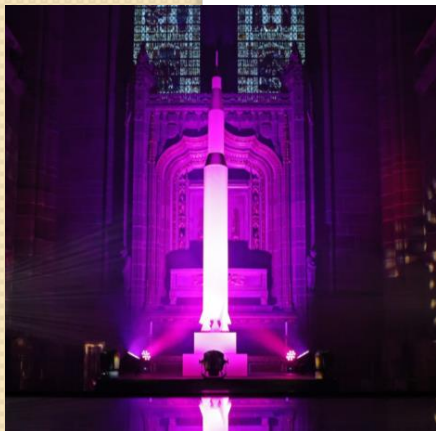
Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses

### Benefits, Dangers and Limitations...

### After visiting the exhibition

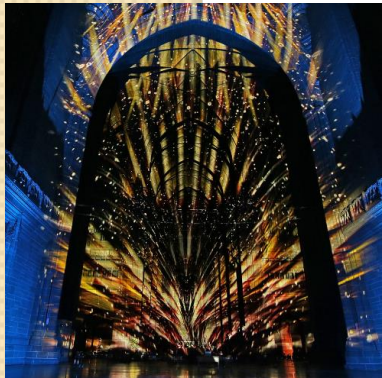
	%
<i>After visiting the exhibition, I think that:</i>	
Science does not need religion	33
Religion does not need science	21
We need both science and religion within our lives	72
A cathedral is not the right place for this type of exhibition	5
A cathedral is an ideal place for this type of exhibition	94
The exhibition is even better in a place like a cathedral	92
The exhibition would be the same anywhere – in a cathedral or a non-religious venue	11

Note: % = sum of agree and agree strongly responses



# Results – Free-text Comments

- Six broad themes identified included in the richness of the responses....
  1. Distinctive effectiveness of the installation
  2. Cathedral Serving the Local Community
  3. Beneficial Psychological Impact of their visit to the installation
  4. Resourcing the Spirituality of the visitors/those describing themselves as spiritual but not religious
  5. People who clearly identified as atheist/non-religious, yet applauded access to the magnificent building
  6. Installation resourced faith of visitors who aligned themselves with Christian tradition



# Some verbatim comments....

- Distinctive effectiveness of the installation

We had been to the cathedral before and we were really surprised by how affective the 'Space' show was, and how well it worked in a church setting. A very good, enjoyable evening. (male aged 50-59)

I think events such as The World globe and Space are fantastic showcased by the cathedral. We anticipate coming to more events like these. (female aged 50-55)

The cathedral is a magnificent and spiritual space which I always enjoy visiting particularly for the exhibitions/installations. It was wonderful to experience the awe with which the 'Universe' was received and how all the different ages and cultures absorbed the energies created therein. The atmosphere was electric and dazzling and we spent two full hours soaking this in. (female aged 60-69)

The Space, the Universe and Everything exhibition was truly stunning, moving, awe-inspiring - a never-to-be-forgotten evening. The lights, colours and special effects were wonderfully combined with the amazing music and the stunning architecture. I forwarded some of the photos I took that evening with friends as I wanted to share the event with them. I would definitely attend another event by this company and hope there will be that opportunity. (female aged 50-59)

# Some verbatim comments....

- Cathedral Serving the Local Community

A memorable experience enjoyed by many. The space event brought many people, including my family, into the cathedral who wouldn't normally visit a place of worship. I like that many churches etc are inviting the community through their doors in new ways. The faith sector has a massive part to play in community and things such as this should be used to increase that access. Thank you. (female aged 70-79)

I visited Space with my parents, sister and nephew and we all enjoyed it very much. Parts were incredible!! Thank you for bringing the event to Liverpool Cathedral. (female aged 40-49)

The experience was uplifting and interesting. I enjoyed seeing families visiting together, people standing, sitting and lying down, listening and watching - contemplating. The atmosphere was vibrant and reflective at the same time. I love the idea that a sacred, religious space was welcoming all the community in an open and non judgemental way. I believe this does more to open minds and evangelise more than any preaching. (female aged 50-59)



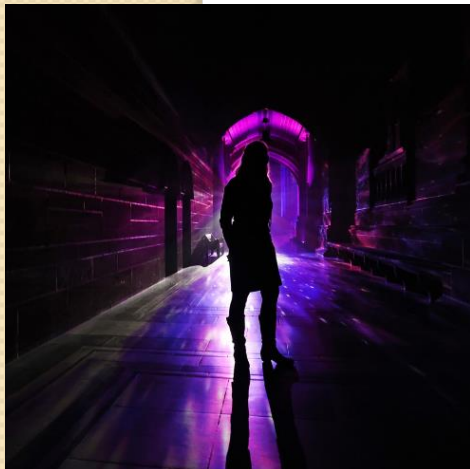


# Some verbatim comments....

- Beneficial Psychological Impact of their visit to the installation

Every time we visit, I feel welcomed and comfort. The building is magnificent and the exhibitions truly inspiring. As I walk around the building I feel a sense of quiet calm and reflection. It is a place I will never tire of visiting. (female aged 30-39)

I found the whole experience awe inspiring! The cathedral, well what an amazing building and I definitely felt a sense of peace during the time I spent there. I sort of lost myself in the wonderful atmosphere and can't wait to return to experience future exhibitions, and enjoy this wonderful building. (female aged 50-59)



# Some verbatim comments....

- Resourcing the Spirituality of the visitors/those describing themselves as spiritual but not religious

I am a spiritual person who prefers meditation to church going. But I love the events that take place in the cathedral and I am filled with joy when entering. The light and sound event you spoke of was by far the most beautiful event I have ever been to. It sent me into a state of bliss. I was sitting on the floor meditating filled with pure joy. The mixture of sound and light seemed to transport me to another dimension. Please bring it back. (male aged 60-69)

I have been to all the events at the cathedral, the moon, earth etc. The space in the building is perfect for this size of exhibition, however the fact that it is a cathedral does put a different 'feel' to it, I light a candle, I stare at the stained glass windows, the columns... it's not a religious experience but a spiritual one x. (female aged 50-59)

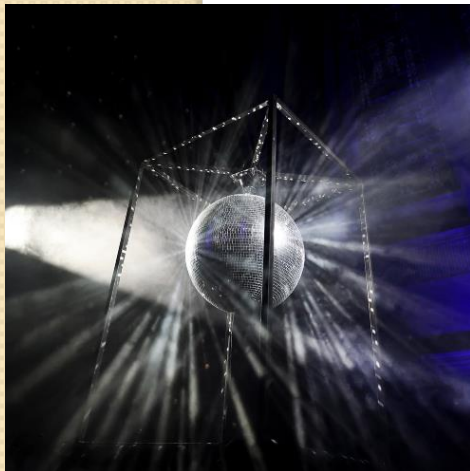
# Some verbatim comments....

- People who clearly identified as atheist/non-religious, yet applauded access to the magnificent building

I think the cathedral is a beautiful building and have enjoyed the doves and world installations as well as the space one. Although an atheist, I find spiritual comfort from lighting a candle in memory of loved ones. (female aged 70-79)

Not religious at all but love the cathedral and the event itself was simply breathtaking (male aged 50-59)

I really enjoyed the light experience and the cathedral made it a wonderful experience. Although I do not believe in God I do enjoy visiting cathedrals and the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral is my favourite. (female aged 60-69)



# Some verbatim comments....

- Installation resourced faith of visitors who aligned themselves with Christian tradition

I enjoy visits to the cathedral and feel that it is part of my roots, belonging to Liverpool and my ancestors. I feel church and religion play a big part in my life giving me faith and an anchor. I enjoyed the science evening at the cathedral in fact it was awesome. (female aged 70-79)

I welcome the developing focus on links between science and faith, the head and the heart, the what and the why, the detail and the bigger picture, the present reality and the vision. This is God's world and anything that helps prompt and supports me to serve him and others better is welcomed. (female aged 50-59)

# Conclusions

- High proportion expressing commitment to Liverpool Cathedral in some way
  - Importance of place; but also nature of the event
- Religious profile – through this sort of event, able to engage with churchgoers and non-churchgoers
  - Cathedrals have capacity to soften boundaries, raise questions
- Positive impact of installation on spiritual well-being
  - Perceived improvement – all four Fisher's domains
- Capacity to promote constructive thought – connection between science and religion
  - Vast majority in favour of cathedral engaging with science; an ideal place for this type of exhibition
  - Need for both science and religion in one's life



# Limitations

- Individuals who booked the tickets (not necessarily includes all who attended)
- Time lapse between attendance and conduction of the survey – low response rate
- Single invite to participate
- Lack of sophistication – science and religion questions

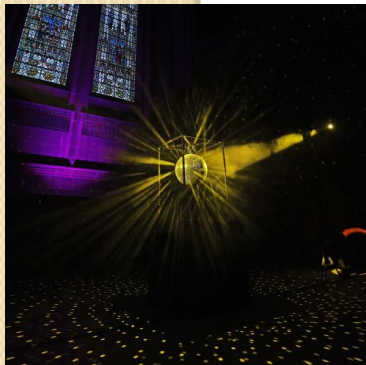




# Futures



- Paper
- Conducted another survey following the most recent Peter Walker Son et Lumiere at the Cathedral (Dec 2022)
- Survey again with those who booked tickets
  - Much shorter time lapse
  - Three invitations to participate
  - Less focus on science and religion



Many thanks for your attention;  
God bless and stay safe....

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