

## COLIN ABLITT

I've actually got two tales, I've had about 10 minutes to think about this, but I've got two tales. The one is a real tale of woe; probably my worst moment ever, which is when it was the Friday or Thursday when they were building the stage in the marketplace for the very first Mysteries.

Now bear in mind that none of the money for the very first Mysteries actually arrived until we'd done it, so we did the whole thing (and we'd got loads of money lined up for it apparently) but we did the whole thing on tick and some people weren't too happy about that. So it was the Thursday or Friday they were building the stage and I went down and I thought "My God it's happening, the stage is actually going up". This is the marvellous stage design that has been adapted over the years but it all came out as part of the original design plans. And then I looked a little more closely and they weren't actually putting it up at all, they were taking it down!

"What!" I shot back home and said "They're taking our stage down in the marketplace!" There'd been a little bit of unhappiness between us and the scaffolders apparently. So I rang up the scaffolders and told them just what their men were doing and what the consequences were going to be. There was a 'friendly' conversation interjected with the odd expletive and I managed to persuade them to get a phone call in to their team and they started putting the stage back up again, which was a great relief.

But the great privilege I had as Chairman of the Mysteries, and it's something I don't suppose anybody ever did before or will do again, was when, in the middle of the Sunday afternoon, there was a play going on on the stage outside the Cathedral and all of a sudden the bells started to ring. Nobody could hear anything. I must be the only person in record who has marched into the Cathedral, straight down the centre aisle, saw Godfrey, who was the head verger then, standing at the crossing, I said "Godfrey, stop those f\*\*\*ing bells!"

He replied "Oh God, they shouldn't be ringing this afternoon!" and they did stop them, but they didn't do the right thing of ringing them all up, they just kind of wound down slowly and stopped and then after the play had finished, one of the bellringers came up and said "Is it alright if we ring the bells up to the top now?"

I said "Yes, that would be fine". But if anyone can better that one in terms of activities at the Cathedral, I'd be pleased to hear about it.