



# ONCE A CHORISTER

Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

## 2022



**Front cover picture:** The 14<sup>th</sup> century chancel in the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, which together with the Lady Chapel (known as the Beauchamp Chapel), the vestries, Chapter House and crypt, are what remain of the medieval building following the Great Fire of Warwick in 1693.

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## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Welcome from the Chair .....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2022 Festival .....</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| A personal view on the Ely festival .....                                     | 5         |
| A memoir on the Ely festival .....  | 7         |
| Festival 2023 – Warwick - 15 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> September ..... | 9         |
| Future events .....   | 13        |
| <b>2022 AGM .....</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| Reports and Accounts .....  | 14        |
| <b>Cathedral Music Trust update .....</b>                                     | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Music at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II .....</b>                       | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Stories of former choristers .....</b>                                     | <b>22</b> |
| Battle of Britain pilot & chorister finally honoured .....                    | 22        |
| A loft find – association badge printing blocks .....                         | 24        |
| Memories of my time at Westminster Cathedral in 1950s .....                   | 25        |
| Westminster Cathedral in wartime .....  | 27        |
| Peter Hurford (St Albans) 1930 – 2019 .....                                   | 29        |
| <b>Member news .....</b>  | <b>31</b> |
| Wells Cathedral .....   | 31        |
| Gloucester Cathedral .....  | 32        |
| Salisbury Cathedral .....   | 33        |
| Warwick St. Mary .....  | 33        |
| Kingston Parish Church .....  | 36        |
| Canterbury Cathedral .....  | 37        |
| Llandaff Cathedral .....  | 38        |
| Portsmouth Cathedral .....  | 39        |
| Lincoln Cathedral .....   | 41        |
| Norwich Cathedral .....   | 43        |
| Hexham Abbey .....  | 46        |
| Rochester Cathedral .....   | 46        |
| Westminster Cathedral .....   | 48        |
| <b>The future of Once a Chorister .....</b>                                   | <b>49</b> |
| <b>A new look .....</b>   | <b>50</b> |
| Once a Chorister contacts .....   | 51        |
| Affiliated associations .....   | 53        |



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## Welcome from the Chair

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### Challenging times continue

We were delighted to be able to meet in person in Ely in September for this year's Festival and AGM; the first time since 2019. Our heartfelt thanks go to John Marshall and the team at Ely who made this possible, despite the challenges they faced. You will find more complete reports on the Festival elsewhere in the magazine.

I hope that, as many as are able, join us at Warwick next year. Of course I am biased as Warwick is my home town and St Mary's is where I sang for 40 years, boy and man and developed my passion for choral music and everything it provides for young people. The church and the choir will be celebrating its 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. The town also has an ancient and historic past, much of which is echoed at the church. Further details of Festival 2023 can be found elsewhere in the magazine. Please make sure the dates are in your calendar and that you book your accommodation early.

I reported in my AGM statement that the Archbishop of Canterbury has decided to cease his association with the Federation on the grounds that we did not have a Safeguarding Policy. Having expressed our disappointment, I gave the reason for us not having a Safeguarding Policy was because we do not organise anything ourselves and that our events are hosted by members whose own organisations have Safeguarding Policies. I reported at the AGM that I had heard that week from the Archbishop's office that the decision stands and that His Grace did not wish to be associated with any organisation that did not have a safeguarding policy. This is a matter that the Executive Committee will have to address once again.

Many volunteer organisations, including our membership, face many challenges resulting from societal change, the impact of the pandemic, legislation and regulation. From scouting to Parish Councils, sports clubs to choirs, encouraging people to step forward and carry some of the responsibility for making things happen has become increasingly difficult. This includes our member associations, some of whom are struggling to maintain an existence. I urge you to read the article by our Honorary Secretary, Alastair Pollard on the future of [Once a Chorister](#)

[Once a Chorister](#) (the Federation) is facing a number of challenges, which, if not resolved, will result in the organisation ceasing to exist. After Warwick next year, there are no further Festival weekends planned. For the Executive Committee to continue to function it needs new blood to join. Technology provides many solutions that would help our survival but we need people who are prepared to give of their time to implement the most appropriate data management solution and to manage our on-line presence. Our ultimate goal is to celebrate choristership and we hope you will continue to support us on that journey.

**Nick Hodges** – [[Once a Chorister Chair](#)]

*October 2022 (updated from my report to the AGM)*





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## 2022 Festival

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The 2022 Festival was held in Ely this year. Although some of the events were cancelled due to the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the previous day, we had a very successful festival, and it was joy to meet in a city that many former choristers had never visited. For those unable to attend, here are a couple of personal reports of the Festival to give you an idea of what took place, and hopefully encourage you to attend next year in Warwick, 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

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### A personal view on the Ely festival

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The Festival in 2022 held at Ely will be remembered for many reasons, not least the fact that it nearly didn't happen several times. The Covid pandemic prevented many events taking place over the past couple of years including the Federation festival in 2021 due to be held in Ely, and then the very sad news that our beloved Queen Elizabeth II died at Balmoral on the eve of the Federation Festival held in Ely in September 2022. Despite the sombre occasion and some of our events being understandably cancelled, we were treated to some poignant services with wonderful music at the Cathedral and a Festival banquet in the magnificent surroundings of Kings Ely School. Overall the festival was a great success. Thanks must go to Jonathan Marshall and Robin Laird and the Ely Cathedral Choristers' Society, musicians Edmund Aldhouse and Sarah MacDonald and their team and the Dean and Chapter.

The drive south on Friday morning was uneventful with the possible exception of following a traction engine for several miles crawling along the A142 to a steam rally! We were warmly greeted at Cathedral Centre by members of the Ely Association to check in before a quick foray into the delightful city of Ely. The offer of a cup of tea and cake led us The Lady Chapel. The building looked huge (the largest Lady Chapel attached to any British Cathedral) with very little furniture at ground level and a very high ceiling. Unfortunately the scars of the deformation during the Reformation are clearly visible, but on one wall is a huge statue of the Virgin Mary –



controversial and not to everyone's taste! Then back next door to the cathedral for Choral Evensong. Due to the unfortunate events the previous day Choral Evensong was hastily adapted to be a "Thanksgiving for the Life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II". Ely Cathedral invite you to stand at the start of a service by ringing a small bell – a nice touch. Most of us are very familiar with Choral Evensong, and the Rose Responses were delightful. A personal highlight for me was the singing of Psalm 121 "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help". Ely cathedral choir used the Walford Davies setting. This psalm was sung at the valediction ceremony for Durham Choristers when I left the choir in 1974. Even now it is one of my favourite psalms and I can still remember the chant we used all those years ago. The Magnificat setting was Dyson in F but not known to me. We were graced by The Lord Bishop reading the second lesson – an imposing but likeable figure who eluded to his large frame when later recounting a conversation he had with the late Queen. We were treated



to a “Russian Contakion of the Departed” for an Anthem which was sung at the funerals of Prince Philip and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Following Evensong a group of us retired to a local pub for a quick pint followed by a very pleasant meal in a local restaurant – which turned out to be the eatery-of-choice for many other former choristers attending the festival! After we had all had our fill of food and drink, we returned to The Lady Chapel for Compline sung by the adults of the Cathedral Choir. The chapel was lit solely by candlelight giving it a very atmospheric feeling as we sat on stone seats around the edge. There are many different interpretations for Choral Compline and this was no exception. Sarah Macdonald’s subtle conducting led the choir to show off the full range of their talents, from the almost silent phrases to resounding forte with the huge space giving a wonderful bass resonance. Many of the events planned for Saturday were not possible in deference to the country being in mourning and the Cathedral being open for visitors to sign a book of remembrance or simply sit in silent prayer. I was able to find a secluded place in Bishop Alcock’s Chapel to sit and contemplate the life and works of our dear Queen Elizabeth, and to think about my own father



who died almost 30 years ago. As I often do when I visit cathedrals, I lit a candle in memory of my Dad. In this time of mourning, the Cathedral was unusually quiet and so peaceful. No background noise and any talking done in very hushed tones. Ely is a lovely compact city with a plethora of delightful eating establishments. Several former choristers met for lunch at the Almonry Restaurant, but my wife and I were lucky to meet up for lunch with our son who was coincidentally in Ely for a completely separate event that day. We sat outside in the sunshine at a delightful independent café, until we were forced to hide inside when the rain suddenly appeared!

The Ely Cathedral Choristers’ Society AGM took place in the Cathedral Centre in the afternoon, followed by the Federation AGM. (Full details of the Federation AGM can be found elsewhere in [Once a Chorister](#) magazine). Then on to Choral Evensong. The Cathedral music department put on a great show with both boys and girl choirs, and were bolstered even further by 18 former Choristers from The Federation – a great privilege that many former choristers feel is the highlight of any Federation Festival. Again the responses were by Bernard Rose, and Psalm 46 was sung to a chant very familiar to many former choristers. We were even privileged to hear a descant to 2 verses in the Psalm, something that I have never heard before. As I travel around the country visiting many cathedrals, I find it interesting to see and hear the different ways things are done and sung at various cathedrals; not better or worse just different. The service was that great setting by C.V. Stanford in B flat – well known to many former choristers from various cathedral and church choirs. The Gloria at the end of the Nunc Dimittis was gentle and so beautiful. Bairstow’s Blessed City Heavenly Salem was the anthem. Immediately after Evensong we wandered down the road to The Monastic Barn. This former monastic barn was built towards the end of the 14th century and is now used by The Kings School; a two storey building with the main dining room upstairs having a fantastic set of wooden roof trusses. The food was great, not what you may expect from a typical school refectory: melon & ham to start, a super-tender slow-cooked feather of beef for main, and a glazed lemon tart for pudding. We were entertained by guest speaker Christopher Robinson CBE, speaking about his time at Ely, Worcester, St Johns Oxford and Windsor, including some snippets of conversation he had with members of The Royal



Family. I was privileged to sit next to Carl Jackson – the Director of Music at the Chapel Royal Hampton Court – a true gentleman, consummate musician, and great company.



Sunday morning again broke with glorious sunshine over the city, as we gathered once again for a Requiem Eucharist for her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The cathedral choir trebles and sopranos sang a beautiful rendition of Pie Jesu Domine, followed later by other parts of Faure Requiem Mass including Sanctus and Agnus Dei. At the end of the service the choir sang one of my favourite pieces, In Paradisum – the

gentlemen of the choir acting very much as an accompaniment to the trebles. The bishop in his sermon spoke fondly of our late Queen, her strong faith and some of his personal memories of meeting her at Sandringham.

After a wonderful weekend of music and fellowship, we said our goodbyes and set off on the long journey North back to Harrogate. This is very much my personal opinion of the event, the fellowship and friendship former choristers have, and the wonderful music sung by the Cathedral choirs, but I hope it gives some idea of the wonderful time we had in Ely.

### **Alastair Pollard**

*[Durham Cathedral Former Chorister 1970 – 1974]*

### **A memoir on the Ely festival**

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I wrote this memoir as a reminder of the festival for my own use. I suspect other may have done similarly.

I was so pleased to find that the Ely offer to host a Federation Festival was to go ahead this year however being in my eighty-fourth year and my general condition having deteriorated I did not expect to be able to travel independently. Then my daughter who a few years ago had taken me to an AGM at Oxford and recently to Festivals at Wakefield and Norwich found that she and her husband would be free and able to accompany me. Bookings were made for the full Festival and for us to stay at the Poets House hotel which faced the West aspect of the Cathedral making it easily accessible for me. I then I received news that a close relative of my late wife, a farmer at Downham in Essex, had died and that the family hoped that we would be able to attend the funeral which would be on the Thursday immediately before the Ely festival. We travelled on the Wednesday evening to stay over for the funeral and churchyard burial which took place during a torrential downpour, and whilst at the gathering afterwards learned of the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

On the Friday morning we progressed to Ely via Cambridge stopping for lunch at the Kettles Yard Gallery arriving at the Cathedral for registration and refreshment in the magnificent Chapter House and receiving news of the cancellation of some receptions and the Cathedral Tours and



the Organ Recital. Friendships with other OCs and familiar faces were renewed in an atmosphere of respectful calm and quietness.

The cathedral was open to visitors and floral tributes were being placed outside. Understandably there was a large number in the congregation for Evensong after which we returned to our hotel for dinner. Unfortunately I was not able to return to the Cathedral for Compline. The free time on Saturday morning was taken up with a visit to Oliver Cromwell's House just across the road from the hotel. To have a detailed visual summary of the Commonwealth period illustrated in the context of his family home was a bonus.

I joined a table of very young Ely choristers at their Society Reunion lunch in the Almonry Restaurant and found them more than willing to relate their experiences and ambitions. I told them of the oldest choral music festival, the Three Choirs Festival, which rotates each year between Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford cathedrals and where in my day we were able to get the autographs of soloists such as Kathleen Ferrrier, Isobel Baillie and Alfred Deller and composers including Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, Gerald Finzi, George Dyson, and Zoltan Kodaly (Psalmus Hungaricus)..... They thought I was very old. The Ely Society AGM and the Federation AGM followed lunch, and then Evensong followed by a Reception and Banquet in the Monastic Barn, originally built to store grain decades ago, now refurbished and used daily as a dining facility by the Kings School. The Festival Banquet hosted academic, clerical, and music guests including Carl Jackson and the Guest speaker Christopher Robinson CVO, CBE, with whom I share a birthday. In recognition of the death of Queen Elizabeth the second, the Sunday morning Eucharist was replaced by a Requiem Mass officiated by the Bishop of Ely to the setting by Gabriel Faure. References to the passing of Her Majesty were expressed in the Sermon, the Prayers and the Intercessions. After the service we informally met in the Lady Chapel for coffee and farewells.

We returned to my daughter's home in Wallingford, stayed the night, and then continued to Gloucester the following day, and after all the activity of the travelling, the family funeral and a very enjoyable Festival I felt somewhat subdued. I unpacked, had a cup of tea and went to the Cathedral for 5:30 Evensong. On entry into the Quire I politely suggested to two visitors already seated that the Choir Stalls would not be the best place to be. They took my advice. The service was sung by six Lay Clerks under the guidance of the Director of Music, Adrian Partington, Psalms and Responses unaccompanied, Canticles - Howells in E and the Anthem - Te Lucia ante terminus, by Lassus. A fading light with pinpoints of flame on the alter candles, a calm and a clarity of diction, spoken and sung, that can only be appreciated within the intimacy of an enclosed Quire, totally absorbed the attention of the congregation of 12. I returned home feeling more positive and at peace with myself.

**Colin Charter**

*[Former Chorister Gloucester Cathedral]*





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**Festival 2023 – Warwick - 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September**

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**An invitation from Oliver Hancock,  
Director of Music, The Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick**



It is my very great pleasure, on behalf of the Guild of Ex-Choristers of St Mary's, to invite you join us at the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick for the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations 2023 Annual Festival from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.

The Festival takes place at a momentous time in our history as we celebrate the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Choir at St Mary's. Whilst we cannot boast that a choir existed during the whole 900 years, we can be proud of our musical tradition during much of that time and, especially, over the last 150 years.

In 1123 Roger de Newburgh, Earl of Warwick, established St Mary's as a Collegiate Church, modelled on the cathedrals of St Paul's, Lincoln, York and Salisbury, with a Dean and Canons and a Choir of 6 "Quaresters" and 6 "Vicars-Choral". During this time, St Mary's became the most important church in the county, largely due to the financial support of the Newburgh family. This remained the case until 1544 when Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the College and the attached choir school. However, St Mary's has remained an important place of worship and a well-regarded centre of choral excellence, now with independent lines of boy and girl choristers, singing alongside the historically-titled Gentlemen of the Choir. The Church contains many architectural treasures, including the magnificent 15<sup>th</sup>-century Beauchamp Chapel, some of which are unique to the building and stand alongside those of much more famous places.



More recently, St Mary's has been the launch-pad for many illustrious careers in choral music. Past Directors of Music and Assistants have gone on to appointments at Ely, Birmingham, Sheffield, Salisbury, St Edmundsbury, Truro, and Guildford Cathedrals, New College, Oxford and St George's Chapel, Windsor (to name but a few) and many choristers have gone on to professional musical careers.



The ancient county town of Warwick sits on a low rocky hill overlooking the river Avon. All approach roads into Warwick afford magnificent views of the tower of St Mary's. Daniel Defoe wrote in 1724 that "*few towns in England present so fine an appearance and the*

*Collegiate Church presides magnificently over this picture*". Unfortunately, our current appearance is less than perfect: our iconic landmark is currently shrouded in scaffolding as urgent repairs to the tower proceed for the next 12 months.

In addition to St Mary's, the town of Warwick, which is steeped in history and heritage, offers visitors many wonderful things to see and do. It boasts one of the finest and largest medieval castles in the United Kingdom and the outstanding Lord Leycester Hospital, repurposed by Robert Dudley (Queen Elizabeth I's favourite) to house former military men deserving of support. Robert Dudley's memorial can be seen in the Beauchamp Chapel at St Mary's. the Hospital is currently closed to visitors as it undergoes major renovation and improvements but will hopefully re-open in the summer in time for the Festival in September.



More information about Warwick can be found here: <https://www.visitwarwick.co.uk/>

**The Guild of Ex-Choristers** has planned a full programme for the three days of the Festival:

### **FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

|        |                             |                           |
|--------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4.00pm | Reception – Welcome and tea |                           |
| 5.30pm | Choral Evensong             |                           |
| 6.15   | Civic Reception             |                           |
| 7.15   | Friday Fish & Chip Supper   | The Chip Shed Swan Street |
| 8.45pm | Choral Compline             | Chancel                   |



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**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

- 10.00am Guided tour of St Mary's Church and talk on its history  
Morning at leisure to visit other sights of interest
- 12.00pm AGM Regimental Chapel
- 2.00pm Organ Recital  
Luke Bond  
*Assistant Organist, St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and former Assistant Director of Music, St Mary's Warwick*
- 2.30pm Tea
- 3.00pm Rehearsal for Evensong
- 4.30pm Choral Evensong
- 7.00pm Pre-Banquet Reception Court House
- 7.45pm Festival Banquet Court House  
Guest Speaker Paul Trepte  
*Former Director of Music, Ely Cathedral and St Edmundsbury Cathedral, former Director of Music, St Mary's, Warwick*

**SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

- 9.30am Rehearsal for Eucharist  
*Delegates are welcome to attend to observe*
- 10.30am Choral Eucharist
- c11.45am Drinks reception and farewell

All events take place in the nave at St Mary's Church unless otherwise stated. Programme subject to change.

Booking for the Festival will open in April and may be done either on-line or by post. Details will be made available via the Federation newsletters and on the Federation and St Mary's websites and Facebook pages (links will be provided on the notice which will be sent out prior to booking opening).



**Accommodation:**

Warwick Arms Hotel - <http://www.warwickarmshotel.com/>

Delta Hotels by Marriot - <http://www.m40j15warwickhotel.co.uk/>

Holiday Inn Express - <http://www.expresswarwick.co.uk/>

Globe Hotel - <https://www.theglobewarwick.co.uk/rooms>

Castle Limes Hotel - <https://www.castlelimeshotel.co.uk/>

Old Coffee Tavern - <http://www.theoldcoffeetavern.co.uk/>

The Old Fourpenny Shop - <http://www.4pennyhotel.co.uk/>

Pillows & Porcelain - <http://www.pillowsandporcelain.com/pillows-bb.html>

Premier Inn - [www.premierinn.com](http://www.premierinn.com)

Rose & Crown - <https://www.roseandcrownwarwick.co.uk/>

Tilted Wig - <https://www.tiltedwigwarwick.co.uk/>

Other accommodation is available in the area including Airbnb and hotels within easy driving distance.

Free car parking is available within a short walking distance from St Mary's, details of which will be provided on booking.





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## Future events

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At present the AGM will not be a separate event and will take place during the annual Festival. This is because we are struggling to find any association willing and able to host a separate AGM event. However, this may change in the future if members associations offer to host a separate AGM event, possibly as part of their own association reunion.

|                 |             |   |
|-----------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Warwick</b>  | <b>2023</b> | <b>Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b> |
| <b>Llandaff</b> | <b>2024</b> | <b>*** HOT OFF THE PRESS, so still provisional ***</b>                |
| Vacant          | 2025        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |
| Vacant          | 2026        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |
| Vacant          | 2027        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |
| Vacant          | 2028        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |
| Vacant          | 2029        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |
| Vacant          | 2030        | Can you help by hosting a Former Chorister Festival?                  |

The guide to hosting a Festival has recently been updated and is available on our website [www.fcoca.org.uk](http://www.fcoca.org.uk) giving useful information about hosting such an event. Executive Committee members and previous host associations will be only too happy to help and remember that you no longer need to arrange overnight accommodation for attendees or transport between event venues.



## 2022 AGM

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The 2022 Annual General Meeting was held during the festival in Ely.

### Reports and Accounts

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#### Chair's Report

I would like to start by thanking my fellow members of the Executive Committee for their continued support and guidance and for all they have done in the past 12 months. We are delighted to be meeting in person this year, the first time since 2019 and our heartfelt thanks go to John Marshall and the team at Ely who have made this possible, despite the challenges they have faced.

I have continued to try and meet with Member Associations over the past 12 months, though at a slower pace than I had hoped. There are still some Associations I have still not met and the reluctance seems to be on their part to do so. The meetings I have had with Associations I hope have been meaningful and helpful; they certainly have for me. I have attended events at Winchester, Coventry and Warwick during the year and I am looking forward to joining former choristers at Leicester in October. A number of Associations who had fallen behind with their subscription to the Federation during the pandemic renewed their membership in 2021.

In my 2021 report I said how keen we were to work with other organisations in support of choral music. In particular I wished us to build further on our relationships with Cathedral Music Trust (CMT), Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) and the Choir Schools Association (CSA). In December, Vice-Chair Arnold Wills and I met with Peter Allwood and Jonathan Macdonald, Chair and Chair Elect of CMT respectively. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss further how the two organisations might work more closely together but it became evident that, because of CMT's desire to build their brand, the only way for us to come together was for the Federation to be subsumed into CMT, whereupon it would lose its identity. Before we had chance to formally respond, CMT advised us that they saw no benefit to either organisation to follow that course and that we should do no more than continue to support each other's activities as we had been doing. We have exchanged newsletters with RSCM but we have had no further response from CSA. We will continue to keep an open door for these and any organisations supporting choral music

I am hugely disappointed to report that the Archbishop of Canterbury has decided not to continue as our Patron. We received a letter from the Archbishop's Parliamentary Adviser of this decision in May, citing the reason being that the Federation did not have a Safeguarding Policy. I subsequently responded expressing our disappointment that the Archbishop would not be continuing his support of the Federation and stating that reason for us not having a Safeguarding Policy was because we do not organise anything ourselves and that our events are hosted by members whose own organisations have Safeguarding Policies. Having received no reply I have, subsequently written again but, at the time of writing this report, have not received a response. Having refreshed and updated our constitution last year and as pre-empted in last year's report, the refresh to our branding was introduced earlier this year. You should have seen it for the first time in my June newsletter. The small amount of feedback we have received, in general, has been favourable. Most of our communications and on-line presence reflect the new branding and we now need to implement it through everything we do.



In common with most other volunteer organisations, including our membership, the Federation faces many challenges resulting from societal change, the impact of the pandemic, legislation and regulation. Many of our member associations are struggling to maintain an existence, as we have remarked before. Enthusiasm for “old-boy” associations has waned and support for former chorister associations from clergy and music departments has not been universal. And yet there are positive benefits to be derived from choir and former chorister associations. As has been said previously, the choir is part of the congregation of the church, not separate from it. There is no reason why choristers can’t remain part of that congregation after they have completed their service in the choir but there has to be a reason for them to do so and that reason has to be because they are valued. The Federation needs support in a variety of areas. We need new members on the Executive Committee. Many hands make light work and at present, too much of what needs to be done is falling on a small number of shoulders. We need help to redevelop our website and also to develop a better data management process. Above all, we need member associations to step forward and offer to host a Festival/AGM. We hope to see everyone at Warwick in 2023 but after that no one has yet come forward with the offer to host an event. We also need to cover our costs. For the last few years we have been running at a loss. We have reduced our outgoings, primarily insurance costs, to as low a level as we can but the subscriptions we receive are still insufficient cover them. Our annual subscription has remained the same for very many years and is now an almost irrelevant amount. There will be a proposal that we increase the subscription next year to a level that will at least enable us to break-even and again in the following year to enable us to build reserves that will allow us to invest in whatever development we need to implement in the future. Our ultimate goal is to celebrate choristership and we hope you will continue to support us on that journey.

***[Nick Hodges - Chair]***

### **Secretary’s report**

Although an AGM is often simply a formality, it is great that we can meet in person for the first time in 3 years here in Ely during the Federation Festival. Zoom may be convenient for an AGM and committee meetings it lacks the personal touch of an in-person meeting. However, the cost of travel does have a significant impact on our ability to meet in person as we are a nationwide organisation with a widely spread membership.

Last year, the Executive committee met formally twice over Zoom on 19th March and 19th July, and some committee members “met” informally over zoom, email and telephone. Minutes of all committee meetings are produced, and Newsletters published to our Website. The major topics of discussion were: the state of our finances and measures to reduce our insurance costs, how to be relevant to existing and new member associations, and options to improve our administration tools to assist communication with members and social media.

I still enjoy producing the **Once a Chorister** magazine, which is much appreciated by those who care to read it but I wonder how many actually do! I still struggle for articles, so please feel free to submit.

Thanks again to my wife Nicola who normally takes minutes during our committee meetings, and to our Chair Nick for his wisdom in skilfully steering The Federation through these troubled times.

***[Alastair Pollard - Honorary Secretary]***



### **Presentation and adoption of annual accounts for 2021**

No specific change to the format of the accounts and very little to say this year! Subscription income has increased from 2020 as expected with a few associations “quiet” during the Covid period. Since the start of 2022 a few outstanding subs have been received which will be reflected in next year’s accounts.

You may remember that last year I mentioned a concern of the Executive Committee was the largest item shown in expenditure being the insurance premium we have been paying for trustee indemnity, public liability and regalia cover. Negotiating the options we had before us, it was prudent in 2021 to combine the trustee indemnity insurance with our main policy, with the aim that the cover for regalia held by associations be withdrawn from June 2022. As an interim measure therefore the total cost of the insurance was reduced from £1,499 to £923 last June, and you will be able to see a substantial reduction this year. We have been seeking as much advice as possible, and once these negotiations are completed very soon now, the amount the Federation will pay for insurance premiums will be drastically depleted, reflecting the current operations now as against the historical Federation operations.

That’s all I feel I need to say to explain the 2021 accounts, except to point out a much reduced deficit of £148 (as against £910 in 2020). I will ask someone to propose and someone to second the adoption of accounts in that they have been verified as a true record by our Independent Financial Examiner.

Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner: I will then nominate once again Mr Matthew Guest, ACMA, of Manchester as the Federation’s Independent Financial Examiner for the current financial year, and ask for someone to propose and someone to second the nomination.

***[Michael Lake – Honorary Treasurer]***

### **Development report**

Earlier this year the Development Officer, Arnold Wills, set out his thoughts concerning development generally and these thoughts, intended to be challenging yet helpful and constructive, serve well as a report for the AGM.

*As a reminder, The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers’ Associations (The Federation) is ‘an umbrella organisation that exists for the benefit of former Choristers and its objective is primarily to promote friendship amongst people from like backgrounds and to assist in maintaining and improving the high standards of Cathedral Music that play such a vital part in Cathedral worship.’*

Clearly the primary objective to promote friendship is largely achieved for those who engage with The Federation. As to how we assist in maintaining and improving the standards of Cathedral music, this is another matter for discussion. Going forward as an organisation, we are losing funds year on year. Do we have the faith to leap forward and look afresh at how relevant we are and if we do, then to whom should we be relevant? Many consider that we are relevant to our current attendees at festivals etc but what concerns us all is the extent to which we will be relevant in the future. I wonder at what point presumably The Federation will cease to be viable? Are we content with that prospect?





**Relevant** - other than largely for men in a certain age bracket (which includes me) I believe we are not relevant. Maybe in fairness that has always been the case, and we know this has been an ongoing challenge for our loyal committee. If that is the case, what do we have to do to become relevant both to former choristers and also to their home cathedral or association?

Maybe we should look at providing support to the associations in terms of how they're run, perhaps regional advice sessions, and maybe those associations who are well run could support and help new or struggling associations. In recent years the current Chair, Nick Hodges has made a great effort to liaise with many of the current subscribing associations and to find out what they want from The Federation. That's been very interesting and welcomed.

Some old associations seem to have folded and been replaced by a new Cathedral Choral Alumni e.g. Bristol, now run by young recent former choristers with current skillsets, and which initiative seems to be very exciting. How do we make ourselves relevant and welcoming to these new organisations who are not subscribing members of The Federation?

**Objective** –Do we run a sufficiently diverse or inclusive organisation, especially in terms of age and gender, and remembering that only if we adapt in these ways, will we survive. Maybe the time has come to positively discriminate so that the committee is not 100% male. Times have changed. For example, the days of regalia are largely over but this remains the associations biggest tangible asset, coupled with the ongoing questions of where regalia is stored and insured.

**Glue** – if we are to continue to be the 'glue' that traditionally links the various associations, surely we need to make ourselves so sufficiently attractive in shop window terms, that the subscribing associations and those who have lapsed, are keen to not only make their annual payments but comfortable with any required increases in fees, because what's on offer is helpful and considered to be of value.

**Resourcing** - There is the age-old issue of resourcing in terms of both time and also software and other equipment. If our funds are reducing year on year then the only way to stem that erosion is to increase the number of current subscribing associations, and in time increase annual fees. We all agree with that. Maybe many associations are simply acting alone and not really concerned for the 'wider association and others'. That is sad if true.

For many good reasons, individual membership is not an option, because we are there to support the associations. But maybe, with hindsight, it could still be helpful in terms of building a database of individuals regularly donating and thus enabling The Federation to be adequately resourced in terms of software, social media and data management. These tasks will largely only be tackled with sufficient resourcing as opposed to relying on volunteers. Only if we are adequately resourced and financially sound will we be able to adapt and survive.

The current Chair and committee are aware of many of these issues and have done a sterling job to maintain The Federation to date.

**[Arnold Wills – Development Lead)**



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## Regional Representatives' Reports

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many associations have not met in the past few years either in person or virtually using video-conferencing software. This has significantly affected churches, cathedrals and choirs, and many former chorister events, gatherings, and meetings were not possible. However, video-conferencing software has opened up other options to meet and discuss, and some associations have managed to meet in person. Organisational changes at some cathedrals mean that their choirs have sometimes been restructured or even disbanded having an effect on Former Chorister Associations. For these and other reasons there is very little news from the regions.

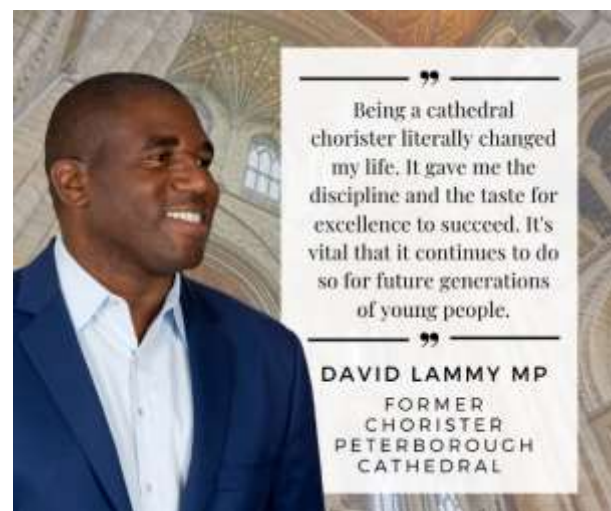
- **Durham:** The Chorister School at Durham merged with Durham School in September 2021 to form the Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF). These and other changes have prevented a DCOCA reunion in 2022 but we have met formally with the Old Dunelmian committee and are invited to their events. We hope to have an Old Chorister event in 2023. Durham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association still exists, albeit as a subsidiary of Old Dunelmians retaining its name and identity, together with membership of the Federation.
- **Ripon :** Ronny Krippner the new Director of Music at Ripon Cathedral got in touch to say that they are currently in the process of revitalising the Choir Alumni Association at Ripon Cathedral and would like to explore being included in The Federation.
- **Sheffield:** Members of the disbanded Sheffield Cathedral Choir formed a new choir, the Steel City Choristers, who are making a name for themselves as they offer children a free first-class musical education and serve a wide range of communities in and around Sheffield and beyond through a diverse programme of choral concerts, services and projects.
- **Salisbury:** Dr Richard Seal died on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Richard was Organist and Master of the Choristers at Salisbury for 29 years from 1968 to 1997. He founded the first all-girl Cathedral Choir in 1991 with the first girls attending Salisbury Cathedral School in 1989, prior to the choir being founded. During his time at Salisbury Dr Richard Seal fully supported the Southern Cathedral Festival with the choirs of Chichester, Winchester and Salisbury taking their respective turns hosting the festival. Also, during Dr Richard Seal's time at Salisbury various recordings were made of the choir and of the Organ.
- **Coventry:** Nick Hodges attended the reunion of the Former Choristers of Coventry Cathedral on 1<sup>st</sup> May to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the consecration of the new cathedral.
- **East Anglia:** Another year, but at last we seem to have more freedom from Covid 19 and after two postponements Ely, in the East Anglian region, have stuck with it and are hosting our eagerly awaited Federation Festival and AGM. I applaud John Marshall and Robin Laird for setting what promises to be an exciting Festival in extraordinary circumstances. After an enforced break it is good to feel things are getting back to normal. There has been no correspondence from the region during this time. Post this Festival I will email my region to ensure my contact list is up to date. I will also broach the question of future locations for AGMs and Festivals.



## Cathedral Music Trust update



As part of the celebrations surrounding International Chorister Day, together with the Royal School of Church Music the Cathedral Music Trust have been trending on Facebook about the benefits of Choristership as said by some famous faces.







Anna Lapwood was recently appointed as Ambassador of Cathedral Music Trust. She had posted some great insight into music again on Facebook.

“

Elite sport is a point of pride for our nation; elite music should be just the same, something to celebrate, as it enhances the lives of all involved.

Peter Allwood, Chair of Cathedral Music Trust had some choice words about the decision to disband Belfast Cathedral Choir.

“The decision to disband the professional choir at Belfast Cathedral is a real blow for the cathedral, its musicians and the local community.

“Over recent years, the choir has gained a reputation for musical excellence in Northern Ireland, not only through sung cathedral services but also concerts, broadcasts and recordings. Experience shows that this level of musical success will be impossible to maintain under part-time leadership and voluntary singers.

“The recently formed Children’s Choir will suffer from lack of professional support and direction, losing a golden opportunity to develop musicians of the future.

“We are aware of the financial issues facing Belfast Cathedral and will do everything in our power to work with the cathedral to help to establish a sustainable path for musical excellence, which will benefit all who live and worship there.”





## Music at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

Many people commented on the wonderful music heard at the Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Here are just a selection from the social media platform Facebook.

- *“Humble thanks and huge congratulations to the Choir of Westminster Abbey, the Chapel Royal Choir, James O’Donnell, Peter Holder, and all in that great place for a profound and deeply moving service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth, complete with beautiful new works by Sir James MacMillan and Judith Weir. Congratulations to all involved. The mixture of tradition and new was a perfect tribute and reflection of her life and beliefs.”*
- *“A poignant and deeply moving service from St George’s, Windsor, this afternoon, beautifully led by the Dean. Congratulations to James Vivian, Luke Bond, the choir, and all who took part. Thank you to the BBC for its ever excellent and sensitive coverage. A momentous day which will live long in our collective memory.”*
- *“What a wonderful global advertisement for our incomparable cathedral tradition we have had since the Queen died. All outstanding. Well done to all Directors, Organists, and of course choristers.”*
- *“So many people talking about such wonderful music at all the special services for the Queen, and they are right. But I wonder how many people realise that such similar amazing musical offerings happen almost every day of the week at cathedrals all over the country, and that they only have to turn up to hear it - no waiting lists, queues, special guest lists etc.”*
- *“Choirs and their MDs are the jewels in church music, sometimes under threat by short sighted clergy. My old choirmaster used to say that a psalm is as good as a sermon. People sometimes take for granted the excellent standards which all the choirs who have performed in recent days, and forget how hard they work day in day out to maintain them. Music of the quality heard today would not have been possible at this level of finesse if these choirs did not sing every day. That’s the point lost on many. To do it really well you have to do it every day. Same as many other disciplines really.”*



Credit Eleanor Tomlinson Art





## Stories of former choristers

### Battle of Britain pilot & chorister finally honoured

Members of the Ely association will be familiar with the memorial plaque in the Colonnade under Upper School on which have been recorded the names of eight Old Choristers who died in the Second World War. Each of those names can be researched on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, as with any other fallen from both World Wars. In 2017, our then Secretary, Christian Stobbs, received an email from Sarah Warren, School Librarian, which mentioned that the names on the plaque were incomplete, in that a certain Sgt. Burtenshaw's name was missing. It is not now!



Sgt. Burtenshaw attended the Choir School from 1932 to 1934 and he is shown sitting at the front in the formal photograph below, 5<sup>th</sup> from the left.

From the records of The Battle of Britain London Monument, we have learned the following:-

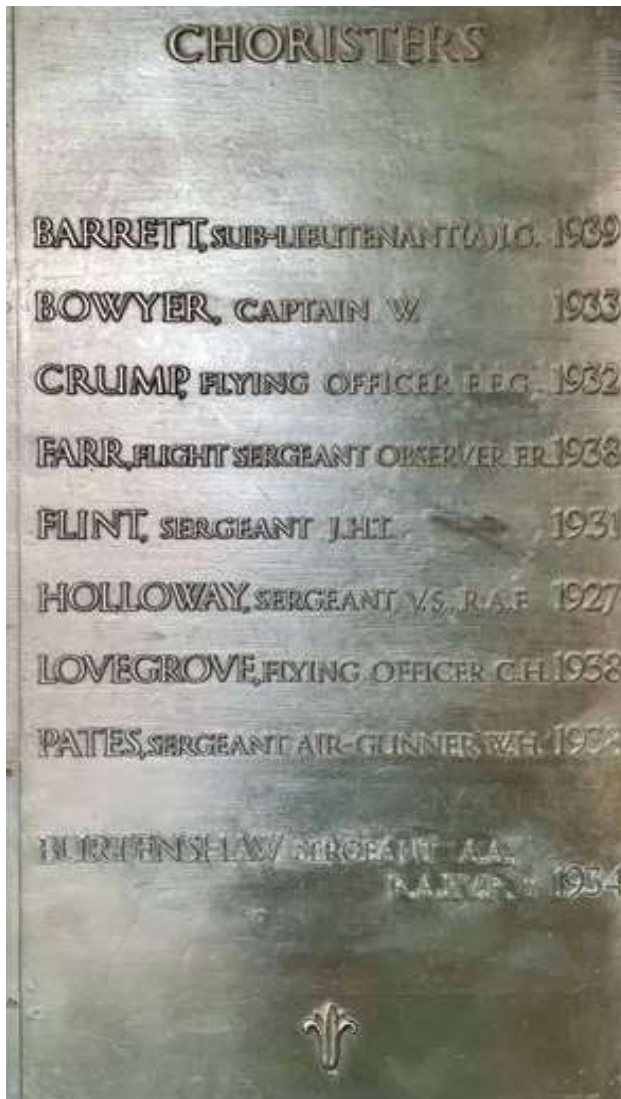
Allan Anthony Burtenshaw was born in Windsor on 23rd February 1920. His family settled in Snodland, Kent where he played for the local cricket team.

He was awarded a choral scholarship to Eton College Choir School and after graduating he joined the RAFVR in April 1939 as an Airman u/t Pilot. Called to full-time service on 1st September 1939, he completed his training at 23 EFTS and 5 FTS and was posted to 54 Squadron at Catterick on 29th September 1940.

He was killed on 12th March 1941 whilst flying in Spitfire II P7689 of No 54 Sqn, which was shot down by a Me109 near Maidstone. He is buried and remembered in Snodland Cemetery, Kent.

As a result of a great deal of perseverance by Paul Bayley, Facilities Manager at Eton, and after several false starts, I am delighted to confirm that Burtenshaw's name was added to the plaque in February this year by Hall Conservation who have done a splendid job. We had thought that the Worshipful Company of Founders, a London livery company, might have discovered a suitable firm, but these leads came to nothing. Hall Conservation's work involved pinning the lettering onto the plaque rather than replacing a section. After that, a final colour wash and protective microcrystalline wax was applied – see below.





The Association's thanks go to Sarah for her research skills and enthusiasm for the project; Sarah had undertaken an extended research project about Old Etonians who had participated in the Battle of Britain, and had contacted Edward McManus at the Battle of Britain London Monument for help in this endeavour. Edward's website originally had Sgt. Burtenshaw listed as an OE, but with the help of Jackie Tarrant-Barton (then Clerk to the OEA) who checked the Choir School registers, it was established that Sgt. Burtenshaw was in fact an OC. The Battle of Britain London Monument have since amended their website.

Burtenshaw's family are, of course, delighted that the name has been added and on 8th July, there was a brief blessing of the new name by Stephen Gray, Conductor, when also attending was Tony Burtenshaw (nephew) and his wife, Edward McManus from The Battle of Britain London Monument (to whom we are grateful to be able to use the above information from their website), The Vice-Provost, Director of Development and Sarah, Jackie and Paul (all from Eton) and senior representatives of the Royal Air Force from the currently operational 54 Squadron and its Squadron Association.

Besides these attendees, several ex-Choir School Old Chorister members were present, when apart from other words spoken, the

famous poem, High Flight, by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr. was read, as well as the dedication from Burtenshaw's gravestone at Snodland.

Everyone is delighted that the project has reached fruition. I especially wish to thank the Provost and Fellows for giving permission and generously funding the addition to the plaque. It is only fitting that the name of our fellow OC, Battle of Britain Spitfire pilot, Sgt. Burtenshaw, one of Churchill's 'Few', is now commemorated in this manner.

On Burtenshaw's death, his Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader R.F. Boyd DFC of 54 Sqn remarked:-

*'Sgt. Burtenshaw was an experienced Spitfire pilot, and above the average as a fighter pilot'*

**Vivian Bairstow**

*[Chairman of the Eton College Old Choristers' Association]*



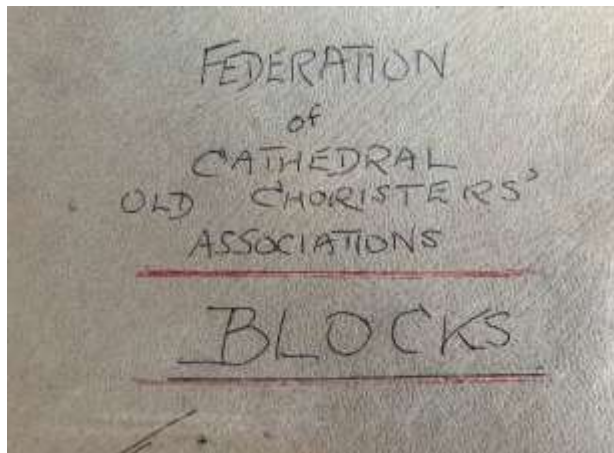


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## A loft find – association badge printing blocks

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A few days ago I was delving into the far reaches of my loft as you do every time my wife Patricia says “what happened to that such and such, I’m sure we put it in the loft, can you go up and have a look”. So as a dutiful husband does, and after a period of thoughtfulness, I entered the loft and



found this box under an old piece of discarded insulation with this written on the lid. It’s not a big box, 350mm x 60mm (13.75” x 6.25” in old money), but it is heavy! On opening it, I found that I had uncovered the printing blocks for all the Cathedral Association badges that were affiliated to the Federation in the 1970 -80’s.

I was, in the 1980’s, the assistant Secretary to the Federation and my close friend the late John Bowdler of the Gloucester Association was the Secretary. As I live in Oxfordshire this was an ideal situation, remember when we had only telephones combined with pen and ink to communicate! So, working together was

relatively easy and as John’s wife made the most wonderful cakes, regular trips to Gloucester were a necessity.

These blocks, were in the day, used when printing the ‘*Old Chorister*’ magazine each association report had its badge above the report (I’m sure some of you will remember) and these were the blocks used when type was set. As time moved on these blocks became redundant and I can only assume, but don’t remember being given them and told ‘Hold on to these until we decide what to do with them’. Well, it’s fair to say I have held on to them until now, and so I am restoring them to their rightful owners for someone else to hold onto ‘Until *they* decide what to do with them’. [The blocks have been passed to Nick Hodges, our Chair – Editor]

It has taken me only about an hour and a half to put this short article together, including taking, downloading and positioning the photographs, as well as typing it up. Isn’t it mind blowing how technology has moved on since the 1980’s and 90’s. I have no idea how long it would have taken an experienced typesetter to set this piece forty odd years ago, but to me now, that seems no time at all.



P.S. I didn’t find what Patricia sent me into the loft to look for!

**Peter Hunt,**  
[Edinburgh St Mary’s OC 1959 – 1965 under Dennis Townhill]





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## Memories of my time at Westminster Cathedral in 1950s

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In February 1952, shortly after the death of King George VI, I auditioned with George Malcom as a boy chorister at the Cathedral. My set piece was Ralph Vaughan William's Linden Lee and I accompanied myself on the piano in his small studio which was over the arch connecting the choir school to the sacristy and Cathedral. After the interview George Malcom led my mother and I out through the sacristy and into the Cathedral via the large bronze doors to the right of the Lady Chapel. As we left, he said to my mother "I believe that you will be receiving a favourable letter in the next few days". The letter duly arrived and in May 1952 at the age of eight I arrived for the summer term. In those days, George Malcolm would inform the headmaster, Father Creese, that his successful applicant was to be admitted in the next term. No doubt the admissions process has evolved since then! There was a total of thirty-two boarders and two or three day boys. We were only known by our surnames.

A memory from that first year was "The Great Smog". In December of 1952 fog mixed with smoke, hence "smog", descended on London requiring vehicles to crawl along with headlights on, even at noon. The smog penetrated the Cathedral making the rear of the nave invisible from the choir stalls. Morpeth Terrace was hardly visible from the Choir School windows on which a yellow and black film developed from the sulphureous atmosphere. It was estimated that up to ten thousand Londoners died of respiratory ailments during this event. Singing was suspended for the four days that the city was enveloped, A light breeze on the fifth day cleared the air.

A day to remember was coronation day on June 2nd, 1953. A kind patron had donated a large screen projector television, black and white of course, to the school. This was set up in the largest classroom which then was adjacent to the refectory. We watched in awe and the day was capped by an Air Force flyover which went down the Mall and turned over the Cathedral footprint. Many of the aircraft were Second World War piston-engined aircraft and their roar rattled the school windows and drowned out any conversation. This coupled with the world map on the wall,



*View eastward from near Victoria Station, with Westminster Cathedral in the background. Many decorations are already up for the Queen's Coronation six days later. Photo © Ben Brooksbank*

covered in the red of the colonies and Commonwealth countries, and a plaque listing the scholars who had died in the First World War, contributed to the mindset of the pupils of that era.

George Malcolm was very demanding and on more than one occasion during a service he would break his baton and walk off mid service leaving, on one occasion, one of the professional tenors, a Mr. Burgess, whose other profession was compiling crossword puzzles for the Daily Telegraph, to wield the broken baton for the remainder of the service. At the next choir practice Malcolm told



us in no uncertain terms that we sang at Westminster Cathedral and NOT Saint Bedes in the Weeds! The organist was a charming New Zealander by the name of Maxwell Furnee. Furnee had been in the RAF during the war and married an English girl and they had a nice flat on the Thames where we would occasionally sneak out for tea. Mr. Hyde, a benign elderly gentleman, preceded George Malcom, who was no stranger to the main export of Scotland. There were various other days when Mr. Hyde would take over as "Mr. Malcolm was unwell". Because our holidays were arranged around high days we were never at home for Christmas or Easter; consequently our sports fixtures tended to be against other choir schools such as the Abbey and St. Paul's who also had non-conventional terms and holidays. Football against the Abbey was played on their home ground in Vincent Square. The ecumenical movement was nowhere in sight then and we played with the intensity of the crusaders and really felt that we had let God down if we lost to the Protestants.

On the corner of Ashley Place and Carlisle Place stood the bombed-out shell of a large Anglican church. We were told, and of course believed, that the bomb was heading for the Cathedral but there was a splinter of the true cross in the tower and the bomb diverted into the Protestant church. Proof indeed that we were members of the one true faith. We would rummage through the rubble of the church looking for bits of stained glass. The church was bombed on September 20th, 1940. One bomb from that string fell in the Choir School playground and the crater was turned into a circular vegetable garden for the duration. After the war the hole was filled in but subsided and we found it a useful place to stop cricket and tennis balls from rolling away.

My voice broke early in 1956 and as was the custom I stayed on until the end of the summer term and was a Cathedral altar server under the elderly Father Collinwood. The official M.C. was Monseigneur Cofraizer who orchestrated every movement on the sanctuary. His cassock and cottas always smelt of stale incense, the odour of sanctity perhaps. Cofraizer was a large man and on one occasion he heard me mention to a fellow chorister that the Cardinal was late. He came over and towered above me like an ogre in a Disney film and said, "Sometimes Ward is early, and sometimes Ward is late, but the Cardinal is always on time". Seventy years on I still recall that admonition. I left the Choir School in July 1956 and went on to Franciscan College in Buckingham, now Buckingham University. Although I had failed the eleven-plus the headmaster, Father Burns, admitted me saying that anyone who could almost converse in Latin and play the piano could not be that thick. I think that I repaid his faith and went on to university and retired as a director of Hanson's North American operations having worked variously in Johannesburg and Singapore before being moved to the States. Hanson's head office was at No.1 Grosvenor Place, overlooking the Palace gardens. On my frequent trips to the UK I could take in an early mass at the Cathedral and walk on to the office thus closing a fifty year loop.

Leaving home at age eight and missing family Christmases and Easters was hard. It took many years to realise what a privilege it had been to sing in the choir and serve at the high altar. The Choir School experience also gave me a solid grounding in music which continue to this day.

***[From an article written by Peter Ward - published in WCCS OBA The Record 2022 ]***



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## Westminster Cathedral in wartime

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A story is related in the Cathedral that a volunteer at the Information Desk, asked by a group of Americans if the blackened walls of the Cathedral had resulted from a fire, described how German bombs in the 'Great Fire of London' in 1940 had set the building ablaze from end to end. Only the efforts of valiant, bucket-carrying priests, nuns and choirboys, directed by the Archbishop himself, had managed to save the building. Sadly nothing so spectacular really occurred.

The Choir School was evacuated in September 1939, initially to Horstead House, near Uckfield, where the boys listened to a description of the Battle of the River Plate read by Fr Moore, their headmaster. In May 1940, with the imminent threat of invasion, the school was closed and did not reopen until January 1946. The boys left London with good reason. There was sustained German bombing for nine months from September 1940 to May 1941 with bombs falling all around the Cathedral – at the corner of Carlisle Place and King's Scholars Passage; scoring a direct hit on the Anglican Church of St Andrew in Ashley Place; beside Morpeth Terrace; on the mansion flats of Carlisle Place to the west and Ashley Garden to the east; and on Victoria Street to the north.

Fortunately air raid precautions had been introduced at the outset of war in September 1939. The Cathedral sanctuary columns had been buttressed with scaffolding and sandbags while the shrine of St John Southworth in St George's Chapel was also protected. An air raid post was set up in Archbishop's House, the clergy and lay staff formed into air raid warning and firefighting parties (though initially equipped only with stirrup pumps and buckets), and arrangements made for extra priests to go to first aid posts and casualty clearing stations in the event of heavy casualties. Evening Mass had been suspended and the crypt was once again an air raid shelter. The remains of a Westminster City Council notice informing those spending the night there that they were entitled to use council washing facilities for a penny (including soap and towel), rather than the usual three pence, can still be seen on a wall in the crypt store room, despite post-war efforts to remove it.

That was the situation in the Cathedral when the nightly blitz began in September 1940. In October Clergy House was hit, but only by a slab of concrete sent flying by a bomb in Vincent Square. In December it was hit again, ironically by an unexploded anti-aircraft shell which did considerable damage to external brick and stonework before ending up in one of the priests' rooms. Bombs hit Blocks 10 and 11 of Ashley Gardens in November 1940, and Block 4 in May 1941, shattering windows and scarring the woodwork of Archbishop's House and the Cathedral Hall, while another bomb, also in May, destroyed a flat on Ambrosden Avenue, breaking many of the large leaded windows in the Cathedral sanctuary and nave, smashing in doors and covering the Cathedral with debris.

Peter Hurford 1930 – 2019



*The gutted remains of St Andrew's Church, Ashley Place, after a direct hit in late 1940, showing the proximity of the bomb to the Cathedral.*

Remarkably, the bomb nearest the Cathedral, a delayed action variety which fell in October 1940 and exploded after two hours, left a crater 30 feet deep, 30 feet wide and 30 feet from the Choir School, but did no other damage, even to the windows. The blast was absorbed by the soft clay (the area was originally Bulinga Fen) on which the Cathedral is built, and went up vertically. Bricks and refuse from the Cathedral allotments were thrown into the crater and it was filled with soil over ten months. The Head Sacristan, Mr Hayes, then created a highly ornamental and productive garden, providing 130 pounds of tomatoes annually, together with cabbages, cucumbers, beetroot, onions, beans, parsley, lettuces, peas and mint to supplement the wartime diet, all surrounded by flower beds. Pictures of the Cathedral's bomb crater garden appeared in the national press and in *The Sphere*, *Tatler* and *The National Geographic Magazine of America* and it featured in the 'Grow More Food' campaign on Movietone News.

Beside high explosives, the Germans also used incendiaries, but once again the Cathedral was largely unscathed. When John Bentley, the architect, was 14, his own parish church of St George in Doncaster burned down. In building the Cathedral he used largely fire resistant materials such as brick, stone and concrete on which incendiaries burned harmlessly until extinguished. Nevertheless one burned a large hole in the wood block floor of Cathedral Hall, another went through the roof of the Choir School gymnasium and a third set fire to the hall run by the Catholic Women's League as a servicemen's canteen. Another reason for the failure of the incendiaries was a 50,000 gallon static water tank and motor trailer pump in the Choir School playground, which had been provided to protect the Cathedral and the immediate neighbourhood against fire.

All in all the Cathedral was extraordinarily fortunate to survive the 1939-45 War almost unscathed, despite being close to targets such as Victoria Station, Wellington Barracks and many government buildings.

*[From an article written by **Patrick Rogers** - published in WCCS OBA *The Record* 2022 ]*

*[Reproduced with permission from Oremus, the Magazine of Westminster Cathedral]*





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## Peter Hurford (St Albans) 1930 – 2019

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Peter Hurford remained as our Ex-Choristers' Association President until his death in 2019, some 40 years after retiring from his post at St Albans, and this event represented something of the end of an era for our Association.

The village of Luccombe in Exmoor holds a special place in the memories of generations of St Albans ex-choristers as the location of summer choir camp for some fifty years, as well being the place where our former organist and choirmaster nurtured his musical talents as a boy.



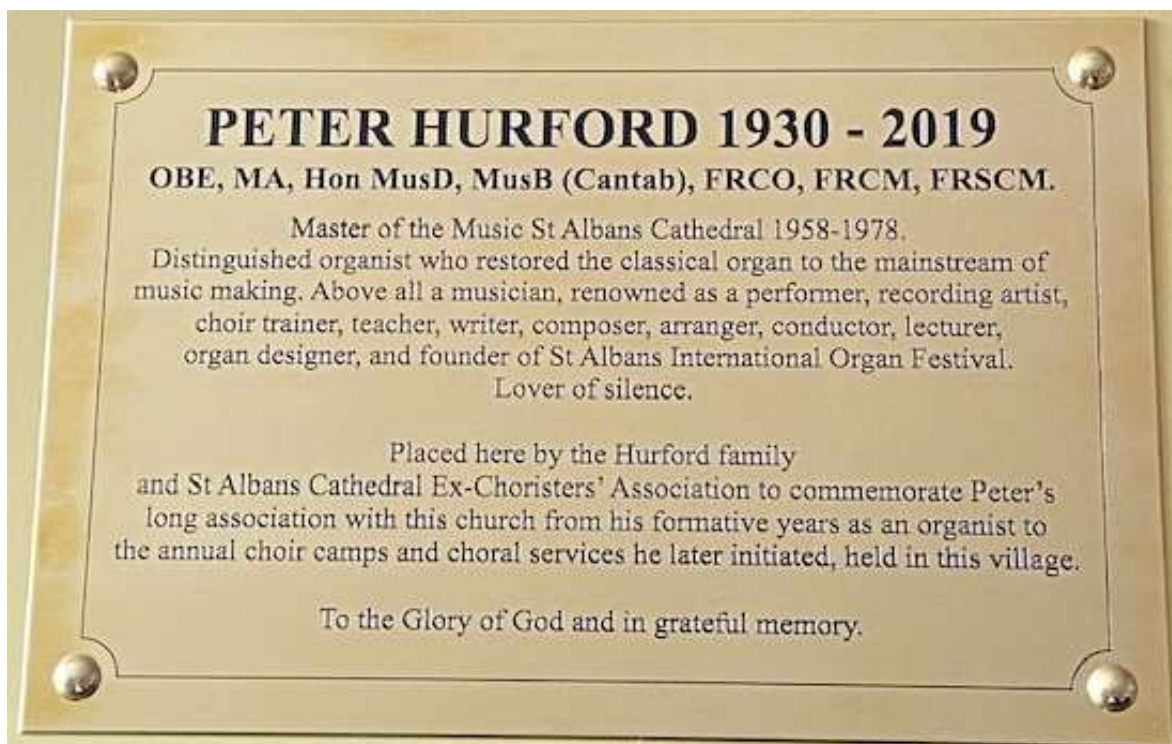
*ECA members assembled in Luccombe church*

The focus of our weekend of fellowship was a special commemorative choral evensong in St Mary's church. Anxieties were expressed that the Robert Ashfield in d minor setting of the Mag' and Nunc' chosen by choir director David Ireson and organist Andrew Parnell were not well enough known by the singers. An extra rehearsal was hastily arranged in advance of our party dinner at

the Yarn Market Hotel in Dunster, using their music room with a handy grand piano, and copies of a backup Mag' and Nunc' magically appeared. Emboldened by a day on Exmoor, the consensus was to 'give it a go', and the latent musical instincts and sight-reading prowess of the dozen former choristers (ages ranging from 28 to 83) were aroused, and Ashfield's delicate recitative phrases were rendered as a rousing drinking song. No problem there then! Under David's careful taming we were soon ready to deliver a service worthy of the occasion.

Other repertoire chosen for the service reflected Hurford's passion for the music of J S Bach in Andrew's choice of the opening voluntary (Fantasia in C minor BWV 562) and his closing performance of the Allabreve in D major (BWV 589), as well as the Hymn 'O love how deep, how broad, how high' to Bach's rich harmonization of the tune Eisenach. Hurford's own compositions were chosen for the Introit (The Holy Son) and Anthem (Truly the Lord is in this Place) whose 7/8 'swing' made up the following week's earworm music for the writer. Sung responses were cantored by the Rector Rev. Ann Gibbs. Psalm 121 was set to an arrangement by Andrew Parnell specially for this occasion based on the tune of Hurford's well-loved anthem 'Litany to the Holy Spirit', including the restful fall to the tonic note at the end. Andrew launched his closing voluntary performance with Hurford's sparkling organ Dialogue no. 1.





The focus of the service was the unveiling of a memorial plaque to Peter Hurford now mounted on the church wall, with the inscribed wording thoughtfully chosen by the Hurford family and the ECA.

In his words of welcome, Rev Stephen Humphries reflected that as a boy, Peter would cycle out from his home in Minehead to put in hours of practice on this modest but “beautiful and sweet” organ, which was the foundation for his becoming ‘a very great organist’ and musician, and who inspired many to learn the organ because of him. He reflected how, with the establishment of choir camp in 1958, generations of former choristers have developed a great love for the village and surroundings, how frequently St Albans names appear in the visitors’ book, and how occasionally a St Albans ex-chorister visiting Luccombe on holiday could be heard to swell the singing of the regular congregation on a Sunday morning. He emphasized how proud the church is of this connection, and that we are always welcome in the village as “friends and family”.

**Simon Trott**

*[St Albans ECA Hon. Secretary, and first bass]*



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## Member news

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### Wells Cathedral

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At last a relatively normal Christmas for the Cathedral choir. The Senior Choristers and Vicars Choral performed beautifully at the three Candlelight Concerts. The Great Choir sang for hundreds of people each night at the two Carol Services, Schola Cantorum and the Vicars Choral brought joy to the Christmas Eve Evensong and Eucharist of Christmas Night. The Great Choir sang a very special Christmas Day Eucharist and sung Matins.



*Junior School Choristers enjoying a Shrove Tuesday 2022 pancake race in Vicars' Close!*

As with most Cathedral Choirs Easter 2022 presented the first normal Easter for the choir since 2019. The Vicars Choral sang the Holy Week Services, with the Choristers joining them for the Eucharist of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday and the Three-Hours Devotion on Good Friday. On Easter Eve, the Easter Vigil was sung beautifully by Schola Cantorum and the Vicars Choral, and on Easter Day it was wonderful to have the Great Choir (the combined boys and girls choirs) singing all three services, including Matins (which is now only sung on Easter Day and Christmas Day). After a busy week, the Choristers enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt in the Cathedral's Camery Garden!



Shortly after Easter on Saturday 30 April we had our first WCCA Reunion since 2019 and it was wonderful to have some 20 ex choristers join the Great Choir for evensong. On Saturday 14 May, the Choristers joined renowned consort The Gesualdo Six to perform a concert in aid of Wells Cathedral Chorister Trust. The Choristers spent time in the afternoon working with the consort and Owain Park, director of The Gesualdo Six, who was formerly an Organ Scholar of Wells Cathedral. At the concert, the Choristers joined The Gesualdo Six for a glorious renditions of John Sheppard's Libera Nos (II) and Jean Mouton's beautiful Salva Nos, Domine. The Gesualdo Six went on to thrill the audience with further works by Gombert and Bingen before moving to contemporary works written by Park himself and Alison Willis. The consort were then joined by trumpeter and former Chorister, Erin Davies, who accompanied them in performing works by Alec Roth and Richard Barnard, much to the audience's delight

For the first time ever, the Choristers of Wells Cathedral stayed overnight in the 850-year-old building. On Friday 27 May, 26 Choristers accompanied by 7 adults, camped out in the Cathedral to raise funds for UNICEF'S Ukraine Appeal and raised over £3,000! Director of Music, Jeremy Cole, said "As far as we know, this is the first time our Choristers have camped in the Cathedral overnight in our Cathedral's long history. It has been so exciting for the children and adults alike to spend the night under medieval stone vaulting, with the clock continuing chiming on the hour! We are immensely grateful to all who have supported the Choristers' efforts via Just Giving, and we are thrilled to have raised such a lot for UNICEF's Ukraine Appeal. It has not only been a terrific fundraiser, but also an incredible bonding experience for our Choristers".

So busy times again and to be released in the Autumn, a new CD of British Choral Music. The disc will feature some firm favourites from the Choir's repertoire, including Parry's I was Glad, Ireland's Ex ore innocentium, and Elgar's The Spirit of the Lord. These will feature alongside recordings of works which have been commissioned by the Choir in recent years through the Cathedral's Commission scheme, such as Bells by David Bruce (2021), Awake my soul by Owain Park (2019), and Stuart Beer's God our Father (2016).

### **Christopher Seaton**

*[Chairman Wells Cathedral Choir Association]*

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## **Gloucester Cathedral**

Our committee has not met since late 2019 and we are in a situation where for health reasons we do not have a Chairman and have as yet been unable to fill our vacancy for a Secretary and no activities to report. I have kept in close touch with the Music Department and attend the Cathedral whenever my health and mobility problems allow. I will be attending Evensong on Sunday 25th September when those choristers, boys and girls, who have left this year will be admitted to the Gloucester Cathedral OC Association and received presentations of music scores that we have financially supported.

### **Colin Charter**

*[GCOCA Federation rep]*



## Salisbury Cathedral

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In the Autumn of 2021, Salisbury Cathedral Choir's post-pandemic schedule finally returned to the normal eight sung services per week with the reinstatement of Choral Mattins on Sundays. The Michaelmas Term, already looking forward to Advent and Christmas, was dominated by three major concerts in which the Cathedral Choir took centre stage; the 30th anniversary concert to mark this important milestone in the history of our girls' choir, a concert with other choirs of Monteverdi's masterpiece, the Vespers of 1610, and finally Messiah in December. I was delighted with the way in which my singers and organists worked at the music and when we finally reached Christmas Day, I was proud of all that had been achieved.

The Lent Term of 2022 got off to the best of starts with a performance of parts 5 and 6 of Bach's Christmas Oratorio with a period instrument orchestra. We held successful voice trials for boys and girls and during Holy Week gave a memorable concert of penitential music by Allegri, Byrd, Finzi and Poulenc.

The Summer Term saw the choirs working towards the Southern Cathedrals Festival (SCF) based in Salisbury, although before that they had given concerts out in the wider Diocese, at Alvediston and Chitterne. The SCF was a great success and the long-established and happy collaboration between Salisbury, Chichester and Winchester Cathedrals was embraced enthusiastically. Music by Vaughan Williams in particular gave a strong theme to the Festival but a real high point was the performance of Haydn's Creation in the final concert.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II brought sacred music into focus and nationally it was of a wonderfully high standard. In Salisbury Cathedral, we reacted to the mood of the nation and delivered many special services. The two double choir masterpieces by William Harris, Faire is the heaven and Bring us, O Lord God were both heard several times. In fact, Faire is the heaven was sung again at an uplifting Thanksgiving Evensong to remember Dr Richard Seal, former Organist and Master of the Choristers of Salisbury Cathedral, who passed away in July.

So, as I write this in October, the music of Salisbury Cathedral is in good shape. Our Be a Chorister for a Day recruitment initiative was frantic and enjoyable and I look forward to welcoming some of those young singers to voice trials in the New Year. It is a privilege to be a small part of the wonderful music tradition here.

**David Halls. Director of Music**  
*[Salisbury Cathedral]*

## Warwick St. Mary

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At the 19th reunion of the Guild of ex-choristers of the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick on Saturday 17th September we welcomed back our former director of music Katherine Dienes Williams (2001-2007), the current Master of the Choristers at Guildford Cathedral, as well as a number of her former choristers from that era. Our event started with a lively recital from the new organ scholar Colin Millington. One of the areas of support Guild members have provided over





the years is financial contribution to the organ scholarship which has given a great start for a number of up and coming talented organists over the years.

Following a short rehearsal came the Choral Evensong and with the full current choir turning out on a Saturday (gratefully appreciated by all) and 20 former boy and girl choristers swelling the stalls, the sound (read volume!) was very full in deed!

Having had a chance to catch up at the drinks reception after our reunion Evensong, it was interesting to hear about the varied careers and experiences our former choristers have had since leaving St Mary's, some in successful professional musical careers and others, like myself, outside of music and enjoying the chance to sing again in a Choral environment at the reunion. The reunion this year attracted former choristers who sang in the choir from the 1950s to 2010s, so we had a real cross section of ages which was great to see.

Our twentieth Guild reunion next year in 2023 will mark a very special anniversary for the church and choir, celebrating 900 years of Choral music in Warwick. To help celebrate we will also be hosting the Annual FCOCA festival weekend and combining it with our former chorister reunion on 15-17th September 2023. So please feel free to block out your diaries for what should be a fantastic weekend to catch up and enjoy some wonderful Choral music while sharing this momentous occasion with us at Warwick.

**Will Butcher** [*Chair, Guild of the Ex-Choristers at the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick*]



*Katherine Dienes Williams rehearses the combined current and former choristers' choir.*





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## Director of Music's report – November 2022

September 2021 saw the Choir return for its first full choral year since 2019. The Guild of Ex-Choristers' reunion and (delayed) Evensong for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Girls' Choir under the direction of Simon Lole was swiftly followed by a visit from BBC Radio 3 – our first since 2017. The evening before the live broadcast was given over to recording (Bevan *Magnificat octavi toni*, Holst *Nunc dimittis*, Mathias *A babe is born*) for broadcast the week after Christmas; somewhat surreal to sing carols in the third week of September. In the live broadcast – Bingen *O virtus sapientiae*, Ives *Warwick Service*, Mendelssohn *Hear my prayer* and Lole *The Father's Love*, sung by the girl choristers and men – the choir gave a very good account of itself.

Thereafter, term was more normal: Harvest Festival, the Warwickshire Regimental Service, and services for All Saints', All Souls', and Remembrance fell in their usual places, with the addition of some of our choristers and Gentlemen taking part in the Cathedral Music Trust's Diamond Fund concert at Coventry Cathedral alongside others from Coventry, Derby, Leicester, Birmingham, and Lichfield cathedrals, Southwell Minster, St Peter's Wolverhampton, and St Alphege Solihull, in the presence of HRH The Duchess of Gloucester. Advent and Christmas services were very moving, but it was interesting to note the slightly reduced congregation numbers – a side effect, perhaps, of offering live-streaming – and our annual concert with Royal Spa Brass of Carols at Warwick Castle took place once again to a sell-out audience of c.3,000 guests.

Lent Term continued our usual round of feast and fast, with an excellent Epiphany Carol Service just ten days into term, the Feast of Thomas Oken (for the first time since 2019), Candlemas Carols and a visit for the boys and Gentlemen to sing Evensong at Tewkesbury Abbey. The Choir sang marvellously (Jackson *in G* and Howells *Here is the little door*) and made the most of that fabulous acoustic! Lent was suitably solemn, with a particular highlight of Holy Week being Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* with strings at Wednesday Evensong. Easter morning saw an excellent congregation and a true moment of resurrection joy at the sound of the choir and congregation in the opening hymn. Alleluia, indeed.

We strode into the summer term with more 'first-since-2019' events: Ascension Day, with services atop St Mary's tower and at the Lord Leycester Hospital, Trinity Sunday Eucharist with procession, Solemn Eucharist for Corpus Christi, the Choir concert (in which the Choir was joined by the Beauchamp Sinfonietta for Parry's *I was glad* and *Blest pair of sirens*, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, Willan *O praise the Lord*, and more), plus joining forces with Armonico Consort for a jubilee concert which included Walton's *Coronation Te Deum* and movements from Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G*. At the end of term, we bid a fond farewell to our Organ Scholar, Matthew Howell, who leaves Warwick to begin teacher training in Bristol. This year's Organ Scholar, Colin Millington, joins us from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

During the summer, the boys and Gentlemen sang Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (Walmisley *in D minor* and Philip Moore's *All wisdom cometh from the Lord*), and the girls and Gentlemen had a very successful week in residence at Canterbury Cathedral, giving the Cathedral's first liturgical outing of Finzi's *Lo, the full final sacrifice* in the Music Administrator's memory, among much else.



The start of the current academic year saw some hurried changes to mark the death of Her Late Majesty, made all the more complicated by the Director of Music's paternity leave. In October, St Mary's hosted her first 'Last Night of the Proms' with soprano Elin Manahan Thomas and the boys, girls and Gentlemen of the Choir providing much excellent singing and hearty flag waving.

At time of writing, the Choir is renewing its association with Duruflé *Requiem* for All Souls', and looking forward to various celebrations as part of its 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023, including hosting the FCOCA gathering 15-17 September (save the date!).

### **Oliver Hancock**

*[Director of Music, Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick]*

## **Kingston Parish Church**

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The Rt Rev Richard Cheetham, who has been Bishop of Kingston since 2002, has retired. He has had an interestingly varied career. As well as being ASKCA's (All Saints Kingston Choristers Association) current Patron (which he will relinquish on his retirement) he also has the (dubious?!) privilege of having been taught Physics at Kingston Grammar school by our long serving tenor Nigel Duffin! We were delighted to learn that our very own Dominic Barrington (former chorister from the 1980s) is making a long-overdue return to this country from Chicago to take up his new position as Dean of York. The provisional date for Dominic's installation is Saturday 12th November, and it is anticipated there will be a very light music list at All Saints the following morning as we expect to be fielding a 'home team' at the York celebrations. Very many congratulations to Dominic!

David Nield's significant milestone: A group of current choir members, along with almost all the subsequent directors/assistants of music at Tiffin school, met for a very convivial lunch at Nield Towers recently to celebrate his Covid-19 postponed **80th birthday**. David is in good health, and still busy composing. His latest work for school choirs - Cinderella - was given its first performance at St John's School, Kingston recently.

We had a Come & Sing fundraising event recently, singing Mozart's Requiem with the ASK choir. In the not too distant future we need to replace our choir cassocks, and estimate that it will cost in the region of £30,000. The day was a great success – we had around 75-80 singers, in addition to our own choir from which Soloists were drawn. As well as the joining fee, we also held a Prize Draw, and sold nearly 400 tickets. The 'must have' prize was a visit to Westminster Abbey accompanied by Robin Blaze, Abbey Lay Clerk and international Countertenor, whose son Daniel was our organ scholar, and subsequently Dorchester Abbey, before going up to University. We're now planning the next Come & Sing in the Spring.

### **Paul Thompson**

*[All Saints, Kingston Parish Church]*



## Canterbury Cathedral

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Following Covid and trying to pick up momentum again was not easy. Almost all our usual contacts at the Cathedral, both clergy and music staff had changed and we had to build bridges. After several attempts to fix a date, by the skin of our teeth we made it. Not a full reunion in the usual way- the AGM to be held later- but about 45 of us (which included parents of some of the recent and current Choristers) attended evensong that day. It was also live-streamed as are most of the Cathedral services. Afterwards most of us went to a favoured local hostelry for drinks, a meal and much lively banter. I was very impressed by the standard of the singing of the Choir. The close harmony of the Responses, and a new anthem was sung which included a solo saxophone. The new organ with the console sited on the north Quire screen gives the Organist much better communication with the Choir. Modern CCTV used for live-streaming can also give an overhead view of the console and show the skill of the Organist.

**Chris Gibbs,**  
*[Secretary CCOCA]*

## The Cathedral Choir 2021-2022:

The academic year 2021-2022 could be said to have been the most important for the Cathedral Choir since the year of the founding of the choir: 1541. This is because the Cathedral Choir welcomed full time Girl Choristers into its ranks for the first time, 480 years after boys were first admitted. The Girl Choristers have made rapid progress as a group, and now have parity with the boys in every way. Each team of Choristers sings two weekday Evensongs every week; and the two teams alternate singing in the Cathedral at weekends; one weekend, the boys sing on Saturdays and Sundays, the next weekend the girls undertake the duties. It is marvellous now to have two teams of choristers, each with its own strengths and individuality; and when the two teams combine for important occasions, the musical result is sensational!

After the disappointments and frustrations of the academic year 2020-2021, it is a pleasure to report that all of the Cathedral's planned activities have taken place this year. In last summer's end-of-term report, it was stated that last year's Three Choirs Festival might or might not take place, because of lingering Covid regulations. In fact, amazingly, the 2021 Worcester Three Choirs Festival did take place as planned in July. No other comparable festival took place last summer in the U.K. We should all congratulate the authorities at Worcester Cathedral for allowing the festival to take place. As usual, the Gloucester Choristers played a full part in the week, and particularly distinguished themselves in their singing in the Gloucester Choir- only Evensong in Worcester Cathedral, which was attended by hundreds of people (despite any fears of Covid!). Our Choristers and Lay Clerks have recently performed in this year's Festival at Hereford, which was the first covid-free festival since the last Gloucester one in 2019. The festival was a great success; but more of that in next year's report. (It should here be re-stated that it is a privilege for the Choristers to take part in the TCF; it is the oldest choral festival in Europe, and provides the children at Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Cathedrals with a set of opportunities which other cathedral choristers are not fortunate to be offered.)

Aside from the Three Choirs Festival, the Choristers have been involved in two CD recordings in the past twelve months. After the writing of the last report, the Cathedral Choir recorded a CD of the works of the Hereford-born composer, Ian King, who sadly died in the middle of the lockdown



in 2020. This disc was released in March, and has received many excellent reviews in national publications, and has featured on BBC Radio 3's In Tune programme. Also in March, the Choristers recorded a disc consisting of music by the international clarinettist, Emma Johnson, who was one of the first winners of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award. The music is very difficult, but very beautiful. It was a privilege for the Choristers to make music with a musician of Emma's quality. The CD will be released in time for Christmas this year. As part of their contributions to the Cathedral's Christmas 2021 festivities, the Choristers also performed a concert with Emma in the Chapter House, which was hugely enjoyed by a capacity audience.

Other highlights of the past twelve months have included a concert for the Friends of Gloucester Cathedral last November, performed to a full nave- the first full nave since Christmas 2019! The Boy Choristers performed Britten's Ceremony of Carols twice, either side of Christmas; and the Girl Choristers performed special Evensongs, one in Stanway Church for the Prayer Book Society, and one for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in the Cathedral, to another full nave.

We were very sorry to have to say goodbye to four outstanding choristers on Easter Sunday in April. The four Year 9 boys Laurence Keigher-Ketcher, Eoin Lloyd, Charlie Lucas, and Zechariah Oyedele all had to leave because their voices were very quickly changing. These boys have each given brilliant service for over five years. We are very grateful to them for helping the choir reform after the empty months of the pandemic. They will be very hard to replace. We are equally sad to be saying goodbye to several other choristers, each of whom has given many hours of excellent singing to the Cathedral in the past few years: Olivia Beynon, Tilly Bradley, Cecily Davis, Lena Villacis Leo Soda and Aaron Stringer. We wish them all well for the future. Olivia Beynon and Cecily Davis will always have the distinction of being the very first female Head and Deputy Head Choristers of Gloucester Cathedral Choir!

**Adrian Partington 17-09-2022**  
*[Director of Music Gloucester Cathedral]*

## Llandaff Cathedral



Llandaff is a lapsed member of the Federation, but Nick and Alastair have been in contact with Elizabeth Atherton (Music Foundation Executive) and they are keen to re-join us. Working in conjunction with Stephen Moore (Director of Music), part of her job is building an alumni and supporters' association for Llandaff Cathedral Choir which will link into the Music Foundation. They are actively trying to connect with as many past-chorister alumni, back row/lay clerks, organists and general supporters as possible. Elizabeth can be contacted through: Mobile 07928 539481 or by email [music.foundation@llandaffcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music.foundation@llandaffcathedral.org.uk)

Music is at the heart of the daily life of Llandaff Cathedral. Our choirs and musicians enrich everyday worship alongside diocesan and national occasions, bringing joy to people across Cardiff, Wales and the UK. The musical life of the Cathedral brings untold benefits to those that are involved, particularly young people, engendering life skills and values such as teamwork and collective responsibility in an atmosphere of world-class performance opportunities.





Director of Music, Stephen Moore says: “We are delighted to announce that a new Music Foundation is being set up to better support and develop the opportunities available to those who wish to make music at Llandaff Cathedral. We want to strengthen what we already have and strive to build a community of musicians that offers opportunity for anyone who wishes to be involved. The Foundation will seek to build on the strong links with the Cathedral School, whilst also forging new relationships with other schools and educational establishments. It will look at ways to engage with former choristers, both those who have left the choirs recently and those who have a connection which is more long standing. The Foundation will fundraise for short and long-term projects, promoting and strengthening Llandaff Cathedral as a hub for music in Cardiff, as well as helping to maintain and develop the high standard of music making for which we are known.”

The Dean and Chapter have appointed Elizabeth Atherton as Music Foundation Executive. Elizabeth joins us with a wealth of experience as a professional singer and educator, and whose early days of development were shaped as a Choral Scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge. Alongside the Precentor and Director of Music, Elizabeth will seek to develop a vision and strategy for the Foundation which will take shape over the coming months before a formal launch takes place.

Elizabeth says: “I am thrilled to be joining the team at Llandaff Cathedral, a very special place indeed, and one that already figures significantly in my life, as my sons are both choristers here. Cathedral music played an integral part in my development as a singer and as the person that I have become, and it is an enormous privilege to be entrusted to lead the building of a Music Foundation here alongside Stephen Moore and his team, who are already fabulous mentors to so many young people. Music has the power to transform lives, and every child should have the opportunity to experience it at the highest level. I am determined to enable as many youngsters as possible to benefit from everything that music education and choral singing has to offer, regardless of their means or background, whilst cementing the status of Llandaff Cathedral as a centre for the arts, both locally and nationally.”

### **Portsmouth Cathedral**

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#### **Summer 2022.**

##### **Round-up:**

And so another Choir Year has come to a close; the first complete, uninterrupted school year since July 2019. It has been excellent to see after so much uncertainty, and inconsistency in our lives, a return to a sustained choir daily routine alongside the many 'specials' that make up the life of a cathedral choir and the pace of life at Portsmouth Cathedral.

This term alone we have sung for The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust Centenary Service, a Jazz Mass for the City Service, The Cathedral Organists' Association Annual National Conference, Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, Falklands40 Remembrance, Diocesan Ordinations, our Patronal Festival and two BBC Radio broadcasts.



### **Holy Week and Easter:**

It was wonderful to welcome our new Bishop to his first Holy Week and Easter at Portsmouth and +Jonathan confirmed six choristers and Choral Scholar, Daniel. Our choirs were able to see a return to our all-day rehearsals, team-building, training sessions and treats, kindly supported by the Choir Association.

### **City Service:**

This year's City Service and welcome to the new Lord Mayor, Councillor Hugh Mason featured the Will Todd Portsmouth Jazz Mass sung by our Cathedral Choir alongside instrumentalists from our back row—Xavier and Tim on Trumpet, Organ Scholar Joel on Bass Guitar and PGS pupil, Ben on Rhythm. In addition, Joel and Tim combined forces to play a haunting extract from the score to the film 'Interstellar.'



### **Cathedral Organists' Conference:**

In May it was Portsmouth's turn to host the Cathedral Organists for their Summer Residential Conference, Over forty cathedral musicians spent three days with us enjoying the delights of Portsmouth as well as Quarr Abbey (left), St Cecilia's Abbey and the hospitality of our choir school, Portsmouth Grammar School and Buckingham House for their Annual Dinner.

### **Platinum Jubilee:**

The Cathedral hosted a number of events to mark The Platinum Jubilee of HM The Queen including a special organ recital, a picnic, a Symphony By The Sea concert and a celebratory Evensong with our Cathedral Choir and invited parish choirs from across the Diocese of Portsmouth.

### **Patronal Festival 2022:**

We celebrated St Thomas of Canterbury this year with a panoply of contemporary music including Roxanna Panifnik's Westminster Mass and two Portsmouth commissions; Nico Muhly's Hymnus Martyrum and Tim Hamilton's Clangor Tuba.

### **BBC Broadcasts:**

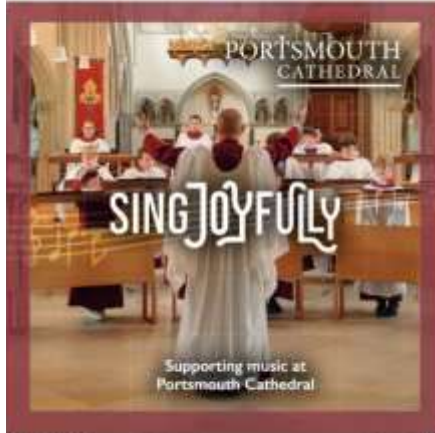
The BBC invited us to broadcast two services in July; BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong on Wednesday 6th July and BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship for Sea Sunday on 10th July. These two services made a fitting finale to the choir year for boy and girl choristers respectively. The boys sang music by contemporary composers Martin Neary, Judith Weir, Bob Chilcott and Philip Stopford—and each wrote in to compliment the choir. Philip Stopford wrote 'Such a wonderful and comforting text has to be sung with great poise and panache, with great lyricism and sustained choral singing, and your choir delivered exactly this'. The girls expertly sang a selection including music by Rani Arbo from our new collection of music by women composers.



### People:

It was excellent to welcome our Portsmouth Grammar School's Cambiata Choir (changing voices) made up of a number of former boy choristers and their PGS colleagues who joined our back row for an Evensong in June. Former Head Chorister, Sam also played the voluntary at the end of the service. We are recruiting to all our choirs at the moment. Places are available for boys (Yrs 3-5), girls (Yrs 5-12) and also for our Gap Year Scheme for 2023/24. Please email for details or see our website.

### Sing Joyfully:



We have recently launched a campaign to secure the future of our music programme at Portsmouth Cathedral. You can find out more details about Sing Joyfully on our website. Please support us if you can to enable us to continue our work into the next 25 years and beyond. Information on all Cathedral Choirs from:

#### **David Price**

*[Organist and Master of the Choristers]*

[www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/joinourchoir](http://www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/joinourchoir)  
[music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk)

## Lincoln Cathedral

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### Choir and Funding Support:

Since the beginning of the year the choir has undertaken several important musical events and services. This includes preparing for the 400th Anniversary in 2023 of William Byrd's death. He was the organist and master of the choristers at Lincoln 1563-72.

Significant work is continuing by the music team to help the recovery of the choir which was depleted over the pandemic period. The cathedral's additional choirs (Consort and Youth Choir) are also making greater contributions to the liturgy. This year is considered a year to rebuild (2021/2022), next year to consolidate (2022/2023) and the following year to flourish (2023/2024). Recruitment is an ongoing issue - the girls are expected to be relatively stable, (in 2021 they also achieved their 25th Foundation Anniversary) and the boys expected to have a 'dip' in numbers and quality as a result of the recruitment hiatus induced by Covid-19. Both front lines are below optimal numbers although interviews are on-going. Choral mattins will recommence on Sunday mornings in 2023 and Saturday evensong sung by the full choir will follow the reintroduction of Mattins. Cost pressures are preventing earlier changes to the current programme of services. In July following five choristers being read out, recruitment is on-going to appoint five boys and three girls to achieve full strength for both choirs.

On 30th January 2022 the Evensong service celebrated the generous sponsor support given to the Cathedral Choir by individuals and groups across greater Lincolnshire and beyond. The service is to thank these sponsors and to join in worship to thank God for the gift of music, for composers, conductors, players and performers. The music for the service included the



Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis setting of Collegium Regale by Herbert Howells and for the Anthem Edward Elgar's setting of the Benedictus in the Key of F. Then followed the presentations of Choristerships, Choral Scholarships, Chorister Bursaries and Lay Vicar Endowments by the sponsor representative(s). The Lincoln Old Chorister Choristership was presented to Niamh Haliday by John Parry on behalf of LCCOCA. One of the aims of the association is to support the choir and like many other associations demonstrates the importance of such support by former choristers. This helps to sustain the viability of Cathedral Choirs and provides the opportunities for youngsters to enjoy the same unique experience which they gained as a chorister. Many Old Lincoln Choristers do this by giving regular amounts to the Music Fund and have, through their fund raising and generosity, raised £70,000 for two Choristerships. In addition, the new LCCOCA has raised over £20,000 towards a third Choristership, the target now being £50,000. When the required amount has been raised a Chorister will be chosen to wear a medallion acknowledging the LCCOCA Choristership.

It is also good to report that much effort by the music department, led by Director of Music Aric Prentice, in the recruitment and training of choristers from local schools continues well. Positive outcomes included the invitation by the BBC to take part in a live broadcast on Ash Wednesday 2nd March 2022 and in a pre-recorded evensong broadcast on Wed 27th April 2022. The music for Ash Wednesday included Byrd: Miserere mei, Deus; Martin Responses; Ps 51; Aylward: The Short Service; Green: Lord Let me know thine end and JS Bach: Prelude and Fugue in C minor BWV546. For the 27th April Evensong, the music included Herbert Howells: St Johns Service SS Wesley's: Blessed be the God and Father and the first movement of Elgar's Sonata for Organ.

### **Lincoln Cathedral and Film making:**

Over the years, several film production teams incorporated views of the Cathedral to add to the creativity of the film story line. As members will recall Lincoln Cathedral was one of the main locations for the filming of the controversial international best-selling book 'The Da Vinci Code' . Similarly, early in the year the cathedral was again used for such a project with Hollywood director Ridley Scott, known for Gladiator, Alien and more. He is creating his latest film about Napoleon. Lincoln Cathedral is doubled as Notre Dame for the film, based in the late 18th and early 19th century. On this occasion the boys' choir was also involved providing them much enjoyment with benefits and experience from the venture. However, in lieu of the benefits enjoyed by the boys, LCCOCA shared the cost with the Cathedral by treating members of the girls' choir to a days' outing to York before the summer break. The day included a visit to the Yorvik Centre, York Minster, a boat trip and a walk round the Shambles.

### **LCCOCA News:**

Following the development of the reorganised Association a new Constitution has been produced by the committee and was ratified at the AGM. As a reminder, following a request by some of the former old choristers the committee is establishing an 'Old Chorister Directory' The list is far from complete, but members can provide as much information as they wish to share with other members including choir member dates.

Since the 2021 AGM the LCCOCA has renewed its' contacts with The Federation and on behalf of our Association John Parry is liaising with them on matters of interest to both organisations. For those members who may be interested, the FCOCA newsletters and the 'Once a Chorister' magazine can be found on the FCOCA web site: [www.fcoca.org.uk](http://www.fcoca.org.uk)





Following earlier notices of the Old Choristers AGM and Act of Remembrance, the emphasis of the 2022 event was particularly to welcome those members of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s to meet old friends and join in to sing evensong with the choir. This included Bernard Rose Responses, Herbert Bruer Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and Stamford Te Deum. At the AGM it was good to welcome Nick Hodges, Chair of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers whose contributions in the discussions was much appreciated. A key issue on the AGM agenda was a mandate for the existing committee of LCCOCA to investigate ways in which the activities of the association could be continued and managed in other ways within the wider cathedral organisation.

The key activities cited, to ensure continuity included:-

- Annual Old Choristers Act of Remembrance and Evensong, followed by drinks reception.
- To maintain links for OCs with the Federation and provide a representative on Lincoln Cathedral Music Council.
- To continue to seek financial support from Old Choristers for the Lincoln Cathedral Music Fund by supporting the Old Choristers' Choristership.
- Fund-raising generally (alongside Music Department activities at the Christmas Market)
- Choir social activities

The proposal followed the difficulty in filling key committee roles and the limited response by members to attend the day's events. However, for those attending it was considered well worth the time and effort particularly to meet peer group friends, to socialise over lunch in the new refectory and later at the drinks' reception. However, the most rewarding aspect was to have joined the choir in rehearsal and then to participate in delivering the chosen music for evensong. Prior to evensong members attended the moving Annual Commemoration of Old Choristers. This included laying a wreath on the Old Choristers War Memorial and remembering old choristers who had passed away during the previous year. Appropriately, this included remembering D Martin Doughty (1955-61) who had sadly died recently. The short service concluded with the members singing a verse of the Charles Wesley Hymn, "One Family, we dwell with Him" to the tune Dundee. After evensong members present were joined by Chapter Members, the music staff and Lay Clerks for a drink's reception in the North Transept.

**H John Parry**  
[LCCOCA]

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### Norwich Cathedral

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I am writing at the end of a joyous All Saints Sunday, at which the girl choristers, lay clerks and choral scholars have performed music by Kodaly, Messiaen, Howells and Walton (his monumental anthem 'The Twelve'). How good it is to be back to full strength and a typically busy musical programme when, only a year ago, we were still feeling the effects of the pandemic.

It was wonderful to welcome Ex-Choristers to join the current cathedral choir on the final Sunday of the choir term in July; the first such day since 2019 when we have been able to bid farewell to leaving members of the choir without covid restrictions and anxieties. We were saying goodbye to five choristers: Fredi Davies and Abi Mansley in the girls' choir, and Will Brown, Edward Lott, Julian Pe amongst the boys. Each of them had made outstanding contributions to the life of the choir, through a very difficult time, and we thank them for all their dedication and hard work. We



also thanked departing alto Lay Clerk Ashley Harries, and leaving choral scholars Celia Stoddart, Grace Wright, Isaac Cooper and Tom Chesworth. After five years of outstanding service, first as organ scholar and subsequently Assistant Organist, George Inscoe finished with us in the summer. George has done so much for the musical life of the cathedral, not only through his organ playing and work with the choir but in so many other ways, notably the setting up of livestreaming, digital worship and musical provision during the pandemic. He and his wife Kirsty (a professional soprano) have moved to London to pursue their flourishing musical careers and we wish them both well for their future together. As is always the case, just as we have bid farewell to leaving members, so we have welcomed new members of the choir in September: Willow Swiatek as our new Alto Lay Clerk; Niamh Davies, Tom Good, Jonathan Quinton and Barnaby Shaw (former Norwich Chorister) as choral scholars; Victoria Chukwinwike and Evie Alexander amongst the girls and Sebastien Dubroeuq, Theo Holden, Otter Gibbs Peel, Alfred Bufford, Ben Chai Guo and Joshua Chukwinwike amongst the boys. After the October half-term break we look forward to welcoming Robbie Carroll as our new Assistant Organist. Robbie joins us from being Assistant Director of Music at St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork, having studied the organ at the Conservatoire in Dublin and the Musik-Hochschule in Cologne, Germany.



The year has been a busy one for as the cathedral's musical life has returned to a full programme. In June 2022, as the nation united in celebration of the late Queen's 70 years on the throne, Norwich Cathedral played host to three musical events which were highlights of the long bank holiday weekend. On Friday 3rd June, our organists Ashley Grote, David Dunnett and George Inscoe joined forces for a celebratory 'Battle of the Organs', marking the last concert before the dismantling and rebuilding of the cathedral organ. With the temporary digital organs already installed,

the recital enabled the 'home team' to perform on three instruments simultaneously – the cathedral pipe organ, already shrouded in its scaffolding; one of the digital organs which have been installed in the cathedral for the duration of the works; and the cathedral's one-manual chamber organ. The free concert attracted an enormous and enthusiastic audience of over 1,000 people! It was wonderful to see people of all ages gathering to hear the pipe organ for the final time before its rebuild.

On Saturday 4th June, we hosted a Platinum Jubilee Concert, with the Cathedral Chamber Choir singing alongside Norwich Baroque for thrilling performances of Royal music by George Frederic Handel. Alongside his Coronation Anthems, beginning with 'Zadok the Priest' (heard at every Coronation since that of King George II in 1727), the orchestra played Handel's 'Music for the Royal Fireworks'. Those present at the concert will not forget the thrilling sound of the baroque trumpets and horns raising the roof, let alone the appearance of a baroque contrabassoon – the only one in the UK, we are told! On the Sunday, the Cathedral hosted the County Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration: the cathedral choir were accompanied by organ and brass ensemble, performing some of the best-known works that were heard at Her Majesty's Coronation in 1953, including Walton's Coronation Te Deum and Parry's famous anthem I was glad.

Upon our return after the summer break, all of these joyous musical celebrations were of course quickly followed by the sad news of the death of the late Queen. As was the case throughout the



country, the cathedral became a focus for the people of Norfolk in their own mourning and thanksgiving for the Queen's life and reign. We welcomed over 1,200 people to the service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving on 15th September, when the choir sang music by Purcell (from his Funeral Sentences for Queen Mary), an excerpt from the Rutter Requiem, and A Cornish Prayer, composed by our Master of Music, Ashley Grote, written originally for the retirement of Bishop Graham James. Particularly for the boys and girls in our choir, it has been a special and proud time to be a chorister and to be involved in these commemorations at such a significant time in the nation's history.

Special mention should be made of girl chorister Alice Platten, who has reached the final televised stages of this year's BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition. We are all incredibly proud of Alice's achievement and wish her all the best! You will be able to watch the programmes and find out the result on BBC 'Songs of Praise' towards the end of the year – do tune in!

The year ahead presents many exciting plans and projects, not least the completion of the project to rebuild the cathedral organ by Harrison & Harrison of Durham.

Please do keep in touch with us; remember that as Ex-Choristers you will always be part of our choir and cathedral family, and we are always delighted to see you!



**Ashley Grote**  
*[Master of Music]*



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### Hexham Abbey

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It feels like it's been a difficult time, but gradually in 2022 we are starting to bounce back. We've grown again to about 20 Girls and 10 Boys spread over two choirs with mixed adult back rows. We had a fabulous time singing with Carlisle and Newcastle Cathedral Choirs with whom we have a very strong connection. We took a group of singers to sing in Beverley Minster and to visit Hull Minster, receiving a wonderful welcome in both places. We are singing on tour in Palma this October, so exciting times!

**Michael Haynes**  
*[Director of Music]*

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### Rochester Cathedral

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For obvious reasons, events planned for 2021 had to be cancelled which left the Association in a state of creative inertia.

However, on the 10th July 2022, a sung Eucharist took place in the Cathedral. At the end of the service, the Dean bid farewell to the choir leavers and admitted them as 'Old Choristers'. After the farewells, the choir sang the anthem I was Glad written by Hubert Parry for the Coronation of King Edward II in 1902. Families joined together for a picnic lunch after the service which was much enjoyed by all.

It was decided with regret that owing to the continued pandemic and other factors, the Annual General Meeting following sung Evensong and our annual reunion dinner for 2022 would not take place. The Committee will endeavour to ensure that a full programme of events will take place in 2023.

Our Archivist, Dr. James Strike, has produced some well researched and good work which has been posted on our website under 'Archive'. A recent posting is Choristers of Rochester Cathedral. Other articles include The History of the Choir of Rochester Cathedral, Organists of Rochester Cathedral and Anglican Chants from Rochester Cathedral - all well worth a look.





The Association launched an appeal to raise funds to support the Cathedral in their project to improve the sound system capabilities. It is pleasing to report that we raised the sum of £5400 which is a very good result for a small organisation like ours and the money has now been paid to the Cathedral.

Adrian Bawtree was appointed as Director of Music and Organist of Rochester Cathedral from September 2022. Adrian was previously Second Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral.  
Rochester Cathedral Old Choristers'  
Association

**David Littlejohn**  
*[Chairman RCOCA]*



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## Westminster Cathedral

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The following was written to encourage youngsters to become Chorister at Westminster Cathedral in London, but much of it is applicable to any budding chorister, anywhere.

### **What kind of music does Westminster Cathedral Choir sing?**

Westminster Cathedral Choir occupies a unique and enviable position at the forefront of English Church Music, and remains the only Catholic Cathedral choir in the world to sing daily Mass and Vespers. The Choir draws on the finest music of the last millennium. Performances by composers like Byrd and Tallis, unheard for centuries, earned the Choir its reputation, and still feature today. Gregorian Chant, originating in the ninth century, and the works of Palestrina and Victoria from the Golden Age of Catholic Music, form the backbone of the Choir's repertoire, but it also sings the finest choral music from across the centuries, including the work of contemporary composers like Sir James MacMillan.

### **How do boys become such expert musicians so young?**

Boys start with singing technique, sight-reading and music theory. Combined with tuition in two instruments, and playing in orchestras and chamber groups, they become immersed in a living musical tradition. Practising and performing every day except Saturdays makes boys expert and instinctive musicians.

### **Who makes a great Westminster Cathedral chorister?**

A great Westminster Cathedral Chorister

- loves to sing
- has a passion for music
- has an inquisitive, engaging mind
- has energy and enthusiasm
- can concentrate
- can listen carefully
- enjoys a challenge
- loves being part of a team

### **Who makes a great chorister boarder?**

A great chorister boarder

- loves to sing and perform to friends and family
- has bags of energy
- enjoys making friends
- is organised
- is on-time
- loves his food (ours is the best in London)!

### **Who makes a great WCCS boy?**

A great WCCS boy

- works hard in class
- has stamina
- picks himself up after failure
- throws himself into new challenges in music, sport and drama.



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## The future of Once a Chorister

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We have a problem. National former chorister events are popular with those former choristers that have attended such events in the past. Unfortunately, we struggle to attract new member associations, and Former Chorister Associations struggle to attract members. We all struggle to retain relevance, and sometimes to extract subscriptions. Moreover, although the **Once a Chorister** magazine is much appreciated by those who care to read it, I wonder how many do. I think we need to look at our target audience. Who do Former Chorister Associations and the Federation appeal to? We cannot appeal to everyone.

The majority (but not all!) of our members (the Former Chorister Associations) and The Federation itself are run by 'older men' who probably want different things from an association of younger people, both boys & girls, men & women. Youngsters today correspond with each other using Social Media and Mobile Apps and probably want different things in their lives than us oldies. How can a group of "older men" know what youngster want and organise events relevant to them? Why are there no ladies and girls on the executive committee? Former Chorister Associations and thus the Federation should be run by younger people that reflect former choristers now, or at least have a much more diverse committee in all its forms. Another problem is attracting volunteers to serve on any committee these days. Personally, I am a Trustee of 1 charity, Secretary of another, Treasurer of a third, Steward at a fourth, and a volunteer at two others. I would love to step back from some, but I know how hard it is to attract volunteers (especially to serve on a committee) as people are so busy living their lives, earning a crust, supporting their own children etc. Former Chorister Associations are no different to any other charity or voluntary organisation in that respect. Ultimately, we cannot force people to join us if they don't want to or our events are not relevant. If there is no demand, then let's support our current members and enjoy what we have. It's not really up to us if The Federation survives, it's up to our association members to attract new blood, and tell the Federation committee what they want from us. When we ask for suggestions the silence is deafening!



My own Former Chorister Association at Durham is struggling to exist. The Chorister School merged with Durham School (a private secondary school with links to The Cathedral) last year, and the DCOCA (Durham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association) was subsumed by the Old Dunelmians. We no longer have direct access to a membership email list, and there are probably less than a dozen pseudo-active members and half of those are over 70 years old. Our own chorister reunion didn't take place this year, although the Old Dunelmians reunion was a great success. I still love Durham Cathedral and will continue to go there when I can. I have fond memories of my time singing in Durham Cathedral Choir 50 years ago, but I have less fond memories of my time at The Chorister School itself. However, I enjoy going to other cathedrals and taking part in Federation events and meeting other like-minded former choristers.

If you want The Federation and **Once a Chorister** to continue, we must find some new volunteers to serve on the committee. Your own associations must encourage new members to join you, and encourage them to join The Federation. Otherwise it will soon close!

**Alastair Pollard**  
*[Secretary and former Chair]*



## A new look

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Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

You will have noticed that the Federation has successfully rebranded with a new 21st century image, with a brand new logo. We now prefer to refer to ourselves as “**Once a Chorister**”, the name given to our magazine from its launch. We believe that the new name better reflects our members and what we are about.

We discovered that if you say to a chorister, “**Once a Chorister**”, invariably you receive the response, “**Always a Chorister**”. Most choristers look back with fondness at their time in their choir and will tell you that it was an experience that has stayed with them all their lives. But it wasn't through looking back that we settled on using “**Once a Chorister**” as a brand name; we were very firmly looking to the future.

The Federation was founded and placed very firmly in the 20th century, but the old logo was no longer appropriate. If we are to appeal to former choristers of the 21st century we have to look as though we belong. We believe that the new simpler logo is more in tune with today.

We have to recognise that not all of our affiliated members are associated with Cathedrals but they do represent those places of worship where the very highest choral standards are maintained. Probably our biggest worry was the word “Old”. None of us wish to be thought of as old. It is for individual Associations to decide if they wish to retain “Old” in their name, and many have changed their name.

“**Once a Chorister**” exists to bring former choristers together and enable them to stay in touch with the world of choral music. Our purpose is clear – to celebrate choristership, which we hope to be doing for very many more years to come.

The organisation will continue formally to be the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations but we feel, “**Once a Chorister**” much better expresses who we are and it rolls off the tongue more easily. We will also start to reduce the use of the word Federation.





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### Once a Chorister contacts

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We have now published several editions of the **Once a Chorister** Magazine in electronic format, and this is the seventh. In general, the feedback has been positive about the content, and individual copies can be downloaded and printed for those who prefer a physical medium. Reports from Associations are not always published in the **Once a Chorister** magazine, but if not they can now be found on the Federation website [www.fcoca.org.uk](http://www.fcoca.org.uk). This not only reduces the size of the magazine significantly and so reduces printing costs, but also means that our website has more up to date material. This does rely on Associations submitting their reports and those of their organists and master of choristers to their Regional Representative or directly to [secretary@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fcoca.org.uk)

**Once a Chorister** is a great vehicle for keeping people up to date with Federation events such as the Festival and AGM (when they are able to take place), and articles of interest from similar organisations or those that potentially affect choral foundations.

I hope that this edition is to your liking. Please continue to submit articles for publication in the **Once a Chorister** magazine or to the website [www.fcoca.org.uk](http://www.fcoca.org.uk)

The global pandemic has affected all our lives, but most places and events are now open, albeit with a certain amount of caution.

**Alastair Pollard**

*[Once a Chorister magazine Editor]*

[Secretary@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@fcoca.org.uk)

### **Committee emails:**

Contact can also be made through these generic email addresses:

[Chairman@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:Chairman@fcoca.org.uk)

[Secretary@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@fcoca.org.uk)

[Membership@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:Membership@fcoca.org.uk)

[Treasurer@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer@fcoca.org.uk)



**Committee members:**

|                                   |                     |                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Chair</b>                      | Nick Hodges         | (Warwick)           |
| <b>Vice Chair</b>                 | Vacant              |                     |
| <b>Honorary Secretary</b>         | Alastair Pollard    | (Durham)            |
| <b>Honorary Treasurer</b>         | Michael Lake        | (Chelmsford)        |
| <b>Membership Secretary</b>       | Richard Lilley      | (St. Albans)        |
| <b>Development Officer</b>        | Vacant              |                     |
| <b>Deputy Development Officer</b> | Oliver Hamilton-Box | (Peterborough)      |
| <b>Website Officer</b>            | Richard Watts       | (Westminster Abbey) |

**Regional Association Representatives:**

|                                     |                  |             |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>East Anglia &amp; South East</b> | Ayrton Westwood  | (Norwich)   |
| <b>Midshires &amp; Wales</b>        | Nick Hodges      | (Warwick)   |
| <b>South West</b>                   | Stephen Milner   | (Salisbury) |
| <b>North and Ireland</b>            | Alastair Pollard | (Durham)    |

**Vice Presidents:**

|                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Geoffrey Mitchell</b> | (Exeter)                     |
| <b>Alan Oyston</b>       | (Durham)                     |
| <b>Ian Henderson</b>     | (Rochester)                  |
| <b>David Horwood</b>     | (Eton)                       |
| <b>Carl Jackson</b>      | (Chapel Royal Hampton Court) |
| <b>Dr. Barry Rose</b>    | OBE                          |

**The Federation Prayer**

Almighty God, we thank you for the music we enjoyed in our lives as choristers and sang together in your house to glorify your name. Let that music always be a witness to your majesty and love, and remind us that you are always watching, and listening from your heavenly throne. May your Spirit guide us through our daily lives so that we may continue to be the instruments of your peace, and proclaim with a glad voice your honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Adapted from "The Musician's Prayer"*



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## Affiliated associations

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**Blackburn Cathedral** Choirs Association  
**Bristol Cathedral** Choral Alumni  
**Cambridge**, The Choir Association of **St John's College**  
**Cambridge, King's College** Old Choristers' Association  
**Canterbury Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Chapel Royal** Choristers' Association  
**Chelmsford Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Chester Cathedral** Choristers' Association  
**Chichester Cathedral** Choristers' Association  
**Christ Church Cathedral, New Zealand**, Choir Society (Inc)  
**Dublin Christchurch Cathedral** Past Choristers' Association  
**Dublin St Patrick's Cathedral** Past Choristers' & Pupils' Association  
**Durham Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Ely Cathedral** Choristers' Society  
**Eton College** Old Choristers' Association  
**Exeter Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Gloucester Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Guildford Cathedral** Choir Association  
**Hereford Cathedral** Former Choristers  
**Kingston All Saints Parish Church** Choir Association  
**Leicester Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Lichfield Cathedral** Former Choristers' Association  
**Lincoln Cathedral** Choir and Old Choristers' Association  
**London (St. Paul's):** The Guild Of The Companions Of St Paul  
**Norwich Cathedral** Ex Choristers' Guild  
**Oxford Christ Church Cathedral** School Old Boys Association  
**Oxford New College** Old Choristers' Association  
**Peterborough Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Portsmouth Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Rochester Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**St. Albans Cathedral** Ex-Choristers' Association  
**St. Edmundsbury Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Salisbury Cathedral** School Association  
**Southwark Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Southwell Minster** Old Choristers' Association  
**Tenbury Wells St Michael's College** Society  
**Truro Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Wakefield Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Warwick St Marys** Guild Of Ex-Choristers  
**Wells Cathedral** Choir Association  
**Westminster Abbey** Old Choristers' Association  
**Westminster Cathedral** Old Boys' Association  
**Winchester Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**Winchester College** Quiristers Association  
**Worcester Cathedral** Old Choristers' Association  
**York Minster** Choristers' Association



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