

## Christmas Message from the New Chairman of the FCOCA



Dear friends, members & former choristers,

*Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!*

As we approach this joyful and reflective season, I am delighted to write to you for the first time as Chairman of the Federation. It is both an honour and a privilege to take on this role, and I wish to extend my warmest Christmas greetings to you all.

For those whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Samuel, and my journey within the choral tradition began as a chorister at Peterborough Cathedral from 2002 to 2007, first under Christopher Gower and later Andrew Reid. Those years; rich with music, discipline, and fellowship; formed the foundation of my lifelong connection to cathedral music and to our extraordinary community.

Shortly after leaving the choir, I joined the Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association (PCOCA) committee, eager to remain involved and to support the organisation that had shaped so much of my early life. Around 2010, I became Peterborough's representative to the Federation, a role I was proud to hold for nearly a decade. In 2019, I took on the position of PCOCA Treasurer, allowing me to serve the association in a new capacity.

Just before taking up the chairmanship, I also celebrated a very happy personal milestone: my marriage. My wife is from County Offaly, and we are very much looking forward to spending more time in Ireland; which, I hope, will give me the opportunity to visit our member associations there in the near future. With her sister currently living in New Zealand, I now have another excellent reason to travel even further afield and meet our member association there as well!

It is therefore with deep gratitude and enthusiasm that I step forward as Chairman of FCOCA. Over the coming months, we look forward to sharing our vision for the Federation; one that embraces fresh ideas and renewed energy while respecting and preserving the heritage and mission that have guided us for generations. A key part of that vision is to bring our associations across both the UK and the wider world closer together, strengthening the sense of fellowship that unites us, no matter the distance between our cathedral, church, chapel or college homes.

In the near future, I hope to speak with associations far and wide to hear your thoughts, hopes, and ideas on how we can work together to help both the Federation and each of our member associations flourish. Your insight and experience are invaluable, and I am eager to listen, learn, and shape our shared future collaboratively. You will, I am sure have seen the refreshed design on our website, this is only the beginning and we would appreciate any feedback, extra content (such as that from member associations) & any additional history you have on our organisation to help build out the great content already.

Christmas is a season that reminds us of the power of music to inspire, comfort, and unite. Whether we are singing in our local choirs, returning to our cathedral homes for festive services, or simply listening to familiar carols, I know many of us feel the same deep-rooted affection for the traditions that first brought us together.

Thank you for your continued commitment to your associations and to the Federation. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the coming year and to working together to support the next generation of choristers across the country and around the globe.

Wishing you and your loved ones a peaceful, joyful, and blessed Christmas.

With warm regards,

Samuel