



ONCE A CHORISTER

Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

2024

V 2.0





The front-page photograph is of Llandaff cathedral choirs, the location for our 2024 Festival.



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Welcome from the Chair



In my Welcome to the magazine last year, I reported that the Executive Committee had been much exercised with what the future held for the Federation. We resolved at the 2023 AGM to survey our membership to find out more about how they were doing, post-pandemic, how they might engage with the Federation in the future and what they thought we should be doing. You can read more about the results of that survey in my annual report to this year's AGM later in this issue. I would like to be able to report that things have changed in the last 12 months and that we have a clear vision for going forward. Currently, that is not the case.

I have recently taken custody of the Federation archive, dating back nearly 100 years. It's been very interesting to learn of the challenges that have faced previous generations and to see how the Federation has responded to them over the years. In 1951 the Annual Festival was held in Chester with the Archbishop of Canterbury joining over 200 attendees at the Festival dinner. Replying to the toast to the choir and cathedral school, Dr C H Moody (Organist, Ripon Cathedral) declared that deans and chapters would need to seriously consider whether it was appropriate to maintain ownership of rare items that reside in their libraries when cathedrals were running out of money and the choral tradition was likely, at best, to be severely curtailed and, at worst, lost altogether. At this time, the impact of the 1944 Education Act was also being felt by the cathedral choir schools, with the change from the "elementary" system, which required children to be educated from the age of 5 to 14, to the primary (ages 5 to 11) and secondary (11 – 15) system, which had already been introduced in some Local Education Authorities.

In the main, cathedrals weathered that financial crisis and the choral tradition remains strong. However, looking at where we are today, the financial pressures of maintaining a fully functional music department have not gone away. There is a concern that the introduction next year of VAT on private school fees will be a challenge for the sector, especially the smaller private schools. It can also be seen that changes in legislation, however well meaning, the introduction of girls' choirs, increased buildings maintenance costs, falling giving receipts and visitor numbers and, of course, the impact of COVID, have added to the financial stress that cathedrals (and other places of worship) have had to face.

The fortunes of the Federation have rested on the shoulders of many individuals over its 114 year history. There have been some who have dedicated considerable service to the organisation. Most notable is Frank Hewitt (Chester) who not only "kept the pot boiling" during the interregnum of 1939-1947 but also held all three officer roles, some concurrently: Chairman 1946-53, Hon. Secretary 1946 -76, Hon. Treasurer 1946-73. Rev. Gordon Berriman (Durham) was chairman from 1957 to 1978 and the Hon. Secretary role was held by John Bowdler (Gloucester) from 1980 to 1990, Andrew Orland (Lincoln) from 2001 to 2009 and Richard Belton (Leicester) from 2009 to 2017. This continuity has been of great benefit to the Federation and their unstinting commitment has allowed it to flourish in past times.

It can be seen from the archives that there has been much change over the years though, in some ways, nothing has changed. The 1938 Festival celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Federation at Westminster Abbey. The Archbishop of Canterbury led the Festival and there was a telegram of congratulations from the King. Most notable from that event was that 400 old choristers attended. Westminster hosted again in 1950, the first post-war, when over 200 former choristers plus their



partners attended. Around the same number continued to attend Festivals through the following decades. When we come to the 2000s, attendance starts to fall and finding places to host Festivals becomes more of a challenge. In 2005 at Durham, 130 including partners plus 36 from the Durham Association and guests attended. Rochester hosted the 2015 event with 80 attendees including partners and guests, 36 of whom were from the Rochester Association. In recent years, post-pandemic, it has been similar numbers, with between 60 to 80 attendees of whom less than half are former choristers, representing between 15 to 20 Associations. The question has to be asked whether it is reasonable to ask cathedrals (and other places) to host Festival when they face so many other challenges and fewer and fewer former choristers from other Associations support the event.

“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results” is often attributed to Albert Einstein, but the original quote is by novelist Rita Mae Brown. I do not believe it can be suggested that the Federation Executive Committee has continued to do the same thing whilst expecting a different result. Over the last decade or more we have recognised the headwinds facing the organisation and attempted to react accordingly. Taking Once a Chorister Magazine on-line was a bold move in 2017, but one that could not be avoided. It was expected to appeal more to the present generation, who receive most of their information digitally and provide the opportunity for expanded content. We looked at the way others see us and contended that our lumpy title did not endear us the younger generation and did not fit our wider remit and so we changed our branding to match the magazine title, which better expresses who we are. Not everyone likes formal, old-school dinners. We know it is where the Associations came from and has formed the basis of the Federation Annual Festival. On multiple occasions it has been suggested that less formal, shorter, less expensive forms of gathering should be considered. No one, as yet, has taken up the idea.

What we learn from the archives is that the success of Federation events has been dependent on them being supported by good, strong Associations who, in turn, have been supported by the clergy and music departments of their respective places of worship. None of us wishes to see the demise of this 114 year old organisation and I can assure you that the Executive Committee will do all that it can to save that from happening. However, there has to be a sea change in the way the Federation is run in the future and what it stands for. We made a commitment at the AGM to engage with every cathedral and place of worship that supports a choral tradition, and implore them to do whatever they can to ensure the continuance and success of their own former chorister Associations and thus, hopefully, the Federation. It is through strong Associations collective will and desire to come together to celebrate their common passion that gives reason for the Federation to exist.



My heartfelt thanks go to all at Llandaff Cathedral for hosting such a memorable Festival this year. My thanks also go to every member of the Management Committee who has given so freely of their time over the last year and, in particular, to our Honorary Secretary, Alastair Pollard, who continues to keep me and the rest of the committee on the right path and edits this magazine. I look forward to when we might once again come together to celebrate our choristership.

Nick Hodges

[Chair, Once a Chorister]



2024 Festival

The 2024 Festival was held in Llandaff this year. The team at Llandaff pulled out all the stops (literally for the organ demonstration) to make another very successful Festival, and it was joy to meet somewhere that many former choristers had never visited. For those unable to attend, here is a personal report of the festival to give you an idea of what took place.

A report on the Llandaff festival

Llandaff is a long way from Harrogate, so I was in two minds as to whether I would attend the 2024 Once a Chorister Festival. But I had a feeling that this may be the last Once a Chorister Festival so I bit the bullet and booked my wife Nicola and I in. We were fortunate to have good friends who live in the West Midlands who offered us a bed for the night to break our journey. A superb evening meal cooked by our hosts, a glass or two of red wine, and a late evening putting the world to rights made for a very pleasant start to the festival weekend. After a late morning brunch we set off for Llandaff, and booked in to the Maltsters Arms Hotel. Our room window gave a view directly up the rather narrow High Street, emphasised by the traffic jam caused by parents collecting their children from the Cathedral School. Our room key was labelled "Llandaff Cathedral". I wondered if the key would fit the Cathedral's door.



A warm welcome was found in the Prebendal House with a drink and biscuits and then we all wandered over to Llandaff Cathedral for Choral Evensong sung by the girls choir. They were in fine voice with Aylward Responses and Evening Service in B flat by Elgar Day. I admit that I am not familiar with the anthem, O how glorious is the kingdom by Philip Stopford, but he wasn't even born when I was a chorister at Durham in the early 1970s! Philip was a chorister at Westminster Abbey no less. A quick glass of fizz at the Drinks reception in The Lady Chapel before rushing back to the hotel for a bite to eat in the bar – I think former choristers had taken all the rooms in the hotel so we were never alone. Complaine is one of the highlights of any Chorister Festival. This time 11 ladies and gentlemen of the back row from Llandaff Cathedral Choir were joined by 8 former choristers to sing. They started off with Tallis' If ye love me, followed by The Psalmody. The Antiphon and Nunc Dimittis were in 4-part harmony providing a rich full sound. The Anthem was O nata lux de lumine, music by Pier



Connor Kennedy. At times, the choir had to compete with the sound of fireworks outside – I wondered if they were arranged especially for the OaC Festival. Everyone was invited to join in with the two ancient hymns. At the end we all left the Cathedral in silence, then stumbled around in the dark trying to find a way back to the main road!



It was raining on Saturday as we dug into a hearty breakfast. The Festival Programme started with a demonstration of the Nicholson & Co. Organ (built quite recently in 2012/2013) by Stephen Moore (DoM) and Aaron Shilson (Assistant DoM). This was possibly the best organ



demonstration/recital I

have witnessed. Such a wide variety of sounds & dynamics, and even a duet (not a lot of space on the pedals for 4 feet!). The organists gave a comprehensive demonstration of individual stops for example flutes, reeds, Bombarde, Contra Trombone. The organ could play very loud, but also incredibly softly. Cameras on the keyboards and the pedals made it so much more engaging. If you going to play the pedals on camera, you must pick your choice of socks carefully beforehand – the more colourful the better seems to be the rule. The layout of the organ itself allowed sound to come from various parts of the cathedral, and even allowed for antiphonal sounds from the two symmetrical organ cases either side of the Choir, with a huge range from the swell box. You can find out more about the organ on page 8 of the Festival Brochure. We were invited to visit the organ loft, and I took the opportunity to play one of my favourite hymns on a Cathedral Organ (albeit with no sound!) There was even a tiny wooden mouse organist hiding in a corner.



Next came a guided tour of the Cathedral with Catherine, a volunteer and retired History teacher. She showed us round the various parts, explaining the ups and downs of the cathedral through the years. Llandaff Cathedral has had a mixed life since 1120, falling into near dereliction more than once. The Cathedral is dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, and to 3 Welsh saints: Dubricius (Welsh: Dyfrig), Teilo and Oudoceus (Welsh: Euddogwy). Externally, the western end is unusual, having both a Spire and a Tower. A striking component is the double-wishbone concrete arch (built after the war to allow an uninterrupted view) surmounted by a hollow drum which housed part of the previous organ (it is still there as it was felt too difficult to remove). Jacob Epstein created the figure of Christ on the organ drum. Very much a



“Marmite” object”. Other things of note include the calm of The Welch Regiment Memorial Chapel, and the controversial Pre-Raphaelite artist Rossetti’s painting of The Nativity for the former reredos.

Straight on to a short recital by 10 pupils at The Cathedral School. We were entertained to a wealth of musical talent. Encouraging children at an early age in church music and choristership helps ensure they flourish. As the Head of Music said “Music makes us whole”. We had a variety of musical instruments and styles ranging from the lovely mellow tone of the cello to the beautiful harmony of a soprano duet. Some of the musicians were choristers, but some were not, showing that music is for all.

After a quick bite to eat from the various shops and cafes in Llandaff High Street, delegates gathered together for our Annual General Meeting (see reports elsewhere for further details) or had a guided tour of The Cathedral School. As Once a Chorister Secretary I picked the former, but as my wife is a high school librarian she picked the latter including a personal tour of the library.

At 4 o’clock we joined together again for Festal Evensong, often the highlight of a Festival. Former choristers were invited to join the girls choir and the boys choir plus the ladies and gentlemen of back-row to produce a wonderful sound of about 70 singers praising God in a fantastic setting. The words of the Introit would be familiar to many as they form The Chorister Prayer. The music was once again by Philp Stopford, commissioned for the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Girl Choristers of Llandaff Cathedral in 2016. As is tradition, our Chair Nick Hodges, was invited to read the First Lesson. Chales Villers Stanford provided the music for the Mag. and Nunc with his Evening Service in A. At over ten minutes long the anthem, Great is the Lord by Elgar, was more like a mini concert than simply an anthem.

After a quick change, we congregated at The Cathedral School for a glass of fizz and into the splendid school dining room for Dinner. In a change to the traditional speaker, we had Stephen Moore (DoM at Llandaff Cathedral) interviewing Lindsay Gray (former Headmaster of The Cathedral School and former Director of the RSCM. Lindsay started singing in a small parish church before he sang in my own Chorister Cathedral in Durham under Richard Lloyd. He talked fondly about his time as Headmaster at Llandaff and then his time at RSCM, and highlighted some of the challenges for cathedral music today – including finance, recruitment, time conflicts for choristers on a Sunday, and the future of choir schools in general. Stephen rounded off an entertaining interview saying he still thinks “the future is positive”.

The 2024 Once a Chorister Festival was concluded with the opportunity to sing out at the Sunday morning Choral Eucharist. All we had to do now was to say our goodbyes to friends old and new, and offer our thanks to the team at Llandaff, at the Cathedral and at the Cathedral School before the very long trek home up the M4, M5, M42, M1, A1 etc. My wife and I were privileged to get chatting with one of the new choristers Alex, and his Mum and you can read what he says about being a Chorister at Llandaff Cathedral elsewhere in this magazine.

Alastair Pollard

[Durham Cathedral Former Chorister 1970 – 1974]



Future events

There are no confirmed events, although we may have a host for the 2025 AGM but this has not yet been confirmed and we have no details so far.

Unfortunately, we have not had any volunteers for the 2025 Once a Chorister annual festival. This is very sad news.

The guide to hosting a Festival is available on our website 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. The festival need not be spread over three days. It can be a one-day event or a two day event.



2024 AGM

The 2024 Annual General Meeting was held during the festival in Llandaff.

Chair's Report

Once again, I must start by thanking my fellow Executive Committee members for their continued support and guidance and for all that they have done on the last 12. I am grateful that they have all agreed to continue as members of the committee for a further 12 months, subject to their re-election at the AGM.

This time last year we were enjoying being at St Mary's Collegiate Church, Warwick for our Annual Festival and, looking back on my report to the AGM that weekend, I see that I reported that the hoped for Festival in 2024 at Llandaff Cathedral was not going ahead. Thankfully, shortly after the Warwick Festival, we heard that Llandaff was back on – seemingly, there was never any doubt, just crossed wires. Our sincere thanks go to Stephen Moore, Director of Music, Aaron Shilson, Assistant Director of Music and Petra Barry, in particular, for all they have done to make this weekend possible and to the Dean and Chapter for welcoming us to this beautiful and historic building for our annual celebration of choristership.

During the course of the last year we have maintained our regular contact with the associations affiliated to the Federation. We agreed at last year's AGM to survey the membership to gain a better idea of what they expect of the Federation and how they might provide support in the future. In October I wrote (email) individually to each of our affiliated members with a set of 5 questions:

1. Is your association active?
2. Are you or any of your members likely to support future OaC events?
3. Does your association submit articles for the annual magazine/would you consider doing so?
4. Would you consider hosting a Festival/AGM?
5. Would you or anyone from your association consider joining the Federation ExecComm?

We also asked respondents to give their opinion on the relevance of the Federation to their association.

Not including those members represented on the Executive Committee, I received replies from just 10 associations. All bar one said they were active but only one said they would attend future OaC events. Four responded positively to providing articles for the magazine but none offered to host events in the near future and there were no offers to join the ExecComm.

We learnt through their July newsletter that the Blackburn association, who were one of the respondents, was planning on closing by 2026 and to reassign their resources to a new financial trust being created to support the music in the cathedral. As with many associations, Blackburn has seen falling support for the association with fewer former choristers attending the annual reunion and no one volunteering for the committee. As reported in the past, we are aware of other associations in similar circumstances, which, obviously, impacts the Federation and time will be given at the AGM to discuss its future.



It was with deep sadness that we learnt in July this year of the death of Colin Charter of Gloucester Cathedral Old Chorister Association who had been a stalwart supporter of the Federation and the driving force behind the GCOCA. VP Ian Henderson and my wife and I attended Colin's funeral in the cathedral and heard that the continuance of the Gloucester association is now in doubt as their committee ages and falls in numbers and no new volunteers come forward.

Not much has changed, therefore, since last year. We are now without any offers to host future events and no new volunteers have come forward to take the officer's positions that Alastair, I and, possibly Michael, will vacate next year. Maintaining the organisation's existence, even at its lowest level, will still require individuals to take responsibility for organising meetings, maintaining databases and managing the finances. Federation finances are, currently, in a strong position, having reduced the recurrent costs (largely insurance related) to a minimum and associations continuing to pay their affiliation subscription. The time has come for decisions to be taken and, I am sad to report, they will not be easy.

Nick Hodges
[Chair]

Secretary's report

Let's start on a high. The Festival at Warwick was a great success, and thanks must go to the whole team at Warwick for staging such a great event, but in particular Colin Edwards, Oliver Hancock, Canon Peter Holliday, Nick Hodges and everyone else involved in making this a wonderfully successful OaC event. A full report of the AGM and Festival can be found in Once a Chorister magazine 2023 on our website.

More good news is that we have received current year subscriptions from (at least) 19 associations and one individual member so we still appear to be relevant to some.

The Executive committee met on zoom on 9th October 2023, 18th March 2024 and 23rd July 2024. Minutes of all committee meetings are produced. We are all looking forward to meeting at our Festival in 2024 in Llandaff.

Depressingly, the major topic of discussion has been the future of Once a Chorister. There is no need to have an umbrella organisation if our member associations do not engage with us or simply no longer exist. We are all fighting to remain relevant. Young people appear to want different things to previous generations of former choristers. Should we struggle on just because we used to enjoy fellowship and friendship with other former choristers?

We have a major problem with a lack of committee members. There are vacancies for Vice-Chair and Development Officer. Next year we also need to find a new Chair and Secretary. We may struggle to even have sufficient committee members to be quorate. If we don't have a functioning committee, Once a Chorister cannot function.

I still enjoy producing the Once a Chorister magazine in October/November, but it is starting to feel like a one-man-show with me writing most of the articles. As I stand down as Secretary of Once a Chorister next year, I also intend to stand down as Once a Chorister Magazine Editor at the same time. Unless we can find another magazine editor, Once a Chorister Magazine 2025



will be the last. Thanks again to my wife Nicola who often takes minutes during our committee meetings, and to our Chair Nick for his wisdom and friendship (and sharing a bottle of wine!)

Alastair Pollard
[Secretary]

Treasurer's Report

This is for the Financial Year ending December 2023.

Not much to say really about this set of accounts covering the year ended December 31, 2023, as the entries annually become fewer! Although the income from subscriptions appears to show just two less than the previous year, the figure of £760 does include some subscription payments for previous years in a few instances, and so as said in other reports the number of affiliated associations continues to decrease, now 40. The figure shown as "donation" relates to the now mothballed Leicester Association, who sent on their remaining balance in their account. Moving down to expenditure, the figure shown for insurance in parentheses is the refund of £245 received from our insurance broker, following the agreement in 2023 to cease providing insurance for association regalia plus the Federation chain of office which is now held in safe keeping in cathedral locked vaults.

So for the year we can show a surplus which has increased from 2022 from which you can see a healthy bank balance. It may only be 1% but the majority of funds held in the current account have since been transferred to the deposit account to earn a little interest.

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

INCOME	2023	2022
Subscriptions	£760	£800
Merchandise	-	£180
Donations	£250	£500
Stock Written Off	-	(£141)
Total	£1,010	£1,339

EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
Insurance	(£245)	£850
Association Donations	-	(£260)
Accountancy Fee	-	£50
Subscriptions	£34	£20
Total	£211	£660
Surplus (Deficit)	£1,221	£679



Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023

FIXED ASSETS	Note	2023	2022
Chairman's Chain of Office and Secretary's Pendant	2	£33,200	£33,200
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock	3	-	-
Debtors	4	-	-
Bank			
Current Account	5	£9,435	£8,204
Deposit Account	5	£105	£105
Total		£9,530	£8,309
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors		-	-
NET ASSETS		£42,730	£41,509

REPRESENTED BY:		
Revaluation Reserve	£33,200	£33,200
Surplus b/fwd at 1 January 2023	£8,309	£7,630
Surplus for the Year	£1,221	£679
Total Assets c/fwd at 31 December 2023	£42,730	£41,509

Michael Lake
[Treasurer]

Accountant's Report

In accordance with Section 4.8 of the Constitution, I have reviewed, without carrying out an audit, the attached annual report and financial statements of the Federation for the year ended 31 December 2023, and would certify that they are in agreement with the accounting records provided and explanations given to me.

Matthew Guest
[ACMA August 19th 2024]



The notes to these accounts form part of the Financial Statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- a) The Chains and Pendants are capitalised on a replacement value basis
- b) Equipment is fully depreciated in the year of acquisition

2. TANGIBLE ASSETS

Chains of Office

COST	
As at 31 December 2023	£33,200
Additions	<u>-</u>
	£33,200
NET BOOK VALUE	
As at 31 December 2023	£33,200

Note: The Chains of Office and Pendants were revalued for the 2020 accounts

3. STOCK as at 31 December 2023 **Value**
NIL

4. DEBTORS
NIL

5. BANK ACCOUNTS
In general monies are held in a Current Account with Lloyds Bank Plc

6. TOURS ACCOUNT
The balance as at 31 December 2023 was £NIL

Michael Lake
[Treasurer]



Membership report

Until relatively recently Once a Chorister had about 55 associations recently, but we are now down to 38.

Since the last AGM at Warwick, there have been slightly fewer requests; 37 membership cards issued to both boys and girls leaving their choirs. In total, we have issued 3089 membership card numbers since we started. We were reminded that if you want membership cards, to please fill in the form to be found on our website, give plenty of time to produce them, and orders are processed in order of need and date of receipt.

@ChoristersAssoc follows 204 accounts and have 211 followers on Twitter (now rebranded as X).

Richard Lilley
[Membership Secretary]

Regional Representatives' Reports

Once again, many associations are struggling to survive, primarily due to the age of committee members, changes in attitudes, and particularly a reluctance for former choristers to serve on their committee. 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. Organisational changes at some cathedrals mean that their choirs have sometimes been restructured or even disbanded, and some Former Chorister Associations have merged with other similar organisations that cater for other choirs, pupils, friends.

Report for the Midlands and Wales Region

As stated in the Chair's Report, with the loss of Colin Charter, the continuance of the Gloucester Cathedral Old Chorister Association is now in doubt. Hereford Cathedral association has been merged into the choral foundation, which, since the retirement of its CEO is now, as far as I can ascertain, run by the Precentor, from whom we have received no response to communications. Though we were able to establish that the primary contact for the Federation at Worcester Cathedral is still in post, its association is dormant. Thus, in this region, only Lichfield, Oxford Christ Church, St Albans and Warwick remain active, out of 14 associations that existed 20 years ago.

In common with other associations, because of falling support and lack of attendance at the annual reunion, the Warwick Guild of Ex-Choristers will have discussed merger with the Friends of the Choir organisation at its AGM this month.

Nick Hodges
[Midlands & Wales Regional Representative]



Report for the East Anglia and South East Region

There has been no correspondence or enquiries from the region since my last 2023 report at Warwick. There is nothing to report therefore and I am very disappointed that I shall not be able to attend this year's Festival, due to a clash with family commitments. I wish all participants a very happy and enjoyable Festival and AGM at Llandaff and hope we will have continuity next year with a forthcoming venue.

Ayrton Westwood

[East Anglia and South East Regional Representative]

Report for the North and Ireland Region

Blackburn is currently very active, with a reunion planned for October 5th 2024, and a colourful monthly magazine (Music & More) published every month by the redoubtable John Bertalot. However, as they strive to remain relevant and continue to “promote the musical life of the cathedral in perpetuity”, there are plans to bring B.C.C.A to a close by 2026 and to reassign resources and ongoing support for the Lantern Trust.

Apart from Blackburn, this region is not as active as we would hope. Durham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association is still active although it now operates under the Old Dunelmians umbrella at Durham School, but we hope to hold a reunion in the Autumn. I believe York Minster Choristers Association is still active but struggling!

The North has the same issues that other associations and Once a Chorister (The Federation) itself struggles with, as we all fight to remain relevant. Young people appear to want different things to previous generations of former choristers. Should we struggle on just because we used to enjoy fellowship and friendship with other former choristers?

Alastair Pollard

[North and Ireland Regional Representative]

Report for the South West Region

The Salisbury Cathedral School Association had no Reunion in 2024, as the school and Cathedral could not find a suitable date. The AGM was hastily arranged with few members attending. FCOCA subscription will be paid this year. I mentioned briefly about the difficulties facing the FCOCA. The School sent out the Llandaff information as they now hold the email addresses. The new Head of Salisbury Cathedral School is Sally Moulton from a Primary school in Poole; Sally will be our chairperson. The SCSA Committee meeting is being held after Llandaff on Tuesday 24 September 2024.

Stephen Milner

[South West Regional Representative]



Royal School of Church Music update

There was no specific report from RSCM this year, but here are a couple of recent news articles from their website.



RSCM Celebration Day



We were delighted to welcome so many people to St Albans Cathedral last Saturday 19th October 2024.

Approximately 150 singers were conducted by Dr David Hill FRSCM and accompanied by Andrew Lumsden FRSCM in a rousing Stanford 'Come and Sing' evensong. The Introit, Give us a Pure Heart (performed in the presence of the composer, Revd Christopher Willcock) was particularly popular with the singers. Christopher had travelled over from Australia to collect his Fellowship of the RSCM Award, alongside worthy recipients from around the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the US. During the service we were also able to present a number of Voice for Life Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates as well as one of our Church Choir Awards.

We are most grateful to all those at St Albans for such a warm welcome, and we look forward to Celebration Day 2025 in Oxford.

A double century in Coventry

200 singers from across the Midlands and further afield gathered together to add their voices to a special, celebratory Evensong service marking the centenary of the death of celebrated church music composer Charles Villiers Stanford.

The music was directed by international conductor, Nicholas Cleobury, who had more than 50 musicians of the Warwickshire Symphony Orchestra, plus the might of the Cathedral's famous Harrison organ at his disposal as well as the massed choir.

RSCM's Director, Hugh Morris, was in attendance and said: 'To be in the congregation for this service was a delight. It was so uplifting to experience such glorious sounds ringing around the Cathedral, offered as praise in worship. The cathedral team was so welcoming; it made for a most enjoyable day'.

© Jamie Gray





Cathedral Music Trust Invests £500,000 in 2024

This year's awards support music in 28 Anglican and Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches across the UK.



We are proud to be investing half a million pounds in cathedral music for 2024 through the Trust's financial support programmes, including the Cathedral Music Support Programme and the Church Choir Award. These awards will support music departments to continue and further their brilliant work both in their own cathedrals and churches, and in the wider community – across England, Scotland and Wales. At the heart of this vital funding is our commitment to championing excellence in choral and organ music, and providing opportunities for people from all walks of life to thrive and develop.

"This investment of £500,000 represents the largest annual sum Cathedral Music Trust has ever distributed through its regular financial support programmes. Our cathedrals and parish churches continue to face financial challenges in sustaining the nation's wonderful heritage of choral and organ music, and this support signals the Trust's ongoing commitment to securing a bright future for this cherished tradition."

[Jonathan Macdonald, Chair, Cathedral Music Trust]



Blackburn Cathedral Choir © Clive Lawrence

In the first year of our renewed main awards scheme, the Cathedral Music Support Programme (CMSP), we are building partnerships with cathedrals across the UK, developing work that shares our objectives in three areas – pathways to music, training and development, and supporting the workforce. The Church Choir Award, a partnership with the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) and now in its third year, is funding far-reaching initiatives at parish churches across England – from supporting projects that offer pathways to choral singing for more young people, to singing

lessons for choir members and the introduction of midweek services. Alongside financial and professional support from the Trust, all seven choirs will benefit from a year's group membership of the RSCM and access to their groundbreaking Voice for Life digital resources. Cathedral Music Trust's work would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our supporters and partner organisations who do so much to raise the profile of this cherished tradition.

Together, we will transform more lives through cathedral music.

Jonathan Mayes

[CEO Cathedral Music Trust]



Member news

Winchester Cathedral



2024 has been a sad year for music at Winchester, yet I am delighted to report that the Winchester Cathedral Old Chorister Association is flourishing. More than 60 former Choristers from both the Boys and Girls choirs joined or rejoined the Association over the past 12 months. Almost all leavers from both choirs now join the Association.

Since the autumn of 2022 the Association has welcomed back former Choristers to our July reunions on three occasions (40 OCs returning in 2022, 60 OCs in 2023). Our Association is very grateful to both the Cathedral Organists under Andy Lumsden and the Pilgrims' School for welcoming us back. We now have 13 members on our Committee. Nineteen former Girls Choir Choristers joined the Association over the past 12 months, with three of them on our committee.



We have grown because we have been active. September 2022 saw 50 former Choristers and Lay Clerks welcome Martin Neary (Master of the Music 1972-1987) back to Winchester for a lunch to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his arrival in Winchester. September 2023 saw nearly 40 Old Choristers from both choirs put on a concert in the Cathedral which filled the Quire and raised nearly 2000 pounds for the Music Foundation. In May of this year 2024 the Association assisted the Music Department in contacting and welcoming back nearly half of all the 80 former members of the Girls Choir for their 25th Anniversary celebrations on the 5th May. Your

correspondent was one of many former Choristers, lay clerks and former Directors of Music to sit in the Congregation and listen to the current Girls Choir ---under the brilliant conducting and leadership of the Cathedral's Organist Dr Andrew Lumsden and Sub-Organist Claudia Grinnell-- sing premieres by Karensa Briggs and Simon Lole, alongside Stanford in B flat and Parry's I Was Glad.

However....

Less than a week before this Evensong took place, the Dean announced the resignation of Dr Lumsden "with great sadness". He left after a series of wonderful concerts & services throughout July's Southern Cathedrals Festival. Many in the Cathedral were aware of the poor treatment of Dr Lumsden, and George Castle (Assistant Organist until late 2021) before him. Rumours primarily revolved around the behaviour of Canon Precentor Trenier. Dr Lumsden announced his



departure at the end of April, with no future post announced by the Dean & Chapter. Many raised eyebrows followed, and subsequent commentary in *Slipped Disc*, *Private Eye* and elsewhere have made it very clear that all has not been at all well in the Cathedral. Winchester OCs wrote a letter to the Dean decrying the treatment of Dr Lumsden: 133 OCs signed this letter, with a broad swathe of Choristers represented from both the Boys and Girls choir from 1947 to 2023, with 17 out of Dr Lumsden's 22 years represented. The Dean met myself and another OC in May and offered us bromides & fallacies. We were told not to believe "rubbish and gossip", promised that the five lay clerk vacancies would be filled at the start of the academic year (September 2024) and that she would lead the search for the interim and permanent Directors of Music. The lay clerk vacancies were not filled. Canon Precentor Trenier has not been present at services since the end of June, was on long term "light duties", and now the Cathedral will not state what the Precentor's position is. Dr Lumsden's departure at the end of the Southern Cathedrals Festival in mid July was commemorated by both the Bishop of Winchester and support for Dr Lumsden shown in a six minute standing ovation by the full congregation in the Cathedral.



The Old Choristers celebrated Andy Lumsden's 22 years at Winchester by turning up in great numbers to support him. Over 100 sang with the joint Cathedral Choirs at Evensong, and a similar number ate with him at our dinner in the Pilgrims' School, with Stephen Layton (OC 1980) delivering a superb speech.

Andy Lumsden's post as Director of Music has been taken over by Andrew Lucas, ex Director of Music at St. Albans, who has by many accounts gotten on well with the musicians and stabilised the ship. He has agreed to stay on until July 2026 which is important: it provides stability for the boy choristers, particularly those leaving next June. Insiders believe that Andrew Lucas has handled a very difficult situation well and, key to his appointment, has benefitted the choristers. We also see as positive the upcoming assistance of the Cathedral Music Trust in the appointment of a permanent Director of Music in 2026.



Last minute news on November 12th 2024 is that the Dean will retire in mid 2025. Whether or not the results of the review further pre-empt her retirement remains to be seen.

The key questions are why Dr Lumsden needed to leave in the first place, the need to address allegations of bullying levelled at the Precentor from many quarters, and how to ensure the continuity of the Pilgrims' School boarding life for the boy choristers which is integral to the stability and quality of the choir.

To address these matters, the Bishop of Winchester in June announced a widely welcomed Review into the Cathedral's leadership and management of the Cathedral's choirs; the culture, behaviours and decision making processes of the Cathedral Chapter, and how this affects the Cathedral's operations, specifically in relation to the Cathedral's choirs. They are likely to report now by the end of this year.

What are the key issues that now vex those intimately involved in the Cathedral choirs?

- Why has Chorister recruitment been underfunded ? A glance at the Cathedral's music budget appears to show that no money has gone towards chorister recruitment between 2020 and 2024. Our Association has been asked on two occasions to assist in recruitment during this period, which we have very happily done. This is no substitute for a methodical recruitment campaign. We are pleased to see this has finally started up again, with "Be a Chorister" posters appearing for the 9th November. The posters appear to commit to boarding at the Pilgrims' School. Nevertheless the posters are unimaginative and our sources believe that the focus should be on musical opportunities and standards (recordings, touring, gold plated psalm singing to name but three).

- Does the Cathedral offer an ironclad commitment to boarding at the Pilgrims' School? Chorister parents and other supporters of the boarding commitment have been nervous over the



past few months, given lukewarm comments from Cathedral clergy. Whilst the latest recruitment posters commit to boarding, the parental view is that probationer parent commitments to boarding are not 100 % secure and that the Cathedral was backtracking until the emergence of the latest recruitment announcement. It is vital that the Cathedral not be evasive about this issue. One source stated that only on the 15th October did the Dean finally “commit to maintaining boarding...and supporting Pilgrims’.”

- When will the Cathedral recruit the five missing permanent lay clerks? The backrow is five short. The Dean promised us in May that they would be recruiting hard “in the Church Times” at the start of this September. The musicians are still waiting, and there are concerns that the D&C is now waiting for the permanent Director of Music, who will arrive in September 2025. The musicians are still waiting, whilst the latest is that recruitment will begin in January 2025, hopes have been dashed before. There is unhappiness that the choir will have to wait nearly another year to return to full strength.

- Who will recruit the permanent Director of Music? There are strong feelings that at least two highly regarded musicians should be on panel for the DoM selection process. The recruitment process for the sub organist this summer initially did not include the lay clerks. They were only added after an outcry. There is real fear that credible applicants for the position will not apply if the D&C are involved or in charge of this process. The involvement of the Cathedral Music Trust should allay some fears.

- Why do the Dean & Chapter withdraw three prominent chorister medals? Medals awarded in the names of three prominent families who gave 53 years of service between them to the Cathedral and the Pilgrims’ School were not awarded this year to Choristers: Michael Stancliffe (Dean 1969-1986), Alwyn Surplice (Master of the Music 1949-1971) and Michael Kefford (Pilgrims’ Headmaster 1983-1997). None of their families were informed in advance of the withdrawal of these medals. It took a campaign and a month for the D&C to commit to revive these medals next year. The D & C claimed this was an oversight. Few believe this.

- Why are complaints suppressed? At two successive community days in May and October, the D&C restricted questions, particularly “awkward” questions emanating from those aware of the musical revolt. Given the ongoing review, this opposition to transparency is manifestly *not* best policy.

- Will the allegations of bullying be addressed by the review, and action taken against the perpetrators? The treatment of Dr Lumsden and others in the music department has been shameful. Many music makers in Winchester expect action to be taken soonest. Changes to the D&C must follow.

Winchester Cathedral has a choral foundation to be proud of, and funding far in excess of many Cathedrals. Winchester OCs and present musicians alike will not stand idly by and see this great tradition sacrificed on the altar of a radical different view of the key role of high quality musicianship in Winchester Cathedral’s life.

Edward Bagnall

[Chair, Winchester Cathedral Old Choristers Association]

[Photographs by Jim Pascoe Photography].



Warwick Collegiate Church



We returned from our summer break in 2023 to launch headlong into Michaelmas Term. A stirring Patronal Festival weekend led on to a joyous weekend with 'Once a Chorister' delegates, including probably the best-attended Friday Evensong in living memory, a very moving service of Compline, a rip-roaring Festival Evensong and dinner, and a suitably celebratory Sunday services. Many thanks to all who put so much effort into making the weekend a success, and to those

who attended. This quickly followed by a double BBC visit: a live broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 and a recording of Sunday Worship the following day for BBC Radio 4. I am very pleased that the BBC has visited St Mary's four times in the last two-and-a-half years, and all members of our choral institution – past and present – should feel justly proud of themselves and this place. A few days later, we were joined for Sunday Evensong by the Choir of All Saints', Northampton – a sister 'Major Church' with a long-standing musical tradition – with Howells Collegium Regale and Greig's luscious Ave Maris Stella. Half Term beckoned

Through 2023, as part of the 900th-anniversary celebrations, the Boy Choristers and Gentlemen of the Choir offered a handful of 'concerts by candlelight'. It was a joy to put on these short concerts: not only an opportunity for the boys to sing in the chancel, but wonderful to see lots of people coming to share in the musical output of St Mary's. Our Advent Carol Service in 2023 included Palestrina's Matin Responsory with members of the Choir across the building, Sarah MacDonald's This is the truth, Howells' A Spotless Rose, Stanford's epic Benedictus in C, Ledger's Advent Calendar, Bainton's And I saw a new heaven, and the world première of a commission from Cecilia McDowall: Tota pulchra es – a hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary – was commissioned as part of the 2023 anniversary and in memory of long-time and much-missed Gentlemen, Peter Stubbs.

Lent Term followed what is now a well-established pattern of our final two carol services – Epiphany and Candlemas – with a trip to Southwell Minster for a joint Evensong between their boys and adults and ours. They were very keen to reinforce the recently re-learned Blair in B minor and I'm very pleased to say it has become a regular guest in our own music lists since. It was a splendid service and, needless to say, much food and drink was enjoyed afterwards (there's much to be said for a 3.30pm Sunday Evensong).

The installation of the Revd Canon Angus Aagaard as the new Rector of Warwick, was held on 9th March and was a feast of all that St Mary's has to offer – certainly musically. The combined choir of boy and girl choristers, Gentlemen, St Mary's Scholars, and a few volunteers from Fr Angus' previous parish of St Anselm, Lambeth, showed their strength in a menu of Parry's I was glad, Wood's Expectans expectavi, Psalm 23 and Stanford's Te Deum in C. There is a renewed sense of joy and gladness at St Mary's. Fr Angus has introduced some welcome changes to our regular liturgy (sung gospel acclamations, a sung Sursum corda and Eucharistic Prayer, removal of the sermon at Sunday Evensong) and Holy Week was thrilling musically and liturgically. The Choir excelled itself in Finzi Lo, the full final sacrifice, Howells Salvator mundi, Bairstow The Lamentation, Sanders The Reproaches and so much more. In the midst of which, the Girl Choristers, accompanied by string quartet and chamber organ, presented a very well-crafted performance of Pergolesi's Stabat mater. Easter Day felt genuinely uplifting, with music by Vierne, Stanford, Handel, Willan, Vaughan Williams, more Stanford, and another world première: this one



The Warwick Service by Matthew Martin. It's not a straightforward work, with a lot of rhythmic complexity in particular, but the Choir did an excellent job in the presence of the composer, and we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with the setting for Pentecost and at Westminster Abbey in July.

During this year's Summer Term, the Girls' CD - I will lift up mine eyes - was well and truly launched with an excellent review in Church Music Quarterly, marking it as "excellent listening". The annual end-of-term picnic and cricket provides a lovely opportunity to catch up with choir families before the final and valedictory Evensong. The girls and Gentlemen enjoyed an excellent Evensong at Westminster Abbey, singing Paul Spicer's (second set of) responses, our 2023 commission The Warwick Service by Matthew Martin, and Harris' Faire is the heaven. The singing really was superb, and a most appropriate way to bid adieu to another choir year. The 2024 residential trip took the boy choristers and Gentlemen to Ripon Cathedral, with a week of singing and trips. Alongside the equivalent of about eight weeks of our normal singing timetable in the space of the seven days, we managed to find time to visit the Lightwater Valley Theme Park, Fountains Abbey, Newby Hall and Gardens, Stockeld Park laser tag, and the Ripon Museums. The Gentlemen struck out even further, nobly surrendering the Friday Evensong to the choristers and visiting the Theakston's Brewery instead.



*St Mary's Boys & Gentlemen
at Ripon Cathedral*

We returned from our summer break as we started last year with a visit from the BBC ahead of a live broadcast of Midnight Mass this Christmas on BBC One TV.

Oliver Hancock

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

Blackburn Cathedral



News.

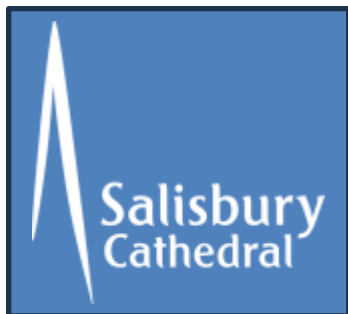
Many of you will be familiar with the monthly "Music and More" published each month by John Bertalot (JB) and the Blackburn Cathedral Music Department. Who could forget the vivid colours, and huge amount of news provided. Many of these publications have been published on the Once a Chorister website too, under Members



JB first came to Blackburn Cathedral exactly 60 years ago, but he has regrettably come to the conclusion that, being 93+, it really is time for him to hang up his computer and hand on the task of publicising Blackburn Cathedral's music to younger and more skilful folk who know at first hand the glories of our cathedral's flourishing music ministry.



Salisbury Cathedral



The work of Salisbury Cathedral Choir is based upon the eight sung services per week during term time, work we take extremely seriously. In addition to this regular pattern of worship, the choir continued its programme of giving concerts in the diocese, helping the churches at Piddlehinton, Compton Chamberlayne, Martin and Durweston raise money for their own needs. We collaborated with other choirs, notably the choir of St Matthew's Westminster in a week-long celebration of the music of Charles Villiers Stanford, marking the 100th anniversary of his death in 1924. We sang services alongside the Cathedral's own Junior and Youth Choirs and

also with the girl choristers of Winchester Cathedral.

The three Salisbury Cathedral 'From Darkness to Light' Advent Processions once again attracted large congregations and people's love of choral music was addressed by our performances of Handel's Messiah, Bach's Cantata 140, the Christmas Oratorio Parts 5 & 6 and James MacMillan's Seven Last Words from the Cross. Salisbury Cathedral Choir took part in an exciting concert with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and the Salisbury Musical Society, which featured the second performance of Awakening, a new work by Paul Carr. The choristers were proud to be involved in John Challenger's newly-released performance of The Planets by Gustav Holst, and enjoyed its annual, important trip to Salisbury District Hospital to sing Christmas carols.

Future plans for Salisbury Cathedral Choir include a BBC Radio 3 live broadcast, taking part in a Jethro Tull concert, a performance of Bach's St John Passion and the Southern Cathedrals Festival which comes to Salisbury in July 2025. Furthermore, a choir tour to Holland is planned for Spring 2025 which will include performances in Amsterdam, Haarlem and Utrecht.

We will shortly be holding our Organ Scholar auditions, closely followed by our annual Be a Chorister for a Day and I hope that both events will continue to attract high class musicians who want to become part of our musical heritage.

David Halls

[Director of Music, Salisbury Cathedral]

Lincoln Cathedral



Since the beginning of the year the choir has participated in several important musical events and services. The Cathedral has also hosted creative exhibitions and performances by visiting musical professionals.

Of note, was the commemoration evensong for the 80th Anniversary of the WW2 D Day Landings. The choir performed Messiah at Christmas and Bach St John Passion on Saturday 23th March 2024 with Aric Prentice conducting the Cathedral Choir, Lincoln Chamber Orchestra, with soloists Chris Wiles, Evangelist and Stephen Holloway performing Christus.



Recruitment is an ongoing issue - the girls are now up to nineteen and the boys hopefully to increase from fourteen following ongoing interviews. The choir also includes five choral scholars. 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 with twelve schools participating. A current initiative includes the offer to children 6 to 12 who would like to experience life as a Lincoln Cathedral chorister. The offer includes a singing lesson and to join the choir in a choral evensong. The cathedral's additional choirs (Consort and Youth Choir) maintain their contributions to the liturgy. For year 2023 the choir continued to consolidate and has now increased its' choral involvement into services.

Cost pressures are still influencing the current programme of services. Saturday Evensong is being sung on alternate weeks by the Youth Choir and in the intervening weeks by the choral scholars and lay vicars alone (ATB). However, Sunday choral matins has been reintroduced and is currently programmed for once- a month on specified days. On 28th January 2024 the evensong service included the presentation of choristerships and choral scholarships. This is made possible by 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. It was well attended and thanks are due to the Music Fund Council for the organisation preparation and work on the day.

The music fund council is responsible for providing the funds required to help sustain the choir and its tradition of musical excellence. Its support is very much appreciated. The Record Presentations of Choristerships, Choral Scholarships, Chorister Bursaries and Lay Vicar Endowments were then accepted by the sponsor representative(s). The Lincoln Old Choristers' Chorister (2002) Record was presented by Issac Turner and the Lincoln Old Choristers Chorister (2017) Record by Niamh Halliday both to John Parry on behalf of LCCOCA. Issac was the ninth chorister to receive the award following the first recipient Jonathan Line in 2002. 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 themselves gained. Music for the service included the Magnificat and Nunc Dimitus setting in the key of A by Sir Charles Villiers Stamford and for the Anthem Hubert Parry 'Hear my words, ye people'. The choir has continued to undertake a full programme of several important musical services, supporting events and staged exhibitions.

During February the Lincoln Cathedral Choral Scholars gave recitals under the Gaia - a seven metres diameter globe providing the opportunity to see this model of the Earth floating in the Cathedral Nave and to contemplate the wonder of life on Earth. The "Overview Effect" representing a visual reminder of the need to safeguard the earth's environment. The recitals lasted up to 30 mins and included music by Vaughan Williams, Handel, Mahler and Sibelius.

In April the Cathedral hosted a recital by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields to celebrate the centenary of its' founder, Lincoln born Sir Neville Marriner.

During July the Cathedral hosted the Lincoln Jazz Festival which included a range of jazz styles and appearances by leading national and international musicians in the jazz community, including the James Taylor Quartet.

To maintain contact with the Cathedral and the choir in the years ahead, in July former Old Chorister Laurence Oliver, representing the newly formed 'Fellowship of Lincoln Cathedral Old Choristers' (FLCOC) welcomed leaving choristers Henna Markland and Benedict Brown into the



Fellowship. Laurence then presented them with Psalters and an Old Chorister Membership Badge.

In September the Cathedral hosted the Grand Organ Festival with the first recital by Peter King and second recital by Ben Bloor. Ben is the Organist of the London Oratory Church and oversees the Downs/Walker organ.

The National Federation held its Once a Chorister Annual Festival at Llandaff Cathedral on 20th to 22nd Oct for 2024. It was attended by forty delegates representing thirteen affiliated Associations including three members and two guests from the Lincoln FLCOC.

The hosts provided a full programme to attend including a demonstration of the Nicholson Organ built 2010/13 and short recital presented by Director of Music Stephen Moore and Assistant Director Aaron Shilston. A particular joy for the delegates was joining the choir to sing in the Festival Solemn Evensong for the Feast of St Matthew, CV Stamford Magnificat and Nunc Dimitus with the stunning anthem, Elgars 'Great is the Lord'. Guest speaker for the Festival Banquet was Lindsay Gray former Headmaster of the Cathedral School and former Director of the Royal School of Church Music.

On the 6th October 2024, the FLCOC held its annual reunion in the Cathedral. After lunch in the Cathedral Café, members joined the choir for evensong rehearsal in St Hughs Choir. Following tradition during its' Annual Commemoration of Old Choristers Act of Remembrance which was held in the Works Chapel, an Old Chorister and Chorister laid a wreath on the Old Choristers War Memorial. The Precentor, also led prayers to the memory of Alan Wheeler (1952-1959) Former Secretary to the LCOCA, who died 6th February 2024 and Barry Chapman (1941-1948) who died on 29th July 2024. For evensong participating old choristers much appreciated singing with the cathedral choir, Dyson in F Magnificat and Nunc Dimitus plus the anthem, Stamford Te Deum in B Flat. After Evensong a drinks reception was held for some thirty FLCOC attendees with guests including choir members to help celebrate the event. It had been an enjoyable occasion for attending members of the newly entitled 'Fellowship of Lincoln Cathedral Old Choristers'.

Following the retirement of Dean Very Revd Christian Wilson in 2023 Dr Simon Jones was appointed as Dean of Lincoln and installed on 18th September 2024. The Fellowship of Lincoln Cathedral Old Choristers wish the Dean many happy years at Lincoln.

H John Parry

[Fellowship of Lincoln Cathedral Old Choristers]



Norwich Cathedral



On Saturday I had the joy of auditioning a number of recent Ex-Choristers for our new Senior Boys' Choir, to be launched in September this year. This group, for boys aged 13-18, will give not only ExChoristers but also other boys and young men the opportunity to sing together here at the Cathedral through that period when their voices are changing. In the afternoon, we also auditioned for our Senior Girls' Choir, now in its 29th year.



With the addition of girls aged 8-13 to the Cathedral Choir this coming September, it is tremendously exciting to know that we will be offering singing to boys and girls from the age of 6 (when they can join the excellent Cathedral Children's Choir) up to 18. In the process, we will be adding to that great community of Ex-Choristers who have benefited from and experienced the riches and opportunities of singing in our magnificent Cathedral.



With the work to re-build the organ complete and an exciting organ festival coming up in July to celebrate this milestone, along with the developments in our choirs, it really does feel like an exciting time for music at Norwich Cathedral and it is great privilege for me personally to be leading it. More information about the Organ Festival can be found (and how to book) in this newsletter.

I do hope that many of you will be able to return to the Cathedral for one of our annual ExChoristers' Guild reunion weekend. As well as dinner on the Saturday night, we hope to welcome as many ex-Choristers and their families to lunch on Trinity Sunday and to join in the singing of Choral Evensong for the Cathedral's Patronal Festival.



Details of how to sign up are found in the newsletter and on the Cathedral website (Cathedral.org.uk and visit NCexCG entry via "music") or Website: www.norwichcathedralexchoristersguild.org.uk

With warmest wishes and thanks for your continued support.

Ester Platten

[Secretary, Norwich Cathedral ex Chorister Guild]



Rochester Cathedral



An update from Ian Henderson, Vice president and former chair of **Once a Chorister**, concerning the earliest known recording of a live Cathedral choir rediscovered.

A chance discovery has uncovered, what is believed to be the earliest live recording of a Cathedral choir. The recording of the Rochester Cathedral choir was rediscovered by Michael Curling, a member of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society. It was recorded nearly 100 years ago in 1926 and was played at a special Choral Evensong on Sunday 19th May at Rochester Cathedral.

In 1926, Columbia Records sent technicians down to Rochester Cathedral. Electronic microphones were set up so they could record the Cathedral Choir. This recording was transferred, live, by telephone lines to the Columbia Studio in Westminster. These were then cut into a 12 inch, 80 revs per minute, shellac record. Although some earlier recordings of cathedral choirs were made, these were recorded in Columbia Studios in front of large sound horn. This recording is believed to be the earliest recording of a Cathedral Choir singing in their own Cathedral. The recording was made in the Cathedral on the 1st November 1926 and it was issued commercially by Columbia Records in February 1927



Copyright Archive Of Recorded Church Music

When Michael Curling found the record he contacted Jeremy Lloyd, Assistant Director of Music at Rochester Cathedral. The Archivist of the Rochester Cathedral Old Choristers Association, James Strike, visited Michael Curling who kindly gifted the historic and fragile record to the Cathedral. The recording features the Magnificat in B flat by Charles Stanford on one side and the Old Hundredth hymn, All People that on earth do dwell on the other. The Cathedral choir was conducted by Charles Hylton-Steward, Director of Music from 1916-1930. Remarkably, the Organist in the recording is Percy Whitlock, the famous 20th Century composer. He had been a Chorister at the Cathedral from 1911-1918 and then was Assistant Organist from 1920-1930.

Adrian Bawtree, Director of Music at Rochester Cathedral says:

"We are delighted to be sharing this historic recording with you all. To hear the choir in such good heart back in 1926 and to hear the famous Percy Whitlock at the organ is just simply fantastic. We will do our best to continue to sing with the Spirit when we combine with our Old Chorister's on the 19th May."



To preserve this record for future posterity, Alistair Taylor, owner of a specialist record shop in Rochester High Street has transferred the old shellac recording to a CD so it could be played over the Cathedral sound system at a special Evensong on Sunday 19th May. This will be the first time in nearly a century the voices of those old choristers will fill the Cathedral once more.

The End of Year Eucharist for leavers was held in the Nave on the 7th July. It was a magnificent choral service. At the end of the service the Dean thanked those leaving the choir. The traditional bring and share buffet lunch was held in the Crypt afterwards owing to the weather. Next years' service will take place on Sunday 6th July 2025. A joint Annual Dinner with the Old Roffensian Society (former pupils of King's School Rochester) was held in the School Hall on the 5th October. Some fifty-one old choristers and Old Roffensians were present and the feedback received was very positive. It is planned to repeat the event in 2025.

David Littlejohn and Ian Henderson

Portsmouth Cathedral



This choir year has been an exceptional one! Four BBC broadcasts, two European tours, one CD recording and so much more. We enjoyed playing a full role in the commemorations of DDay80, a sequence of concerts and services at churches out and about in the diocese, an Early Music Festival and Cathedral Sing projects.

DDay80 BBC Radio 4: We broadcast 'Sunday Worship' on BBC Radio 4 to mark DDay80 led by Canon Jo, The Dean and The Chaplain of The Fleet alongside Musicians of His Majesty's Royal Marines Band. This programme is listened to by about one million listeners across the UK and The World. *After a hearty breakfast the choir then sang for our Civic DDay Service.*

DDay80 National Commemoration: We were asked to form a choir of junior singers from Portsmouth schools based on a core of our own youngest choristers for the live BBC One National Commemoration of DDay80 on Southsea Common on 5 June in the presence of TM The King and Queen as well as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. In addition, one of our boy choristers, Luca was selected to read a 1944 testimony of Trevor Baker (a child witness of DDay preparations in Portsmouth; Luca writes.....



'It was such an amazing experience reading for the King, Queen and Prince and all of the veterans. It took lots of practice and I was very nervous but it was a really good piece of writing and I wanted to get right and I wanted to portray Trevor Butler as much as I could. I was also part of the choir who sang God Only Knows at the end. We had practised a lot with Dr Price and it was worth it because the end product was really rewarding. I'm very grateful for the opportunity I was given to represent Trevor and Portsmouth and I'm very proud to be from Portsmouth.'



Visits to The Diocese: This choir year we have sung for services and concerts across our diocese; we have been warmly welcomed at St Mary's Bramshott, Holy Trinity Gosport, All Saints Catherington, St Mary's Niton, St Mary's Buriton and St Peter and St Paul, Hambledon. Early next term we shall be at St Peter's Titchfield once again.

Seafood On The Green: Thank you to all who came to Seafood on The Green last month! Thank you also to all the Choir Parents and other volunteers who made the 10th

anniversary of the Seafood on The Green event such a success. Originally started by Choir Parent Vanessa Fenton in 2014, it has now become a Portsmouth tradition! We raised over £1,700 for the work of our choirs and it was wonderful to see so many people there from across the community. Over 150 people were served Seafood Platters and Paella in under two hours! The funds that the Portsmouth Cathedral Choir Association raise are used to support the pastoral side of the choir, for example team building end of term treats, but also to directly supporting some choristers who would otherwise not be able to join us on trips such as choir tours. Being able to support choristers, ensures our Choirs remain as inclusive as possible for all. This support is so important to their sense of belonging and experience of the choir and in turn helps nourish the quality of their work – which we all benefit from in the amazing performances they produce.

Interstellar: We hosted international Organist, ROGER SAYER who attracted the largest audience in many years for an organ concert when he played the music of Gustav Holst and the score of the movie Interstellar by Hans Zimmer.

New Choristers: It has been excellent to see our Junior Choirs grow in numbers and strength over the past year. We have enjoyed a mixture of singing and activities on Mondays (Boys) and Thursdays (Girls). We welcome Oliver, Harry, Oliver, Dylan, Henry, Rohan and Dilan to the boys' group and Bea, Maya, Evie, Patience, Jasmine and Lydia to the girls.

We look forward to welcoming next year's set of Gappers Kim (Organ Scholar), Joel and Theo (Tenors) and George, Jimmy and Noah (Bass).

Next term: We look forward to our annual round of special services in the Michaelmas Term including The Royal Marines Band Service Memorial and All Souls' Requiem. At the start of term we are planning a Choir Celebration Day to welcome new members, refresh our Sing Joyfully Campaign and Choir Association Annual Meeting. Join us for this on Saturday 21 September. And our new recording for Regent Records 'A Year at a Cathedral' series should be ready for release next term. A reminder of our campaign to secure the future of our music programme at Portsmouth Cathedral. Thank you to many people who have already donated to this fund - we are immensely grateful



Join Our Choir: A For details on how to join the Cathedral Choir—please contact The Music Office music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk

David Price

[Organist and Master of the Choristers]



All Saints Kingston

As a Diocese of Southwark 'Hub' church, we are excited and delighted to announce that All Saints has been granted a 5 year funding stream to develop a model that can be easily shared with other music focused churches seeking to reach young families. The Project – Growing Faith through Singing - will be based on our existing Lifting Young Voices (LYV) programme. LYV offers high-quality singing lessons to local state primary schools, engaging with a wide cross-section of children in the Royal Borough. The children are then invited to join a Junior Choir at the church. There are also termly concerts in the church, bringing together the school groups and the Junior Choir. The Junior Choir will be taking part in an 'All Age' Communion Service on Harvest Festival Sunday, followed by Choral Matins with the Senior Choir.

As well as extending our existing schools outreach programme, we will be recruiting 3 Lay Clerk Choral Trainers (A,T,B) to work alongside David Condry (DoM) and his deputy, once appointed. Each Choral Trainer will deliver the programme to two primary schools. They will also sing in All Saints Choir as professional Lay Clerks, helping to strengthen the choral tradition, nurture young choristers and integrate the outreach work in the schools with the regular life of the church.

Paul Thompson

[Chairman, All Saints Kingston Old Choristers Association]

Ely Cathedral

The reports by Edmund Aldhouse and Sarah MacDonald below first appeared in our Yearbook.

Our Annual Reunion was held on 14 September. The guest speaker (if we could call him a guest in the Cathedral he served for almost 30 years) was our former Director of Music, Paul Trepte. Instead of the usual speech, Paul, answered prepared questions which were put to him by his wife, Sally. This was an interesting, informative and at times, amusing, change to the normal after lunch session, and was well received. As always, members of the Society joined the Cathedral choirs for Choral Evensong, which was also attended by the Friends of Ely Cathedral. Sadly some of our older members were unable to attend the reunion, but it is encouraging that there was a good spread of former choristers from decades past right down to boys and girls who left their respective choirs in recent years. The reunion is now our only major annual event, apart from the moving Act of Remembrance which takes place at the Choristers' War Memorials after Evensong on the Saturday before Remembrance Day.

In September 2023 Stanley Godfrey, who had been Organist and Choir Director at St Frideswide's Church became the Cathedral Graduate Organ Scholar, and at the start of the current term Jeremy Lloyd, formerly Assistant Director of Music and Sub Organist at Rochester Cathedral became our Assistant Director of Music. Both Stanley and Jeremy are very much involved in many aspects of music, at both the Cathedral and King's Ely.

John Marshall



2023 was a year which saw a number of exciting projects come to fruition. In one case this happened with a two-year delay occasioned by the COVID pandemic, whose long shadow is receding, but still ever-present. As readers will doubtless be aware, the Cathedral celebrated the 1350th anniversary of its foundation across the year, and a number of special events marking this occasion involved our musical forces. Even before the first of these, we had enjoyed a splendid Easter celebration, culminating in an orchestral performance of Haydn's superbly tuneful *Missa Sancti Nicolai* on Easter morning.

The main liturgical focus of our commemoration of St Etheldreda, and her pioneering ministry in Ely, came at around the time of her feast in June. The full Cathedral Choir broadcast Evensong live on BBC Radio 3, and we were delighted to include a new setting of the canticles by Janet Wheeler, commissioned specially for these celebrations and generously supported by the Friends. We also recorded a service for BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship, which was broadcast in September, and the Cathedral Choir was naturally present at a memorable and moving Festal Eucharist at which we welcomed the Archbishop of York as Preacher.

I mentioned in last year's report that our group of boy choristers would essentially remain the same for around eighteen months, and they have gone from strength to strength in that time. Much of this is due to the hugely enjoyable tour which the boys and Lay Clerks undertook to Southern Germany at the beginning of July (but which ought to have happened in 2021, when such an international venture would still have been unthinkable). We were hosted most warmly by the Roman Catholic parish in Salem, near Lake Constance, and enjoyed staying a stone's throw from the lake, with its magnificent views of the distant Swiss Alps beyond. The choir's singing was rapturously received by local audiences, and as well marvelling at Baroque churches, the boys were able to enjoy free[1]time activities ranging from aquariums to zipwires! Planning is now beginning in earnest for our next tour (to North Germany), and I am grateful in particular to the parent body (and many others) whose tireless fundraising makes these trips possible.

We returned after a disappointingly cold and wet summer to sweltering September temperatures and another major project: not every Cathedral Choir would be able to learn Handel's *Messiah* in the space of four weeks, but our trebles embraced the task with enormous enthusiasm. With all solos from within the choir, showcasing in particular our excellent team of Lay Clerks, the concert itself was a highlight of our anniversary year, made all the more special by the extraordinary playing of Britten *Sinfonia*, with whom we always enjoy collaborating.

Christmas rounded off the year: highlights are too numerous to mention in detail, but two things stuck out for me this year. One was our first performance of Britten's iconic *Ceremony of Carols* by all the trebles: the boys greatly enjoyed learning this core piece of repertoire, which will now become a fixture of our festive pattern for all of our choristers.

The other was without a doubt *Midnight Mass*, at which the boy choristers sang for the first time in several decades. Despite the lateness of the hour, their enthusiasm and excitement were palpable (through some yawns!) and their singing committed and beautiful. It was a very special start to Christmas, and a reminder that the daily liturgy is at the heart of all we do.

Edmund Aldhouse
[Director of Music]



Ely Cathedral Girl Choristers

2023 has been an eventful year for the Girl Choristers. After an impressive fund-raising effort by the parents, we were finally able to go on the tour which had to be cancelled in the spring of 2020. Six staff members and twenty choristers and sixth form choral scholars set out in February for a brief but wonderful trip to Umbria and Tuscany. We sang services and concerts in Arezzo, Orvieto, and Assisi. Much fun was had, some beautiful music was made, and lots of pasta was eaten. It was a truly fabulous few days.

Other highlights of the Lent Term included making pancakes together with the boys on Shrove Tuesday, a joint service with the Girl Choristers of St Catharine's College Girls' Choir from Cambridge, where we sang Christopher Robinson's "Ely Service" conducted by the composer, and performing Jean-Charles Gandrille's utterly astonishing setting of the Stabat Mater on Mothering Sunday, when all of the probationers were installed as full choristers into the cathedral foundation. After evensong on Easter Sunday, we said a fond good-bye to Mr Jack Wilson who moved back home to Belfast to take up the position of Master of Music at St Anne's Cathedral.

In the summer term, we gave the first performance of Janet Wheeler's new canticles, "The Ely Service" which was commissioned for the 1350th anniversary of the founding of the double monastery at Ely in 673. The composer very cleverly used these two numbers to create the melodies on which the canticles are based—notes 1, 3, 5, (e.g., C-E-G) and a rest for 0, as well as notes 6, 7, and 3 (e.g., A-B-E). By playing with the two Es, and interchanging E-natural with E-flat she created some absolutely wonderful false-relation colours which the choristers loved. This service was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, and we also recorded a BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship service for the Etheldreda celebrations as well (transmitted in September). At the end of the academic year, we said farewell to five leaving choristers and four departing choral scholars.

With the Michaelmas Term, began the final push to complete parity between boy and girl choristers. We are already singing four services a week each, and on the same footing from the point of view of finance and esteem, which has been very welcome progress. Over the next few years, we are lowering the age range of the girls to match that of the boys (i.e., school years 3 to 8). In September 2023, no fewer than TEN new girls joined our ranks, with probationers in year 5, year 6, year 7, and year 8. It has been a steep learning curve for them, but their commitment and enthusiasm (especially at 8am!) has been palpable. The fact that they all sang the whole of Handel's Messiah within one month of joining the cathedral choir is testament to that. Other musical highlights this term have included the Fauré Requiem for Remembrance, and Britten's A Ceremony of Carols sung by all of the girl and boy choristers together for the first time in the cathedral's history. As the year drew to a close, the Cathedral Stayover at Christmas was, as always, one of the highlights of the choristers' experience with the boys and girls bringing the beauty and mystery of Christmas to our congregation quite magnificently.

Sarah MacDonald

[Director of the Girl Chorister]



Gloucester Cathedral – Colin Charter



I'm sure you will all be very saddened to hear of the death of Colin. Friends and family gathered at Gloucester Cathedral in July to celebrate the life of Colin Charter who died aged 85.

Colin became a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral in 1948 rising to Head Chorister in 1954. In the 1960's he joined the Gloucester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association (GCOCA) committee, on which he served for nearly 50 years, 10 of which as Chairman. Colin was their representative at the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations (FCOCA), attending AGMs and Festivals at 35 Cathedrals and Collegiate Choral Foundations around the country with his wife Alison, and more recently his younger daughter Ailsa.

Colin and Alison both served as Cathedral Stewards for some twenty years, including Colin's five years as Head Steward. He also contributed as a voluntary Cathedral Guide and in 2020 was enrolled as a member of the Company of St Kyneburga, set up in 2013 to honour those who have served the Diocese of Gloucester with distinction. Colin's interest in choral music never diminished, his commitment to supporting the Cathedral and its music continued through the Friends of the Cathedral, The Friends of Cathedral Music and the Music Patrons scheme. When Colin knew he was nearing end of life he planned his own funeral service in detail, summoning fellow former choristers to his nursing home to take notes back to the Director of Music and the Dean!

The funeral, held in the chancel of Gloucester Cathedral and led by The Very Revd. Andrew Zihni, Dean of Gloucester, was a truly joyous celebration of Colin's life with many representatives from the GCOCA, FCOCA and the cathedral's Guides and Stewards attending alongside family and friends. The address was given by The Very Revd. Nicholas Bury, former Dean of Gloucester and the cathedral choir, directed by Adrian Partington, sang the Russian Kontakion for the Departed, How beautiful is thy dwelling place from Brahms' Requiem, Nunc Dimittis from Howells', Gloucester Service and In Paradisum from Faure's Requiem. Colin's final journey processed through the nave with a guard of honour provided by the cathedral Stewards to the South Porch where the final farewell and dismissal prayers were given by the Dean. As the mourners made their way to the Chapter House for refreshments they were treated to Widor's Toccata from the 5th Organ Symphony, which had been played at Colin and Alison's wedding in 1966 and on this occasion, played by Assistant Director of Music, Jonathan Hope.

Nick Hodges (on behalf of all the Once a Chorister committee and members)

Westminster Abbey – Jack Wood

It is with great sadness that I pass on the news that Jack passed away early last Wednesday 28th August. He was a chorister in Westminster Abbey Choir from 1943 – 1946.



Since his time as a member of the war-time choir, Jack (alongside other colleagues of his era) was a stalwart and longstanding member of the Westminster Abbey Old Choristers' Association. As well as being Hon. Sec. of the Association for a time, he served for many decades as a member of the Brotherhood of St. Edward and was Hon. Sec. between 1970 & 1982. He also sang with the Purcell Club on countless occasions as well as being a frequent attendee of the FCOCA Festivals which he and Jeanette enjoyed immensely may be remembered by other attendees.

Jack had recently celebrated his 95th birthday. The funeral was held on Friday 27th September - 11.30am at St Mary Magdalene Church.

Richard Watts

[Representative for Westminster Abbey]

Chichester Cathedral – David Ruffer

It is with great sadness that I report the death this week of David Ruffer, a former chorister of Chichester Cathedral (1963-1966) and chairman of our Choristers Association from 2001 to 2017. He was also a founding Trustee of our Scholarship Fund charity and also its chairman until 2017. He had earlier this year stepped down as a trustee.

He was a great supporter of the cathedral choir and during his tenure had organised two Gala Concerts which successfully raised funds for the Scholarship Fund.

He will be greatly missed by many.

Andrew Porter

[CCCA communications]



Durham Cathedral – Alan Oyston

Just before the 2024 edition of Once a Chorister was published, we heard of the sad death of Alan Oyston. Alan was a former chair of The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations (FCOCA), and a leading light of The Durham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association (DCOCA) for many years. The funeral is to be held in Durham Cathedral on 16th December but I thought it right to provide a short obituary in this edition. Thank you to The Northern Echo for providing some of the details.

Alan was born in Stanley County Durham and was a child Chorister at Durham Cathedral during the war. He even wrote a book about it with George Hetherington (see right). He went on to study music and History at St John's College in Cambridge. He was a founding member of the Durham Singers (he had posters for many of their concerts stuck on the walls of his house), and served for 22 years as their musical director from 1984 until 2006. He taught at Durham Chorister School, before transferring to Chester-le-Street Grammar School, and established a music department at Durham Technical College, which became New College Durham. Mr Oyston became head of music at the College of Education, in Middleton St George, and on retiring from full-time education, in 1992, was principal of Stockton-Billingham Technical College. He was an ardent supporter of DCOCA for many years, acting as President and Secretary for many years, and hosting the committee meeting at his home in Neville's Cross for many years. He was a regular attendee at Durham Cathedral Services. He was elected as FCOCA Chair from 2002 to 2007, and was a regular attendee at Federation festivals and tours (both here and abroad).



James Lancelot (former Director of Music at Durham Cathedral for over 25 years) described Alan as “a kind soul, fiercely loyal to the place [Durham Cathedral and The Chorister School]”, “It is, sadly, another link with the past broken; few if any OCs will now remember the School and the choir during the war years.” This is link to the fact that the choristers slept in The Chapel of the Holy Cross underneath the Deanery at Durham Cathedral during the war. “Twenty-four boys would line up two-by-two to enter the undercroft each night at 7.30pm, sleeping on makeshift campbeds, with only their clothes, a toothbrush, a library book and a gas mask.”

I myself also have fond memories of Alan, including eating sausage roles in his kitchen after a DCOCA committee meeting, listening to him and George Hetherington playing duets (Alan on cello), or reminiscing about his time as a boy chorister during the war. He much preferred to tell us stories or talk about friends, rather than discuss the business of the committee! He will be sorely missed.



Durham Cathedral – Cyril Watson

Cyril Watson, 8th May 1929 – 4th March 2024, School master at The Chorister School in Durham from 1959 to 1994.

His funeral in Durham was very well attended by former pupils who remember him fondly, particularly his History lessons! Many paid their own tributes to him. Extracts from the Eulogy read out by Simon Tasker at his funeral are provided here:



It is with feelings of great privilege, sincere humility and deep sadness that I am standing here before you today. But, overriding those sentiments is another which is the most enormous gratitude for having known and having been a pupil of Cyril Watson. And I am quite sure that each and every one of us who has been amongst his pupils, his colleagues and his friends shares in that sadness but also glows with pleasure and overflows with gratitude for that relationship.

Cyril was born in Seaham Harbour on 8th May, 1929 and, apart from his two years of National Service and a period spent at King Alfred's College in Winchester, Cyril seems to have stayed a loyal resident of County Durham for his whole life. A document, issued by King's College of the University of Durham, records him gaining his School Certificate qualifications in 1947 and, in 1952, he completed his teaching qualifications, studying Education, Divinity and History at King Alfred's College, Winchester.

In 1957 Canon H.Y. Ganderton, who had been Headmaster of Durham Cathedral Chorister School since 1929, retired and was succeeded by the Rev. John Grove whose first two appointments to the staff of The Chorister School on taking up his post were Brian Crosby and Cyril Watson. It was a hard life both as pupil and teacher at the school in those days. There was little that could readily be described as luxury. All teaching staff lived on the premises, which themselves were located in three different places around The College. It fell to Cyril's lot to have to spend part of every day in each of the three places. His classroom was on the first floor above the Chapter Office. His living room was located off the half landing of the stairs in number 5 The College and his bedroom was located in a garret in the corner of the top floor of the building at the top left-hand corner of The College which until 1953 had been the university's St Mary's College.

It seems that, from the first moment of his arrival in the school, Cyril threw himself wholeheartedly into his job and within a very short space of time he had introduced debating and formed The Debating Society. On Saturday afternoons he ran a woodworking club in his classroom and the disused room that was beside it. He introduced really ambitious drama projects. We rehearsed plays on makeshift stage sets built of old wooden beer crates, the location of the rehearsals gravitating in due course to the disused chape below the Deanery – the same space in which Choristers had slept overnight during air

raids in the war. Cyril's enthusiasm for drama encouraged many former pupils to make their careers in theatre, film and similar media and, through drama, he helped many pupils to develop



a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. He ran the hobbies club. As an avid cinema goer he started a film club.

But his history lessons were something else! Every event in history from the Romans to the Industrial Revolution was acted out by Cyril in the most exciting and dramatic way. Using as props anything that came to hand, including window poles, blackboard easels, you name it, and with his black academic gown serving as every item of costume that you can imagine, he held our rapt attention for every last moment of every lesson. It was so exciting, so interesting and so totally unique. And colleagues several rooms away were pretty much always aware which period of history he was teaching as the drama and excitement of the lesson transmitted itself through the fabric of the building to their rooms.

He continued with the same enthusiasm, the same dedication to the school, the same dapper appearance, the same attention to detail and the same compassion and care for his pupils and his colleagues until, in 1994 on reaching state pension age, he decided to retire. We have received many, many tributes and messages since Cyril passed away, and each of them says the same thing. That he was a truly inspirational teacher, a man of enormous generosity and compassion with a lovely, but never cruel sense of humour and that he was an overall super person. It would take far more time than we have available to us to read all of the tributes and messages to you now. But, there is one in particular that I have been asked to read and it says:-

"I remember my lessons with Cyril Watson with great affection. He was an extraordinarily engaging teacher, who always made the lessons lively and fun. Our enjoyment in being taught by him was matched by his obvious enjoyment in teaching us. History came alive in those lessons for me. It gave me a love of history which stayed with me throughout my life. For that and for him I am truly grateful."

Rt Hon Tony Blair

In retirement, Cyril never returned to the school, preferring to remember it just as it was when he left it. But for some years he remained living in the flat above the headmaster's house on South Bailey to which he had moved when, after sterling service in the boarding house, he was relieved of those duties.

Subsequently, he moved to live in a modern house in Rosemount, and then to The Orchards at Brandon.

Today, though, we all have to say our final farewells to Cyril's earthly incarnation. I can't find words adequately to describe him or all that he has done for so many, many people. What I can say, and perhaps this substitutes for that lack of words, is that, although we no longer have his earthly presence, none of us who has been touched by him in our lives, whether as pupils, colleagues or friends, will ever, ever forget the astonishing person, one of the very best there could ever be, Cyril Watson.

And so, simply, we just say 'Thank you, Cyril'.

Simon Tasker

[Former Chorister at Durham Cathedral]



What's it like as a Child Chorister at Llandaff?

Alastair (OaC Secretary) and his wife Nicola met Alex K. (aged 10) and his Mum Singeta at the Once a Chorister Festival in Llandaff in September 2024 and asked if Alex could answer a few questions about being a Chorister at Llandaff. Here is the transcript of exactly what he said:



What do you enjoy most about being a chorister?

It's good to sing together and being part of the chorister group is fun. We sing different songs for each service but sometimes you get into your best pieces that you particularly like, and that stays in your mind. That's really nice – like Agnus Dei.

I like the chorister teas that we have together straight after school before rehearsal and Evensong, sometimes its pizza if it's a long service. We are together as a chorister group a lot, the boy's group for our services, and the girl's group for theirs. We sing together at festivals and some concerts.

We also have fun activities together every term as a group like paddleboarding (and throwing each other in the Reservoir), Bushcraft, Wall climbing, sausage and sparklers for Bonfire Night etc and fun in the Bishop's garden that the chorister parents organise through the Llandaff Cathedral Choir Association. I have got to know older and younger boys in my school well, and that's

great when you know the seniors through choristers. When it's not raining, I play cricket, tag or ball with some of the other boys after the service which is good to do after the singing and concentrating.

What are your highlights from the day you were 'made up' and what is Llandaff's tradition on this day for probationers?

We were told what it would be like, but I remember getting the signal from Mr Moore, our Director of Music, to come up and stand in front of the pews during Eucharist service. It was exciting. We had a formal ceremony where all of us who were being made-up lined up in front of the pews – before the congregations and our families. Mr Moore presented us to the Precentor Father Ian to be full choristers, and my mentor from year 9 placed the surplice over my head as Father Ian said a prayer. We all turned to the congregation and bowed, and they clapped.

It felt like an important ceremony, and I was so proud to be made up and promoted as a full chorister after a year as a probationer. My mum, dad and sister were in the front row, and my class teacher from Cathedral School attended and watched me and the other children being made up. My family were really proud of me for becoming a full chorister. My school friend was in the congregation with his family.



The service was live streamed on YouTube and my aunts watched it from London, and Dublin and later on other family watched the recording from around the UK and further afield. My uncle and nanny have often watched me sing on YouTube too.

After the Eucharist service I had a quick meal to celebrate with my family and came back early for a special Evensong service. After that service, the chorister parents had arranged a special promotion chorister party for all the made-up choristers – ones like me who became full choristers, and for Dean and Canon's scholars. We had special chorister cakes one for the boys, one for the girls, and one for the scholars, as well as snacks, drinks and speeches. On top of our cakes were little individual figures that looked like us made of sugar in our robes and surplices which the baker had made from photos of us! I cut the boys cake with the other boys who were made-up, and we each were able to take our own special chorister figure off the top to eat or keep – my mum has kept mine!



After that I played cricket, and ball, with some of the other children. My parents bought me a special cricket bat as a promotion present.

What is your favourite piece of music?

It's hard to choose one as I love music, but I really love Vast Ocean of Light, Agnus Dei, Sanctus, God is gone up, Great is the Lord – and lots of others I can't remember the names, but these are smashing pieces.

What would you say to someone who is considering becoming a chorister?

It's such a good opportunity and worth trying out for being a chorister. Go for it as chances like this don't come up everyday! It also means I have a scholarship which helps my parents too. There isn't one type of chorister either – we are all really different. I loved singing but apart from school choir I haven't done anything like this before. I knew my mum has always been in a community choir but also found out that her dad, my grandfather sang regularly in Indian classical concerts, so she is particularly proud! We sing in English, Welsh and Latin which is amazing.

It's a big commitment with weekday services, alternate weekends, Christmas, Easter, festivals and other events. You have to audition to get in, and if you are accepted it's different to anything else to begin with. You are given a mentor at the beginning, who is a senior chorister and that really helps. Then you learn about the music and become more confident and really start enjoying pieces of music. You get used to Cathedral life and your parents come and watch and are part of it too. We also sing at all the major school events as well and once you are a chorister you can wear a special school tie.

Mr Moore has high standards and calls us professional musicians – he is strict but also has a good sense of humour, and Mr Shilson who plays the organ is also great, funny and supports us. They are both professional and expect a lot, but we do feel part of a team which I really like. It feels like a big achievement becoming a chorister and although the first three months are really hard work, it's now become a part of my daily life.



I do miss out on some activities and parties due to chorister commitments, but I can still generally fit in cricket, and football. My parents and chorister teachers say that being a chorister has helped my concentration and my godfather said that Sir Alastair Cook, the great English cricketer always says that his ability to focus during Test matches was due to his training as a chorister at school! I hope so because I have just got into cricket Wales!

Things to look forward to as I get older

We went to Brecon Cathedral for a 3 Cathedrals festival last year which was fun, and when you reach Year 6 you can go on tour to other countries to sing in Cathedrals. You can also be part of BBC Recordings at the Cathedral and make records which will be on Spotify – you learn and get a lot out of it. I would like to be a mentor and help younger probationers like my mentor helped me in the future. Some of the seniors have medals too which is cool!

All in all, it is a big part of my life and very rewarding.

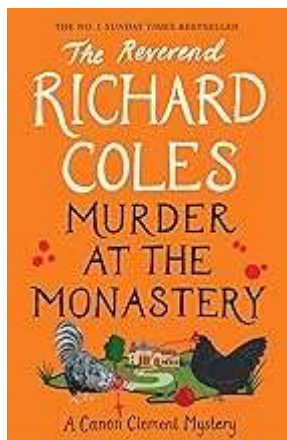
Alexander K.

[Chorister, Aged 10, Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff]



General Articles

Quiz on Ecclesiastical terms



Regular readers of Once a Chorister will know that I like reading books with a strong ecclesiastical or clerical connection. Naughty vicars, curates in training, small-church politics and murder in an assortment of church buildings intrigue me, as do stories of adults who hark back to their chorister or clerical days.

I recently read Richard Coles latest Canon Clement Mystery, this time set in a Monastery. Richard was a Choirboy at Wellingborough School, and ordained into the Church of England ministry in 2005. As a former vicar, Richard knows a thing or two about church life, and throws in the (often very) odd word known only to a select few. I thought it would be fun to set a quiz on some unusual words – I admit that I had to ask “Mr. Google” to help me with some. There is no prize, but I hope you find it fun too. How many of these top 20 words do you know?

- Refectory
- Calefactory
- Chapter of Faults
- Custos Luci
- Oblate
- Scapular
- Tract90
- Hebdomadary
- Lappets
- Postulant
- Novice
- Apse
- Cotta
- Stole
- Medicant
- Amiss
- Metanoia
- Acolyte
- Biretta
- Gaiters

Answers (or a very simple guide) on the last page.

Alastair Pollard

[Durham Cathedral Former Chorister 1970 – 1974]



The Choir Schools' Association – 1964 List

Ian Henderson sent me an article about The Choir Schools' Association (CSA). CSA was founded by the late Rev. R. H. Couchman in 1919, and these Choir Schools were the bedrock of the Federation (as it was known then) which had been formed a few years earlier in 1910. Amazingly all but about six are still going well, though now largely incorporated within their local ongoing Public School.

Against most schools in the list from 1964 is a note about their foundation, showing that the majority of Choir Schools have been going a long, long time, and hopefully will continue to do so.

Kings College School, Cambridge	- established by Henry VI about 1450
St Johns College School, Cambridge	- founded in the reign of Charles II
Canterbury Cathedral Choir School	- part of school dates back to Norman times
Chester Cathedral Choir School	- of ancient foundation
The Prebendal School Chichester	- the oldest school in Sussex
The Chorister School Durham	- of monastic foundation
St Mary's Cathedral Choir School Edinburgh	- opened in 1880
The Kings School Ely	- of ancient foundation
Eton College Choir School	
Exeter Cathedral School	- founded about 1150
The Kings School Gloucester	- founded by Henry VIII
St James Choir School Grimsby	- Founded in 1880
St Chad's Cathedral School Lichfield	- Occupies the former Bishop's Palace
The Cathedral School Lincoln	- founded in 1962 in the old Deanery
The Cathedral School Llandaff	- refounded in 1880
All saints Resident Choir School W1	- founded in 1848
St Paul's Cathedral Choir School	- of ancient foundation (12 th century)
Westminster Abbey Choir School	- of very ancient foundation
The Cathedral Choir School New York	
Newcastle Cathedral Choir School	- founded in 1947
Christ Church Cathedral Choir School Oxford	- Founded in 1546
Magdalen College School Oxford	- founded in connection with the College
New College School Oxford	
St Mary's Choir School Reigate	
Kings School Rochester	
The Cathedral School Salisbury	- an eleventh century foundation
Southwell Minster Grammar School	- of ancient foundation, with 956 charter
St Michael's College Tenbury Wells	- founded in 1856
Turo Cathedral School	- linked with Grammar School founded in 1549
Wells Cathedral School	- founded in 1242
Winchester College Choir School	- founded in 1394
The Pilgrims School Winchester	- occupies a house in close built in 1687
St George's School Windsor Castle	
Worcester Cathedral Kings School	
York Minster Song School	- first school founded in 627



The Rodolfus Foundation – News Release



News release – 29th October 2024

<https://www.therodolfusfoundation.org.uk/press-release>

Choral courses for 2025 and a new recording for the Rodolfus Choir in our 45th anniversary year

The Rodolfus Foundation will be running **6 Junior and Senior Courses** for children and young people from ages 8 to 21 in 2025. We have a number of distinguished figures from the choral singing world coming to direct and visit our courses and inspire young singers.

We are pleased to announce that **Steven Grahl** will direct a senior course for the first time. We will also be welcoming back **Katherine Dienes-Williams**, **Sarah MacDonald** and **Simon Toyne** to direct our other senior courses, and **James Bartlett**, **Charlotte Corderoy** and **Martyn Ford** to direct our junior courses, all ably supported by a team of highly experienced singing teachers, accompanists and course assistants.



Founder and Artistic Director, Ralph Allwood started the courses in 1980 since when over 12,000 young people have enjoyed an experience which, for many, has been life-changing. Rodolfus alumni include Edward Gardner OBE, Roderick Williams OBE (who is President of the Foundation) and mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston. The courses are not auditioned, and in 2024 a third of participants received financial assistance. This means that children and young people from every community can access what has been described by Times music critic Richard Morrison as “the best week of music education”.

In 2025 **Ralph Allwood** will visit all six senior and junior courses for a day giving all course participants the chance to experience his magic. Ralph will also be directing a **Choral Weekend 3-6th April 2025 for choral singers over the age of 22** with evensong in Westminster Abbey and a performance of the Brahms Requiem as a celebration of his 45 years as the Founder and Artistic Director.

The Rodolfus Choir, which is comprised of course participants aged 16 to 23 who have successfully completed an audition, celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. To mark this milestone the choir has plans to make a **recording of works by Cecilia McDowall** in the spring of 2025.

Ralph Allwood, said “*I am delighted to be able to welcome Steven Grahl as course director to join the team of outstanding choral professionals who direct and staff our courses. I am proud that we have been able to produce such excellent choral singing from our non-auditioned courses and our leading youth choir and help transform the lives of so many children and young people for the past 45 years*”.



Details of the courses for 2025

Founded in 1980 by Ralph Allwood, the Rodolfus Choral Courses cater for children and young people aged 8-21.

Senior course singers (ages 16-21) receive individual singing lessons, masterclasses from expert tutors, learn to sing in consort groups and rehearse as a whole-choir to prepare for services and performances. Singers on Junior Choral Courses (ages 8-15) sing a broad range of music in whole-choir and aged-defined consort groups, with bespoke tuition to help young singers develop, including boys with changing voices. They are an ideal training ground for the senior courses.

From the moment students arrive on the first day to the final day concert, they are kept busy singing, socialising, learning, and making life-long friends. They will learn in a week what they might otherwise only achieve in a year attending weekly lessons and they will leave us inspired and excited about their future.

For the first time, Dr. Allwood, Founding Artistic Director, will be visiting all the courses to conduct the choir!

Annabel Price

[General Manager, The Rodolfus Foundation]

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The future of Once a Chorister

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 this **Once a Chorister** umbrella organisation (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!

Earlier this year we received a sad letter from one of our member associations. I quote:

I am deeply sorry to report that our association sadly closed down with effect from 31st March due to the fact that no one came forward to offer to fill any of four vital vacant positions on our committee.

I fear that this will become an ever more common occurrence.

If you want the **Once a Chorister** organisation 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 **Once a Chorister** committee. Otherwise it will soon close!

Alastair Pollard

[Secretary, **Once a Chorister**]



Survey

At the AGM held in Warwick in 2023, it was agreed that we should survey our membership to ascertain their current state of health, what they expected of the Federation and how they might support it in the future. In October 2023, Chair, Nick Hodges contacted 37 associations directly. Excluding those Associations represented on the Executive Committee (8), responses were received from just 10 Associations plus two who did not complete the questionnaire. Some respondents did not answer all the questions.

These are the questions asked requiring a specific answer:

Question 1: Is your Association active, i.e. does it hold regular (annual) reunion events for former choristers and/or does it communicate regularly (at least annually) with its members?

Response 1: All 10 answered Yes.

Question 2: Are you or any of your Association members likely to support or attend future events of the Federation i.e. the Annual Festival?

Response 2: 1 said "Yes", 3 said "Unlikely", 3 said "Possibly".

Question 3: Does your Association submit articles for the Federation's annual magazine, Once a Chorister, or would you do so in the future?

Response 3: 3 said "Yes", 3 said "No", 1 said "Possibly".

Question 4: Would your Association consider hosting a future Festival/AGM?

Response 4: 2 said "Yes", 3 said "No", 1 said "Perhaps" and 1 said "Too soon" after hosting a previous event..

Question 5: Would anyone from your association be prepared to join the Federation Executive Committee and help to run the organisation in the future?

Response 5: None said "Yes", 5 said "No", 2 said "Possibly".

Some interesting additional notes/comments were made, including:

- *Happy to continue to support the FCOCA but it has no real relevance.*
- *Our Association is being reorganised.*
- *Our focus is on our own Association rather than Federation.*
- *We have had some challenges but have recently had success in recruiting younger members.*
- *With cathedrals being cash strapped we suggest a financial inducement to pay for someone to organise event.*
- *Costs of attending events (Festivals) a possible barrier. Cost of travel/accommodation/banquet cited.*



What is **Once a Chorister**?



In 2022 the Federation successfully rebranded with a new 21st century image, and 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 endeavour to reduce the use of the word Federation.



Once a Chorister Magazine



The Old Chorister Magazine was renamed in 1988, **Once a Chorister**, the branding we have been using for the Federation since 2022. In 2016, following the death of Michael Barry, who had been editor of the magazine from 2001, the decision was taken to only publish the magazine on-line as an electronic document. Since 2017 the editor has been Alastair Pollard who has combined this with, firstly, his Chairmanship and, latterly, Honorary Secretary roles. The magazine has followed the same format since its early years with articles related to choral music and those who are involved in it, reports on meetings and Festivals and, primarily, reports from Associations and music departments on their activities over the past year.

We have now published several editions of the **Once a Chorister** Magazine in electronic format, and this is the latest. In general, the feedback has been positive about the content;

individual copies can be downloaded and printed for those who prefer a physical medium. Annual reports from Associations are normally published in the **Once a Chorister** magazine, but occasionally they can now be found on the Federation website 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

Once a Chorister is a great vehicle for keeping people up to date with Federation events such as the Festival and AGM, 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

Alastair Pollard

[Secretary **Once a Chorister**]

Secretary@fcoca.org.uk



Committee Contacts:

Contact can also be made through these generic email addresses:

Chairman@fcoca.org.uk
Secretary@fcoca.org.uk
Membership@fcoca.org.uk
Treasurer@fcoca.org.uk

Committee members:

Chair	Nick Hodges	(Warwick)
Vice Chair	Vacant	
Honorary Secretary	Alastair Pollard	(Durham)
Honorary Treasurer	Michael Lake	(Chelmsford)
Membership Secretary	Richard Lilley	(St. Albans)
Development Officer	Vacant	
Website Officer	Richard Watts	(Westminster Abbey)
Webmaster	Vacant	

Regional Association Representatives:

East Anglia & South East	Ayrton Westwood	(Norwich)
Midshires & Wales	Nick Hodges	(Warwick)
South West	Stephen Milner	(Salisbury)
North and Ireland	Alastair Pollard	(Durham)

Vice Presidents:

Geoffrey Mitchell	(Exeter)
Ian Henderson	(Rochester)
David Horwood	(Eton)
Carl Jackson	(Chapel Royal Hampton Court)
Dr. Barry Rose	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"



Affiliated associations

All Saints Kingston Choir Association
Blackburn Cathedral Choirs Association
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
Christchurch NZ Cathedral
Dublin Christchurch Cathedral
Dublin St Patricks Cathedral
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
Lichfield Cathedral Former Choristers' Association
Lincoln Cathedral Fellowship of Old Choristers of Lincoln Cathedra
Llandaff Cathedral Choir 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
Rochester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Salisbury Cathedral School Association
Southwark Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
St. Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association
St. Edmundsbury 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



Answers to the Ecclesiastical Quiz:

Refectory	Dining room
Calefactory	Warm room
Chapter of Faults	Gathering to discuss sins
Custos Luci	Keeper of the light
Oblate	Lay member
Scapular	Pinny over cassock
Tract90	Controversial comment on 39 Articles which define the CofE
Hebdomadary	Sings liturgy (and Bell ringer)
Lappets	Tails on a mitre
Postulant	Wants to join a religious order
Novice	Probationary member of a religious order
Apse	Curved area at east end of a church
Cotta	Surplice
Stole	Scarf
Medicant	Travelling monks
Amiss	Scarf
Metanoia	Repentance or turn to God
Acolyte	Candle holder assistant
Biretta	Square hat
Gaiters	Lower leg silk stockings, worn by senior clergy



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