



## Chair's Update January 2024

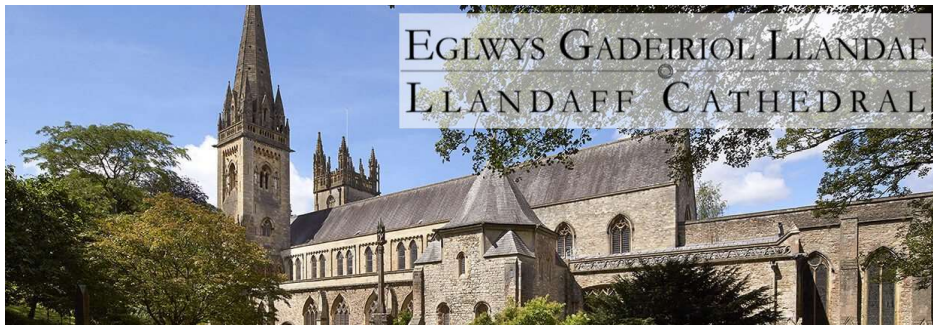


Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

### Here's to 2024

As we are still in January, I hope you will allow me to wish you, a peaceful, prosperous and, above all, healthy New Year.

In my last Update (September '23) I said that the planned **2024 Annual Festival** at Llandaff was in doubt but, if you have read the **Once a Chorister** magazine, published on-line in December, you will know that it is very much on. We are delighted that a full weekend is being planned from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 so please make sure these dates are in your calendar. Booking will open in April and we will send confirmation when it does. In the meantime the invitation from **Llandaff's Director of Music, Stephen Moore** and proposed programme is appended to this Update. Please share it with your members/associates.



### Membership Survey

As a response to the challenges the Federation faces, as I have aired in previous Updates, we agreed at last year's AGM in September that we would contact all of our affiliated member associations and ask for feedback on what we should do to secure the future of the organisation. The Federation faces the same headwinds as many other social and voluntary organisations with a lack of people coming forward to help run the Federation and to offer to host events, such as the annual gathering.

In October I wrote to all of our current membership setting out the challenges we face and asking for a short questionnaire to be completed. I have subsequently heard from around a third of them, though not all have completed the questionnaire.

If your Association has still to respond, please do so as soon as you are able so that we can gain a clearer understanding of what our membership would like us to do. The Executive Committee is due to meet in March and it would be helpful to receive responses before that meeting.

I have appended the questionnaire that was sent to the membership to this Update, so that, if you have not seen it previously, you are aware of the questions asked. Do feel free to respond to me directly with any views, opinions or comments that you would like to make. All suggestions are helpful.



## OaC Magazine

Once again, I am hugely grateful to Honorary Secretary, Alastair Pollard for editing and publishing the annual magazine, which can be found using the link on the home page of the **Once a Chorister** website at [www.fcoca.org.uk](http://www.fcoca.org.uk). Please circulate the web page to your members and encourage them to take a look. In the past, most affiliated associations and their respective music departments have provided content for the magazine, with reviews of their activity and articles of interest to those who are or have been involved in choral music. This might seem a long way out, but please start the process now to submit an article in the 2024 edition from your Association. Publication will take place around the end of November and copy deadline will be the end of October and should be sent to [secretary@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fcoca.org.uk). If you require guidance on content, please email Alastair at the same email address.

### Nick Hodges Chair



Email: [chairman@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:chairman@fcoca.org.uk)

You are receiving this newsletter because either we have you on our database as the contact person for your Association or we have had some contact with you. I would like to continue to write to you but if you do not wish to receive further communications from me, please reply to the email to which this newsletter was appended with REMOVE in the subject line. Contributions to any discussions mentioned in the newsletter may be sent to me, Nick Hodges, at the email address shown: or to the Honorary Secretary at [secretary@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fcoca.org.uk).

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of respondent

Role of respondent

Email address of respondent

Q1 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?

Q2 Are you or any of your Association members likely to support or attend future events of the Federation i.e. the Annual Festival?

Q3 Does your Association submit articles for the Federation's annual magazine, Once a Chorister, or would you do so in the future?

Q4 Would your Association consider hosting a future Festival/AGM?

Q5 Would anyone from your Association be prepared to join the Federation Executive Committee and help to run the organisation in the future?

Q6 We would welcome your opinion on what relevance the Federation has to your Association



## An invitation from Stephen Moore Director of Music, Llandaff Cathedral

I am delighted, on behalf of the Dean & Chapter of Llandaff, to invite you to join us here at the Anglican Cathedral of Cardiff for the Federation of Old Choristers' Associations Annual Festival from 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024.

There has been a Christian presence here, on the bank of the river Taff around a mile from the centre of the vibrant Welsh capital, from the time of Saint Teilo in the sixth century. The present building dates from the Norman period, around 1120 under Urban, bishop from 1107 to 1134 and was extended in the early thirteenth century, with further additions and modifications in the later Middle Ages. The Cathedral has undergone three major upheavals and restorations. The devastation of the Cathedral on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1941 caused by the explosion of a German landmine outside the south aisle was addressed in the 1950s under the architect, George Pace, with a repaired and refurbished Cathedral and the addition of the St David, or Welch Regiment, Chapel. Pace's crowing glory for the Nave of the refurbished cathedral was the striking *Majestas*; a double wishbone concrete arch surmounted by a hollow drum. Jacob Epstein's "Christ in Glory" is mounted on the West face of the drum.



The origins of the present Cathedral Choir can be traced back to 1880 when Dean of Llandaff, Henry Vaughan, founded The Cathedral School to educate the boys who were choristers. The first Dean's Scholars (Head Choristers) were appointed soon after that. Girl Choristers, who for many years were trained by The Cathedral School, first sang in the Cathedral in 1996. In an historic change, the girls were welcomed into the music department of the Cathedral in September 2021. In September 2022, parity of opportunity for girls and boys who wish to be choristers was achieved in Llandaff for the first time, placing all choristers on an equal footing and strengthening the historic link with The Cathedral School where they all continue to be educated. We are proud to maintain a weekly output of seven choral services with the Cathedral Choir and are actively exploring potential new avenues of musical outreach.

Alongside the weekly round of seven choral services, over the past 5 years, the Cathedral Choirs have appeared live on Television and Radio, on Songs of Praise on Easter Day 2021 and Christmas Day 2022, recorded two CDs with Regent Records, sang at the 368th Clergy Support Trust Festival at St Paul's Cathedral and undertaken both domestic and foreign tours. The Cathedral Choir appeared on BBC Radio 3 Evensong in September 2023 for the first time in over 25 years and Christmas services will also be broadcast on BBC Radio Wales in December. Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, a service in September 2022 was attended by HM King Charles III and Queen Camilla and broadcast live on television around the world.

The Cathedral Organ is a 4-manual Nicholson & Co. instrument, built in two stages and installed between 2010 and 2013. The Organ is the largest, wholly new Cathedral Organ to

be built in the UK since the 1960s and has immense colour and capacity as an instrument for both solo and accompaniment work.

Alongside the Cathedral choirs, we in Llandaff are dedicated to providing the opportunity to make music and sing for as many people of all ages as possible. In September 2023 the Dean & Chapter appointed a new Music Animateur to work with school children from across the diocese with initial projects already reaching out to over 500 children. Alongside this, the Cathedral music department supports *Majestas Kids*, a group for children aged 7-11, *Majestas Consort*, an adult voluntary choir, and *Llandaff Cathedral Festival Chorus*, a community group of over 100 voices. It's certainly safe to say that Llandaff is a busy and rewarding place to work with a lot going on! We continue to actively explore new avenues of fundraising, engagement and support for the music at the Cathedral.

As part of this work, it is our hope that we can once again establish an active Old Choristers' network – something which has lapsed over recent years – for Llandaff Cathedral. We look forward to reconnecting with former choristers of Llandaff as well as those of other places at the 2024 Festival weekend and hope that you will be able to join us. Booking will open in early April.

### **The proposed programme for the Festival is as follows:**

#### **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September**

- 4.30pm Reception – Welcome and tea *Prebendal House, Llandaff Cathedral*
- 5.30pm Choral Evensong for the Eve of St Matthew *sung by the Cathedral Choir*
- 6.15pm Drinks Reception in the Cathedral Lady Chapel
- 7.15pm Time for dinner in Llandaff Village (recommendations will be made)
- 8.45pm Choral Compline *sung in the Quire by the Cathedral Choir and delegates*

#### **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September**

- 10.00am Demonstration of the 2010/13 Nicholson Organ and short recital given by Stephen Moore and Aaron Shilson
- 11.00am Tour of the Cathedral followed by visit to the Ringing Chamber and/or Organ Loft
- 12.15-1pm Lunchtime recital given by pupils of the Cathedral School, Llandaff
- 1.15pm Time for lunch in Llandaff Village (recommendations will be given)
- 1.30pm Tour of The Cathedral School, Llandaff (for any who wish)
- 2.45pm Rehearsal for Evensong *Cathedral Choir and delegates*
- 4.00pm Federation Solemn Evensong for the Feast of St Matthew
- 6.30pm Pre-dinner drinks *Memorial Hall, The Cathedral School*
- 7.15pm Sit for dinner *Memorial Hall, The Cathedral School*

#### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

- 10.15am Cathedral Choir open rehearsal for those who wish to observe
- 11.00am Choral Eucharist  
Followed by sherry/wine before farewells