



# GCOCA NEWS

August 2013

*Sharing news about former Choristers and the Cathedral Choir*

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## GCOCA Officers

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*Stephen Lake, Dean*

## Committee

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*John Heywood*

Precentor

*Neil Heavisides*

Director of Music

*Adrian Partington*

Treasurer

*Andrew Stratford*

Secretary

*Stephen Power*

Membership

Secretary

*Elvin Young*

*Andrew Douglas*

*Alan Iles*

Technical Editor

*David Arnold*

## **Chairman's Report**

This year has seen some welcome consolidation within the GCOCA thanks to support of our members outside of the Committee. For the last reunion Mark Fox took on the provision and running of the bar (we will be gratefully calling on his services once again this year), and this year we are very grateful to have David Arnold on board as our new newsletter editor.

2013 has seen a shift from tracing existing members of the Association to attracting our new members. The information pack that used to be distributed to all new foundation choristers has been found and revamped. This new version will be circulated to all recent Old Choristers and all current Choristers. Hopefully by explaining what the Association is for, and what we do, we will be ensuring its continuance for decades to come.

I must include both congratulations and a vote of thanks to our Secretary; Stephen takes up his new role as Organ Scholar at Gloucester Cathedral at the end of the summer in addition to being Chorister Tutor. He has decided however to step down as Secretary in order to concentrate fully on his dual role at the Cathedral, although he will stand for Committee and will be a most welcome adviser.

Our Treasurer - Andrew Stratford, feeling the pressures of a new arrival and the pressures of work, also wishes not to stand for re-election this year. We thank him for his services over the past two years, and wish him the best of luck. It seems therefore it is a time for change once more within the Committee.

I look forward to my fifth year as Chairman, and hope to see a few new faces, both on the Committee and at the AGM.

*John Heywood*

## **Old Choristers' Concert, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September**

This year sees the next in our biennial concerts in the Cathedral, supporting the work of the Cathedral Choir. This year, in the 10th anniversary year of the death of Dr John Sanders, OBE, we pay tribute to him in music associated with Gloucester Cathedral.

In the first half, Old Choristers have the opportunity to sing with the Cathedral Choir, generously giving their services, in a programme to include Samsion's *They that go down to the sea in ships*, and Wesley's *Blessed be the God and Father*. The Cathedral Choir will also perform John's *Reproaches*, and music by David Briggs and Mark Blatchly. The second half of the concert will be for us, the Old Choristers, to perform a variety of numbers, including a set from a newly formed group from The King's School.

If you would like to perform something, either as a solo or part of a group, please let Andrew Douglas know as soon as possible.



## **The Cathedral Choir 2012-2013**

The Three Choirs Festival – Europe’s oldest musical festival, and the thing which really puts the cities of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester on the map – is to be held again in Gloucester this year, at the end of July, some two weeks after the end of term. So, while the other pupils, (and staff), are sunning themselves on holiday, the Cathedral Choristers are hard at work in the Cathedral! This is a big sacrifice for the boys to have to make; but for almost all the boys, it will be the thing that they remember most clearly about being a chorister, after they have left. Old Choristers are always most proud to talk about the Festivals at which they attended. No other Cathedral Choristers in the country have the richness of musical experience in their chorister careers that those of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester have.

However, preparation for the Festival involves the Cathedral Choir in a lot of hard work. The preparation for each year’s festival begins usually in January, and dominates the academic year from that point onwards.

Nevertheless, the Cathedral Choir has had a fulfilling and interesting time during the year, with many concerts and a few trips, although not to a foreign country this year.

The highlight of the year for most of the boys was a trip to London to perform a Carol Concert in the “society” church of St. George’s, Hanover Square. This annual concert, known as “The Story of Christmas” has been in the past performed by the choirs of Westminster Cathedral or Westminster Abbey, so it was quite an accolade for the Gloucester Choir to receive an invitation to be the choir for this occasion. “The Story of Christmas” is a big charitable occasion, with tickets selling for several hundred pounds each; and, besides the stars of Gloucester who performed at the event, there were stars of the stage and screen reading lessons, for example, Stephen Fry, Ian Hislop, and Benedict Cumberbatch. It was a great occasion, and the boys sang, and behaved, impeccably.

Other highlights of the year were the Choir’s performance of Bach’s *St. John Passion* in the Cathedral, and concerts at Stowell Park, Deerhurst Priory, Drybrook, Frampton on Severn, and Upton Bishop (in memory of John Sanders, Director of Music at the Cathedral for many years).

Once again this year, the Choir has benefited from few personnel changes; only two boys have left during the year, Nicholas Hollands and Alexander Stefanyszyn, both of whom gave magnificent service over many years. For a second complete year, the boys have been led by the Head Choristers, Jacob Partington and Timothy Burton. These two have been outstanding servants of the Choir, and will be very difficult to replace when they leave after the Three Choirs Festival. Few boys these days are able to sing until the end of Year 9, but Tim and Jacob have loyally soldiered on until the time, officially, when they must leave the choir. (Most boys leave in year 8, although some as early as year 7).

Finally, one more achievement by the Choir must be noted. The Choristers competed at the Inter-Choir Schools Football Tournament again this year, at Salisbury, and went all the way to the final, beating the hosts along the way! Sadly, they lost in the final after extra time and penalties! They’ll win it next year!

**A.P. 2/vi/13**

## **Musical Chairs**

This year, we have enjoyed the sterling efforts of our three Choral Scholars and Organ Scholar. All four fine young men; Alto, Oliver Finn; Tenor, Toby Ward; Bass, Hugo Herman-Wilson and organ, Tom Etheridge leave Gloucester to take up similar scholarships in that most iconic of Chapels, King’s College Cambridge.

The Choir has also said a fond farewell to Tenor Lay Clerk Peter Harris, who has taken up a similar role at Winchester Cathedral, and to Senior Lay Clerk, Philip Colls, who retired early at Christmas. Philip has contributed to the choir for about 25 years, (with a five year break whilst I was a Chorister – a coincidence!)

## **Deaths**

Dave Courtney, died 30 September 2012, former Chairman of Cheltenham Town Football Club

## **Informal Christmas Gathering**

For a second year, we are planning a beer and curry night on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, following the Cathedral Carol Service at 6pm. We will aim to meet up in the Pelican at the end of Pitt Street, and go on to a curry house after a few restorative ales; other drinks are available, but this is a real ale pub, highly recommended by lay clerks and organists!

If you intend to come to this, please contact Stephen so we can book a table. [stephenjpower@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stephenjpower@yahoo.co.uk) or 07944 369281.

**GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS ASSOCIATION**



To: Stephen Power, c/o 12 College Green, Gloucester GL1 2LX  
Email: stephenjpower@yahoo.co.uk Telephone: 07944 369281

Name: ..... Years in the Choir.....to.....

Address & Postcode.....

Email address ..... Telephone No.....

**Please TICK or indicate quantities where relevant below.**

**REUNION**

**Concert on Friday 20 September 7.30 Rehearsal arrangements tbc.**

Sing with the Cathedral Choir in *Blessed be the God and Father* and *They that go down to the sea in ships*.

Take part in other OC group items. Please get in touch if you are willing to take part.  
I would like to take part ALTO / TENOR / BASS please circle the relevant voice part.  
INSTRUMENTAL NUMBER (please give details)

**Saturday 21 September 2013**

I / We expect to attend the Headmaster's Reception, Paddock House, at 1pm, Saturday  
I/We expect to attend the AGM at 2pm (7, College Green)  
I/We expect to attend Evensong at 4.30pm  
If you intend to sing at Evensong (rehearsal time, 3.30) please circle the relevant voice part:  
ALTO / TENOR / BASS

I require.....place(s) for the Reunion Dinner at 7.00 for 7.30 in the Parliament Rooms.

Bar provided by Mark Fox. All costs included in price.

- On arrival** A selection of canapés
- Main courses** Boeuf Bourguignon with mustard mashed potato and seasonal vegetables  
OR  
Leek, red pepper and feta bake
- Deserts** Individual Pavlovas topped with blackberry and apple compote and cinnamon cream

**Please indicate any dietary requirements** .....

I enclose Dinner payment: £28.50 p/p - Students £25.00 p/p £.....  
 I enclose payment for the Five Year Membership Scheme, £25 £.....  
 I require an Association Tie £7.95 (+ £2 for p&p if required) £.....

We regret that we are no longer able to supply the Federation Magazine "Once a Chorister". Please go direct to the Federation to order a copy.

Nominations for vacancies on the committee:

Secretary I nominate .....

Treasurer I nominate .....

I enclose a donation to GCOCA funds £.....  
 All cheques payable to GCOCA Grand Total £.....

Please reply [with appropriate payment] to Stephen Power, by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013

[www.gcoca.co.uk](http://www.gcoca.co.uk) [www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk](http://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk) [www.thekingschool.co.uk](http://www.thekingschool.co.uk)  
You can also find GCOCA, Gloucester Cathedral and the King's School on Facebook.  
The FCOCA website has details about their activities: <http://www.onceachorister.org>