

Lincoln Cathedral Choir and Old Choristers Association

At the 2021 AGM/Annual Reunion, 2nd October 2021 the recently appointed Reverend Canon Nick Brown, (Precentor), welcomed those present at the meeting. He gave testimony to all those who kept music alive in Lincoln Cathedral during the difficult months of the pandemic. Particularly the commitment of those who helped the cathedral to weather the many interruptions in regular worship.

Jeffrey Makinson Assistant Director of Music confirmed that over the last two- year period the cathedral was closed during the early part of the pandemic when Said Services were performed and streamed remotely. Eventually with Choral Scholars living in a social bubble they were able to record a number of anthems and settings to be used in on-line services and were well received.

As soon as able, lay clerks began to sing in the cathedral, three services a week were covered, all to an empty building but streamed online and welcomed by many in this country and abroad. Later, all choristers joined them, all being 'socially distanced'.

Since September 2021 the boy and girl choristers have been singing together as one top line with week day rehearsals in the song school. By October chorister numbers include 14 boys of whom 5 were probationers and 17 girls, 6 of whom were probationers.

The choir have enjoyed singing in a number of high-profile services and events such as Battle of Britain, National Police Memorial Service and a recording for BBC Songs of Praise, with two more planned in 2022 for BBC 3. On 20th Nov, the professional Messiah soloists included two former choristers and two former choral scholars.

Sadly, since the last held AGM, the meeting was informed of the deaths of former choristers James Read (2010-2015), Graham Garton (1937-1945) and Sylvia, the wife of Alan Wheeler, a chorister 1952-1959.

In July, at the Reading Out 16 Choristers were welcomed to the Association.

With regard to LCCOCA Choristership funding, £70,000 for two endowments was achieved and now has reached over £20,000 of the £50,000 required for a third.

After the AGM old choristers were given a tour of the new Visitor and Heritage Centre. Using the restored and reconfigured former 'Old Deanery', at a cost of £16M and all as part of the Lincoln Cathedral Connect Project which has been supported by English Heritage. The centre includes viewing galleries for schools and community groups.

On the tour several of the old choristers noted where they spent their time when the Old Deanery was used as the Cathedral School and boarding accommodation.

For Choral Evensong the service was sung by a choir of old choristers and the Cathedral Lay Clerks. It was an enjoyable experience to repeat, albeit in a different voice for some, works learnt as a young chorister. The music performed included Rose Responses, Stamford in C and I Was Glad, Parry. The first lesson was read by old chorister Ms Charlotte Turner.

Prior to Evensong the short Act of Remembrance and laying of the wreath for old choristers was carried out by old chorister Miss Mary Wilson.

Following evensong all old choristers, guests and members of the Cathedral Choir attended a drinks reception hosted by the LCCOCA committee.

In spite of Covid it was good to see an increase in attendance by old choristers at the 2021 Reunion and hopefully for 2022 a return of those who sent formal apologies.

H John Parry