



FEDERATION OF CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATIONS

NEWSHEET 17

As reported in the last Newsheet, Richard Belton stepped down as Honorary Secretary at the AGM held at Wakefield in May. Unfortunately, there were no nominations for a new Honorary Secretary and, until one can be found the Chairman, Alastair Pollard and I will cover the duties. For the time being I will be Acting Honorary Secretary. My contact details may be found at the foot of this Newsletter and you are welcome to use the email address secretary@fcoca.org.uk.

If you, or anyone in your Association would like to join the Executive Committee and consider becoming our next Honorary Secretary from the AGM in May 2017, do, please, let me know.

The purpose of the Newsheet is to report what was discussed at Executive Committee meetings. There was no formal meeting held prior to the AGM in May, which has previously been the convention, but a meeting was held in Leamington Spa on Saturday 8th October.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Treasurer reported that a donation of £250 had been gratefully received from the Wells Association following the very successful 2106 Annual Festival. He added that, though the Federation's finances were in much the same state as they were a year ago, with the loss of any potential revenue from the Once a Chorister Magazine, the organisation's reserves would diminish over time as our fixed annual expenditure was in excess of our fixed annual income. Though this wasn't viewed as needing urgent attention, the Executive Committee would have to address the issue in the not too distant future.

ONCE A CHORISTER

Member Associations will be well aware of the considerable difficulties we faced issuing this year's edition of the annual magazine. The Executive Committee thanks all of the Associations who submitted reports and for their patience in having to wait for its publication. As it was known that it would be very late in being published, the decision was taken not to print the edition, as it was probably going to miss most Association's circulation deadlines, but to issue it as an electronic document that could be forwarded to individual members or printed by the Associations if they chose. The edition was circulated by email on September 26th.

With the sales of Once a Chorister falling consistently over the last few years, its future has been discussed at Executive Committee meetings and at the AGM. Each year fewer Associations provide copies to their members and, consequently, the unit cost increases. Once again we would ask for your views on the future of the magazine. Do you want to see the continuation of a printed magazine or does an electronic version that you can email to your membership work better? Does providing a link to the document on the Federation web site help? Do you want to have the option of printing your own copies?

Our current thinking is that the Federation should produce an annual magazine of, say, 8 to 10 pages consisting of articles that reflect the aims and objectives of the organisation and its members and that the Association reports could either be posted to the Association pages of the Federation web site or a link provided to the Association's own web site, where they have one.

Whatever the future of Once a Chorister the Federation does need to maintain its communications with its member Associations and we are actively seeking someone to join the committee to shape our activity in this area in the 21st century. Please send us your views.

FEDERATION WEB SITE

We are very grateful to Richard Watts (Westminster), not only for all of his efforts in publishing Once a Chorister but also for everything he does as our web-master. You may have noticed that we have a new web site address – www.fcoca.org.uk. Currently this defaults to our existing site – www.onceachorister.org, which, eventually, we will retire and everything will be served by the new domain. We think this new domain is more relevant to our developing communication needs. We will be looking at the design of the site with the aim of making it more accessible and easier to manage.

Alongside this development, we also have new email addresses for the principal Executive Committee members, namely chairman@fcoca.org.uk, secretary@fcoca.org.uk and treasurer@fcoca.org.uk. These email address will be able to serve the personnel in these roles as they change in the future.

FESTIVALS

It was agreed that the 2016 Annual Festival held at Wells from 29th April to 1st May had been a huge success. A full and varied programme had been enjoyed by those who attended and the Wells Association should be congratulated on the exemplary organisation.

We look forward to the 2017 Festival to be held at Norwich from 9th to 11th June. Details can be found in the magazine and on the Federation web site. Norwich is a busy city and you are encouraged to book your hotel as soon as you can. The Maid's Head will be the Federation base for the weekend and a special rate is available for Festival attendees booking in advance by quoting the reference ID1851 and the Norwich Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Guild, but be quick as there are a limited number of rooms.

AGMs

The 2016 FCOCA AGM held at Wakefield on 7th May coincided with their Association's Golden Jubilee. To celebrate this event the Wakefield Old Choristers' Association held a dinner in the cathedral, preceded by Choral Evensong sung by the present choir on Friday 6th, which a number of FCOCA delegates attended.

The 2017 AGM will be held on Saturday 6th May at Christ Church, Oxford. A full day of events are being provided including a tour of the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments, lunch in the Great Hall, a tour of the cathedral for non-delegates and evensong sung by the combined choirs of Christ Church, Magdalen and New College choirs conducted by Dr Stephen Darlington.

As reported in the last Newsheet, venues for Festivals and AGMs in 2017, 18 & 19 are now agreed and we are inviting Associations to indicate their interested in hosting either event from 2020 onwards.

TOURS

Brian Ferris of Worcester is continuing to work on plans for a tour of Worcestershire as reported in the last Newsheet, though the planned date is now 2018 rather than 2017. He is being assisted by Gordon Hughes (Oxford, Christ Church). This will not be an "official" FCOCA tour but the Executive Committee has agreed to support it in whatever way it can. FCOCA Treasurer has agreed to manage the finances through the existing FCOCA Tour fund and access to the Federation's contacts list will be made available to promotion purposes.

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