



FEDERATION OF CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATIONS

NEWSHEET 19

August 2017

2017 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was hosted by Christ Church, Oxford and for those who were able to attend the whole event, Gordon Hughes and his team had organised a splendid day. Starting with a welcome from the Dean and the Headmaster of the Cathedral School, we visited the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments where we heard a fascinating account of the work of the collection and some of us got to play some of the instruments (well done to Geoffrey Mitchell (Exeter) who "volunteered" to play Handel's harpsichord). After lunch in the Great Hall (Harry Potter fame), delegates enjoyed a guided tour of the cathedral where we discovered that, though small, it is packed with many historical and interesting features. Tea followed the AGM after which we were treated to choral evensong sung by the combined choirs of Oxford's three choral foundations, Christ Church, New College and Magdalen College.

At the AGM, 15 associations were represented by 23 delegates. Apologies had been received from 8 individuals and one association. As it was unlikely that the Federation would produce, in this year or future years, a printed version of *Once a Chorister* and that we no longer sold merchandise to the extent we had in the past, it was proposed by the Executive Committee that the roles of Publications Officer and Marketing Officer be removed from the constitution. It was also proposed by the Executive Committee that the roles of Development Officer and Website Officer be created. These changes were adopted. It was noted that Arnold Wills (Peterborough) had been co-opted to the Executive Committee during the year in the newly created role of Development Officer and that Richard Watts (Westminster Abbey) had formally joined the committee as Website Officer. The following were duly elected for the coming year:

Office	Name	Association
Chairman	Alastair Pollard	Durham
Vice Chairman	Nick Hodges	Warwick
Hon. Secretary	Vacant*	
Hon. Treasurer	Michael Lake	Chelmsford
Website Officer	Richard Watts	Westminster Abbey
Development Officer	Arnold Wills	Peterborough
2018 Festival Representative	Samuel Barber	Peterborough
Associations' Representatives:		
• South West	Stephen Milner	Salisbury
• East Anglia & South East	Ayrton Westwood	Norwich
• North and Ireland	Alastair Pollard	Durham
• Midlands & Wales	Nick Hodges	Warwick

* Nick Hodges will continue to fulfil the role of Honorary Secretary until a permanent replacement is found.

Gordon Hughes (Oxford Christ Church) reported that arrangements were well in hand for the planned Worcester Tour in 2018 and that it would be going ahead. The dates would be 26 April to 1st May. For the event to be successful it would require between 30 and 40 individuals to take part and the cost was estimated to be around £500 per person including hotel, coach and entrance to attractions visited. This event is not sponsored by the Federation but the Executive Committee has confirmed its support and to promote it to associations. A demonstration of the new FCOCA Facebook page showed how it might be used in the future to disseminate information to member associations, provide the platform for associations to post reports and advertise their own events and allow conversation between associations. The meeting concluded with a lively discussion about the future of the Federation led by our new Development Officer, Arnold Wills. He posed a number of questions about the role of the Federation, which he will be asking of member associations in addition to carrying out a survey of how associations maintain their relationships with past choristers.

Since the AGM, we think we have found a willing volunteer for the role of Honorary Secretary – details, hopefully, in the next Newsheet.

Annual Festival – Norwich

Held from 9th to 11th June, delegates to this year's Festival were warmly welcomed by the team at Norwich and treated to, what one could only describe as, a wonderful weekend. Ayrton Westwood, Jonathan Burrell, Timothy Ashcroft and all of the organising committee at Norwich are to be congratulated for delivering a weekend packed with tours and entertainment at relatively short notice. Also to be thanked is the cathedral music team who provided no less than 5 choral services and also some wonderful entertainment at the Festival Dinner on the Saturday evening.

Our next Festival will be held at Peterborough Cathedral from 14th to 16th September 2018. Make sure it's in your diary, now.

Once a Chorister

We are all hugely disappointed that, after (I believe) nearly 70 years of continuous publication, we had to make the decision last year not to publish *Once a Chorister* in a printed format. We were pleased, however, that the publication continued in an electronic format that could be widely distributed and printed by associations where they chose to do so. There has been considerable discussion at both Executive Committee meetings and at the AGM on the subject of communication and the important role the Federation plays in providing a central link to all member associations. We sincerely hope that the new website and our presence on Facebook will provide some of the means of providing that link however, we still see the need for an annual statement of the activities of member associations and their choral foundations. Our chairman, Alastair Pollard, is determined that *Once a Chorister* will continue to be produced in the future. He recently wrote this to an association representative:

"Once a Chorister magazine is a key part of FCOCA, so I have been working hard to ensure it will continue. I am confident that we will now be able to publish Once a Chorister (albeit in a much smaller format) before the end of the year. The 2017 Once a Chorister Magazine will be published electronically as a PDF file that can be printed by readers or by associations. One of the most difficult tasks for any magazine editor is persuading associations to submit material magazine but it would be most appreciated if you can submit a report from your association."

So, get writing and send your articles to chairman@fcoca.org.uk.

Nick Hodges, Acting Honorary Secretary

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