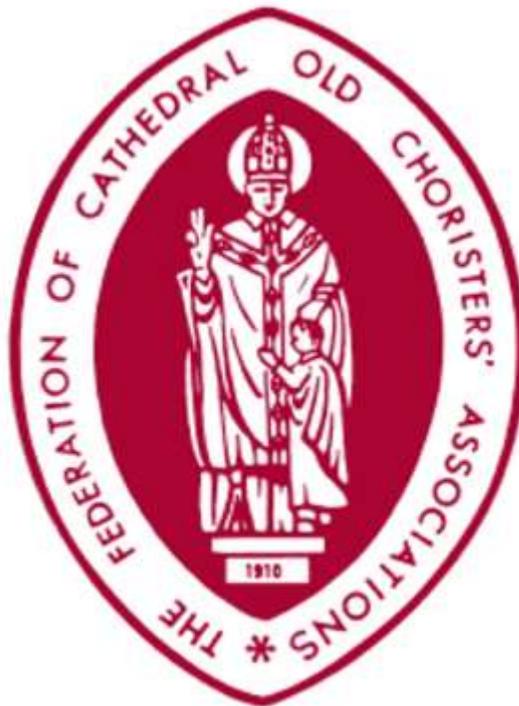


Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

Once a Chorister Magazine



Year 2018

Version 1.0

Introduction

The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations has now published two editions of the Once a Chorister Magazine in electronic format, and this is the third. In general, the feedback has been positive about the content, but the size of the e-magazine has meant that printing individual copies has become expensive. Although a few former choristers liked to read about other Associations' news this was not a universal desire. Hence the decision was taken to publish reports from Associations on the Federation website www.fcoca.org.uk and not in the Once a Chorister magazine. This not only reduces the size of the magazine significantly and so reduces printing costs, but also means that our website has more up to date material - some of the reports currently published on the website are very old. This does rely on Associations submitting their reports and those of their organists and master of choristers to their Regional Representative or directly to secretary@fcoca.org.uk.

Once a Chorister is a great vehicle for keeping people up to date with what happened at the Federation AGM and Festival, and some articles that potentially affect all choral foundations.

I hope that this edition of the online publication is to your liking. Please continue to submit articles for publication in the Once a Chorister magazine or the website.

Alastair Pollard - OAC Editor
Chairman@fcoca.org.uk
Telephone 07775 720100

Contents

Introduction.....	2
2018 Federation AGM in Chelmsford.....	4
Report on AGM	4
Regional Representative Reports.....	5
Chairman’s Report at AGM	7
GDPR Policy and privacy Statement	8
2018 Federation Festival in Peterborough	10
Report on Festival	10
Federation Chairman’s report for Festival.....	12
Give visitors some peace, church told	13
Future events	14
AGMs	14
Festivals.....	14
Draft Portsmouth Cathedral Festival Agenda.....	14
Federation Tour.....	14
FCM (Friends of Cathedral Music) invitation.....	15
News from former Choristers.....	16
Oliver Wright – What has my Chorister Education given me?.....	16
Esther Platten – from one generation to another	16
Canon Chris Chivers – from Bristol to Cambridge	17
A Chorister Wedding	18
Andrew Burnham - from Chorister to Bishop	19
The Chichester Psalms – a Chorister Reunion	20
Chris Knowles – Singing Teacher and Author	21
David Horner – Obituary.....	22
Peter Sweeney – Obituary.....	23
Book Reviews.....	24
Starbridge series – by Susan Howarth	24
The Dunbridge Chronicles - by Pam Rhodes.....	25
The Lindchester Chronicals - by Catherine Fox.....	25
Shepherd of another Flock - by David Wilbourne.....	25
Paddington at St. Paul’s - by Michael Bond	26
Notes for Singers – by Chris Knowles	27
What is the FCOCA?	28
The Federation Prayer.....	28
Contact Details.....	29
Executive Committee members.....	29
Regional Association Representatives	29
Vice Presidents	29
Affiliated Associations	30

2018 Federation AGM in Chelmsford



The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations was held at Chelmsford Cathedral on Saturday 12th May 2018. Thanks go to the Dean, Master of the Choristers, and members of the Old Choristers' Association.

Report on AGM

Although the number of attendees was a little lower than hoped for (only about 25), it was good to greet some new faces. I have to admit that I have not been to Chelmsford before, the closest I got was Southend and Colchester. The Cathedral is one of the smallest in the country and also one of the youngest - the Cathedra was installed in 1914 in the Parish Church when the Diocese was created. The building may be small, but the diocese itself is the second largest in England covering all of Essex and 5 East London boroughs. All Cathedrals have their own charm, and special attributes. Chelmsford is very light inside with a colourful ceiling and some fine stained glass but, for many, the most impressive "window" is the Tree of Life painting by Mark Cazalet. There are depictions of Adam & Eve, Judas the Traitor, several birds, and even a reference to modern man's troubles with waste and plastic.



Attendees were given a tour of the Cathedral in the morning of the AGM, including a visit to the recently renovated Choir School (behind the Tree of Life painting). Having the Song School within the Cathedral saves time and the effects of bad weather, but even includes a mezzanine level for storage and an administrators desk. There was also a short introduction to the two organs - the nave organ at the back of the Cathedral, and the Chancel organ at the front. They were built in 1994 & 1995 respectively, and both can be played from the console of the Chancel organ. This antiphonal effect was put to good effect during the service and voluntary at Evensong. After a welcome from the Vice-Dean, we had a fantastic lunch prepared onsite in the small Cathedral Kitchen. The AGM followed the usual format, and included a lively discussion how the new GDPR legislation affects Old Chorister Associations and The Federation. Although we have a host for the AGM (Lichfield) and Festival (Portsmouth) in 2019 and 2020 AGM in Rochester, we

are struggling for a host for the 2020 Festival. There was some discussion about combining both into a single event in the future, but no final decision was made.

The Cathedral Choir did us proud, as always, albeit with only 12 boys. Interestingly one of the “back row” was a lady – I’m sure we will see this more often in the future elsewhere. All the music had a local connection – The Essex Service by Alan Bullard, a hymn descant by James Davey (current Organist and Master of Chorister at Chelmsford), Introit by John Jordan (former Master of the Music) and Responses by Peter Nardone (former Director of Music).

[Alastair Pollard – FCOCA Chairman]

Regional Representative Reports

North & Ireland

There are about 15 member associations in the Northern region, but many are now effectively in “Mothballs”. This is the word I like to use, as although they may not hold regular gatherings, meetings, events at the moment, this does not preclude things becoming more active in the future. In addition, many associations still manage to have someone at the AGM or Festival, or at least keep in touch with friends in the Federation through Once a Chorister or the odd Christmas card. One of the Northern Region’s most memorable characters, David Horner, passed away earlier this year. He was a staunch supporter of The Federation, most notably as magazine editor, running the Federation Shop, and attending all the Federation tours. He really was a “special” person in so many ways. His funeral was held on a very snowy day in York Minster, with music and readings chosen in advance by David – he always was good at planning. The Minster also hosted a special 100th birthday service for Francis Jackson – organist, choirmaster and composer there for many years.

Durham Cathedral has a new Master of the Choristers, a local lad called Daniel Cook. He had a hard act to follow when James Lancelot left his post after 32 years. Dan has already made his mark by holding chorister taster days, which have become increasingly common elsewhere in recruitment. Durham Chorister School also has a new Headmaster, Ian Wicks, taking over from Yvette Day who has gone to Kings College School Cambridge and already persuaded the School Director of Music James Randle to follow her there. Blackburn Cathedral now has 150 singers in seven choirs. The choristers in the Boys choir and Girls choir all come from local schools.

One of the biggest problems in our region is chorister recruitment, but the North of England plus Scotland and Ireland are still hanging in there as an important part of The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers’ Associations.

[Alastair Pollard – Regional Rep]

Midshires & Wales

I am pleased to report that, following the resignation of Thomas Corns as Director of Music at St Mary's, Warwick, having been appointed to Sheffield Cathedral, Oliver Hancock, previously Portsmouth Cathedral has been appointed his successor and took up the post in January this year. This is a very welcome appointment for Warwick and demonstrates its commitment to maintaining its choral tradition.

It was with sadness that I learnt recently that Birmingham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association is being wound up and their archives and remaining funds being transferred to the Cathedral. It is hoped to maintain a Facebook presence. We have lost a number of members in the recent past as associations find it increasingly difficult to maintain interest from past choristers. One way of doing so is through on-line social media as Peterborough, amongst others, is proving. Indeed, my own association at Warwick now has over 250 members following its Facebook page.

I have moved house in the last 12 months and, for the first time in my life, no longer live in Warwickshire but just across the border in Worcestershire. We have taken the opportunity to attend Worcester Cathedral on a number of occasions, principally around Christmas and Easter and have been able to catch up with our old friend, Peter Nardone (DoM). One final word on my Warwick association. The present choir would probably not exist had it not been for the tireless efforts made by Geoffrey Holroyde when he became its choirmaster in 1961. In what was, in those days, an almost voluntary role, which he combined with a career in industry, he built a choir of over 30 boys and 16 men who delivered high quality choral services, broadcast on radio and television, toured extensively in Europe and the USA and regularly visited cathedrals in England. In September, as part of our AGM, we will celebrate Geoffrey's 90th birthday.

[Nick Hodges – Regional Rep]

South West

No reports have been received from the south west associations but from my own association, Salisbury, I can report the following:

On 27 March 2018 it was announced that the Queen had appointed The Reverend Canon Nickolas Papadopulos, previously Treasurer at Canterbury Cathedral, to be the new Dean of Salisbury and he will be installed later in the year.

The Salisbury Cathedral School Association will be holding their Reunion and on Saturday 16 June and on this occasion, together with the whole school with parents, will be celebrating 800 years of the founding of the Bishop's Palace in 1218. The School was given the Bishop's Palace in 1947 when the then Bishop moved into another property as the School at Wren Hall was growing and required more space.

There will be an exhibition, talks and tours of the Palace, Tea, Choral Evensong followed by a Reception to end the day.

[Stephen Milner – Regional Rep]

Chairman's Report at AGM

Looking back on the past year within the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations we remember the good times. We had a very successful AGM in Oxford, with the opportunity to play early musical instruments, listened to the massed voice of 3 college choirs, and soak up the atmosphere of Morse and Lewis' dreaming spires. For our Festival we headed into deepest East Anglia. Norwich is a very pleasant place to visit, and we managed to meet chorister friends both formally and informally in a relaxed manner, and there was a good mix of organised events and free time. Although we lost one of our most diligent members, David Horner of York, several of us managed to dig our way through the snow and travel chaos to the funeral in York Minster, despite the awful weather that prevented even more members attending.

Membership numbers may be diminishing and grey hairs are multiplying, but we still carry on with the very important social aspects of our associations, reminiscing about past chorister days and sharing news through Newsletters and personal contacts. We managed to publish *Once a Chorister* as another way of keeping former choristers up to date with news, and social media is also important for example to attract younger members. Several associations, including FCOCA, have a Facebook page, and some have Twitter and web pages. Some may use their Choir School or Cathedral pages. Friends of Cathedral Music is an important source of information about choir music nationwide. Use keywords like <Old Choristers> and <Cathedral>.

We still struggle to attract people to serve on the Federation Executive Committee, which is not only disappointing but means we have to do more with fewer resources. We are also looking for hosts for the 2020 and 2021 AGM and Festivals. We are considering combining the 2 major events in the Federation calendar into one. This may appeal to some, but is not universally appealing. This all makes our task of attracting more members that bit more challenging, but can we offer new and particularly younger members an attractive proposition? Comments welcome.

Overall, I believe the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations does very well for its current membership. We do not know what the future holds in our increasingly troubled world with many cathedrals and musical establishments starting to feel financial pressures; but let's enjoy what we have, spread the word about the benefits of choristership and church music and be receptive to new members. Have fun, laugh a lot, and enjoy yourselves.

[Alastair Pollard – Chairman]

GDPR Policy and privacy Statement

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is a piece of data Protection legislation that has affected us all in one way or another, It has severely affected the way that the Federation and its members associations can store and use individuals' personal information such as names, address, telephone numbers and addresses. In particular we cannot publish details of people who attended our Festival, but the Federation itself can hold limited data to allow it to communicate with members. The Federation published its Policy & Privacy Statement at the AGM.

FCOCA Policy:

The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations (FCOCA) is a non-profit organisation providing a common point of contact and support for ex-chorister associations of cathedrals, colleges and churches, which themselves have or have had a choral music foundation.

The FCOCA holds records of associations in the UK and internationally. For each association it records the name of the association and, where applicable, its website address or that of the establishment from which it is derived. It also records the name and contact details of the Primary Contact at the association, as provided by the association and, for members, where it is provided by them, it may record, in respect of the Primary Contact, their email address, postal address, landline telephone number, mobile telephone number and fax number. For members, similar details may also be recorded for their Federation Representative where one is appointed. The FCOCA also holds records of individual members, not associated with a member association. The data held in addition to their name, may include their email address, postal address, landline telephone number, mobile telephone number, as provided by them.

Reasons for holding data:

The primary reason for the FCOCA to process data is to enable it to maintain contact and support for member and prospective member associations. Specifically, this will be to inform member associations and individual members of forthcoming AGMs, Festivals and other events organised by the FCOCA, to circulate a newsletter three times each year, following Executive Committee meetings and the AGM and to notify member associations and individual members of any other appropriate and relevant information. Wherever possible, communication from the FCOCA to individuals whose details are processed by the FCOCA will be by email.

Legal basis

As a non-profit organisation with, primarily, recreational activities, we are not required to register with the ICO or to appoint a Data Protection Officer. The Data Controller is the Honorary Secretary of the FCOCA. We believe and intend that the legal basis on which we hold is under legitimate interest. For this reason, we are not intending to request consent to process the data we hold unless the reasons for holding data should change in the future.

FCOCA Data Privacy Statement:

The FCOCA holds and processes only those personal data that it requires to maintain contact with the representatives of its member associations and as provided and updated by them.

Data held:

Data is held, primarily in electronic format (Microsoft Office documents and Google Mail) on a personal computer of the Honorary Secretary. Extracts from the data may be provided, from time to time, to other FCOCA elected officers, including the Honorary Treasurer, for the purpose of issuing invoices for annual subscriptions, the Development Officer, for the purpose of promoting

the activities of the FCOCA and, in part, to the Regional Representatives to enable them to maintain support for associations in their respective region. Records of Primary Contacts and Federation Representatives are removed upon notification by member associations of individuals leaving these roles. No history of these records is maintained. Any association may request removal of or a change to their data at any time, as may any Primary Contact, Federation Representative or individual member. The FCOCA maintains a register of attendees at the Annual General Meeting, each attendee personally signing the register. The register records the attendees name and the association they represent. Attendees at the Annual Festival are listed and provided to all of the Festival attendees. A copy of these lists is held in physical archive by the Honorary Secretary. They record only the name of the attendees and the association they represent. No data is shared with any other organisation. From the 1st May 2018, no details of Primary Contacts or Federation Representatives, are published on the Federation website.

Further information:

Requests for details of any data held by the FCOCA and requests for any changes to be made to data held should be made by email or by post to the FCOCA Honorary Secretary as detailed below. Questions related to the FCOCA's data policy should also be addressed to the Honorary Secretary. secretary@fcooca.org.uk

[Nick Hodges – Vice Chairman]

2018 Federation Festival in Peterborough

The 2018 Annual Festival of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations was held in Peterborough from Friday 14th to 16th September. Thanks must go to everyone involved in the organisation of the festival.

Report on Festival

Peterborough Old Choristers' Association was a founder member of FCCOA, when the idea was first discussed there in 1910. So, it seems fitting that old choristers from around the country were once again invited to Peterborough to join in their Cathedral's 900th celebrations. Over 100 people joined together for a weekend of music, history and, most importantly, fellowship. The main events were split between the Great Northern Hotel (directly opposite the Railway station) and Peterborough Cathedral, only a few minutes' walk apart.

Former choristers and their guests arrived during the day on Friday by train and by car, and even by bicycle for tea in the South Transept followed by Evensong sung by girl choristers. Peterborough appointed its first female director of music this year, and Tansy Castledine had only been in post a few days before she had to provide and lead the music for our Festival. There was no sign of any nerves (or intimidation from former choristers) as the music was wonderful. The FCCOA committee had suggested that Peterborough did something slightly different for the evening's event, and so we gathered together in the south transept for an evening of food, wine, cheese, and music. After a light meal we were invited to taste up to six wines from around the world and six Artisan (traditional hand-made) cheeses. Our 2 hosts from the Stamford Cheese Cellar talked about each cheese in turn, explaining about texture, taste, names etc. each one beautifully served with an appropriate wine (3 white and 3 red). There was something for everyone, and as the evening wore on it became more enjoyable. Half way through the tasting, Tansy and the Cathedral lay clerks entertained us to (unaccompanied) singing of traditional songs. We all rolled home to the hotel, and some managed to down a couple of pints of gin before bed.



Few old choristers were up with the lark after the previous night's festivities and, fortunately, nothing was planned until 11:00 am when we had a choice of two Cathedral tours. Some took the traditional tour of this magnificent Norman building at ground level led by one of the excellent guides, learning about the dissolution by Henry VIII, looting and damage by Cromwell's cannon and rifles, and the beautifully decorated wooden roof. Other more hardy delegates climbed up and squeezed through narrow passages to explore the upper echelons, both inside and outside the Cathedral roof.

Unexpectedly lunch was provided in the South Transept, watched by jealous visitors as they meandered down the aisles. One of the current special events is Tim Peake's Spacecraft, on exhibition in the Cathedral, as part of its nationwide tour. An interesting juxtaposition of old and modern.

David Humphreys, Assistant Director of Music at the Cathedral, gave an organ recital, together with a camera on the manuals so we could see the intricate and sometimes athletic movements of his hands. The music was a mixture of gentle and rumbustious:

Concert overture in C	by Alfred Hollins
Variations sur un thème de Clément Jannequin	by Jehan Alain
Sursum corda	by Edward Elgar
Première Fantaisie	by Camille Saint-Saëns

The ubiquitous photo opportunity brought together the current choristers, recent leavers from the girls' choir, old Choristers and friends, under the tower, looking heavenward for inspiration just before we sang our hearts out at Evensong. Evensong was a joy for all. After a short ceremony laying a wreath at the wars memorial in St. Sprite's chapel, we all processed into the choir stalls, and the Cathedral choir launched into a rousing rendition of Zadok the Priest. An unexpected bonus. At the earlier rehearsal, Tansy said that some of us may know the Mag. And Nunc. and Anthem. And so we did: Stanford in A and Parry's "I was Glad". Although for some of us we knew the treble line better than we knew the tenor or bass line! Overall a memorable service and a joy to sing or listen to. For some old choristers, this is the highlight of the weekend – a rare opportunity to sing good church music in a magnificent Cathedral.

After a quick wander back to The Great Northern Hotel, 106 gathered for the Festival Dinner. We started by singing Grace in 4-part harmony – someone had suggested having a rehearsal, but as old choristers most of us are more than capable of sight-reading and it sounded fantastic in the admittedly rather cramped room. I wonder what other guests in the bar thought of it? We shall soon forget the rather slow service that caused toasts to Queen & Federation and speeches to follow the main course and the cheese course being served at a very late hour! Fortunately, the speakers – Carl Jackson Director of Music at The Chapel Royal Hampton Court Palace and Frank Close from University of Oxford – managed to entertain and educate us admirably in a relatively short time.

Another late night, but some managed to rise in time for Early Communion at 8:00. I managed Matins at 9:15 – a rare treat for me these days. The 16th century music was very much to my taste - Te Deum and Benedictus (from the Short Service) by Gibbons. Although the attendance was relatively small, it did not detract from a lovely service. I understand that Cathedral Eucharist (Misa brevis by Dove, and Tantum ergo by Duruflé) was also outstanding. The festival rounded off in style with Walmisley in D and Wesley's "Blessed be the God and Father" at Evensong.

The annual FCOCA Festival is, to many, the highlight of the Federation year, when we gather for music, reminiscences, and fellowship with friends old and new. Portsmouth have a hard act to follow as host of the 2019 Federation festival, but I have no doubt that we won't be left wanting.

[Alastair Pollard - Chairman]

Federation Chairman's report for Festival

We were enjoying ourselves at the Festival Banquet so much that there wasn't time for me to speak to the gathering formally. So to save me the embarrassment of writing a speech and not delivering it, I include here my words of wisdom!

Firstly, I must say what a delight it is to be in Peterborough. Although at times it has been a bumpy road, we are all here and I even have a hotel room too! Looking at the attendee list it is great to see so many former choristers from Peterborough. Holding a Federation Festival is a great way to boost attendance at your local association AGM. Talking of Festivals, we have a venue for the 2019 FCOCA festival but no other Festival venues are set. We need to find a venue for 2020 and 2021 soon or ...

There are lots of different types of former choristers. Life as a chorister is a great way to set you up for life. You learn about self-discipline, counting, team-working. Alastair Cooke (just retired from International Cricket) was a Chorister at St Pauls Cathedral. He claimed "the amount of focus and concentration required to keep practicing while undergoing regular school hours helped with his batting."

Although showmanship and enthusiasm is not the most obvious characteristic associated with choristers there are several famous examples. Alexander Armstrong, a former chorister at St Mary's in Edinburgh, has refined his love of "showing off" as he's carved out a career as a comedian, actor and baritone singer. I read that he ditched the cello for the much more masculine oboe. Jon Snow (Winchester) and Aled Jones (Bangor) have both succeeded in the world of Television. And here am I, a former chorister at Durham Cathedral, who has been known to perform on occasion!

As I said last year, the Federation is changing and we must learn to adapt to continue to be relevant to both our current membership, and the future membership. There is a fine balancing act to attract new members and meet their needs, but not to forget our current membership and continue to fulfil their needs. Not an easy task, but we are working on it. I also said I would like to have some ladies on the committee, to hopefully give a different perspective. My wife was the only volunteer for the vacant post of FCOCA secretary, so thank you. The next committee meeting will be interesting!

We are not alone. There are several organisations that are interested in Church music, Choristership, Organ music, Cathedrals, etc. These are often the very same things that interest us as former choristers. But are there too many similar organisations with similar aims, and dwindling membership? Looking to the future, I think we should work closer together but still retain our unique identity. We may be a group of "old buffers" as my wife calls us, but we are a social bunch with something very special in common. I shall enjoy serving you in my last 18 months as Chairman. It is a great honour; and where else will I get the opportunity to read that tough-twisting Bible reading from Judges with all the unpronounceable names and no preparation, in a magnificent cathedral?

Finally, I cannot let the death of our Vice-President David Horner pass without comment. David and his wife Margaret were the first members of the Federation that I met outside Durham and we remained friends ever since. David was a chorister at York Minster under Sir Edward Bairstow and served the York Association and the Federation loyally for many, many years. His roles included Marketing manager, Once a Chorister magazine editor, Membership secretary, and

mentor to committee members. He was rewarded by being appointed as an Honorary Vice President. Rest in Peace, David.

I hope to see you all next year in Lichfield and in Portsmouth.

[Alastair Pollard – Chairman]

Give visitors some peace, church told

The Church of England is too “bouncy” for people who want to attend service quietly but are “pounced on” and asked to join in, a senior bishop has said.

A gathering of cathedral bosses heard from the Archbishop of Canterbury this week that cathedrals should be places of fun and excitement. The Bishop of Chelmsford urged them yesterday not to “Smother” those who wanted to attend anonymously and “sit behind a pillar”, noting there is room for both kinds of worship. He said that some people were horrified by the idea of having to share the peace during service, the tradition where worshippers are asked to turn to their neighbour in the pews and exchange blessings.

“With cathedrals, one of the attractions is the anonymity you can find within the worshipping community of the place, and we should not apologise for that.” the Right Rev. Stephen Cottrell told the National Cathedrals Conference in Manchester. “I think there are thousands and thousands of people who want to come quietly, who even want to come secretly, and it’s getting harder and harder to do that in the modern day bouncy and accessible Church of England.

Attendances are declining at parish churches but cathedrals have more than 11 million visitors per year and their congregations are increased by 17 per cent over the past ten years.

[Kayay Burgess, Religious Affairs Correspondent - The Times 19 September 2018]

Future events

AGMs

Lichfield	11 th May 2019
Rochester	2020
Vacant	2021
Vacant	2022
Vacant	2023

Festivals

Portsmouth	21 st – 23 rd June 2019
Vacant	2020
Vacant	2021
Vacant	2022
Warwick	2023

Draft Portsmouth Cathedral Festival Agenda

The final running order for the 2019 Festival in Portsmouth has yet to be finalised, but in summary we hope to include:

Friday 21 June

Delegates arrive at hotels, Registration in Cathedral House, a Talk 'Then and Now...' by Anthony Froggatt and David Price, Afternoon Tea, Open Rehearsal, Choral Evensong sung by the Cathedral Choir, Buffet Supper in The Square Tower, all rounded off with either Compline or a Festivities Concert

Saturday 22 June

Harbour Tours, Lunch, Organ recital by David Briggs, Tea, Rehearsals for Evensong in Song School/Cathedral House and then Quire, Choral Evensong, Drinks Reception in the Nave, Festival Banquet in The Royal Naval Club.

Sunday 23 June

Early Holy Communion in St Thomas Chapel, Sung Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir, Sherry/Coffee and Farewell, Choral Evensong with the Cathedral Choir.

Federation Tour

Unfortunately, the Worcestershire Coach Tour planned to take place in April 2018 did not happen.

FCM (Friends of Cathedral Music) invitation

Many former cathedral choristers are also Friends of Cathedral Music (FCM), and one such friend is Arnold Wills. He wrote a very good article for the FCM journal, Cathedral Voice, about the upcoming (as it was then!) FCOCA festival, and developments within the Federation. Some interesting snippets from that article, much of which is also very relevant to YOU.



Following the very successful 2017 festival held at Norwich, former cathedral choristers, including all with an interest in cathedral music, are looking forward to the 2018 Festival, which this year is being hosted by Peterborough Cathedral on 14-15 September. The Peterborough association was key to the formation of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations (FCOCA) and the first AGM was held there in 1910. Interestingly, when the festival was last held in Peterborough, in 1964, Herbert Howells was amongst the guests and the Master of the Music was Dr. Stanley Vann.

FCOCA also has a new website at www.fcoca.org.uk and we would be very interested to know what FCM members think of it. We have a Facebook presence too – just look for FCOCA or Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations. We invite you to 'like' the page and post messages about your association or anything else relevant to the Federation. We are setting up a LinkedIn profile which may be a useful way for people who have been choristers to make professional and business contacts. We are encouraged to hear how younger former choristers have been supported by former cathedral choristers established in their professions.

We would encourage all former cathedral choristers who wish to be connected with their local or 'home' chorister associations to take this step. We estimate that there are in excess of 10,000 former choristers of cathedrals and major parish churches who are neither in touch with their former colleagues nor linked in any way with their local cathedral. The camaraderie and marvellous music alone, we believe, are sufficient to nurture and encourage this special friendship and bond.

For more information about FCM Cathedral Voice, contact the Editor – editorcv@fcm.org.uk

[Arnold Wills, former chorister at Peterborough Cathedral and Gentleman at Hampton Court Chapel Royal, has a developmental role within the FCOCA executive group]

News from former Choristers

It is often said that our time as choristers in our formative years greatly benefits us in later life. We cannot all be top civil servants, lawyers, celebrities, sportsmen & sportswomen, etc, but we all have talents, skills and pastimes that are likely to have been affected to a greater or lesser degree by our time singing in a choir, worshiping in a great church, or learning in a choir school. These stories may inspire younger former Choristers too.

Oliver Wright – What has my Chorister Education given me?

I was a chorister at New College from 1987-1993. Head chorister in my last year. I was then a choral scholar at St John's Cambridge from 1999-2003. As a result, music, and particularly Anglican Choral music, has been 'in the blood'. Having pursued a career in the law (and after 15 years becoming a partner and head of department at my firm in London), I have just handed in my notice. In September I will begin theology training towards ordination in the Church of England.

There are lots of things that I think my 'education' as a chorister has given me. Here are some of them:

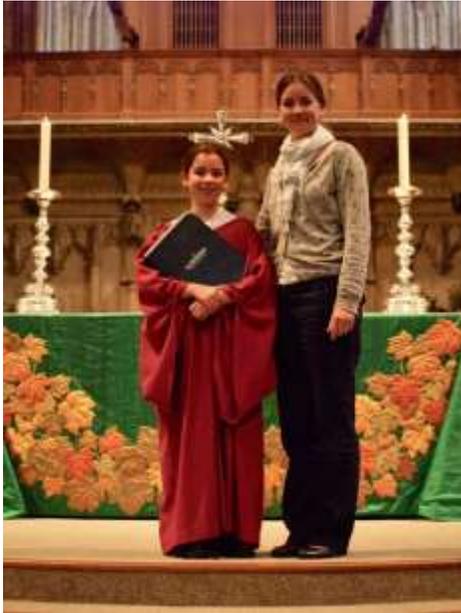
1. Performance. From a very young age, being used to perform under pressure in various different circumstances. This has genuinely set me apart from many of my peers in the law who didn't have such training.
2. Musical ability. The training has never left me. Sight reading particularly again has always given me a massive head start.
3. Love of music. This has ebbed and flowed, but in adult life I have developed a real passion for orchestral music. And on the odd occasions I can make an Evensong somewhere, I tend to be very close to tears - feeling so at home.
4. Love of God. Perhaps evident from my career change! I'm aware that for some people being a chorister/choral scholar, they just made a decision not to engage with the liturgy. For me it always meant a great deal. There is a real 'well' of liturgy and scripture which the life in Chapel filled up for me.

Esther Platten – from one generation to another

Last year I moved back to Norwich where I grew up, as my husband changed from a London parish priest when he was appointed Canon Precentor at Norwich Cathedral. It was obviously a joy to return to a city that I loved, where friends and family still lived, and to a place that had so many positive memories. A huge bonus was to be moving into the Cathedral Close and to become members of the worshipping community that had been so formative in my early career as a musician.

I was one of the fortunate girls given the opportunity to become a Cathedral Chorister as I became a sixth-former. As founder members of the choir in 1995, my contemporaries and I were both

rookies and trail blazers - the movement to introduce opportunities for girls to sing in Cathedrals was relatively new, and I was fortunate enough to be part of that movement in Norwich thanks to Michael Perham and Neil Taylor. The additional schedule and steep learning curve was tough during A-levels, but it quickly became apparent that choral singing was to be central to my life and future. Two years later I took up a Choral Scholarship at Kings College, London under David Trendell, studying 'cello and voice at the Royal Academy of Music and have never looked back.



22 years later I found myself sitting in the choir at Norwich watching my eldest daughter (aged 11) take up that same opportunity.

I am in no doubt that her choral training will enrich her life in so many ways that can't be measured; it will shape her as a person along-side anything she does at school and give her additional access to culture, friends and opportunities that would not normally be so easily available. She is already counting the days until Christmas (we have had to ban the singing of carols for the time being!) and dreams of a future of solos, CD's, tours and possibly being Head Chorister. I am hugely grateful to those early ambassadors who decided that girls should be given opportunities to learn the craft of singing, and to those who work so hard now to make sure there is a sustainable future for children of all backgrounds and schooling, to contribute to and benefit from music in our Cathedrals and Parish Churches.

[Esther Platten – former Norwich Chorister]

Canon Chris Chivers – from Bristol to Cambridge

I was a chorister at Bristol (1977-81) and an Academical Clerk (Choral scholar) at Magdalen College, Oxford (1985-88), then director of music at New College School briefly before five years as Lay Chaplain, Housemaster and Christie Tutor at King's College School, Cambridge. I even did a gap year teaching at St Michael's College, Tenbury and singing as a Lay clerk - the year it closed.

So lots of Cathedral and collegiate life.

All of which led to a call to be a priest. And stints at St George's Cathedral, Cape Town and Westminster Abbey as precentor, before five years at Blackburn Cathedral as Canon Chancellor, a London parish and now Principal of Westcott House in Cambridge where I trained for ordination and have the pleasure of walking alongside women and men preparing for public ministry.

None of this would have been possible without the language of music, the beauty of liturgy and the team-work which I learned in so many church music infused contexts. And I've managed to keep up some music along the way - as a composer of choral music for these same foundations - Magdalen, New College, King's and Caius among them, Cape Town and Hong Kong cathedrals further afield - published by OUP, the RSCM and Encore with whom the latest, Hong Kong Preces and Responses, were published this year.

A Chorister Wedding



This summer saw the union of two former choristers in the stunning setting of the chapel at Lancing College. Rachael Cox (Lincoln, 2001-2006) and Philip Craven (Chichester, 1995-99) were married in a nuptial mass on 23 August, with a forty-strong choir singing for the celebration. The music was directed by Charles Harrison, the current Master of the Choristers at Chichester, while the organ duties were shared by Shean Bowers (Bath Abbey) and Ian Tindale.

Having been choristers, music is very dear to the couple and was virtually the first item on the wedding planning agenda. 'We were keen to have

a nuptial mass, which in turn gave us greater scope for music. We couldn't imagine a better way to mark the occasion than to have our friends and family singing', said Rachael. 'The difficulty we had was in narrowing down our most-loved settings and ensuring it would all be achievable in just over an hour's rehearsal. Thankfully, the choir was more than up for the challenge and did the most incredible job.' The setting for the mass was the striking Kodály Missa Brevis, which was complemented with works by Bach, Parry, Colin Mawby and Will Todd. 'We couldn't imagine not singing at our wedding and were so proud to sing with the choir for Ireland's Greater Love during communion. I'd wanted it at my wedding since singing it as a chorister; it meant so much to us', said Philip. 'We were lucky with how quickly the choir picked up the music and Charles commented on just how musical a bunch they were! We owe so much to our times as choristers which has so shaped our education and futures, and most importantly, we would probably never have met without that incredible musical connection.'

After Chichester, Philip went on to choral scholarships at Lancing College, University College and St John's College, Durham, Lincoln Cathedral and was most recently a Lay Clerk at Bath Abbey. He is now Head of History at Haileybury College, and regularly helps out the basses in the school choirs. Rachael went on to study Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music, followed by a Masters in Music at the University of Bristol and is now a professional singer, greatly enjoying working with a number of companies including Garsington Opera, Birmingham Opera and, most recently, Hampstead Garden Opera and Bury Court Opera.



*Rachel and Philip Craven
[Martin Bell Photography]*

Andrew Burnham - from Chorister to Bishop



Singing as an indifferent treble in the choir of Southwell Minster, 1956-1962, my one claim to fame in those days is that I was a pickled boy in a millennial performance of St Nicolas, directed by Benjamin Britten the composer. I already knew, before I had finished, that I wanted to be ordained. I didn't want to pass up the chance of a full musical education and I went off, in 1966, as a commoner, to read music at New College, Oxford. The idea was to read music before going off to theological college in the second year of a second degree, a degree in theology. The plan was somewhat blighted by the realisation that I was unsure about God. Church music was fine: I had run a church choir in Oxford and I happily played a Marcussen organ Sunday by Sunday at St Mary's, Clifton Village, when, after a PGCE, I went to Nottingham to teach. I conducted the Sinfonia Chorale, a Nottingham chamber choir, and was chorus master, then conductor of the Nottingham Harmonic Society.

Ordination followed belatedly in 1983 and, after curacies in Clifton and Beeston, I became Vicar of Carrington, in Nottingham. Oxford remained alluring and in 1995 I became Vice-Principal of St Stephen's House. I had trained there part-time, so, in a sense, I was returning to do the job properly. My 'training' took me to 2000, when, invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury, I was consecrated as third Bishop of Ebbsfleet, a so-called 'flying bishop'. I journey throughout a third of England – the West and Southwest – for ten years but, having realised that my real vocation – and the vocation of many of those who looked to me - was to be a Roman Catholic, I went with a colleague to the Vatican in 2008 to see if there were any possibility of groups of Anglicans becoming Catholics together. *Anglicanorum coetibus* ('Concerning groups of Anglicans') resulted in 2009, as Pope Benedict opened wide his arms to us. In January 2011 I was confirmed (!) and ordained deacon and priest. A month or two later I became a Prelate of Honour (styled 'Monsignor') and, running the Oxford Ordinariate Group, I went out to East Hendred to live, where I am now the Catholic parish priest. As for music, I brought my children up to be musical and my son served as a treble at New College, went on to Winchester, and then came back to New College as a counter-tenor. In short, a little vicarious delight for me. Looking back on the music, there were high points. In 1978 I conducted Verdi Requiem with the CBSO and a community choir. I remember too a marvellous performance of the Monteverdi Vespers: the late Christopher Hogwood accompanied from the chamber organ and I conducted the chorus, having first had some extra tutorials from Denis Arnold, gaining advice on instrumentation. Lots of other things too but there is limited space for the self-indulgence of nostalgia.

The Chichester Psalms – a Chorister Reunion

Reproduced with permission from the Chichester Cathedral Web site, posted 18th October 2018.

On Wednesday 17th October we were delighted to welcome BBC South Today to the Cathedral to capture the reunion between two former members of the Chichester Cathedral Choir - David Gibson, former Head Chorister, and Noel Osborne, former Lay Vicar. In 1965, both had the honour of performing the (almost) world premiere of the Chichester Psalms, at Chichester Cathedral, in the presence of its creator, the world renowned composer, Leonard Bernstein.

This year, to celebrate Leonard Bernstein's centenary, the Chichester Psalms will once again be performed in the Cathedral on Saturday 24th November. This performance promises to be a major highlight of the year's celebrations.

The story began in 1963 when Walter Hussey, Dean of Chichester Cathedral, wrote to Leonard Bernstein asking if he would compose a piece of choral music for the Southern Cathedrals Festival in 1965. Bernstein accepted and the result was his choral masterpiece the Chichester Psalms.

Talking to David Allard from BBC South Today, Noel Osborne recalled how not only did the music arrive from America less than one month before the performance but they then discovered it was to be sung in Hebrew! This was a new challenge for the choir and a Hebrew scholar was quickly drafted in from Chichester Theological College to teach them how to sing Hebrew phonetically.

As Head Chorister in 1965, David Gibson had the honour of being chosen as the soloist for the performance. When asked if he was nervous he said, 'When you are that young, you just take it in your stride.' He remembered seeing Bernstein at the performance and described him as 'Wearing a gaberdine mac with the collar turned up, he looked very stylish, very romantic.'



David and Noel were delighted to meet two of the Cathedral's current choristers, William, and Head Chorister Jago. They compared the life of a chorister then and now and David entertained them with a photo of him in his 1960's chorister robes.

Head Chorister Jago will sing the solo in this November's performance of the Chichester Psalms. When asked how he felt about being chosen he said 'It is a great honour and I am so grateful to get the solo - it's amazing!' Just as in 1965, he will be performing in the Chichester Cathedral Choir, alongside the choirs of Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by the world acclaimed conductor Marin Alsop.

The full interview can be seen on Wednesday 21st November, at 6.30pm, on BBC South Today.

Chris Knowles – Singing Teacher and Author

Chris has written a book, “Notes for Singers” shown in the next section. His journey in writing this book may be of interest and perhaps also of encouragement to the members of the Federation.

I was Dec. Bass in the Salisbury Cathedral Choir for eight years, 1973-1981, serving under Richard Seal. I had had a traditional route to the choir stalls, at least in part. I had not been a chorister, even at my local church, but the Deputy Head at my grammar school planted in my mind the idea that a choral scholarship might be a good thing. Thus, I went to Trinity College, Cambridge on my academic merits (such as they were) and joined the choir as a volunteer. The late Richard Marlow, himself a recent Trinity arrival, was the Director of Music. He had inherited an all-male choir, two-part tenors, two-part basses. This division of parts stretched all the voices, often making the tessitura extremely uncomfortable for young singers, particularly for first tenors and first basses. At the end of my time at Trinity I had no idea about what to do for a living, except that I had a burning desire to sing. I was awarded a choral scholarship to Winchester Cathedral under Martin Neary which I combined with a teacher-training course at what was then King Alfred’s College. At the end of that year, I replaced Allan Mottram at Salisbury and taught Modern Languages and Latin at Bishop Wordsworth’s School in The Close.

The burning ambition to sing never left me and for the last two years of my time in Salisbury I did part-time teaching and started to sing as an ad hoc with the BBC Singers whenever choir commitments allowed. The crunch point came when I got my first opera contract to sing in the chorus of Kent Opera and it was clear that I had to take the decision to leave Salisbury.

Twelve years of freelance life followed, mainly in the extra chorus at the Royal Opera House, Opera North, Kent Opera and once at Welsh National Opera, plus depping around London, doing all sorts of recording work, and solo work as occasion demanded. I earned a living, sometimes a very good one, but I realised that I was not going to get any further up the ladder. At that point my agents, Musicmakers, decided to give up and asked me to take over. I did, and the cardboard box of files kept in someone’s front room eventually became a thriving international business. I didn’t miss waking up in the morning and wondering what my voice was doing, but at first I did miss the camaraderie of singers, because now I was on the other side of the fence, no longer a colleague, but someone to be approached with a view to work. There were compensations though. As an agent I went to many of the world’s great opera houses and concert halls, often many times, and heard some amazing (and some diabolical) performances.

I had always had a few private singing pupils and when, after nearly thirty years, I decided to retire as an agent, singing teaching seemed the obvious thing to pursue. I also knew I could write, having had a book published on an unrelated subject (fly-fishing) and a series of articles in Classical Music Magazine. This book is the coming together of all those experiences. I am well aware that there will be many issues on which teachers, singers, conductors and organists will disagree with me, but that is the nature of the Art. I would be the first to admit that, when it comes to singing, anyone who claims to “know all there is to be knowed” (as Mr. Toad sang) is kidding themselves. What I hope my book will do is open people’s minds to different ways of thinking about singing, because singing shouldn’t be the result of what we do, but the way we think.

I’d like to add an important footnote here. My time at Salisbury was a wonderful musical experience and I learnt a lot about musicality and musical integrity, both of which stood me in very good stead for the rest of my life.

David Horner – Obituary



David in his Minster School uniform, 1941



On the 1st of March 2018, several former choristers fought their way through snow and delayed trains to York Minster to remember one of our own. Alastair Pollard, The Federation Chairman, read out these kind words from Geoffrey Mitchel who, sadly, was forced to abandon his journey, like many others, due to the dreadful weather and delayed trains.

We are all of us here in what was essentially David's spiritual home! Having been a chorister under the great Sir Edward Bairstow, this had clearly been a sufficiently inspiring part of his life for him to marry Margaret and to

send her son Vincent to continue the tradition – that was in 1980 under the equally great Dr Francis Jackson, whose 100th birthday we have all recently celebrated here in the Minster, and which David and Margaret attended. David has kept up his attendance at the Minster ever since, becoming a Steward even before there were properly organised Stewards, and subsequently seeing that body of people grow and become established. That was the sort of thing he did!

My presence here today is as a member of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations. My own personal involvement with the Federation was in 1974, when I was dispatched to Norwich to invite the Federation to Exeter the following year for its annual festival. Simply my living in London meant I was the fall-guy, living nearest to Norwich! For 44 years therefore I have been aware of the influence of this gentleman from York.

I cannot recall any Federation event when he was not in evidence – usually in an official capacity. And not just the official “social” events: for he and Margaret came on all our tours, mostly in Europe, but also on a month-long visit to New Zealand. Our annual magazine, which rather unimaginatively had been called “The Old Chorister”, accurate enough but not flattering(!), was in 1987 reinvented when David was elected as the new Editor; and things perked up enormously. First of all he changed the name of the publication to “Once A Chorister” - with all the imagination and expectation that implies – “once a chorister – ALWAYS a chorister”, which is patently true of us all! And he also introduced a colourfully designed cover, which stood out on Cathedral bookshop shelves. He also devised the system of identifying every single member – by Name and Association. There is therefore now a comprehensive catalogue of who we all are. I think Margaret has continued this gargantuan task? This eye for publicity was evident in his devising the expansion of our regular sales: up till then really only of Old Chorister ties, but now to include all manner of artefacts and items of clothing which enhanced the Federation's finances no end. Therefore, he was also appointed Marketing Manager. This, of course, entailed them both simply being obliged to attend every festival and AGM to run the “shop”, which he could not possibly have done without the stalwart help of Margaret of course.

This all changed in 1998 when David felt he would like to hand over the reins of the magazine – I think possibly on account of the increasingly technological needs of such a task today. He

regained however the marketing brief for a few years, but despite having recently handed it over largely to others, I suspect Margaret is still left with a few items in her attic!

David simply WAS the Federation: he knew absolutely everybody, and all its necessary protocol. When I was appointed Chairman in 1992 he was immediately a tower of strength ("what you want to do Geoffrey is this..." was a frequent mantra)! And I have just received a letter from the recent Chairman but one, saying how valuable David's input into the Federation and all its idiosyncrasies was. The fact that so many of our present officers have come from far and wide to show our respect and affection, and to celebrate the life of this great personality is testimony in itself. I am sure we all feel the same way, and he will be missed enormously. I am equally sure he will be joining the heavenly choir at the first opportunity, if not actually organising it!

[Geoffrey Mitchell – Vice President]

Peter Sweeney – Obituary



Peter Sweeney passed away on March 18th 2018. ***Gifted musician, flamboyant recitalist and enthusiastic music teacher*** He was organist and director of music at Christ Church Cathedral for 11 years and in 1984 a new organ was built for him at Christ Church Cathedral by the Irish organ builder, Kenneth Jones. He was the founder and artistic director of the Dublin International Organ Festival. For many

people though, Peter Sweeney will be best remembered for his vivacious performances to 30,000 children annually for 27 years alongside conductor, Gearóid Grant and tenor soloist, Emmanuel Lawler for The Irish Times Music in the Classroom collaboration with the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra and RTÉ Concert Orchestra. A close friend since college days, Grant said, "Peter was quite the showman and comedian. He sought perfection in everything he did (even the bad things he did brilliantly!) But above all his talents – the best was that he could make children laugh." *[From The Irish Times 14th April 2018.]*

Here are a couple of comments from the Christ Church Cathedral Dublin Past Choristers Facebook Page showing how being a chorister can have such an influence on your life:

I'm devastated. I adored him and the gang in "The Consort of St. Sepulchre " when I was 4 and then got to audition for him for Christ Church when I was 15. He said my sight reading was woeful, but they really needed a soprano, so I was in. The youngest singer at the time and it changed my life. I had an amazing education at Christ Church, both musical and personal and it was shaped by Peter's exuberance, genius and generosity. He became a friend in later years and I will never forget him and am ever grateful that our paths crossed. May he rest in peace.

I first met Peter at a Masterclass at the Gorey Arts Festival . He played at the Festival Service and asked me to audition for the Cathedral Choir. That was back in 1983. I joined the Cathedral Choir and he persuaded me to join the Organ Festival committee. We worked together for many years and he introduced me to many notable musicians. Thank you, Peter, for helping me and encouraging me as a chorister. I would not have made it to 50 years without your support. Thank you also for being there to help me celebrate in January. May you rest in peace, I will miss you greatly.

Book Reviews

Married to a School Librarian, you would think that I read avidly, but sadly no. I could probably count the number of books that I read in my first 50 years in this earth on a single hand. I only remember reading two books in my youth – Tricycle Tim by Enid Blyton, and Chorister Cake by William Mayne, but more recently I have started reading much more, and there is a theme running through them – they all revolve around The Church of England and Anglican clergy, often gently poking fun at that quintessential English institution. Modern day Barchester Chronicles or Joanna Trollope?

As former choristers we lived in and around The Anglican Church and its music in our formative days. A little knowledge of Anglican clergy hierarchy, church music and the church year can improve the experience, as several of these books make occasional comments about the same, but it is not obligatory. As you would expect (or hope) in a story spread over several books, everything is resolved by the end, although not always as you expect.

In a completely different genre, our new FCOCA secretary Nicola reviews the latest Paddington Bear book when he becomes a Chorister at St. Pauls Cathedral for a day.

If anyone can recommend books, or even series of books in a similar vein, please let me know, and even better write me a short review for next year's Once a Chorister.

Starbridge series – by Susan Howarth

Glittering Images. Glamorous Powers, Ultimate Prizes. Scandalous Risks, Mystical Paths, Absolute Truths.

This series has 6 books in total and is set initially in the early part of the 20th century, when the Church of England hierarchy wore gaiters. Susan Howarth lived in Salisbury, so it is no surprise that some of the settings are based there. The covers of her books often show pictures of a cathedral with a strong likeness to Salisbury, but there is no reason to assume the stories are set there. Much of the books explore the tension between the Archdeacon of Starbridge, the head of the Cathedral (the Dean), the head of the diocese (the Bishop), and a troubled but ultimately helpful abbot. Not that any of this would happen in real life, would it?

The books can be read stand-alone as each has a separate narrator, but they should preferably be read in order to get the best effect as some central characters are common to several books and there is a timeline. For example, one common character is Archdeacon Neville Aysgarth who struggles to cope with his family life, his professional life and his beliefs as he climbs the ecclesiastical ladder. Who would want the responsibility of high office in The Church?

In many ways, this series is darker than others, as we follow the clergy through scandals, family turmoil, a fall into and recover from depression and alcoholism and relationships between clergymen. I liked this series as it was rather more gritty than others and I failed to see several twists coming but, have to admit that, as each volume is over an inch thick, it is sometimes hard going especially as there is some deep theology in parts, which I failed to grasp but apparently it is based on accepted teachings.

The Dunbridge Chronicles - by Pam Rhodes

Fisher of Men. Casting the Net. If you Follow me. Saints & Sailors.

We all know Pam Rhodes from Songs of Praise but she has written several books. These four books follow the main character, Neil, through his work as curate and then vicar. As a newly qualified and single curate he is initially dominated by various woman who wish to take care of him in different ways, until he manages to tame (most of) them. As Neil's church life in rural England progresses, we follow his friends and family and how they affect his life. The final book sees Neil take some of his parishioners on a cruise around the UK. Cruising may provide the opportunity for contemplation, but is everything as rosy as it appears? A gentle series with a few twists, but again, it could easily happen in real-life in The Church of England.

The Lindchester Chronicals - by Catherine Fox

Acts and Omissions. Unseen things Above. Realms of Glory.

This is a trilogy of books written by the wife of the former Dean of Liverpool Cathedral. The books are littered with lines from sacred works which make the books great fun for a former chorister. We follow the loves and lives of many people in the fictional diocese of Lindchester, including bishops, a lady Dean, male and female vicars and a very troubled former chorister Freddie May. The stories could easily happen in a modern-day diocese, with references to modern issues like Brexit, Syria and same-sex relationships. Any naughtiness is implied rather than described, but the author does not shy away from difficult issues that still divide and unite the Church of England.

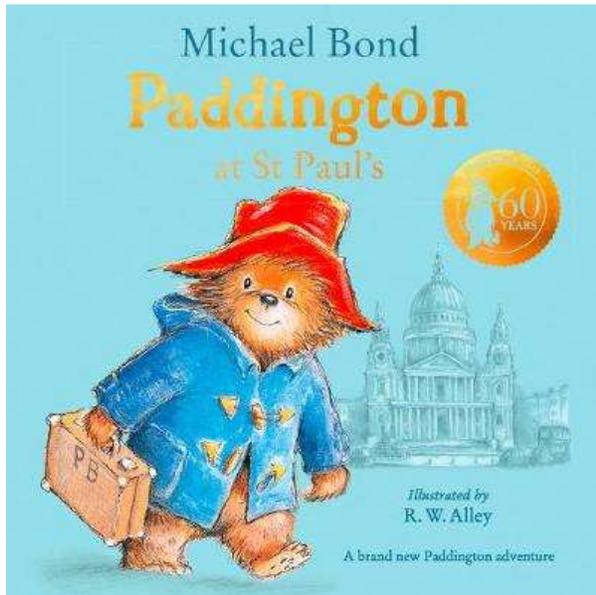
The style of writing is often gentle, sometimes flying over the city looking down on the characters going about their business, but gritty when it needs to be, with a keen eye on real-life. We can read about the innermost thoughts of clergy out walking their dogs, see the difference in what they want to say to colleagues as oppose to what they actually say, and join in with the household arguments. Finally, we read about Amadeus, the Cathedral cat, as he stalks Boris 1 and 2, the chorister hamsters.

As the wife of the recently appointed real-life Bishop of Sheffield, will Catherine Fox change the character of her subjects in future books based on her recent experiences in the higher echelons of the C of E?

Shepherd of another Flock - by David Wilbourne

This book is different in the sense that it is non-fiction. The tales and tribulations of working in the Yorkshire Dales have been written down in a book by many professionals, the most famous being James Herriot. This book is written by a vicar in his parish of Helmsley in the North Yorkshire Moors. We meet some of his more eccentric parishioners, as David goes about his business, often cycling many miles a day in God's Own County of Yorkshire. My personal link to David was that he was chaplain to Archbishop John Habgood who was Bishop of Durham when I was a chorister there. David went on to become an assistant Bishop in Llandaff and in York.

Paddington at St. Paul's - by Michael Bond



It was a great loss when the author Michael Bond passed away in 2017 and one year after his death the picture book *Paddington at St. Paul's* was published from a manuscript found by his daughter Karen.

Paddington makes a trip to St. Paul's Cathedral with his old friend Mr. Gruber and after looking round the pair become separated as they go down to the Cathedral café for elevenses. In true Paddington style the small bear gets swept up in an eager crowd of young boys who, of course, turn out to be choristers and presume Paddington is a new addition to their number. He attends the rehearsal and discovers a difficulty with reading music: "*I think someone must have spilled some ink because it's covered all over in black spots.*"

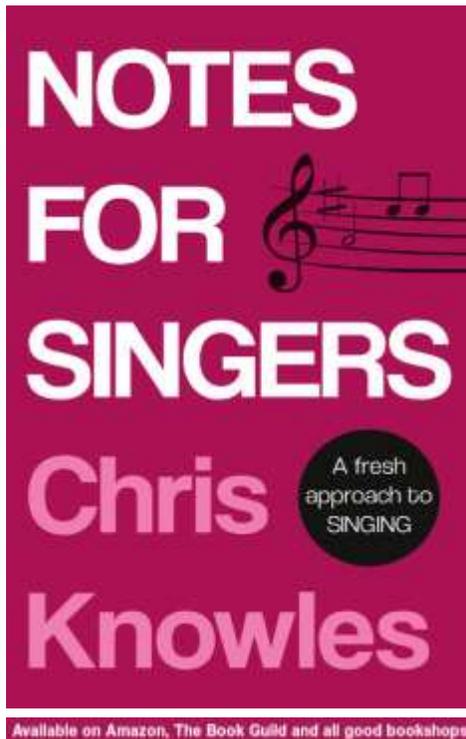
Luckily Mr Gruber turns up to sort the confusion and as the choir master is a '*kindly gentleman*' he allows Paddington in a surplice to sit with the choristers during the service. "*There can't be many bears who have sung with the choir at St. Paul's*", comments Mr. Gruber in the taxi home.

A lovely picture book to share with your children or grandchildren and an opportunity to explain the world of the chorister through the colourful illustrations.

Published by Harper Collins, hardback, RRP £12.99

[Nicola Pollard – FCOCA Secretary]

Notes for Singers – by Chris Knowles



This book aims to highlight a subject which has become obscured and overcomplicated by half-truths and misconceptions. Contrary to a lot of current practice, singing is not about doing, but about thinking, feeling, and creating the right circumstances for our voices to work in. We all have pictures in our minds when we sing and they tend to influence our singing negatively. Notes for Singers offers ways to re-think our approach to singing, allowing our voices to work naturally. Singers often attribute their technical difficulties to breathing problems, but breathing plays a secondary role only: singing develops breathing, not breathing singing. If the mental approach to singing is right, the breath will largely take care of itself. We need to cultivate the ability to recognise and remember the sensations of each vowel on each note, so that we build up a mental register of sensations. We can't see inside our instruments (our voices), but we can create a mind map using our imaginations, so that we can visualise notes and vowels, which allows us to recreate any vowel on any particular note by an exercise of will (rather than by physical exertion). In addition, the book invites singers to think through familiar aspects of their singing in ways they may never have considered before: sight-reading, posture, auditions, interpretation, vocal identity, languages and true legato singing.

Chris Knowles lives in Ely. After spending a dozen years in the choir stalls (Trinity College Cambridge, Winchester and Salisbury Cathedrals) he worked for a decade as a freelance baritone, initially with the BBC Singers and then mainly at Kent Opera, the Royal Opera House and Opera North. He then spent twenty-five years as an agent on the other side of the curtains of the world's opera houses and concert halls. Singing teaching is an ongoing passion.

What is the FCOCA?

We are often asked, “What is the point of The Federation?” and “Why should we join?”

Many former Choristers have a natural affinity with the places where they previously sang. Geographic mobility for employment or social reasons means that many people no longer live near their choral roots and Chorister Association, but the Federation can provide a social network to meet other Choristers, enjoy the architecture and music of our wonderful choral foundations, and reminisce about days-gone-by. It can also offer an umbrella for members of those associations currently in mothballs.

It is also important to remember that The Federation is not just for Cathedrals. We welcome former Chorister associations from other foundations including Parish Churches, Collegiate Churches and Chapels Royal. We also welcome individual members who do not have a specific association to join, and always welcome our members’ partners to events.

There are a number of benefits that you get from your membership fee:

- Publications such as this Once a Chorister Magazine!
- Opportunities to meet other like-minded former choristers
- Invitations to host and attend AGMs and Festivals
- Invitations to Federation tours organised by Federation members
- Special offers (museums, organs, organists, tours)
- Free entry to some cathedrals (e.g. York, Ely) where the general public have to pay..
- Insurance for your association regalia and public liability
- News from your cathedral (et al) and others

The Federation Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for the music we enjoyed in our lives as choristers and sang together in your house to glorify your name. Let that music always be a witness to your majesty and love, and remind us that you are always watching, and listening from your heavenly throne. May your Spirit guide us through our daily lives so that we may continue to be the instruments of your peace, and proclaim with a glad voice your honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from “The Musician’s Prayer”

Contact Details

Executive Committee members

Chairman	Alastair Pollard	(Durham)
Vice Chairman	Nick Hodges	(Warwick)
Honorary Secretary	Nicola Pollard	(Durham)
Honorary Treasurer	Michael Lake	(Chelmsford)
Development Officer	Arnold Wills	(Peterborough)
Website Officer	Richard Watts	(Westminster Abbey)
2019 Festival Representative	Peter Fellows	(Portsmouth)

Regional Association Representatives

East Anglia & South East	Ayrton Westwood	(Norwich)
Midshires & Wales	Nick Hodges	(Warwick)
South West	Stephen Milner	(Salisbury)
North and Ireland	Alastair Pollard	(Durham)

Vice Presidents

Geoffrey Mitchell	(Exeter)
Alan Oyston	(Durham)
David Horwood	(Eton)
Ian Henderson	(Rochester)
Dr. Francis Jackson	CBE
Dr. Barry Rose	OBE

Affiliated Associations

Belfast Cathedral Past Choristers' Association
Blackburn Cathedral Choirs Association
Bradford Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Bristol Cathedral Choral Alumni
Cambridge, The Choir Association of **St John's College**
Cambridge, King's College Old Choristers' Association
Canterbury Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Carlisle Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Chapel Royal Choristers' Association
Chelmsford Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Chester Cathedral Choristers' Association
Chichester Cathedral Choristers' Association
Christ Church Cathedral, New Zealand, Choir Society (Inc)
Dublin Christchurch Cathedral Past Choristers' Association
Dublin St Patrick's Cathedral Past Choristers' & Pupils' Association
Durham Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Edinburgh St Marys Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Society of Ely Choristers (Societas Choristarum Eliensium)
Eton College Old Choristers' Association
Exeter Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Gloucester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Guildford Cathedral Choir Association
Hereford Cathedral Former Choristers
Leicester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Lichfield Cathedral Former Choristers' Association
Lincoln Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
London (St. Paul's): The Guild Of The Companions Of St Paul
Newcastle Upon Tyne Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
New York Saint Thomas Choir School Alumni Association
Norwich Cathedral Ex Choristers' Guild
Oxford Christ Church Cathedral School Old Boys Association
Oxford New College Old Choristers' Association
Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Portsmouth Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Rochester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
St. Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association
St. Edmundsbury Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Salisbury Cathedral School Association
Sheffield Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Southwark Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Southwell Minster Old Choristers' Association
Tenbury Wells St Michael's College Society
Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum
Truro Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Wakefield Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Warwick St Marys Guild Of Ex-Choristers
Wells Cathedral Choir Association
Westminster Abbey Old Choristers' Association
Westminster Cathedral Old Boys' Association
Winchester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
Winchester College Quiristers Association
Worcester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association
York Minster Choristers' Association