

From The Chairman:

I hope 2016 is a happy and prosperous year for all our members. We have an exciting year ahead with two or three major events. Firstly, there is the publication of my book, "**The Choirs and Musicians of St Albans Cathedral.**" Hopefully all ECA members and friends received an invitation to the launch which took place in the North Transept of the Cathedral on Thursday 21st January. Further details about the book are given in a later section of this edition.

The other two important events for the ECA is our **Reunion and Choral Eucharist** on Sunday 15th June when ECA members, including our Abbey Singers, will sing the Service of Eucharist at 11.15am in the Quire and a celebration for 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Abbey Girls Choir in 1996 on Saturday 25th June. A special introit has been commissioned for this anniversary from Judith Weir which has been co-sponsored by the Association.

Abbey Singers (ECA members)



Abbey Singers – December 2015
Director Tom Winpenny & Organ Scholar Nick Freestone

On Tuesday 22nd December, the Abbey Singers sang their customary performance of Choral Evensong under the direction of Tom Winpenny with Organ Scholar, Nick Freestone accompanying.

The service included Psalm 48, the canticles by Pelham Humfrey in E minor, and the anthem *Ecce Concipies* by Jacob Handl.

As usual the sound was excellent.

Abbey Singers mainly comprise recently valedicted choristers who are still in secondary education and wish to continue to sing in the Cathedral before beginning their tertiary education or embarking on their careers.

ECA Veterans 'Gaudy'

On Saturday 21st November a small group of "Golden Oldies" including the Chairman and accompanied by IT Manager, Tony Price, spent a very enjoyable day at the Abbey. Firstly there was an exhibition of photographs and other memorabilia that are being preserved in the Cathedral Choir Archive; one of the ECA's ongoing projects.

Some early recordings of the choir (circa 1960s & 70s) were played and it was very interesting to hear how the sound had changed over the decades.

After lunch in the Abbot's Kitchen there was a rare opportunity to visit the Muniment Room (up 46 spiral stone steps to the triforium) where historic and important pictures, documents and other various artefacts are stored and preserved for posterity.



Photo: Tony Price

Back: Malcolm Bury, Peter Jeffs, David Ireson, Peter Pearson,
Harry Oliver, Trevor Jarvis, Nicolas Gibbon
Front: Margaret Meager, Maureen Adams, John Adams, John Meager,
John Tournay, Rogers Covey-Crump, Pat Hurford.

Dr David Kelsall, the Cathedral Archivist showed us some remarkable documents that had been retained and some members clearly had no idea about this valuable historic work and in all their years service had not been up to this repository. The day was complete when the members attended Choral Evensong and were welcomed by Canon Kevin Walton.

Cathedral Choirs News

A highlight for most cathedrals in the UK is the period of Advent and Christmas and this year was no exception for our choirs at St Albans.

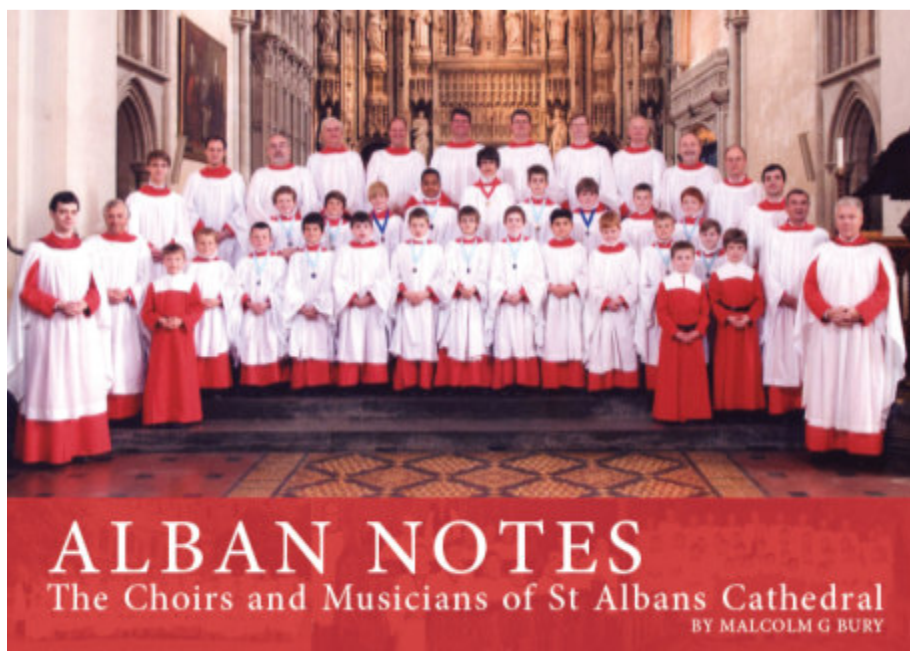
On Monday 7th and Wednesday 16th December the Abbey Girls Choir and Cathedral Choir sang Christmas Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall and the Fairfield Halls, Croydon with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by John Rutter.

Then on Saturday 19th December the traditional "Carols on the Hour" took place with the Parish Singers and Parish Juniors (1.00pm), The Choir of St Hilda's School (2.00pm), Abbey Girls Choir, Lay Clerks and Abbey Singers (3.00pm) and finally the Cathedral Choir and Abbey Singers (4.00pm). As usual, each hour was well attended by members of the congregation and the general public - nearly 7000 people in all throughout the day.

Choral Matins on Christmas day was celebrated with the Cathedral Choir singing *Te Deum* in C by Benjamin Britten and the Christmas favourite, *Hodie Christus Natus Est* by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.

A Milestone for the St Albans Cathedral Choirs

After 8 years of research and compilation of contributions from current and former choristers and lay clerks, and historic information, a book entitled **ALBAN NOTES The Choirs and Musicians of St Albans Cathedral** by Malcolm Bury (ECA Chairman) has been published by Rhinegold Publishing Ltd and is now on sale.



Synopsis:

The first chapter of the book covers the period from around 780 AD when King Offa made land available for the establishment of a Benedictine Monastery, its consecration in 1136, through the Dissolution of the Monasteries c1539, and the establishment of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban in April 1877. Subsequent chapters document the activities and achievements of the successive Masters of the Music and the Choirs from John Stocks Booth (1855 to 1879) to Andrew Lucas (1998 to the present day). The book compliments Andrew Lucas' book 'The Organs and Musicians of St Albans Cathedral' published in 2009 and builds on this work by including the choirs.

The net proceeds from sales will be donated to the Cathedral Choirs.

Copies are available direct from the author via the ECA website (go to www.stalbanseca.org/book-order-form) or by post, price £12.99 plus packing and postage. (For postal orders, see order form attached).