



*The Federation of Cathedral
Old Choristers' Associations*

*Norwich Cathedral
Ex-Choristers' Guild*



2017 Festival 9th - 11th June

NORWICH
CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral and its music



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Norwich developed as an important trading centre in the late Dark Ages from two or three Anglo-Danish settlements along the banks of the River Wensum. As time went on these communities grew and merged to create a borough known as Norwic which, by the early 900s, was minting its own coins and had a population of about 5,000. Norwic was about thirty miles by river from the North Sea and was a safe inland port for trade with the Baltic and the Low Countries.

Before the Normans came to England the seat of the diocese of the North Folk area of East Anglia was centred on the village of North Elmham, where there are the remains of a Saxon cathedral. When the Normans first arrived they moved the seat to Thetford, a town of greater size.

After 1066 the Normans realised the importance of the trading town at Norwich and built a castle at the end of a ridge that overlooked the river port. Norwich was then chosen as the site for a new cathedral and Herbert de Losinga, a Benedictine from the Abbey at Fecamp, was appointed Bishop of Norwich and organised the building of the cathedral on low-lying land close to the old Saxon market place known to us now as Tombland. Herbert laid the foundation stone for the cathedral in 1096 and work progressed at such

speed that its first consecration took place in 1101. A new market place for Norwich was then set out in a large field (Magna Crofta, now Mancroft) to the west of the castle and a Norman-French quarter grew up around it.

By the time Herbert de Losinga died in 1119 he had probably completed the presbytery with its chapels, the transepts and four bays of the nave. What is especially astonishing is that much of the stone for the cathedral had to be brought from Caen in Normandy in boats little larger than Viking longships. They sailed across the Channel, along the East Coast and up the Yare and Wensum to the cathedral building site by way of a canal that ran from the river into the cathedral precincts. The cathedral was finished by Herbert de Losinga's successor, Everard de Montgomery, who was enthroned in 1121 and it is certain that parts of the ancient bishop's throne from Elmham were brought to Norwich for that ceremony which means that the throne behind our high altar is the oldest bishop's throne in any cathedral north of the Alps.

The Cathedral was damaged during riots in 1272 and much rebuilding took place. The reconstruction of the cloisters began in 1297 and they were finally finished in 1430. The cloisters are the second largest in England and are unusual in having two storeys. There are hundreds of decorated bosses along their vaulted ceiling.

The pillars and arches of the nave are Romanesque, largely as the Normans would have seen them but a fire in 1463 meant that the roof was given a stone vault during rebuilding and it also has hundreds of highly decorated bosses at the intersection of the ribs which depict the theological history of the world from the Creation. Altogether there are over a thousand decorated bosses in the Cathedral and the Cloisters, more than any other cathedral in Christendom. There is also a fine collection of 61 misericords which date from the 15th, 16th and 19th centuries.

The fire of 1463 began when lightning struck the cathedral spire. It had to be rebuilt and work began in 1480 on a replacement which is of brick faced with stone. It is still there and at 315 feet (96 metres) it is the second highest in England after Salisbury.

In 1643 a Puritan mob destroyed items of Roman Catholic symbolism still left in the Cathedral and for many years it was left in a ruinous state. Over the next three hundred years gradual restoration took place.

Norwich has one of the largest cathedral closes in Europe and has more people living within it than any other cathedral close in England. Within the last twenty years a new Refectory has been built on the site of the old monastic refectory and a new Hostry centre to welcome visitors to the Cathedral has been built on to the exterior of the west side of the Cloisters.

Ashley Grote – Master of Music



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Ashley Grote has held the post of Master of Music at Norwich Cathedral since September 2012. He is responsible for the day to day running of the Cathedral music department, directing the boys' and girls' choirs in their busy programme of choral services, concerts, broadcasts and recordings and he is also conductor of the Norwich Cathedral Chamber Choir.

Born in 1982, Ashley was a chorister at King's College, Cambridge from 1990 to 1995 and returned as Organ Scholar from 2001 – 2004. As Organ Scholar at King's he performed internationally with the world-famous choir and accompanied numerous recordings and radio and television broadcasts. Ashley has subsequently held posts as organist-in-residence at Tonbridge School (2004-2005), Assistant Organist of Westminster Abbey (2005-2008) and Assistant Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral (2008-2012).

Ashley is in demand as an organ soloist, having studied with Nicholas Kynaston in London since 2002. He has performed throughout the UK, USA and Europe with recent concerts in Italy, Germany and Sweden. His first solo disc, of organ symphonies by Louis Vierne, was released in June 2012 and was described by Gramophone Magazine as a "top notch recording."

David Dunnett – Organist



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David has been organist at Norwich Cathedral since January 1996 and was also Master of Music from 1996 to 2007. He was educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham and Clare College, Cambridge where he assisted Tim Brown and studied the organ with John Pryer, John Bishop and David Sanger. He continued studying with David Sanger as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music and also spent a year as Organist at St Marylebone Parish Church. He worked in the United States as Director of Chapel Music and Staff Accompanist at the College of Wooster, Ohio, before becoming Assistant Director of Music at Uppingham School.

David became sub-organist at Winchester Cathedral in November 1991 and subsequently performed with Winchester Cathedral Choir in concerts, broadcasts, recordings and tours to Brazil, USA and Australia. He assisted David Hill with the Waynflete Singers, taught at Southampton University and is a previous conductor of the Southampton University Chamber Choir and Winchester Music Club.

David is a busy organ recitalist both here and abroad and also regularly accompanies singers and instrumentalists on the organ, harpsichord and piano. He features on numerous recordings as conductor, soloist and accompanist and has given recitals in Europe, USA and Russia. He is the choral conductor of the Norwich Philharmonic Society, a previous part-time lecturer at the University of East Anglia and a busy examiner.

Norwich Cathedral Choir



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Norwich Cathedral Choir consists of 20 boy choristers, with alto, tenor and bass parts sung by the six Lay Clerks and six Choral Scholars. The choristers are aged 8 – 13 and are selected by competitive audition. They receive their education at Norwich School which is an independent school located within The Close. Most boys continue their education at Norwich School after leaving the Choir.

Choristers sing at five services each week during term time, as well as at Christmas, Holy Week and Easter. Choristers perform their traditional role of leading the worship at Norwich Cathedral but also benefit from the experience of performing in concert, featuring on radio and television and by making commercial recordings. In addition, recent choir tours have included destinations such as Sweden, Germany, Norway and the USA.

Norwich Cathedral Girls' Choir



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Founded in 1995, the Norwich Cathedral Girls' Choir is one of the longest established of its kind in the country and is now widely regarded as one of the best in the United Kingdom. The girl choristers are volunteers, drawn from across Norwich and Norfolk, with a number of schools and colleges represented among its members. The choir is made up of over twenty girls between the ages of 11 and 18. The girls' choir sing Evensong in the Cathedral every Tuesday during school term and lead the worship at one Sunday Eucharist and Evensong each term. They play a full part in the Cathedral services during Christmas and Easter, perform regular concerts in the Cathedral and across the Diocese as well as making commercial recordings and broadcasting on radio.

The Organ



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Norwich Cathedral houses one of the largest pipe organs in the country. The first known references to an organ at Norwich Cathedral date from the 14th century, since when numerous famed organ builders (such as Dallam, Renatus Harris, Byfield and Bishop) have been associated with instruments built here. In 1899 a new five manual organ was built by Norman and Beard before being badly damaged by fire during a dramatic evensong on 9th April 1938.

Features of the current organ include:

- 105 speaking stops

- 4 manuals dating from the Hill, Norman and Beard rebuild of 1940-42

- Fine casework erected in 1950 and designed by Stephen Dykes Bower

- Pipes measuring 32 feet at their longest and less than an inch at their smallest

- A solo tuba on 18 inches of wind pressure

- 256 channels of memory

- A stepper sequencer to help visiting organists manage the stops.

One particular notable feature, added in 1969, is the Cymbelstern. This is a set of six bells with a rotating star located high up on the east organ case, which is unusual in an English organ and adds visual interest to the music when it is in use