



THE CATHEDRAL AND
ABBEY CHURCH OF
SAINT ALBAN

ALBAN NOTES

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The FCOCA Festival

Well it's over!! After 25 years the international Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers Associations returned to St Albans for their 83rd Festival. According to many delegates and guests it was a great success and as Chairman I am grateful to all those who made it happen.

During the weekend 80 delegates from 20 cathedrals and collegiate choral foundations - including five delegates from Eire (St Patrick's and Christ Church Dublin) - attended the festival, most staying in the Clarion Collection Hotel opposite Sumpter Yard, and 96 delegates and guests enjoyed the Festival Dinner on Saturday in the Old Town Hall.



The weekend started on Friday 20th September with delegates present at Choral Evensong sung by the Abbey Girls Choir, directed by Tom Winpenny.

A Welcome Reception and Buffet in the Abbot's Kitchen followed, at which the Dean, as the President of the Federation for 2013, welcomed the visitors to St Albans. Candlelit Choral Compline completed the evening, with Fr Paul Arbuthnot as Cantor and a choir of delegates directed by David Ireson. The service concluded with the motet *In Manus Tuas* by Richard Shepherd.

Festival Photographer - Colin Whyman



Saturday began with a splendid organ demonstration by Andrew Lucas and Tom Winpenny. Andrew explained the history and the various developments of the Cathedral organ to around 40 people - enlightening to organists and non-organists alike - while Tom played three contrasting pieces demonstrating the clarity of various registrations and the different combinations of sounds and moods of the instrument. A guided tour of the Cathedral rounded off the morning's events..

The first part of the afternoon session was an innovative forum at which delegates were able to share with other delegates and members of the Executive Committee their views on the activities and direction of the FCOCA. This was an important step towards a strategy review which will be held in November.

A highlight of the Festival was the service of Choral Evensong on Saturday where over 40 delegates sang along side the Cathedral Choir with Stanford's 'Mag & Nunc' in C and *O how glorious is the kingdom* by Basil Harwood.



All the festival photographs will be posted on the ECA Website at <http://www.stalbanseca.org/>

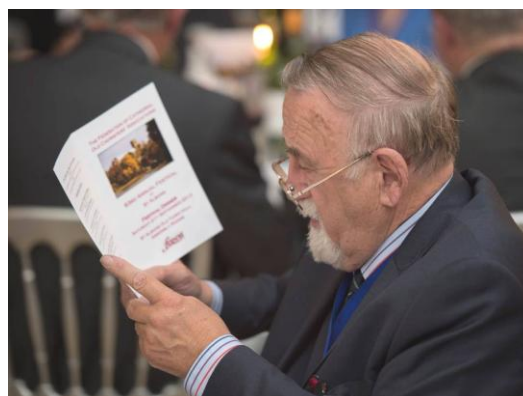
Copies are available from the Chairman at malcolmgb@btinternet.com

Prices : 7"x5" @ £3.75 or 10"x8" @ £6.00



The Assembly Room of the Old Town Hall was transformed for the Festival Dinner on Saturday evening by elegant table settings with blue and gold flower centrepieces, and catering by Lussmanns.





Delegates sang an unaccompanied Grace, *Occuli Omnium*, which came together after a few bars thanks to the conductor, David Ireson.

This followed immediately by a most amusing speech by the Dean in which he spoke about the relationship between church musicians and the clergy which has not always been sweetness and light. To illustrate this he read one of his favourite quotations. It was by a man called Philip Stubbes, a very fierce Puritan clergyman of the 16th century, who literally thought church choirs were creatures of the Devil:

I say of music – says Stubbes - that it is very ill for young heads, in alluring them to pusillanimity and loathsomeness of life. All music may be compared to honey, and suchlike sweet things, which do delight at first, but afterward make the stomach queasy and weak. So music may at first delight the ear, but afterward it corrupteth and depraveth the mind, making it inclined to all manner of licentiousness... For who indeed be more bawdy than the company of music making men and singers? Who more loose-minded, who such drunken sockets and parasites as they? Therefore, sir, if you would have your son soft, smooth-mouthed, affected to bawdry, scurrility, untimely talk and inclined to every kind of abomination - then set him, sir, to learn music, and you shall not fail of your purpose.

The Dean went on to say that religion needed music; but music – at least religious music – also needed real religion. And I think we can boast a little here that the co-operation of musicians and clergy in cathedrals is one of the reasons why cathedrals are the one success story that the Church can show over the last twenty years. Despite all the travails of the rest of Church of England, cathedral worship has been consistently growing and growing quite fast. So with that in mind, can I finish by saying Down with Philip Stubbes and the Puritans, and Hooray for all you drunken sockets and loose minded parasites that make up our cathedral choirs.

Federation Chairman, Ian Henderson, in Federation regalia began by confirming that the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby had agreed to become our Principal Patron.

He thanked all the delegates including those who had come a long way to the St Albans festival and gave a very warm welcome to the members from St Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

Although the Federation now has nearly sixty members, all with access to our web site we still need to adapt to opportunities in the future, some of which were discussed at the forum earlier in the day.



Proposing the 'Toast to the Federation' Ian posed the question, "If the Federation was not here where would the Associations be? Some would continue to flourish as they do today, others would probably merge with other associations while others would simply vanish." The Federation is only the tip of an iceberg but provides a sense of cohesion to the many associations which meet to enjoy past and present times."



The guest speaker was Dr Simon Lindley who is Master of the Music at Leeds Minster.

Simon was Assistant Organist at St Albans from 1970 to 1975 and was Peter Hurford's first full time Assistant.

Simon also spoke about the role of Church Music, Cathedral Choirs and the importance of the Federation in supporting the tradition of Choral Music in Churches and Cathedrals. Simon lived up to his reputation with a speech that was both erudite and amusing.



The finale – "My Evaline" sung by Cathedral Lay Clerks & Delegates

The Festival ended on Sunday morning with delegates choosing to attend the Parish Eucharist sung by the Abbey Singers or Choral Eucharist sung by the full Cathedral Choir. The service was the Mozart Mass in D

Members News:

We welcome as new members recently valedicted choristers from the Cathedral Choir; **Alexander (Fred) Jenkins (Head Chorister)** and **Julian Trevelyan**, and from the Abbey Girls Choir; **Isabelle Blain (Head Chorister)**, **Bryony Hulbert**, **Riahne McQuade**, **Lydia Pazzi-Axworthy** and **Jennie Walton**.

We send our congratulations to **Mat Taylor** (Treble Chorister 1980-85) who was married recently in the Cathedral.

Annual General Meeting 2013

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 7th September, together with the Chairman's Report, are now posted on the ECA website. Copies of the Honorary Treasurer's Report are available on request.

Appeal to all ECA Members

If you have moved location/house in the last few years, or if you were an Abbey Girls Chorister and have married recently, can you please let us have your new postal address and telephone contact details (and married name) either via the ECA website or by email to malcolmgb@btinternet.com

Organ Scholar



We are pleased to welcome **Michael Papadopoulos** as our organ Scholar for 2013-14.

Michael began learning the organ when he was 14. He was the recipient of the Sheila Mossman Prize as well as a Gold Bursary from the ABRSM for his distinction result in grade 8 piano. He has recently graduated from Oxford University where he read Music and was organ scholar of Trinity College.

In his last year at Oxford he was Assistant Organist at Exeter College and combined his university duties with the post of Assistant Organist at St Mark's Regent's Park, London, and also as accompanist for Schola Cantorum of Oxford. Michael is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and this year will begin a 2-year Masters at the Royal Academy of Music as well as being our organ scholar.

Abbey Girl Choristers – Leaver's Video

If you wish to see how our Abbey Girl Choristers cope with getting to rehearsals and more likely the sadness of leaving the choir then have a look at the following : <http://youtu.be/FcvtVkYek80>

Simon Johnson at St Pauls Cathedral Organ

Probably one of the most erudite and informative demonstrations available on YouTube and one that will be appreciated enormously by Harry Potter fans! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxagkd6egqk>

Nigel McClintock *MMus, GRSM (Hons), FTCL, FFCM, ARCO, DipRCM*



Former Organ Scholar with Barry Rose from 1993 to 1994, Nigel McClintock has had a resounding success with the choir he formed in 2008, Schola Cantorum at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast where he is now the Director of Music.

Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIQ9DkZCR5w> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G773wmzRzvo>

Nigel was formerly at St. George's Church Belfast, and Croydon Parish Church.

They have sung in many cathedrals in the UK and in June 2010, they sang at Mass in St Peter's Basilica before Pope Benedict XVI and gave a concert in the Benedictine Church of San Anselmo.

This is a very interesting story and the youtubes are definitely worth a visit!