THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT ALBAN

ALBAN NOTES

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Their sound is gone out

Andrew Parnell conducting the joint choirs in the finale, *Zadok the Priest*

Their sound certainly did go out! Not in living memory (we think!) has the Abbey witnessed such a unique and spectacular line up of past and present cathedral musicians with service spanning some 60 years, and coming together in collective performance. The audience of nearly 300 on September 18th clearly enjoyed this thrilling concert with Handel's *Coronation Anthems* being performed by the Abbey Girls Choir and Abbey Singers, some very welcome volunteer lay clerks, and Exquire, 'singing members' of the ECA (or 'old lags' as we are sometimes called!).

The joint choirs were conducted by Andrew Parnell, former Assistant Master of the Music and Founder Director of the Abbey Girls Choir, with Tom Winpenny playing the organ.

The concert opened with *The King Shall Rejoice* and immediately the atmosphere in the nave was (as one of the audience commented) 'electrified' by the brilliant sound and enthusiasm of the joint choirs; this set the scene for the anthems that followed.
The Abbey Girls Choir, conducted by Tom Winpenny, performed two short works, *Ave Maria* by Mozart and *Lift thine eyes* by Mendelssohn. Although this concert was very early in their new term they made a characteristically beautiful sound.

Simon Johnson, whose wife Laura had given birth to their first baby, Amy Rose, the previous Tuesday, returned to St Albans Cathedral to play the *Variations de Concert* by Joseph Bonnet to which the audience responded with huge applause.

There was a terrific welcome for the return of Dr Simon Lindley, Peter Hurford's first full-time Assistant Organist, who played Peter's suite *Laudate Dominum*. Simon came by car to St Albans leaving Leeds at four o'clock after a workshop with John Rutter, to participate in the concert then travelled back to Leeds the same evening in order to direct Sunday's early morning service – a fantastic commitment. In October 1975, when John Clough was hospitalised, Simon made a similar hasty trip from Leeds to the Cathedral to direct the music at the wedding of lay clerk Malcolm (latterly ECA Chairman) and his wife Luanda.

Former chorister, Rod Argent of the Zombies, who had just returned from a US tour, entertained us with his own arrangements of classical piano and jazz - his own *Fiesta,* and *In a Sentimental Mood* (Duke Ellington) - crowned with the famous song “She’s not there!” which he wrote in 1963. Rod’s music added great diversity to the programme and had many in the audience tapping their feet!

A highlight of the concert was the tribute to Peter and Pat by the ECA Chairman to mark the occasion of their 80th birthdays. David Ireson, Co-Founder of the ECA and longest serving lay clerk, presented them with an “Album of Memories”.

The album contains photographs from Peter’s era and features formal choir photographs, candids of choir camp and various choir people, and the first ever overseas tour by the Cathedral Choir to Bayeux and Caen in 1977.

Peter and Pat came to St. Albans in 1958 and quite a number of us taking part in the concert sang for Peter sometime during the twenty years to 1978. As Rod Argent said, being in the Cathedral Choir under the direction of Peter was a privilege and the experience had a profound and lasting impact on our lives.

Finally, and at the special request of Peter and Pat Hurford, Master of the Music Andrew Lucas gave a magnificent performance of Bach's *Fugue in E Flat (St Anne*). This was immediately preceded by the joint choirs singing the hymn 'O God our help in ages past,' specially arranged for the concert by Andrew Parnell with a third verse written for AATB.

Past and Present Cathedral Musicians
Rod Argent (Chorister 1956-1962), Andrew Parnell (1978-2001), Tom Winpenny (2008-Present),
Dr Peter Hurford (1958 - 1978)
Andrew Lucas (1998-Present), Simon Johnson (2001-2008), Dr Simon Lindley (1970–1975)

Some of the messages received from concert-goers, including Ian Henderson, Chairman of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations:

I thought the programme worked really well and having Rod, Simon Lindley, Simon Johnson and Andrew Lucas together with Peter, Tom and Andrew all together at the end was terrific.

Thanks for a brilliant evening!! One of my friends reckoned it was the finest concert he'd heard for a long time!

The concert on Saturday was fantastic - it really was a 'tour de force'!! - I sincerely hope it will not be the last ECA concert.

The programme was well chosen and the combined choirs produced a wonderful sound that was noticeably free of rust. We think everyone concerned deserves just praise and we really do hope it won't be the last from the ex-choristers. We're sure Peter would have been equally impressed with all the performances and it was so nice to see him and Pat publicly honoured for their contribution to music in this city.

What a triumph! That was a great evening and I was so glad to be there.

Superb singing; marvellous enthusiasm from the men, no doubt there will be another concert in the future!

I was so impressed with the grandeur of the performance that I feel it is a huge tribute to the Ex-Choristers

I really loved hearing Rod in the Abbey and his words beforehand were the perfect way of making the transition between musical styles

From the Chairman

I am deeply indebted to all those who gave their services so freely to make this concert a tremendous success. We achieved our aims of celebrating the rich musical heritage we enjoy at the Cathedral, of acknowledging the 80th birthdays of Peter and Pat Hurford and also making a substantial surplus which will sustain the ECA well into the future. I should like to thank our Patron, Dean Dr Jeffrey John, and Master of the Music & Vice-President Andrew Lucas, for allowing this concert to take place in the Cathedral and all of the Cathedral authorities for their excellent cooperation. Thank you.

Concert Photographs - Souvenir Programmes - 2010 Members' Year Book

Copies of the photos taken at the concert are now available in a number of sizes and there are also a few remaining souvenir concert programmes. Copies of the 2010 Year Book are still available.
Please contact the chairman at malcolmgb@btinternet.com or by telephone 01296 630169.

Choir Camp Equipment

The choir camp equipment has finally been sold or disposed of thanks to the efforts of Tony and Ros De Rivaz, Neil Baker and William Houghton with a final surplus in the order of £700 being made.

The balance on the Choir Camp Bank Account (£166.56) has been transferred to the Choir Tour Fund and early in the summer, as proceeds were realised, a donation of £100 was made to the boys for their Swanage trip.

Some of the funds will go towards something memorable for Luccombe village and all remaining monies returned to Cathedral Choir funds.

Congratulations!!

Former chorister Laurence Lyndon-Jones has been appointed Organ Scholar at Chester Cathedral after graduating from Pembroke College, Oxford, where he read mathematics and was Organ Scholar for four years. He started in cathedral music as a chorister at St Albans and began learning the organ after he left the choir. Laurence appeared with the choir in the film *Johnny English*, and also took park in tours to the USA, Sweden and Holland.

While Organ Scholar at Pembroke, Laurence conducted the Chapel choir on tours to Tallinn, Milan and Barcelona and at two evensongs at Westminster Abbey in London. He has given organ recitals at Pembroke, St. John's, Harris Manchester and Exeter Colleges in Oxford and at St. Albans Cathedral. Laurence was the conductor of the *Arcadian Singers of Oxford* in 2010 and conducted Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre.

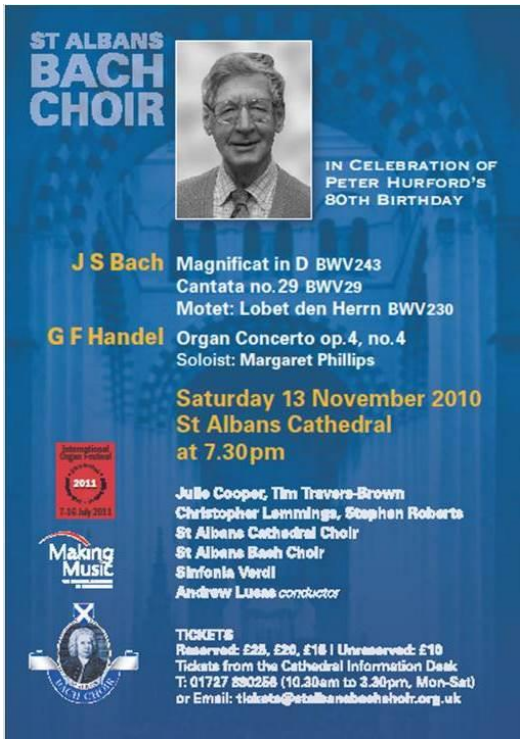
Wrong photo caption

We apologise that in the last edition of *Alban Notes* one of the reunion photos should have been captioned *Gillian and James O'Sullivan with Jeremy Howarth*, not Toby Taylor.

Lost Contacts:

We have lost email contact with the following members.
Please let us know if you have their address: *Thomas Evans, Elizabeth Eyre, Peter Sturt and Alfie Bates.*

St Albans Bach Choir



The St Albans Bach Choir, the IOFS and St Albans Cathedral Choir are coming together in concert on Saturday 13 November in the Cathedral to celebrate a man who has been inextricably bound up with the musical life of St Albans for over 50 years - Peter Hurford, who will be 80 in November.

As the music of J S Bach has been central to Peter Hurford's life's work, the concert will feature three of Bach's best known choral works: The ***Magnificat, Cantata no.29*** 'Wir danken dir, Gott' ('We praise Thee, O God'), and the ***Motet 'Lobet den Herrn'*** ('Praise the Lord!')

In recognition of Peter's distinguished career as an organist, the concert also features ***Handel's Organ Concerto Op.4 no.4***, composed in 1735 and first performed as an interlude in Handel's oratorio, "Athalia". Acclaimed concert organist Margaret Phillips is the soloist. As it seems so appropriate to the celebratory theme of the evening, the concert concludes with the concerto with its original (now rarely heard) chorus of thanksgiving.

This is a 'hot ticket' of the season so be sure to get yours early!!