THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT ALBAN

ST. ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL EX-CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Issue: 1 November 2007

This newsletter is the first communication to former choristers and lay-clerks of the St. Albans Cathedral and Abbey Girls' Choirs since the Reunion Choral Evensong which took place on 30th June.

The organisers of the reunion felt that it had been such a success that St. Albans Cathedral should have its own Ex-Choristers Association as, indeed, do many other Cathedrals in the United Kingdom, and hold similar reunions each year. A number of things are already taking place to make this happen.

Firstly a small working committee has been initiated to formally establish and manage the Ex-Choristers' Association. The following have offered their services – perhaps "been volunteered" is a better word - at least for the first year:

Chairman: Malcolm Bury Alto Lay-Clerk 1971-1982
Hon. Treas.: David Martin-Smith Tenor Lay- Clerk
Gen. Member: John Adams Alto Lay-Clerk 1960- 1980
Hon. Sec. Robert Staten Treble Chorister 1968-1972
IT/Comms. Manager: Simon Colston Tenor Lay-Clerk

Dr. Peter Hurford has very kindly accepted our invitation to be the first President of the Association. Pat has also accepted our invitation to become the first Honorary Member and we look forward to seeing them both at our future events.

Committee Members

We are looking for three of four others to join this group to represent various decades from the 70's onwards and specifically younger people in the age range 17 to 25 to represent members of the Cathedral Boys' and Abbey Girls' Choirs who completed their service more recently. If you would like to join the committee and help organise events please contact either Malcolm Bury by telephone on 01296 630169 or by e-mail at malcolmgb@btinternet.com or Bob Staten on 01793 848246 or by e-mail at staten@btinternet.com

Association Website

We are in the process of re-designing and implementing our own independent Internet Website. This will be launched very shortly and should provide an important vehicle for two-way communications and also an archive of events and photographs that is available to the public. We are aware that some folk do not use e-mail so we will continue to use "real paper and envelopes" as appropriate.

A working constitution has been drafted, primarily to document our aims, membership classifications, responsibilities of officers etc., but also to give credibility to the Association if it become necessary to manage finances sometime in the future.

Membership

Full Membership of the Association is open to all ex-Choristers and ex-Lay-Clerks. There is also a provision in the constitution to offer Honorary and Life Memberships to former Masters of the Music, Precentors and to people who have given exemplary service and support to the Cathedral Choirs. In addition, and as a response to a suggestion from a former chorister, those people who have an interest in the Association, but were not members of the choirs, may apply to be Associate Members – this will enable them to be included on mailing lists and attend events.
If you do not wish to be considered a member of the ECA and receive further newsletters please contact the Honorary Secretary, Bob Staten, and your name will be deleted from our mailing lists.

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We are now attempting to extend our database of members and a directory is being compiled as part of the website. However, only member's data that is in the public domain will be published on the website.

Finances

For the present there are no subscriptions – we hope to be able to fund our activities via grants and donations and through voluntary help by members. If you wish to make a donation towards the running costs of the Association please contact David Martin-Smith on 01727 840514 or at david.martinsmith@btopenworld.com

Loss of an Old Friend

Ron Gough
18th November 1917 – 6th October 2007

Former "Gentleman of the Choir" Ron Gough passed away on 6th October. Many of you will know that he had a career with Barclays Bank and his experience there stood him in good stead when, in his retirement, he did various jobs at the Abbey; first as the Abbey accountant at the time when the Chapter House was being built, later on the Refectory till and more recently helping to count the collection monies on a Monday morning. As a boy treble Ron sang in the choir of St. Albans, Holborn and then at St. Paul's, Camden Square. He joined St. Alban's Cathedral Choir as a Bass in 1957 and being King's Scout his help in running the first choir camp at Luccombe in 1958 was invaluable.

Ron played bowls with the Townsend Club, walked with the St. Albans Footpath Society, played bridge with the Friday Bridge Club, and always, until recently, cycled everywhere around St. Albans. Latterly he was a member of the Abbey Servers Guild and a founder member of the St. Albans Probus Club. For several years Ron sang with the St. Albans Chamber Choir and enjoyed their visits to Worms in Germany to give joint concerts with the Wormser Kantorei.

The bass line of several choirs around the St. Albans area will be the poorer for his passing: St. Albans Bach Choir, The Music Makers of Harpenden, St. Michael's Church Choir and the Evensong Choir at St. John's Markyate.

2008 Reunion Choral Evensong

Plans are moving ahead for next years' Reunion Choral Evensong although finding a suitable Saturday is proving a little tricky with so much happening in and around the Abbey at the preferred times.

Lost Contacts:

Does the name Vance King mean anything to you? I'm told he was a deputy organist sometime between the 1950's and the 1970's but no trace can be found of him in our records or on the Internet. Please e-mail or telephone Malcolm Bury if you remember him or know of his current whereabouts.

We are trying to complete our database of former "Gentlemen of the Choir"; if you know the current whereabouts, or the last known address for any of the following can you please let us know; a telephone number, postal address or e-mail address would be helpful.

Maurice Abrahams (Alto)	Derek Bell (Tenor)	James Black (Alto)	Simon Blake (Alto)	Fred Bradley (Bass)
Andrew Cassels (Bass)	Norton Challenor (Bass)	Frank Collins (Bass)	Peter Cook (Alto)	Harry Everett (Bass)
Percy Foster (Bass)	Eric Freeman (Tenor)	Alan Godfrey (Alto)	Frank Gurney (Alto)	Oliver Gurney (Tenor)
Mike Hall (Tenor)	James Henley (Alto)	James Imison (Tenor)	Jimmy James (Tenor)	Victor Kettle (Bass)
Ben Knowles (Tenor)	Justin Lee (Tenor)	Humphrey Moreton (Bass)	Geoff Richardson (Alto)	George Page (Bass)
Bill Privet (Tenor)	John Pulford (Bass)	Gavin Rogers-Ball (Alto)	John Roy (Alto)	George Slough (Bass)
William Ward (Bass)	Bunty Williams (Tenor)	Christopher Zealley (Tenor)		