

St. Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association

It has been an exciting year for the St Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association. In June we held our biennial reunion which was attended by around 30 members, sadly somewhat fewer than in 2008. However, after the AGM where we welcomed some new faces to the committee, we joined the Cathedral Choir for Choral Evensong and, under the direction of the Master of the Music, Andrew Lucas, sang Stanford in B Flat and Handel's *Zadok the Priest*.



The Ex-Choristers after Evensong with President Peter Hurford, Dean Dr Jeffrey John, Andrew Lucas and Tom Winpenny

At the end of the summer term we welcomed to the Association newly valedicted choristers **Caspar Singh, Kitty Bishop, Hannah Foxton, Kate James and Cleo Newton**, who had completed their service. We also welcomed as new members **Christopher Chapman** (treble 1953-54), **David Bird** (treble 1944-48) **David Radcliffe** (treble & head chorister 1960 – 1966), **Nigel Nethersole** (treble & head chorister 1962-1966), **Dr Jago Morrison** (treble 1977 – 1980), **Lee Ward** (Organ Scholar 1991 – 92) and **Roland Deller** a former alto lay clerk (2006 – 2009).

In September the ECA held a major concert in the Cathedral. Entitled "Their sound is gone out" we set out to celebrate the Cathedral's living musical heritage, to raise funds to ensure the ECA's financial sustainability, and to pay tribute to our President Peter Hurford and Pat Hurford on the occasion of their 80th birthdays. Not in living memory has St Albans Cathedral witnessed such a spectacular line up of past and present cathedral musicians coming together at the same time. The combined choir for Handel's *Coronation Anthems* was formed from the Abbey Girls Choir and Abbey Singers, some volunteer lay clerks and Exquire, the singing members of the ECA. Andrew Parnell, former Assistant Master of the Music and Founder Director of the Abbey Girls Choir conducted these *Anthems*, Those who attended clearly enjoyed this thrilling concert.



The concert programme opened with *The King Shall Rejoice* conducted by Andrew Parnell 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.

The Abbey Girls Choir, conducted by Tom Winpenny, then performed two short works, *Ave Maria* by Mozart and *Lift thine eyes* by Mendelssohn. Simon Johnson returned to St Albans to give a brilliant performance of the *Variations de Concert* by Joseph Bonnet for which he received huge applause.

There was also 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*. Former chorister, Rod Argent of the Zombies, entertained us with his own arrangements of classical piano and jazz and also the famous song, "*She's not there!*" which he wrote in 1963.

A highlight during the concert was the tribute to Peter and Pat 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" which contains photographs from Peter's era including formal choir photographs, candid of choir camp and various choir people, and the first ever overseas tour by the Cathedral Choir to Bayeux and Caen in 1977.

Finally, and at the special request of Peter, Andrew Lucas played Bach's Fugue in E Flat (St Anne); clearly a favourite with the audience. 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.

Pictured are: Rod Argent (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)



At the beginning of the autumn term **Peter Holder** was appointed Organ Scholar at St. Albans Cathedral for 2010-2011. Former chorister **Laurence Lyndon-Jones** was appointed organ scholar at Chester Cathedral after graduating from Pembroke College Oxford, where he read mathematics and was Organ Scholar for four years. Former Abbey Girl Chorister, **Claire Innes-Hopkins**, having completed two very successful years as Organ Scholar at Peterborough Cathedral, moved to Oxford where she is Tutor to Choristers at Magdalen College School, and Associate Organist at the College.

From Andrew Lucas - Master of the Music

The **Cathedral Choir** and **Abbey Girls Choir** have had a busy year. The new term started in September with a service for the inauguration of The Bishop of St Albans, The Rt. Revd Dr Alan Smith. In October a Service of Choral Evensong was broadcast on the BBC by the Cathedral Choir and featured *Hail Gladdening Light* by John Stainer, *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G* by Stanford with solos being sung by head chorister **Caspar Singh** and baritone **David Ireson**. The anthem was *All wisdom cometh from the Lord* by Philip Moore with **Kenneth Burgess** as baritone soloist.

A week before Christmas, and in addition to the usual Services of Lessons and Carols, there was a day of 'Carols on the Hour' which featured all the choirs that regularly sing services in the Cathedral; the Junior Parish Singers, the Parish Singers, the Abbey Singers and the Cathedral and Abbey Girls Choirs. On this occasion the Abbey Singers were joined by six former lay clerks and choristers.

In February the Abbey Girls Choir staged a very successful pre-USA tour fund-raising concert. For the concert they were joined by the Cathedral Choir Lay Clerks and performed works by Handel, Tallis, Verdi, Stanford and Rutter. The tour in April took the Abbey Girls to New York, Washington and Miami where they were stranded for six days as a result of volcanic ash. A 'thank you' concert was held in July with proceeds sent to the hosting churches.



In March the Cathedral Choir gave a recital at packed All Saints' Church in Leighton Buzzard which was sponsored by the Cathedral Music Trust.

In May the Cathedral Choir and Abbey Girls Choir joined forces with the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, with **Stephen Darlington**, in a spectacular concert for the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire's Fund and the Cathedral Music Trust. The concert featured Howard Goodall's Requiem, *Eternal Light*, conducted by Stephen Darlington and *March: A History of the English Speaking Peoples* arranged and played by Tom Winpenny, together with music for both individual and joint choirs by John Rutter, Herbert Howells, William Walton, Giuseppe Verdi and William Harris. The finale was a memorable performance of *I was Glad* by C Hubert Parry sung by the joint choirs and conducted by **Andrew Lucas**.

In July, just before the end of the summer term, the Cathedral Choir and Abbey Girls Choir made a recording of music by John Rutter, including settings of the *Magnificat*, *Gloria* and *Te Deum*, which will be released in the spring of 2011.



Left: Andrew Lucas with the choirs and orchestra. Above: Tom Winpenny at the Harrison Organ console.

For the cathedral choristers a very busy year ended with a trip to Swanage in Dorset for a well-earned weekend of R&R.

Visit the St Albans Cathedral Ex-Choristers' Association website at:
<http://www.stalbans-exchoirassoc.co.uk/index.html>