



ECOCA Newsletter February 2010

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Members

Welcome to the ECOCA newsletter Winter 2010 edition. You should receive this with your papers in good time for the Easter Monday reunion on 5 April 2010.

I have to admit that we were hoping to put together two newsletters this year to keep you up-to-date with news from the Association. We will try to get back into the habit of producing two newsletters a year from now on, with another edition in the summer.

It would be great to receive any news or contributions from all members, as this newsletter is your opportunity to tell us what you're doing. I would also be grateful for ideas about what you would like in your newsletter, so that we can improve it in the future. Please contact me at anytime with your news or ideas:

Matthew Ryan
11a Gower Ridge Road
Plymstock
PLYMOUTH
PL9 9DR

Email:
matthewryan06@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 07980 853 671



News

Paul Morgan's final Easter Monday



Paul Morgan has been a permanent feature of musical life at Exeter Cathedral for longer than many of our members have been alive! But after 41 years in the organ loft, Easter Monday 2010 will be Paul's final appearance as organist for the ECOCA reunion.

Whilst we all wish Paul the very best for his future, I am sure that many members will be sad to see him retire, and witness the end of a remarkable period of service for Exeter Cathedral. Paul will be remembered by all Old Choristers not just as an inspirational organist, but for his modesty and generosity of spirit.

The Chapter of the Cathedral has announced that Paul will be made Organist Emeritus, and this will be formally done at a reception in the Chapter House following Evensong on Sunday 4 July. This is the Sunday of Petertide, the Cathedral's Patronal Festival, which is both Paul's final working Sunday, and an important day in the life of the Cathedral's regular congregations.

As Easter Monday 2010 will be Paul's final ECOCA reunion, he will be conducting the combined voices of Old Choristers and the Cathedral Choir at Evensong. A presentation will also be made to Paul at the Association dinner in the evening. We hope that as many Old Choristers as possible will attend the Easter Monday reunion on 4th April 2010 to give Paul a rousing send off from ECOCA.



New ECOCA members

A very warm welcome to the new Old Choristers joining ECOCA this year:

Raleigh Addington
Eleanor Coton
Megan Haynes-Parry
Verity Friar

Henry McCready
Joseph Partridge
Anna-Rose Sliwinski
Ben Zeman

A request from the ECOCA Membership Secretary...

The association is putting together an email directory of members to help get in touch more easily in the future. Eliot Wilkinson, Membership Secretary, has requested that members send their email addresses to him stating their name and dates in the choir.

Eliot (86 – 91) would be very grateful if you could please complete and return the membership reply slip that will be sent with the Easter Monday reunion mail out.



The committee is keen to stress that all email addresses will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of ECOCA. Your personal data will be kept secure and not distributed to third parties for any purposes.



ECOCA Reunion 2009 – by Gordon Pike

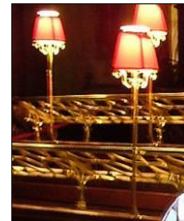
Fifty-five Old Choristers attended the Eucharist on Easter Monday 2009. After the rehearsal, Mr. Pike reported that Dec had won the Frank Cotton Memorial Shield for skittles following the annual ECOCA



skittles outing on Maundy Thursday at Seven Stars in Kennford. Four girl choristers and thirteen boy choristers went for lunch. Three rounds of skittles were played, in which Dec won 158 to Can 136. The highest individual boy was Samuel Turner, and highest individual girl was Verity Friar. The killer champion boy was

Ben Zeman, and the killer champion girl was Lucy Lefebvre. All retired to the Kennford post office for ice creams and sweets. On Saturday afternoon, the boys played soccer and Can won 11-0. The girls played netball and Dec won 14-5.

The Epistle at Eucharist was read by Michael Clark, and the Intercession prayers were lead by our Chairman, Reverend Charles Roberts. In these Intercessions, we remembered our departed members:



John Baker 1932-1938, passed away May 2008
Geoffrey Ryall 1932-1938, passed away January 2009
Daryl Youe 1959-1963, passed away February 2009
Richard Salter 1952-1957, passed away February 2009

We also remembered those members who were struggling with ill health at this time, including Andrew Hydan, Brian Kirk, Bob Norman, Richard Fellowes.



Thirty-three members attended lunch in the school. Everyone enjoyed the curry followed by sponge and custard, whilst reminiscing before our Annual General Meeting.

Ninety-eight Old Choristers attended the Evensong in the afternoon. Mr. Pike reported that some of the older girl choristers had remarked on the dress of newer girl members, which did not complement the suits and blazers of the boys and men. It was asked that the younger Old Choristers dress appropriately for the Cathedral in future.

Following the rehearsal, Marjorie Cotton presented the Frank Cotton Memorial Shield to Decani. ECOCA Chairman Reverend Charles Roberts presented the cups to the boy and girl choristers before tea in the Chapter House.

The Cathedral was packed for Evensong, with an additional fifty seats provided for visitors. Richard Eyre, Dean Emeritus, attended with his wife Anne. Evensong was memorable, especially with the Old Choristers singing the psalms and verses of the hymn on their own. The *Stanford in A* was sung enthusiastically, and the anthem *Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem* by Blair was a popular choice.



The ECOCA dinner at the Devon Hotel was attended by ninety-four people, starting at 8pm. The dinner was arranged by Michael Clark, and the new seating arrangements were a great success. The food was very good, and Richard Eyre was an amusing speaker, as always. The raffle made £362.00 for the Wesley Fund, crowning another very successful reunion of the ECOCA.



Cathedral Choir Tour – by Gordon Pike

Gordon Pike writes that the Cathedral Choir will be touring Norway from 14th February to 21st February 2010. The choir will be flying from Gatwick to Oslo, and then on to Alesund, before taking a coach to Heroy. The choir will sing in Heroy Church on Monday night, Eid Church on Tuesday night, Vereide Church on Wednesday night, and Forde Church on Thursday night.

The boys, girls and gentleman will travel from Forde to Bergen on Friday, to perform a midday concert in Bergen Cathedral on Saturday. After a quick break, the choir will be back in action for an evening concert at Asane Church, and will also sing the morning service on Sunday in Asane.

The choir will return from Bergen to Gatwick, arriving back in Exeter around midnight on 21st February. The touring party will include 19 girl and boy choristers, and 12 gentleman of the choir. We all hope we will have a very successful and enjoyable tour.

Caption competition

The funniest caption to accompany this photo will be published in the next ECOCA newsletter. A magical mystery prize will be awarded for the winning entry!





Stephen Tanner's Birthday concert on 19th September – by Shirley Tanner



Visitors to Exeter Cathedral School music room in Kalendar Hall may well notice a signed poster on the wall of the band members of the group 'Coldplay'. Chris Martin, the lead singer of the band, is one of many musicians over the last 22 years who has found success stemming from their musical training and inspiration at ECS. The Evensong and concert on 19th September 2009 was a true celebration of their achievements as well as marking Stephen's 50th birthday.

As on Easter Monday each year, many former choristers joined forces with the Cathedral Choir to sing Evensong. The Canticles (Howells' *Collegium Regale*) were sung by the Boys, Girls and Men of the Cathedral Choir and were augmented in the joyful Glorias by the extra voices. Lucian Nethsingha remarked that Howells would surely have approved of the combined forces to create such a wonderfully uplifting effect! The anthem was Stephen's 'Ye Holy Angels Bright' which had been written for the Girls' tenth anniversary in November 2004.

The evening concert involved performances by many ex-ECS musicians as well as the current Cathedral Choir. We were so pleased to welcome back some of the earliest girl choristers (the 'Spice' girls) some of whom were in the stalls exactly fifteen years ago for the Girls' first Evensong on November 17th 1994. They had cheekily borrowed an arrangement of Stephen's 'Steal Away' to surprise him!

The singing group *Isca Voices* confidently sang several numbers including Stephen's unaccompanied 'Lugano Service'. Peter Oakley,



one of our current Cathedral Countertenors, sang a most impressive duet with his contemporary, Alex Wynn. Katie Tanner played an entertaining movement for two pianos by Richard Rodney Bennett with her father and this was followed by virtuosic marimba solo by Elmley de la Cour , which sounded most effective in the resonant acoustic of the building.

It was a privilege to hear James Gardiner Bateman play his saxophone again in the Cathedral. Two enterprising family groups were represented in the concert. The three boys of the Harker family have formed a jazz band called '*The Jaspers*'. For this concert they were joined by Elmley on drums and Paul Maries on bass. '*Standing Stones*' comprise of two members of the Prowse family: Anna and Andrew. Together with a friend, they performed two contrasting songs that they had written.

Many former ECS string players now perform in the *South West Camerata* which was formed and directed by Fiona McLean. The first piece they played featured Michael Dawson on the Cathedral organ and displayed a beautiful intensity of ensemble playing.

Special birthday messages from Orlando Le Fleming and Christopher Martin were surprises for Stephen and relayed on the big screen. We are pleased to report that we are able to donate £955 in total to the two charities, the Cathedral's Third Millennium appeal and the Mayenziwe project as the proceeds for the evening's entertainment.





Deaths

We regret to report the passing of a number of members over the last year.

Geoffrey Ryall (Old Chorister 1932 – 1938)

Bob Norman (Old Chorister 1945 –1951)

Bob passed away on 2nd June 2009. A celebration of Bob's life was held at Reading Minster of St. Mary the Virgin on 18th June 2009.

Daryl Youe (Old Chorister 1959 – 1963)

Richard Salter (Old Chorister 1952 – 1957)

An obituary for Richard was featured in *The Guardian* available through www.theguardian.co.uk.

Richard Whittingham (Older Chorister 1953 – 1956).

A service of thanksgiving for Richard was held at Keynsham Methodist Church on 21st September 2009.

Brian Kirk (Old Chorister 1954 –1959)

Brian's funeral was held at All Hallows Church, South Cerney, Gloucestershire on 17th November 2009. Brian administered the ECOCA Bursary Fund for many years, leaving the fund in a remarkably good position.



Where are you now?

Matthew Ryan - As the new editor of the newsletter, I feel I should get the ball rolling. After moving out of the big smoke and going back to university (yet again) in 2006 I am most definitely back in the real world employed as a social worker in Sussex. I am living in Brighton, and singing with *the Brighton Festival Chorus*. Musical highlights from the last year included a semi-staged off score performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* in the Brighton Dome. I've also had the chance to do some more unusual gigs with the Chorus, including Carol Orrf's *Carmina Burana* in the O2 arena in London. Entering an arena of 17,000 people dressed as a monk and carrying a flaming torch was a memorable concert opening. The Chorus also supported Dame Edna Everage on a recent national tour, which was a hugely enjoyable if somewhat unpredictable musical experience!

Eliot Wilkinson writes to report that he got married on Sept 4th 2009, at the Larmer Tree Gardens, Tollard Royal in Dorset. Eliot's brother *Ali Wilkinson* is also getting married on June 4th 2010 at Kingscote Barn, Tetbury in Gloucestershire. On a Wilkinson theme, Eliot and Ali are going to be running the Edinburgh marathon on May 23rd, raising money for the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice in Farnham, which provides palliative care for people with terminal illness. The hospice looked after their great aunt when she died of motor neurone disease a few years ago. Eliot and Ali would be happy to receive any donations for their run. They both have a page on the JustGiving website www.justgiving.co.uk/eliotwilkinson and www.justgiving.co.uk/Alistair-Wilkinson

Alex Gaze – It's great for me to finally be able to say (at the age of 31) that I have a degree. After dropping out of my BSc many years ago I have just completed my MA as a part time student in London while working as Communications Manager for a large social housing group.



My enjoyment of music has never diminished and I still play with a Salvation Army brass band, you can buy our DVD on Amazon or, if you're in London on Sundays, you can see us marching down Oxford Street at 2pm. I have been married for 2½ years now and my wife and I both sing with the City of London choir (see my advert!). My wife is also pregnant and expecting our first child in June this year. I can only hope that he/she inherits my love of music, but perhaps not my large forehead.

Competition - Who do you think you are?

Who are these choristers photographed after winning the Hereford Cup, the Cathedral Choristers' football competition for the fifth time in six years?



Submit your entry on Easter Monday by tea to Alex Gaze. To make marking easier, please answer as numbers 1 – 8. All winning entries will be entered into a prize draw for a mystery prize!



Memories

Memories of Life as a Cathedral Chorister in the 1930s by Andrew Moseley

The old choristers' school was a bleak stone building with three stories and a cellar, in which the maids and cook worked, lived and slept. The twenty choristers and six probationers had four virtually unheated dormitories, a lavatory and a double bathroom, in which the prefects had to supervise everyone's total immersion in cold water each morning. One hot bath a week was permitted.

Downstairs, immediately behind the imposing front hall and door was R.W.B Langhorne's (Guv's) book lined study from which he ran the school's affairs and dispensed justice. Black marks were awarded for various offences, even for a failure in the weekly Latin verb test. Three such crimes incurred three strokes of a reversed clothes brush on the backside.

To the north of the hall was a full-sized billiard room and table, and beyond this a large common room, in which it was possible to read, or more likely, gamble in various games, using cigarette cards as currency. The seniors had a separate common room in which there was an antique radio, and another small room was equipped with a piano for lessons and practice.

A further building to the north had a choir school above, fed by an outside staircase, equipped with a hand-pumped organ, a piano, music stands and cupboards housing sheet music and manuscripts – some hefty books referred to as “big A's”. A prefabricated building housed two classrooms for juniors and seniors, which could be linked by sliding doors. Latin and English lessons were taken by Guv, maths



taught by Mr. Gibson, and French by a Miss Scott. Miss Reader, a fierce lady, armed with a ruler for knuckle rapping, taught piano.

Meals were served in a single storey dining room, which linked the main building to the Langhorne residence dining area. Uniformed and superior Maids serviced the family while the boys ate traditional boarding school fare such as hot pot, sultana suet pudding at lunch, and bread, margarine and jam for tea.

In front of the main school building was the tarmac playground used for soccer or cricket by season.

An alley to the south led to the Cathedral Close while another double door gate at the north end gave access to the town. Flannel suits and caps were worn on days off, with Eton suits, Eton collars and mortarboards for the twice-daily crocodile to and from the Cathedral.

The highlight of the summer term was Pa Pics party – a strawberry, cream and meringue event given by Mr. Pickard at *Dellers* restaurant. To my eternal shame, at my first of these events, when the host tapped me on the shoulders saying “what a handsome little boy!” I spewed everything over the table.

The pleasure of singing from chants to services and anthems, once installed as a full chorister, was truly wonderful. I will never forget my first solo, “Lead me Lord”, my later promotion to Decani’s corner boy and Head Chorister, and the privilege of singing “Hear My Prayer” and “The Wilderness” – each at least twice. To my regret, I was never given “Hodie Nobis” at the Christmas Eve service!

Being away from the family at Christmas and Easter was obviously painful, but we were compensated by presents and enormous eggs, and packed our trunks and tuck boxes for rail travel home a day or so later.



I am afraid there were some misdemeanours. The most serious involved upsetting the famous old Cathedral clock, while admiring the gas floodlighting in November 1933. I was the last of the choristers in the gallery of the North transept on our return from the tower when I saw an ascending and descending rope. I pulled it, and the tower bell struck nine times. Five minutes later, when we were in the Vestry, it struck ten. Needless to say I had to confess, and I got beaten. However, having breakfast at the Deanery one Sunday morning about a year later, Dean Carpenter told me that the clergy had been highly amused, and that I was forgiven.

My voice broke when I was 14 in 1937, and I left to take School Certs at Ilfracombe Grammar School. To his great credit, Guv wrote to me frequently, including during the War years, when I was abroad in the Fleet Air Arm, right up to his death. The whole experience was invaluable in giving me self confidence in my future career and a love of music which will be with me for as long as I live.

Some Rambling Jottings of an Old Chorister by Geoffrey Mitchell 1944-50

About 25 years ago the Headmaster Harry Potts invited me to give a talk to the choristers about my own experiences in the late 40s. It seemed to me then that the boys were far more interested in the extraordinary daily routine than in the music itself - not surprising since the latter hadn't really changed all that much. But, my goodness, the school most certainly had.

Wartime bombing and the blitz had made life in London very difficult, and my parents had hoped to get me off their worried hands. Exeter



was as far from London as we could envisage, and it was here that I came at the age of 8 years and 1 month in August 1944. At that time, the school was still evacuated to Honiton, where it been most of the time since the old choir school was destroyed in the Baedeker raid on Exeter in April 1940.



The house – Holyshute – was a fine large 19th century premise, which with the addition of a couple of temporary wooden classrooms served the 26 boys of the school very well. There were just 20 choristers and 6 probationers in all my six years there. I spent only one term there before we moved back into Exeter to The Chantry, an ex-Deaconesses' home, in January 1945. My memories of Holyshute are entirely happy ones. There was a large garden with a pond, in which, as I recall, there was small rowing boat! Also at the edge of the "playing field" was a huge chestnut tree, and if there were a shower during a game, we all sheltered under this tree and partook of all the windfall fresh chestnuts. Nothing had ever tasted so good!

Talking of food, we were very lucky by living in the country, and also from having a very kindly and skilled cook. She retired soon after we came to The Chantry and things were never so good afterwards! She would bake, make jam, stews and I certainly had never eaten so well in my life after the privations of a ration-ridden regime in London, where one was permitted 1 egg, 2 ounces of sugar and 2 ounces of cheese per week. Meat had been very scarce, and our mothers had to make the best of spam, whale meat and powdered egg.



The choristers went into Exeter a few times each week to sing the services, but the probationers only joined them on Saturdays and – in our Eton suits – on Sundays: Evensong only on the Saturday and all the services on the Sunday. Cook always made up a spectacular hamper for our lunch. There were the most authentic and delicious Cornish pasties, fruit and a huge fruitcake, the like of which I had never seen in my life. We ate this in the Cloister Room (now appropriately enough the Refectory).

Christmas 1944 was my last one at home until 1950! The terms in those days were inordinately long. The school holidays were taken after the main religious feast, and the choir stayed in residence until Epiphany, being allowed to travel home on the evening of January 6th if there were suitable trains. Otherwise we stayed another night! It's worth noting that in all my six years we had only three boys from Devonshire: boys came from all over the country – Scotland included! The Christmas holiday was exactly 2 weeks and four days. Similarly we stayed after Easter to sing the whole of Easter week, up till Low Sunday, when again we were allowed home for 2 weeks and 4 days. The summer holiday was exactly the month of August. There were no half-terms (I don't think they had even been invented at that time) and only two exeats (for tea only) were allowed per term. Luckily we were allowed to go out with others, and I well remember John Lomax (who is luckily one of our reunion regulars now) inviting me to join him and his parents for tea – occasionally driving as far as Teignmouth! In my case, my mother came only twice in all my six years. Once with my father, for my Installation in the May of 1945, and then with my Godmother for my confirmation in October 1948, after which we went with our folk to tea with the Bishop of Crediton who had confirmed us.

The move to The Chantry was a reawakening. The food was far worse than anything I had ever eaten. We were obliged (I can't really say



forced, though that is what it felt like) and under constant supervision, to eat everything that was served. I well remember very gristly meat, and eternally brown cabbage. Due to financial restraints, we had only one maid/cook, and the boys were responsible for all the table-laying, the clearing, the washing up and drying up at every meal. The head boy had to create a roster at the beginning of term for this to run smoothly. But I say “Thank Goodness”, because under the refectory table, at which 20 of us sat to eat, there was wooden ledge. When Mrs Treneer wasn’t looking we would pass the totally inedible bits along, where it was surreptitiously placed on this ledge. The table-clearers then rescued all this debris into an Ostermilk tin and it was deposited down the well in the back yard. I dread to think what happened down there after all those years of putrefaction, and whether it was ever discovered!

Remarkably we all survived – largely on unlimited bread I recall, though butter was restricted to Sundays only. Notably the staff did NOT eat with the boys, but in a private dining room, and on occasions one or two of us would be invited to clear up after them. The delicious roast potatoes, and buttered scones, and all manner of exotic tit-bits, which we consumed hurriedly and heartily during this exercise, almost made up for the previous deprivations! Although strictly against the rules, the late Bob Norman, who happened to be the only chorister I remember who actually lived in Exeter – on Pennsylvania – used to sneak us up to his mother’s for tea and cakes on the afternoon walk after Evensong! And also the aforementioned John Lomax had an aunt who ran the local Workhouse (yes there still were such things) and we would go there for a similar treat!

Reading Dickens later in life, I realised that very little had changed during the century after he was writing! I ought to spend a moment describing the working day. We sang Matins and Evensong every day except Wednesday (and Saturday when Matins was said). Our day



consisted of the walk in crocodile; breakfast; choir practice; matins; TWO school periods; lunch; ONE period; evensong at 3pm; walk about town in pairs; tea; psalm practice for the following day; prep; bed! It has never ceased to amaze me how we all managed to achieve scholarships to our chosen schools on 3 periods of academic work a day. I suppose it was the almost one-to-one nature of the teaching with so few boys. On Wednesday, Matins was replaced with another lesson, but the afternoon one was lost to sport. Saturday morning's Matins time was occupied with gym at the Episcopal School, where Mr Treneer had been Headmaster before coming to us.

Memory is a strange thing: so much of our life was variedly unpleasant, but the Cathedral and the music made up for everything, and it is due to those wonderful facets that we come streaming back to relive the best part of our chorister days year on year. While writing this I have been aware of so many details of the musical life which impinged on all this, but that will have to wait for another occasion!



Advert

Are you looking to join a choir in London?

The City of London choir is always on the look out for new members. It has about a hundred active members from a wide variety of professions and backgrounds, all of whom share a love of music-making to a high standard. The choir has a professional conductor and accompanist and performs with some of the country's finest orchestras and professional soloists.

If you are interested, please contact Alex Gaze (86-92) on 07810 418 208, email alex.gaze@ghg.org.uk or visit www.cityoflondonchoir.org.

Advert

Friends of Exeter Cathedral

By joining us you will receive an annual report in May and a newsletter in November each year. These publications will show you what is happening in the Cathedral and how we spend our income on the maintenance of the Cathedral fabric, music and archives. The annual report also includes regular articles by Andrew Millington, the Dean and the Bishop, with additional articles on the fabric, archives and history of the building.

Subscriptions are currently – annual, single £10; two persons at same address £15; Life subscription (under 60s) single £200; joint £300 (over 60s) single £150; joint £200

If you wish to join, please contact the honorary secretary at 1 The Cloisters, Exeter, EX1 1HS, or visit our page on the Cathedral website – friends@exeter-cathedral.org.uk