



ECOCA Newsletter

February 2011

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Members

Welcome to the ECOCA newsletter to accompany the mail out for our Easter Monday Reunion 2011.

I have to admit that I was hoping to publish a Summer 2010 edition of the newsletter. I moved house in August and again in September, and underestimated how much work it would be to set up home on my own. Please find below my new address for your future reference.

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

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News: Paul Morgan thanks ECOCA



I would like to thank the Exeter Old Choristers' Association for such a marvellous day on Easter Monday. It was a real joy to conduct Evensong and be among so many friends. I was most grateful for the generous remarks made about my years at Exeter at the dinner, including the very kind tribute paid by



John Thomas. It was so good to have Martin Shaw as our guest speaker and special thanks are due to Gordon Pike for his masterful organisation of the day. The messages and cards from old choristers unable to be present were also much appreciated as I always enjoy hearing about your latest ventures.

I remain truly overwhelmed by the generosity of your gift. The extent of the generosity was not revealed until I returned home after the dinner and looked at the cheque. It came as quite a shock. I haven't yet spent the money but intend to buy something appropriate to remind me of my happy time with you all.

It really doesn't seem so long ago that I came as a young man to Exeter under Lionel Dakers (Organist) and Tom Evans (Headmaster). Much remains the same, especially Evensong and Mattins, although I remember we often used the Revised Psalter. Lucian sensibly returned us to full use of the Oxford Psalter! The Eucharist has seen constant changes through Series 1, 2, 3, Rite A and B to our present Common Worship. Exeter Cathedral School is now much larger, of course, the biggest change being the admission of girls in the 1990s. The next few years will see major work on the cathedral organ and thought is currently being given to new rehearsal rooms.

I look forward to seeing these changes from a different perspective as a member of the congregation and college of canons. I extend my best wishes to Andrew, Stephen and David as well as the choristers and gentlemen of the choir, and look forward to seeing you all in due course. Again thank you so much for your most generous gift.

News from the Song School

Some ECOCA members have asked if we could have more news about our current Cathedral Choristers. Your editor approached none other than current Director of Music Mr. Andrew Millington.



Andrew interviewed a small group of boy and girl choristers on a long train journey to London in September 2010. Andrew writes that he talked to a group of year 8 choristers in their final year with the choir, who have been singing at Exeter for the past four or five years. Recent highlights in the choir have been the tour to Norway last February, which Gordon Pike wrote about in our last newsletter. The choristers remember the beautiful places visited by the choir, and being amongst the mountains and fjords: “the weather was very cold but bright, and there was snow everywhere!”

Andrew asked choristers for any funny or interesting stories when singing in the choir. It was reported that one Saturday evensong, as the choir faced east to say the creed, one of the panes of glass in the East window opened and group of tourists took photographs of the choir below! It seems they were on a roof tour that should have taken place earlier in the day, and not in the middle of the service...



All the choristers are looking forward to their new schools next year, but want to come back to visit the choir, especially on Easter Monday and for the Grandisson service. Many thanks to Andrew Millington for helping us speak to our current Cathedral Choristers. We look forward to welcoming them to ECOCA in the future.



Choir Leavers and their New Schools in 2011

Sebastian Beamish: Torquay Boys' Grammar School

Thomas Bowerman-Wake: Music Exhibition, King's College Taunton

Martha Bowles: Music Scholarship, St Margaret's School

Meiling Daniell-Greenhalgh: Music Scholarship, King's College Taunton

Idina Hankin: Queen Elizabeth Community College, CREDITON

Anna Saunders: Music Exhibition, Downside School

Samuel Turner: Torquay Boys' Grammar School

Oscar Wiessler: Torquay Boys' Grammar School

Introducing Simon Carder, Acting Headmaster at Exeter Cathedral School

Simon Carder writes that he was delighted to have been appointed as the Acting Headmaster at Exeter Cathedral School for the Michaelmas and Lent terms, following Brian McDowell's early retirement on health grounds at the end of the Summer term in 2010. Simon will be in post until April 2011 at which stage Stephen Yeo, currently Headmaster at Lyndhurst School in Camberley, Surrey, will take on the permanent Headship.

Simon has been a prep school headmaster for many years, firstly at Beachborough School near Brackley/Buckingham and latterly at Eagle House School in Sandhurst. He was Chairman of IAPS, the prep schools' association, in 2003/04. Since September 2006 he has run his own consultancy helping schools in a variety of ways. Simon was particularly excited to be leading Exeter Cathedral School as three of his uncles and two of his cousins were choristers at Exeter. Simon reports that an exciting year awaits the school and he is committed to making it a happy and successful one for the children and everyone else involved at the school.



Future Musical Events

Saturday 5th March 2011 at 7pm: A Concert of Organ Music by David Davies, Assistant Director of Music. David's recital programme will include Franz Liszt's Prelude and Fugue on Bach, Julius Reubke's Sonata on the 94th Psalm, works by Alfred Hollins, Tchaikovsky and Mozart, movements from Saint-Saen' Carnival of the Animals, and Elgar's Land of Hope and Glory. Tickets (free) from the Campaign Office on 01392 285 974 or campaign@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

Saturday 16 April 2011 at 7.30pm: The Honeymead Ensemble. A wonderful opportunity to hear international musicians led by Exmoor based Tamsin Waley-Cohen. The programme includes Brahms: String Sextet No. 2 in G major and Schoenberg: Verklarte Nacht. Complementary tickets are available from the Campaign Office on 01392 285 974 or campaign@exeter-cathedral.org.uk

Saturday 18th June 2011 at 7.30pm: the Cathedral Choirs of Exeter, Wells and Bristol in Concert. Programme to include Bob Chilcott *Requiem*, Elgar *Te Deum and Benedictus* and Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*. Tickets available soon. Check <http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk> for further updates.

Friday 24th to Sunday 26th June 2011. Gospel Weekend. To include Jazz Vespers at Nightchurch, a workshop with expert tutors including Scott Stroman, an evening concert and a Jazz Mass to end on the weekend on Sunday 26th June. Contact music.admin@exeter-cathedral.org.uk for up to date information on this event.

Saturday 2nd July 2011 at 7.30pm (gates open at 5pm).Last Night of the Proms. By the lake at Coryhill, Combe Raleigh, Honiton with the Cathedral Choir and Sheldon Singers by kind invitation of Christopher and Caroline Padget. Tickets £10 in advance are available from the Campaign Office on 01392 285 974 or campaign@exeter-cathedral.org.uk



ECOCA Reunion 2010 by Gordon Pike



Fifty-eight Old Choristers sang at Eucharist, with Mr. Tanner conducting and Mr. Morgan playing the organ. The music included the Easter Gospel Song, with words by Jonathan Meyrick and music adapted from Donizetti, and the Haydn's Little Organ Mass.

Haydn

After drinks at the school, thirty-nine Old Choristers and guests sat down to lunch in the school dining room; sponge and custard always goes down a treat after the main course! Our Annual General Meeting was held at 1.45pm, with a very good turn out from our older members.

Practice for evensong commenced at 3.30pm, taken by Paul Morgan with Andrew Millington playing the organ. As Easter Monday 2010 was the last for Paul Morgan as our organist, Paul had agreed to conduct and play the voluntary at the end of Evensong.

Following practice was the presentation of the Frank Cotton Memorial Shield by Mrs. Cotton. About thirty children and Old Choristers enjoyed lunch at the Seven Stars in Kennford during which a skittle competition took place on Maundy Thursday. Decani won the shield: the scores were Dec 172 to Can 150.



The highest individual boy was Samuel Turner, and the highest individual girl was Lucy Lefebvre. The killer champion boy was Simeon Coton, and the killer champion girl was Ellie Smith. The killer champion adult was Neville Gibbings.

After the presentations we had tea in the Chapter House, followed by a large group photo of Old Choristers taken outside the Chapter House main door with Mr. Morgan.



Evensong was attended by a huge number of people, with at least seventy extra chairs in place for Old Chorister parents, present chorister parents, visitors and congregation from the past, all of whom wanted to be there to hear the wonderful sound from the combined singers. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress requested to attend Evensong, as they had heard it was one of the most popular services in the Church's year.

Brahms

This Evensong was no exception, and Mr. Morgan enjoyed conducting the Murrill in E Canticles, and Brahms' *How Lovely are they Dwellings*. He managed to keep everyone under control (even the Tenors).

At the end of Evensong everyone listened to Mr. Morgan's voluntary, which was followed by rapturous applause. After plenty of talking and catching up, one hundred and twenty people made their way to the Devon Hotel for the dinner. Our guest speaker was Bishop Martin Shaw, accompanied by his wife Elspeth. Our guests of honour were Mr. Paul Morgan and Heather.



Some of the younger Old Choristers took charge of selling the raffle tickets after dinner, raising an impressive total of £397.56. Bishop Martin Shaw made a very powerful speech about the importance of Cathedral music. John Thomas completed the speeches with a tribute to Paul Morgan's 41 years of service to Exeter Cathedral, presenting Paul with a card and gift from ECOCA. Paul was unaware that members had donated £1000 towards a gift for his retirement, a fact he only discovered once he had returned home!

The Wesley Fund



The Wesley Trust Fund has been set up by ECOCA to provide bursaries for children to join the Cathedral Choir and School who are talented but whose families would not otherwise be able to afford the fees.

An update on the reserves of ECOCA Bursary Fund and Wesley Fund will be provided at the Annual General Meeting on Easter Monday

Wesley

If ECOCA members would like to make a regular donation towards bursaries for future choristers, the committee would like to encourage members to make donations to the Wesley Fund.

A Bankers Order form has been inserted into the centre of this newsletter, which members can return to: The Wesley Trust, The Brambles, Halford, Liverton, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 6JE.







Spot the Chair

Somewhere amongst this happy band of choristers is none other than ECOCA chairman, Rev. Charles Roberts! So the question is: can you spot the chair? Answers on a postcard...



Deaths

We regret to report the passing of several members over the last year:

Richard Ebdon (Old Chorister 1949 - 1954)

Hugh Leech (Old Chorister 1931 - 1936)

Geoffrey Tims (Old Chorister 1936 - 1941)



A Centenary Tribute to Reginald Moore by Christine Ford

On the face of it Reginald Moore was a charismatic and larger-than-life figure, possessing great charm and a huge talent. Standing at over 6ft 4ins he had the presence and sparkling wit to ‘make’ any gathering. However, there was also a shy side to him and he often felt himself to be awkward with people and situations with which he was unfamiliar. He lived music every moment of his day and regularly embarrassed his daughter by beating time to whatever was in his head whenever they went for a walk together.



Reginald Moore – far left, back row Cantoris

He was born 100 years ago in Bramley, Leeds on 19th May 1910, the eve of the funeral of King Edward the Seventh. Both Reg’s father and grandfather had fine baritone voices and sang as soloists in oratorio in Yorkshire. It was no surprise that he became a chorister at Leeds Parish Church at the age of seven. It was to be a long stint as his voice did not break until he was well over sixteen.



By this time he was also an award-winning pianist and was taking organ lessons with the legendary Sir Edward Bairstow at York Minster. Reg won an organ scholarship to Peterhouse, Cambridge, but in the days when scholarships bestowed honour rather than money. The finances required for such a venture were beyond his family and instead he started teaching the piano and organ, and became organist of St Peter's Church, Bramley. He continued his lessons with Sir Edward, taking the ARCO examination successfully at the age of 19, and following that with the fellowship a couple of years later.

Appointed in 1933 as assistant to Sir Walter Alcock, the organist of Salisbury Cathedral, the Yorkshire boy moved south to that most sheltered and peaceful of southern cathedral cities. He often talked of his home sickness in his early days, longing for the grit, lights, noise and energy of Leeds on a Saturday night as he wandered through the quiet streets of Salisbury. But it was here that his great love of choral conducting developed and was nurtured, becoming the most important aspect of his musical life for the rest of his days.

In his early years at Salisbury he met Sir Adrian Boult, who took a great interest in him, and was convinced that Reg would make an outstanding orchestral conductor. Generous in his support, his tuition, and in his introductions in London, he failed to persuade Reg that this particular rostrum was for him. Reg returned to Bramley in 1939 to marry Gay in St Peter's Church. Within six months war had been declared, and early in 1941 he left Salisbury to serve in the Royal Air Force. He was trained in radar and stationed, for a large part of the war, at Bolt Head in South Devon.

At the end of the war he returned briefly to Salisbury, but was very shortly appointed assistant director of music at Winchester College. With its unique choral tradition, and with an abundance of very bright and able students to teach, he spent some of his happiest years here.



He revelled in the sophisticated badinage of the common room, and in living in such a vibrant and busy community. Firm friends with the cathedral organist, he also performed regularly there as well. It was at this time that he took his B.Mus degree externally from Durham University.

In 1952 Reg was shortlisted for the organist post at both Canterbury and Exeter Cathedrals. The Exeter interview was first, and he was immediately offered the job, having secured the vote of the choristers at the rehearsal he took with them. Finally he had his own choir, and he was determined that it should be second to none. He worked both himself and the choir tirelessly, and within six months the Exeter Cathedral Choir was being talked about in many important musical circles. His belief that only the very best performance was acceptable to the Glory of God sometimes made him a hard taskmaster, although he continued to inspire great respect and affection from the cathedral choristers.

The next few years saw many accolades with broadcasts and outside performances ahead of their time, as indeed perhaps Reg was a man ahead of his time for Exeter, still emerging from a tough war. For example, his espousal of the music of Herbert Howells caused visible discomfort to one member of the Chapter. Soon after his appointment to the Cathedral he had also been appointed Director of Music at the then University College of the South West (soon to become Exeter University). He also trained and conducted Exeter Choral Society and Orchestra. The workload was heavy, especially as for much of the time he had no assistant organist.

Disagreements developed with the cathedral authorities, and these could not apparently be rectified. After four years of glorious music-making, during which time he had introduced and also commissioned uplifting music, Reg left the Cathedral to concentrate on his university



work. Reg trained and conducted the University choral society and chapel choir, and continued as a recitalist, giving frequent broadcast recitals on the organ, and guest conducting the BBC Chorus.

At a farewell reception at the Cathedral he said “I am sentimental enough to believe that the music which we have made together in this wonderful Cathedral has been absorbed into these hallowed walls for all time”. Reg died of lung cancer just after his 58th birthday in 1968. Sadly, he did not live long enough to know his two wonderful grandsons, but he would have been delighted that the younger became a chorister in the choir of one of his own Exeter choristers, at Rochester Cathedral.

Memories of Easter Monday Reunions by John Weeks 1945-50

As you can see from my dates, I go back a long way when there were only twenty-six boys in total, and all at the Chantry with Mr. and Mrs. Treneer, and Dr. Wilcock as Choir Master. Looking back I realise that this was a privileged time of my life, which I very much enjoyed and gave me a love of music which has lasted all my life. At nearly seventy-four I am still singing in a good choral society in Godalming where I now live.

The confidence that the cathedral experience gives one helped me to perform as a tenor soloist in light and comic operas, albeit as an amateur, for nearly thirty years. I then joined a male voice choir for about five years before joining Godalming Choral Society. However the highlight of my musical calendar is always Easter Monday and singing the services with the full choir, not forgetting the rest of the day's activities and meeting lots of old friends.



My wife Anne, who sadly died a few years ago after fighting cancer for nearly ten years, also thoroughly enjoyed Easter Monday and said on many occasions that the beauty of the singing had to be heard to be believed. This gave her such a boost each time and helped her to continue her uphill struggle. I now serve on the committee and still return each Easter, and hope to do so for many more years.

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

“A.W. Wilcock.

D. Mus. (Manchester); B. Mus. (Durham);

F.R.C.O., F.R.M.C.M., Hon. R.C.M., L.R.A.M.” (Poor fellow!)

Thus did Dr. Wilcock, affectionately known as *Baldy*, sign my autograph album.



Dr. Wilcock conducting



I barely recall my audition in the Autumn of 1943 in the Organist's flat in Church House. But it would have been with the good Doctor, a benign figure, whom I remember telling to play my choice of piece - the hymn *Fight the good fight*, to the tune Pentecost, "beginning on C sharp"! As if there were a choice, but my mother had given me strict instructions to request it thus (he often referred to it later on...)

He had spent three years as Organist of Derby Cathedral before succeeding Thomas Armstrong, who had been promoted to Principal of the Royal College of Music. At the age of 46 he was appointed as Organist of Exeter in 1933, retiring in 1952 due to ill health. He died the following year. On account, no doubt, of this ill health (partly I fear exacerbated at The Royal Clarence) the choir was honestly not very good throughout my time here. I well remember us often breaking down completely in unaccompanied Tudor settings, and Baldy having to clap his hands, blow another note on his modified organ pipe, and say "back to *He hath out down*", or whatever... Sadly, we didn't seem to be particularly embarrassed. He was unfortunately too ill to put in any appearance at all over my last Christmas (1949). The choir climbed the stairs to the door of his flat and sang him carols though the open door. Choir practices were little more than sing throughs as far as I recall, and Baldy could easily be distracted to play Grieg's *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* for us!

A couple of years earlier he had surprised us all by remarrying a Miss Gadd (Baldy was a widower) who became a particular favourite of all of us, giving the odd tea party, which was in those straitened times a huge treat. Staffing cathedral choirs during the war must have been difficult, and our six Vicars Choral remained pretty stable as a group throughout most of my six years. Mr Plowman retired from the alto line to be replaced by Mr Judd; Mr Kennedy died in office. Otherwise the team consisted of Messrs Thomas, Isaacs, Tapley and Dineen.



Kennedy's funeral was the first I had ever attended – his stall looming empty during the service, with his surplice and mortarboard draped over the music stand. Dr Wilcock played the grand piano instead of the terrible temporary organ that was in the nave, and played the Chopin Funeral March so beautifully that I think we were all in tears by the end. It seemed to us then that the piano was his better instrument.

Services were held in the nave until the Quire was re-opened on Easter Day 1948, with the restoration of the Organ from its hiding place for the duration of the war (likewise the East Window and the Bishop's Throne). The asbestos wall at the Crossing was removed and the glories of the Quire came into view. There were semi-permanent stalls in the nave, together with the temporary organ. But I seem to remember the piano being used in preference.

There were still musical highlights: the Grandisson Service on Christmas Eve; carols from the Minstrel's Gallery at the end of Christmas Evensong; the termly oratorio performances with the Musical Society; orchestra and visiting London soloists. I still have the autographs of then famous singers like Heddle Nash, Eric Greene, Ena Mitchell and George Pizzy.

One of my greatest musical memories was quite unconnected with the cathedral, occurring during my last year when I was Head Boy. During Prep one evening Mr Treneer came into the form room and called me out. We walked along Queen Street to the Corn Exchange, where a short word with the lady on the door admitted us to a recital by none other than Solomon, one of the greatest pianists in the world at the time. I remember my parents being envious beyond words when I wrote and told them!



Which brings me to the Treneers. Howard Treneer was Head of the Episcopal School, and was appointed to the Choristers' School as we moved back into Exeter to The Chantry in January 1945. In order to follow protocol he was invited to take Holy Orders. Something of a polymath, he taught everything, and was no mean cricketer. I think everyone had nothing but kindly thoughts for Pa Tren, hardly ever showing any signs of disapproval. Never seen without his pipe, he would frequently ask one of the boys to pop round the corner for an ounce of Digger Shag – his favourite tobacco! Those were the days!

Unfortunately Mr Treneer came with Mrs Treneer. It may just have been that she didn't like *me*. An upstart oick from Essex probably wasn't her style! But I found her disingenuous to put it mildly. Amongst the Assistant Masters the most long-standing was Keith Gibb. He had two canes, Little Willy and Big Willy, the former being by far the most painful. He was not loath to use them frequently for the smallest misdemeanour, including during Saturday Latin tests!

Visiting staff included the lovely Mrs Pamela Michelmore, who taught us Geography on a Saturday morning. She marked our books with the first red Biro we had ever seen, it being fairly newly patented by Mr Biro in 1938! But we were forbidden to use them, having to stick with pen-nibs and inkwells! As I conclude this excavation into the depths of my memory, all the trials of school are obliterated by the music and the atmosphere generated by those two hours in the Cathedral every day. As with so many of us, my career was formulated there and then.

ECOCA Reunion Photo 2010

The ECOCA reunion photo taken with Paul Morgan outside the main door of the Chapter House on Easter Monday 2010 will be available from Gordon Pike on Easter Monday 2011. The cost of the photo is £2.00 for a small copy, and £4.00 for a large copy.