

# Saint Patrick's Cathedral Past Choristers' & Pupils' Association



## IN TOUCH



Volume 1, Issue 1

Autumn 2011

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### From the President

Hello everyone,  
I welcome this opportunity to say that I appreciate greatly being elected as president of the Association. My memories of Saint Patrick's Choir and Grammar School cover the decade from 1942 to 1952. There are many people from that period still involved in various ways and others are either out of the country or at a distance from Dublin, as I was for many years.

First, I want to congratulate Ben Barnes on his year as president. It is particularly appropriate that I follow him as he was my vicar choral while I was Prebendary of Mulhuddart. Well done Ben.

I am writing this letter to encourage all past pupils and choristers to support the Association with a notable and noble history. There are a number of special gatherings throughout the year which are worthy of your support. Some of these have a



fundraising aspect and are important for the on-going viability of the Association. Each event is designed to enable members to enjoy each other's company and to share news.

You will see details of plans for the coming season and specially the Harvest Wine & Savoury Evening in the Deanery on 1st October. We are grateful to the Dean for making this possible. Please make every effort to make this a great event by your own attendance and by encouraging other members to come along.

I look forward to seeing you at some time during the coming year. Obviously I do not know all the members, so please speak to me at our events. There will be some who think I should know them but time has its way of playing tricks by affecting hair colour or even hair loss!

Yours sincerely,  
David,  
President

**A changing cathedral—**

**Details inside**



## REUNION DINNER 2011

The Dinner in March attracted more people than for a number of years. About 114 members and friends sat down to dinner in the Masonic Hall. One of the most satisfying aspects of the attendance was the fact that there was a greater number of younger members than in recent years. This bodes well for the life of the Association.

The President, Ben Barnes, made sure that the evening ran smoothly. Our present tradition of limiting the speeches left time for more homemade entertainment. This was provided by the Close Singers along with soloists, Canon Charles Mullen and Roger Pickett. These were accompanied by the excellent and witty Revd David Oxley. The finale was the rendition of "Mary" by Noel Miller with all joining in the chorus with gusto.

The venue proved welcoming and we appreciate all the Masonic Hall did to contribute to the success of the evening. Thanks are due to Edwin Hancock for developing this connection.

The challenge now is to emulate this success and even improve on it.

Hope to see you all at the Dinner in 2012.

David Godfrey.

## Annual General Meeting 2011

The AGM of the Association was held on Tuesday 24 May, 2011 last at "Cintra" 8 Braemor Park, Dublin (by kind permission) which is the home of Linda and George Quigley. The attendance was about average (never enormous for the AGM!) but, nevertheless, sufficient for a productive meeting held in comfortable surroundings and which dealt adequately with the issues listed on the agenda. The main purpose of the AGM, as pointed out by our secretary, is to review the activities of the Association over the past year, including finance, and to elect the officers and committee for the coming year.

In the absence of the president the Revd Roy Byrne was chosen to substitute as chairman. Having officially opened the meeting he read the president's report. In his report Ben apologised for his absence and expressed his appreciation for the support he had received from the committee members throughout the year which was, for him as president, most enjoyable. He sent good wishes for the coming year and urged all members to continue supporting the Association and encourage others to participate. Following this the honorary secretary and the honorary treasurer presented their reports both of which pointed to a successful and active year. However, some disappointment was expressed regarding the attendance at one or two of the annual functions.

The following officers and committee were elected for the year ahead.

President: Very Revd David Godfrey

Vice Presidents (Ex Officio): Sylvia Hick, Principal of the Grammar School

Sandra Morgan, Principal of the Choir School

Stuart Nicholson, Organist and Master of the Choristers

Vice Presidents (Nominated): Ben Barnes and Albert O'Keeffe

President Elect: Louis Parminter

Hon. Secretary: Helen Olliffe

Hon. Treasurer: Joy Linton

Hon. Auditors: Philip Denner and Noel Miller

Committee: Revd Roy Byrne, Roger Pickett, Stephen Burleigh, Victor Williams, Linda Quigley and Andrew Sparks.

Amongst the "Other Business" items discussed it was proposed and agreed that the Association would maintain its annual financial support to the schools and the cathedral.

After the meeting the members were entertained to a most lavish supper by our gracious hosts and the chairman expressed the gratitude of the Association to Linda and George for their excellent hospitality.

## Forthcoming Events

The committee would like to draw your attention to and ask for the members support for the following events to be held this year.

### (1) Harvest Wine & Savoury Evening- Saturday 15th October 2011

This "new look" event will be held in the Deanery on Saturday 15th October 2011 commencing at 8.00pm and we are most grateful to the Dean for opening the Deanery to us for the occasion at which a large attendance is anticipated. All past pupils and their friends are invited to come to what should be a most enjoyable and relaxing evening in magnificent surroundings. There will be plenty of goodies to eat and drink and attractive raffle prizes to be won and it will be an opportunity to meet and chat again with former colleagues. The charge per person is €15 (payable at the door) and the proceeds will be used to help alleviate the costs associated with the running of the reunion dinner. Please therefore do your best to attend.

### (2) Reunion Evensong – Sunday 16th October 2011

The Reunion Evensong was introduced a few years ago and is now a firm favourite with past choristers and those who enjoy the music of the cathedral. Stuart Nicholson, Organist and Master of the Choristers, has set aside Sunday 16th October for the event this year and we are grateful to him and to the Dean for this kind invitation. All past choristers of both the boy's choir and the girl's choir are invited to join with the cathedral choir to sing Evensong. It is a wonderful opportunity to enter the choir stalls again and relive memories of past times spent with the choir and should not be missed. The music is always specially selected for the occasion and generally straight forward.

You are asked to attend the cathedral at 2.00 pm so that rehearsal can commence promptly at 2.15 pm for the service which starts at 3.15 pm.

After the service you are invited to refreshments in the Hewson Room which, again, is most enjoyable. Keep the afternoon free for this special event.

### (3) Christmas Carol Services in the Cathedral

Each year past pupils attend these services to assist with the stewarding and collections. We would appeal to you to please help us to maintain this long standing tradition and come and participate on the following dates. (Meet in Cathedral at 2.15 pm)

**Sunday 18th December 2011** - Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

**Christmas Eve** - Traditional Lessons and Carols

## Looking to 2012

There are two further events which form part of our programme for this season which are -

- **Quiz Night** Following two very successful Quiz Nights at Faugh's GAA Club, Templeogue we have been invited back again for, hopefully, another pleasant evening. The facilities are excellent at this venue and there is plenty of car parking space. We expect to hold this function in the Spring but the date has yet to be confirmed so we shall be issuing a separate circular with the details in due course.
- **Reunion Dinner** This is our major event of the year and is scheduled for March in the Masonic Hall (exact date also to be confirmed). We are remaining with the Masonic Hall as the accommodation there is most suitable for us and the pricing is most competitive. Full details will be given in our usual Dinner circular which will be sent to members nearer the time.

# Saint Patrick's Cathedral Schools

## The Grammar School

The 2010—11 academic year opened with 137 students on the roll; an increase of ten on the previous year. As the Christmas term began the most obvious change was the newly refurbished toilet facilities for both boys and girls. I have long believed that the better the facilities provided for students, the better they will treat them and it has been most rewarding to note the almost complete absence of graffiti or vandalism in both toilet blocks during the course of the year.

Academically, the results in the State examinations were good—at least in line, or indeed better, than had been expected.

With only one class in each year group obviously results will vary from year to year, depending on a particular cohort. A large percentage of senior students take higher papers in the Leaving Certificate and every year 'A' grades are obtained by students across a range of subjects. The good standard of teaching at the school was noted in the report on our WSE (Whole School Evaluation) inspection that took place in March 2010.

Each year National Newspapers publish lists of what are commonly referred to as 'league tables'. This year The Irish Times reported that the percentage of Grammar School students who proceeded to third level colleges was 90%. This percentage was higher than that recorded for many more prestigious schools including The Institute of Education and it was more than double the percentage for any other school in Dublin 8. While the academic

work continues there is no doubt that 2010—11 will be remembered most for expansion of extra-curricular activities. During 2009—10 basketball, football, drama, debating, students council and Gaisce were available to the students. 2010—11 saw the range expand to include our first rugby team, fashion and jewellery making, green schools, homework club and baking club. All of these have been successful. The senior rugby team entered the Leinster Shield competition and got through several rounds. However, team spirit and enthusiasm were undoubtedly the greatest reward. A large number of junior boys are also interested in rugby and next year we will field a junior rugby team.



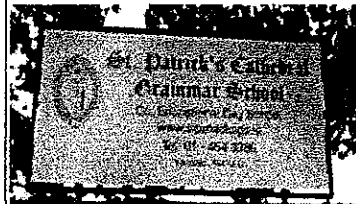
Rugby at St. Patrick's

The fashion and jewellery club produced a variety of jewellery which was sold on a stall at Open Day in December 2010. One member of the fashion club entered Griffith College's Fashion Design Competition. Photographs will be available on the school website [www.stpatrickscgs.ie](http://www.stpatrickscgs.ie) before the end of the summer break.

For 2011-12 Guinness Ladies Hockey Club have offered our girls use of the Iveagh Grounds, in Crumlin, for hockey training and the students will be coached by Niamh Small, an Irish international hockey player. This is a tremendous opportunity for the girls and I hope many of them will avail of it. In 2011-12 there will also be a 'Computer Club'.

So life at the Grammar School is very busy. Many students arrive before 8 am in the morning and the 'buzz' continues until after 6 pm almost every evening. Despite this we are not immune from the effects of the current economic downturn. We are very aware that we need to increase our school enrolment to ensure the long-term survival of the Grammar School. This aim will be helped considerably if our proposed development plans come to fruition. After eleven years we have finally submitted building plans to Dublin City Council. The rest as they say 'in the lap of the gods'. Meanwhile I hope as you drive down Kevin Street, you will admire our new Grammar School sign, above the schoolyard wall.

Sylvia Hick



New Grammar School Sign

## The Choir School

Primary schools are busy active places and the Choir School is no exception. In September pupils quickly settled into the routine of their new classes and got to grips with new books and different subjects. The autumn term was filled with a range of activities and events designed to develop the pupils' learning outside the classroom. History studies included a visit to Christ Church Cathedral, No 29, the Georgian house in Fitzwilliam Street and the Or Exhibition in the National Museum. Our pupils tested the worksheets designed for the cathedral. All classes attended a story telling workshop in 'The Ark' where they created stories and recorded them for other children. One pupil had a part in 'The Snowman' in the NCH.

The Spring term started in the 'Incredible Edibles' programme, run by Agri Aware

to encourage children to eat and grow more fruit and vegetables. The pupils planted strawberries, carrots, beans, potatoes, turnips and onions and some flowers. Thanks to a donation from the Past Choristers' and



Boys at choir practice

Pupils' Association the school was able to purchase more gardening tools, containers and plants. Was a pleasure to meet with some of our past pupils at the annual dinner and reunion in March and it is always inter-

esting to learn more about their careers and the paths they have chosen.

The summer term past quickly and events which took place included the usual school work plus swimming, a trip to Newgrange and Knowth, a trip to Dublinia, an end of year concert, an exhibition of pupils' work across the range of subjects, caring for the plants in the school garden (sharing the strawberries and guessing if the potatoes were ready for harvesting!) and a sports day. We bade farewell to 6th class at the end of year service in the Lady Chapel. We hope that in the years to come they too will play a part in that unique group of past choristers and pupils of St. Patrick's Cathedral Schools.

Sandra Morgan.

## A memory or two from a past pupil!

I was one of the first girls to be allowed to cross the hallowed steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School. This was to be the beginning of the happiest days of my life! Being female and obviously a different shape to what the teaching staff and fellow pupils were used to, we were treated as almost exotic! Looking back now I feel poor Mr. Horner and Mr. Kleinstuber didn't really know what to do with us. I was joined in my year with three other girls, Isobel Campbell, Jean Bowe and Jennifer Hill. We were so scared the first term we never ever left the prefabs even for lunch! All that changed when we made friends with all the boys and were treated as equals.

Mr. Brian Weir was a pet and we all loved him and to this day I still remember the difference between stalagmites and stalactites! He was always approachable, kind and punctual for class, Dan Stokes who always seemed to arrive late! And what can I say about Miss Jago.....a legend. The only teacher who could command a perfect Spanish class. Even the most lively person in the class quaked in their boots if



George & Linda

she called upon them to recite an irregular Spanish verb.

Of course a lot of romances blossomed in the school. I met my husband, George, there. Clive Macken met Susan Usher, still one of our closest friends. My sister, June Rogers, was a pupil in class with Paul Hewson (Bono).

I remember sports day, prize giving and the cathedral school service every Friday morning. I still love to steward in St. Patrick's especially around the Christmas season. All this has given me a great love of choral and classical music.

I am delighted the school continues to thrive under the guardianship of Sylvia Hick and her wonderful staff. May there be many

more happy times and events.

I am now very involved in the Past Choristers' and Pupils' Association and would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to get involved with us and support the events we run. We have a varied programme during the year and we would love to see many more people getting involved. Please make contact with our secretary or any member of the committee. Looking forward to seeing old friends!

Linda Quigley

(just discovered I am going to be a granny....Happy days!!!)

(In addition to her being one of the first girls in the school, Linda was also our first lady committee member and our first Lady President, year 1997/98.



Reunion 1998, with Dean Stewart

### "O Muse! Where Art Thou?" (taken from the archives)

There is a school in Ireland,  
St. Patrick's is its name,  
There was no school in any land  
So worthy of its fame.

For in it little saints were taught,  
Who never in their lives had fought;  
In class there never was a sound,  
For in this school young saints were found.

They always had their lessons right,  
Which they always did at home at night.  
Were they ever late for school? Oh, no!  
But this was very long ago.

Things are not now as before;  
A school for saints it is no more.  
For now you see the "saints" are rough,  
Some even play the atomic stuff.

R. SIMESON (Inter.) 1946

## Cathedral Developments

By Gavin Woods, Cathedral Administrator.

Things often seem to move slowly in the Cathedral (sometimes frustratingly so!) but looking back over the last year it is clear that quite a lot has in fact happened. The most obvious change has been our development of the entrance most used by our visitors and worshippers; the south west porch. In fact the work to date represents

and sections of a walnut tree pulled out of a lake in the midlands! It is a piece of bespoke furniture worthy of the Cathedral setting. Happily it also works quite well and has proved an attractive, functional and safe work station for the Cathedral Staff. The glass doors have revolutionised the ambience of the west end

continues which is largely unseen. New fire proof doors are being installed throughout the doorways in the roof space the benefit of which I hope never personally to witness! A good deal of planning is taking place to minimise the threat posed by fire to the Cathedral and Deanery buildings and further initiatives in this area will be undertaken in the near future.

Leaving aside the Cathedral fabric there have been other developments of note. Mr Parminter, a well known former chorister, is now assisted by Mr Colin Chadwick who has joined us through a rather circuitous route from Southwark Cathedral and St Cannice's in Kilkenny. Amongst their many other responsibilities they will ensure that guided tours of the Cathedral by volunteers and staff will continue through the winter. Details of these tours will be kept updated on our website [www.stpatrickscathedral.ie](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie). Our education project continues apace with workshops and tours now available for both primary and secondary schools. Again full details are to be found on our website. The general routine of repair and maintenance never ceases. The roof requires constant attention and major work will be required to quite large sections soon. We are also looking forward to our next major project which is the cleaning, decoration and reordering of the Lady Chapel. The scale of this work will be comparable to that undertaken on the Tower some years ago. Let us hope the visitors keep coming!

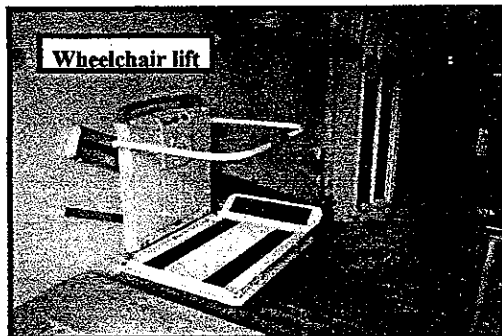


The new entrance doors

phase one of a more ambitious plan which includes creating a new lobbied exit in the west door and the redevelopment of the shop. Our beautiful new welcome desk was designed by the Cathedral architect Mr John Beauchamp and was built by Mr Chris White of Acre Wood. It is crafted from various hardwoods including oak, elm

of the Cathedral. Many, including myself, had some reservations about how they would look and work once in place but few would disagree now that the light they allow into the area has had a transformative effect.

The new mechanical wheel chair access platform is to my mind the most important addition of the past year. People of reduced mobility can now access the Cathedral unaided which reduces the load on staff at busy times and increases the independence of our visitors and worshippers who are wheel chair users. Other very important health and safety work



Wheelchair lift



## From the Precentor's pen...

"When morning guilds the skies..." A 6:00 a.m. rendezvous in the Close allowed for loading of robes, music and travel bags onto the coach with the help of our fabulous driver, Tommy and a roll call: 11 choristers, lay vicars, the Organist and Master of the Choristers (the Big Boss); the Assistant organist, the Dean's Vicar, 4 "mums", the Precentor and Mrs Reed. We then boarded the M.V. Ulysses for the comfortable crossing to Holyhead

and our drive to Birmingham. The evening was spent acclimatising. Friday morning, it was down to work with a rehearsal and an afternoon recital in Birmingham Cathedral, which was very well attended. Fond reunions displayed how much Stuart is missed by his former congregation. Following, there was a hasty departure to Cadbury World where, just like raisins, the choristers were immersed in chocolate. The hours flew. The shopping was manic. "The best day of my life so far!" After a stimulating visit to the Think Tank science museum on Saturday, we were on the road to Gloucester. Approaching the precincts, the theme song to the Harry Potter films resonated from the young voices as some of the filming was done in the cloisters. The impressive Cathedral hosts its services in the intimate choir and chancel, whose monastic origins as the Abbey of St Peter date back prior to 1540. The sublime music at the Office of Evensong was most appreciated by the worshippers. Back to Birmingham for our evening. "Awake, awake to love and work..." A sunrise drive to

Gloucester to be there in time for a 10:15 Eucharist. The introit "O sacrum convivium" by Tallis and the setting "Misa Brevis" by Grayston Ives reminded us of the



Rehearsing

true value of all the effort of so many. Once again, the congregation were grateful. At coffee following, chorister Billy Morris' father, John, of Booterstown Parish who joined us for worship, passed on his son's regards, who now lives in San Francisco.

A leisurely lunch and cathedral tour preceded the rehearsal and service of Choral Evensong. Canon Mullen, once again, intoned the office and the choir was, as usual, resplendent. Mr Leigh was in his element as he treated the congregation to the standard of voluntary to which he and the instrument were capable of achieving. Grateful applause dismissed us all!

At Sunday supper, the awards ceremony entertained the boys. All of the choristers were winners. Monday was the journey home. The calm seas off the Old Bailey were welcoming as were the arms of parents and partners. "It is right to give our thanks and praise." Thanks to Mr Nicholson and to Mr Leigh, to the lay vicars to the choristers and to the Dean's

Vicar and adult supervisors, Vic, Liz, Averill and Bernie, who contributed to the success of the tour. Thanks, of course, to those who subscribed to the costs; namely the Cathedral Board, The Society of the Friends, Past Choristers and the sponsors of the choristers as well as to the parents for their fund raising.

It is always a pleasure to accompany the tour for many reasons. Firstly, in support of the choir so that they may sense their value to us all. Most enjoyably is the opportunity to hear the excellent talent in new settings and to realise how fortunate we are in achieving such marvellous standards. Oral compliments, as well, uplift the spirits. New perspectives on the liturgy are interesting and valuable. There is also the refreshment of interacting with colleagues and to witness the bonding



amongst the participants. The leisure activities are equally important and, let's face it, what can beat Cadbury World?

May I reassure every one of the worth of such tours. May I thank those who invested their time in planning, organising, supervising and participating in the memorable event. For the supervisors it was 24/7! Not exactly a holiday! They are worthy of our thanks and praise. Every success to Mr Nicholson with his next venture! RCR

## A continued challenge for us

Over the years the Association has published magazines and newsletters which have recorded for posterity memories and recollections of former choristers and pupils of the cathedral schools. It is good indeed to look back and celebrate the past but an Association such as ours can only survive if its eyes are firmly set the future! A jaunt back to the past is a good thing but the challenge of our Association is to plough onwards and set its sights on new challenges and possibilities. Our Association has a wonderful heritage for which we are so thankful but our urgent task is to continue to be relevant to the needs of our present members and to look forward to our growth and survival in the future. Our committee are continuing to endeavour to make contact with all past choristers and pupils, to continue to develop our links with the cathedral schools, to forge new ways of assisting the cathedral and also to host functions and events which meet the needs of our very diverse membership. Please remember our Association is nothing without the continued support of the members and those interested in our aims and objectives.

Roy Byrne.

### ASU Golfing Tournament 2011

Congratulations to the St. Patrick's past pupils team on winning the Royal Dublin Cup at the ASU Golf Tournament held at Beechpark Golf Club on 5th September 2011. This is the second time our team have won this cup since its introduction in 1950, the last time being 1969.

There were nine of our members participating and the winning four (with the highest score) were Wally Blennerhassett, Clive Macken, Mervyn Miller and Archdeacon David Pierpoint.

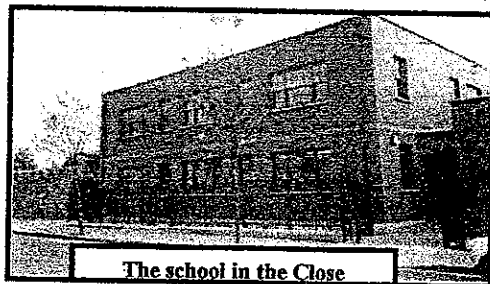
We are grateful to Cecil Rowden, the team captain and ASU Golf Hon. Secretary for organising this event each year.

### Association Ties and Scarves

Supplies of Association Ties and Scarves are available at the following prices:

Ties.....€10  
Scarves..€25

Contact Stephen Burleigh, 22 Woodbrook Park, Templeogue, Dublin 16.  
Phone 494 7460 or Email [gsburleigh@eircom.net](mailto:gsburleigh@eircom.net)



The school in the Close

For further information about the Association please contact our Secretary—Helen Olliffe (086 847 7916) or find us on facebook where our events are advertised.

### Reminder.....

#### Membership Subscriptions

Membership subscriptions, €15, are now due and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Joy Linton, 10 Newcastle Manor Square, Newcastle, Co Dublin or passed to any member of the committee for onward transmission to her.

The Association relies heavily on members subscriptions to meet financial commitments and would therefore appeal for payment of these as soon as possible. Paying subscriptions is often overlooked (put on the long finger and forgotten about!) so please don't leave it hanging, why not deal with it now.

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# RS M

The Royal School of Church Music in Ireland

Come & Sing

Saturday 12 November 2011

St Bartholomew's Church, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Registration from 1.30pm Rehearsal starts at 2pm

For details and booking form contact:  
Mark Bowyer, Flat 7, 35 Castle Street,  
Dublin 2.

E: [mark.bowyer@rscmireland.com](mailto:mark.bowyer@rscmireland.com)

T: +353 (0) 86 165 3714

Booking Form must be in by Friday  
21/10/2011