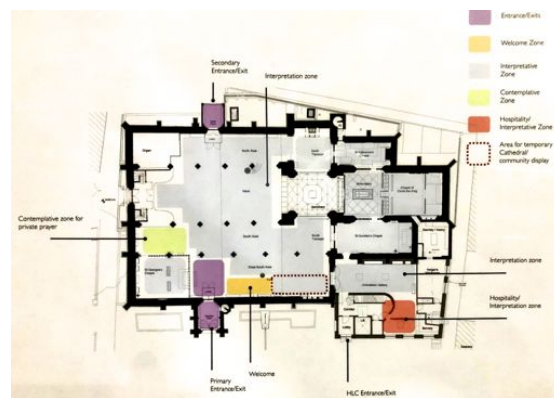




# Leicester Cathedral Old Choristers' Association



# Newsletter 2021





## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the latest LCOCA's newsletter covering 2021. Despite the on-going pandemic – the less said of that the better – a great deal of information about our beloved cathedral and LCOCA members is still coming to me as well as many other interesting articles. The redoubtable Richard Belton has been, as always, assiduous in assembling all the news, photos and other information to make this another bumper edition. As always, this newsletter is your opportunity to keep in touch with your cathedral, its music and those fellow choristers and songmen with whom you shared so many wonderful times. Following last year's detailed reminiscences from Stephen Wain and Chris Jager's of Dr. Gray's time, I asked for memories of your times with Peter White, Jonathan Gregory and Chris Ouvry-Johns. I did mention that I was George Gray's last head chorister and Peter White's first so my triggered memories will appear in the next issue as this is going to be a bumper edition as it is.

As in previous years, do keep us up-to-date with your personal news and anything else which you feel would be of interest to us. Please feel free to email our joint secretaries at [lcoca.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:lcoca.secretary@gmail.com). Also let us have comments on the content in this issue and what you would like to read in future editions.

I mention this every year but when submitting articles, please ensure they are unformatted. Whilst I can access Word documents easily, any photos MUST be attached to emails and not embedded in your Word document. Thanks.



**David Fisher** [Chorister 1963-69 & Songman 1970s]

## FRIENDLY QUIZ from last year:

*Throughout the 2020 newsletter there were sixteen numbered images of places of worship which I had photographed. How many were you able to recognise? Here are the answers:*

- 1 – Beverley Minster
- 2 – St Walburge's, Preston
- 3 – Leeds Minster [formerly Parish Church]
- 4 – Hull Minster

- 5 – Blackburn Cathedral
- 6 – Boston Parish Church
- 7 – King's Lynn Minster
- 8 – Doncaster Minster
- 9 – Grantham Parish Church
- 10 – Bristol Cathedral
- 11 – Clifton Cathedral
- 12 – Northampton Cathedral
- 13 – Liverpool Cathedral
- 14 – St Margaret's Church, Bodelwyddan
- 15 – Aachener Dom, Germany
- 16 – Ely Cathedral

*All are notable (in varying degrees) for architectural or historic reasons. Beverley being grander and more beautiful than most cathedrals, Preston because the architect was Joseph Hansom and it has the tallest parish church spire in the country and Bodelwyddan St Margaret's is justly known as the Marble Church – see below. All are worth visiting as are most religious buildings of whatever denomination. Have you some interesting photos of religious buildings for future editions? Alas, despite me offering a cash prize to be donated to the Cathedral's Music Foundation for the number of correct questions answered not a single entry was offered. I shall donate the money myself.*

**David Fisher**

## LEICESTER CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION



[<http://leicestercathedral.org/music/choirs/old-choristers-association/>]

### PRESIDENT:

**Revd. Canon Dr Johannes Arens**

### VICE PRESIDENTS:

**Right Revd. Vivienne Faulk**

**Very Revd. David Monteith**

**Revd. Canon Michael T H Banks**

**Revd. Canon John Craig**

**Revd. Canon Stephen Foster**

**Revd. Canon Michael Wilson**

### CHAIRMAN:

**Graham Wright**

### JOINT SECRETARIES:

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## **TREASURER, FCOCA & FCM**

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**MINUTES SECRETARY: Nicholas Basford**

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR: David Fisher**

**COMMITTEE:**

**Dr Christopher Ouvry-Johns** (Ex-Officio)



## **DR. GEORGE GRAY MEMORIAL TRUST**

<http://leicestercathedral.org/music/dr-george-gray-memorial-trust/>

**Chairman of Trustees and Administrator:**

**David Briers**

7 Houlditch Rd, Leicester, LE2 3FF  
email: [juda.briers@btinternet.com](mailto:juda.briers@btinternet.com)

**Trustees:**

**Nicholas Basford Richard Belton  
Neil Crutchley Gerard Gray  
Philip Leech John Thorpe**

This trust is administered by the trustees to provide scholarships to the Cathedral Choir and is governed by a trust deed dated 8th February 1983 as amended by a Resolution dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010. It was registered as a charity on 1st March 1983 under registration number 513625 and any proposed changes to the trustees are ratified at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

### **Report 2021**

The Chairman was informed by the Director of Music in September 2021 that because of the conditions caused by the pandemic no scholarships were being awarded for the academic year just closed. The Chairman told the Director of Music he felt sure the Trustees would therefore agree that the £1600 they had made available for the year to September 2021

could be carried forward and made available for the ensuing year.

Following advice from the Melton Building Society that their interest rate would be further reduced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 0.25%, the Trustees agreed to transfer all but £1000 of the money invested in the Melton Building Society to the existing Loughborough Building Society account as 0.80% interest could then be obtained on that account.

As the only business to be done in respect of the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 was to approve the annual report and accounts there was, as in the previous year no point in holding an in-person meeting and the appropriate documents were therefore circulated by email for approval. Michael Gray formally resigned as a Trustee on 16<sup>th</sup> October because of his ill health and he died early on Christmas Eve. The Trustees have sent cards to his family expressing their sympathy and prayers; may he rest in peace and rise in glory and his family know God's comfort. The Trustees are hugely grateful for all he has done for the Trust since it was founded, and he will be much missed. It is good that his son, Gerard is one of the Trustees and that thus the Gray family involvement continues.

In the autumn John Thorpe had a discussion with Chris Ouvry-Johns about future policy. Chris had been successful in obtaining quite substantial grants to support choristers, which have to be spent in the next 12 months and stated he would like to use the Trust's Scholarships to add to this so that extra tuition can be arranged for the most deserving boys and junior girls. As normal rehearsal and instruction had been considerably hindered for much of the preceding 18 months the Chairman felt this was an excellent idea and that the Trustees should agree; five Trustees have already expressed their approval. We hope this will be helpful to the choir in these difficult times.

**David Briers** FRCO  
Chairman of Trustees

**P.S.** A copy of the sermon given by the Very Reverend Alan Warren for Dr Gray's funeral, which took place on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1981, has recently been donated to our archives from Geoffrey Carter. Copies are available from Richard Belton:

[richard.t.belton@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.t.belton@btinternet.com)

## DioSing!

### - adapting the *DioSing!* curriculum

On 17 March 2020 I left the Cathedral office and in-school teaching for eight months. When visiting staff were allowed to return, differing risk assessments meant that teaching the same topic at every school would no longer work. Some schools were happy to resume singing lessons, some wanted music in school but wouldn't allow the children to sing, and some wanted lessons delivered online over Zoom. Early in the autumn term, I started adapting existing lesson plans and making new ones to accommodate each school's wishes.



The advantage to this sudden change in our curriculum is that I've been able to explore areas of the National Curriculum for Music which *DioSing!* hasn't previously covered. In addition to singing, performing, and learning to read music children are now also able to learn about the instruments of the orchestra (demonstrated by the fantastic string, woodwind, brass and percussion teachers from the Leicestershire Music Education Hub), compose their own music, and play musical instruments. The instruments they have been learning are a set of 32 colour-coded bells, which play a one-octave scale in C major. Classes made recordings for the Cathedral's 2020 Advent Calendar, as well as for the Police and Fire Online Carol Service and, most recently, the Good Friday Family Service. All these performances are still available to watch on the Cathedral's YouTube channel.

While the bells have been very popular, finding music for them has been a bit of a challenge! Very little repertoire is limited to the eight notes of a C major scale, since the music



for the Advent Calendar was recorded, classes began work on a variety of new topics which have sparked some wonderful creativity:

**Year 2** (online) – this class are currently learning about Brazilian Samba drumming and the annual Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. They have learned rhythms for the surdo, repenique, tamborim, ganza and agogo, and are performing their own composition on body percussion, 'found' instruments, and a few homemade instruments which have been beautifully decorated with rainbows for the NHS.

**Year 3** – this class are building on what they covered in the Spring term orchestra topic by learning about Holst's *Planets Suite*, and composing the missing 'Earth' movement. They have been listening to how Gustav Holst portrayed the character of each planet in his music and instrumentation, and have composed a short melody which they are learning to play on the bells. They have decided that Earth is peaceful, happy, crazy, calm, exciting, amazing and annoying.

**Year 5** – this class are working on a composing for advertising topic. They have already written a catchy radio jingle for a station they called Cauliflower Radio, and are now working on a soundtrack for '*Sunset Paradise*', a tropical holiday destination where apparently Gordon Ramsey does the cooking for free, and elephants, monkeys, parrots, toucans and flamingos wander around the resort. They have even recorded their own foley with a large bucket of water in the school hall!

Every week, I look forward to seeing what each class will think up, and I can't wait to get more schools on board next year.

**Rosie Vinter**

*Assistant Director of Music &  
Head of Music Outreach [16<sup>th</sup> May 2021]*



## MEMBERS NOTES

### Milestone Birthdays

**Terry Dwyer**, who lives in Quorn, celebrated his 99th birthday in 2021 and is still very much with it! His involvement with the Cathedral was as one time assistant to **Dr George Gray** and as a songman. He was well known in the county as teacher, composer, conductor and performer, and for a time was Assistant County music advisor to Eric Pinkett before taking up a post at Loughborough College. Whilst head of Music at Kibworth Beauchamp Grammar School he produced two operas, "Hugh the Drover" by Vaughan Williams and "Don Giovanni" by Mozart and subsequently published books "Opera in Your School" and "Teaching Music Appreciation" (pub Oxford).

Congratulations also to **Harry Poyner** and **Martin Gray** who reached their 90th birthdays during 2021. A photograph [[on the inside back cover](#)] shows Martin and his wife Peggy, together with their two daughters, **Julia Dickson** and **Penny Gray-Smith**, both former choristers.

### The visit to Leicester of HM King George VI & HM Queen Elizabeth

*In 2022 we have the opportunity to celebrate and commemorate the wondrous occasion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's remarkable 70<sup>th</sup> [Platinum] anniversary of Her accession to the throne. HM QEII's fairly recent visit to the cathedral with the Duchess of Cambridge is fondly remembered. It is appropriate then that this year we can read and enjoy a report about a previous royal visit by John Thorpe who was a chorister from 1946-1951. He continued afterwards as a songman and then songman emeritus (making 75 years in total) serving the cathedral community as a valuable singer and a Eucharistic member of the congregation.*

### A very special day in the life of a Leicester Cathedral Chorister

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 1946

It was a typical autumnal October morning and the start of a normal school day. I reached for my school blazer and cap, said cheerio to mum and left the house. I met up with Barry, my old school friend from Humberstone Junior School,

we had recently left there and been accepted as pupils at the Wyggeston Grammar School for boys.

We caught the L29 Midland Red bus from Scraptoft taking us to Leicester town centre, it appeared busier than usual and there was a murmur of excited chatter amongst the passengers. We alighted in Humberstone Gate having passed the remains of the bomb damaged properties on Humberstone Road near Spinney Hill and the Freeman Hardy & Willis factory and warehouse at the corner of Wharf Street and walked across Charles Street, Halford Street and Horsefair Street to take our second bus via Welford Road to school.

School started as usual, with assembly in the Great Hall, after its conclusion all classes assembled and processed along University Road to Lancaster Road where we took up our positions, form by form, ready to welcome our Royal visitors to Leicester.

The whole school had assembled to cheer and greet them as they passed by in their motorcade on their way to the War Memorial on Victoria Park and then on to a Civic Reception in the De Montfort Hall.

The school assembly was now ready to return to the school. I however was not going back with them. I had to make my way into Leicester and to the Cathedral. There was now, no public transport available to me due to road closures for the Royal processions around town, I therefore set off on foot.

Due to the large crowds that had now gathered along the routes of the King and Queen it was becoming difficult for me to push my way through and cross over the routes to reach my destination, however, thanks to the forethought of my elders, I had been given a pass, signed by the then Chief Constable, Mr Ecob, no less, to enable me to traverse the route I was taking.

There was a policeman stationed about every 100 yards along the route but when I attempted to cross the nearest policeman stopped me. However, when I showed him my pass he even assisted me over. I soon realised what wonderful power I had in my hand and proceeded to zigzag my way across the routes until I was in sight of the cathedral.

I went into the Song School from our usual entrance in St Martins East to discover that most of the boys and songmen were already assembled. There was a lot of excited

already assembled. There was a lot of excited chatter as we robed. We were then addressed on where and what we were going to do, told of the protocol we should follow and how to behave and respond if we were spoken to. I don't remember the details we were given exactly, I think I was too excited and in awe of what was about to happen.

The choir then processed to the south door and we took up our places on the east side outside the Vaughan Porch.

*By now, the Royal Cavalcade was passing the clock tower into High Street on its way to the Cathedral. It arrived in Peacock Lane and the Royal Couple and City dignitaries alighted and were welcomed and greeted by the then Lord Bishop, the Right Reverend Guy Vernon Smith.*



*The Royal party now proceeded down the drive to the Vaughan Porch where we were all awaiting their arrival. The King and Queen were introduced to the Provost, The Very Rev'd H A Jones and other chapter members by the Bishop.*



*Whilst this was happening, the choir were watching the proceedings and songmen were busy with their own cameras. Pictured are Freddy Brightwell (centre) and Fred Warburton (left).*



*Meanwhile Queen Elizabeth came over to talk to some of the choristers. Her Majesty is pictured here in conversation with David Moore...*





...and here with senior boys Ray Cayless and David Frith:



Following on from all the personal greetings and introductions, it was now time for the King and Queen, the Bishop and Chapter and Civic Dignitaries, to move into the cathedral to complete and record their historic visit to our cathedral.



They entered through the south door for a private tour and then exited by the north porch door and proceeded to the Guildhall.



This for me is one of my most valued memories. I realised, that being a cathedral chorister was going to give me a purpose to profess the Gospel, in hymns, psalms and anthems for the rest of my life. This I have done for the past 75 years. My most recent royal joy was to be invited, in 2017, to receive the Maundy Money from HRH Queen Elizabeth II, the daughter of the King that I had met all those years before.

**John Thorpe**

My final picture [below] shows their Majesties, to the cheers of the pupils of Alderman Newton's Boys' School and Alderman Newton's Girls' School, leaving the Guildhall and walking back along St Martin's West to Peacock Lane to rejoin their motorcade.



**FEDERATION OF  
CATHEDRAL OLD  
CHORISTERS'  
ASSOCIATIONS**

*fcoca*

***This is part of the New Year FCOCA update report from the Chairman Nick Hodges. It has previously been distributed to LCOCA members but some may have missed these important points.***

New Year is a time we often look back at what has happened, as well as forward and much has happened in the last 12 months. Since the beginning of last year I have had meetings with over half of our member Associations and they have proved to be helpful and interesting in equal measure and I hope the participants have also found them so. As we were unable to hold our AGM & Festival in Ely, the AGM took place on-line as did our Executive

Committee meetings. Given we come from all four corners of the country, this proved an efficient use of time. I also met with Cathedral Music Trust (CMT) and the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) to begin the dialogue on how we can work together to further the cause of choral music.

We have made progress in our communications with the wider world, our more regular newsletters being part of this. Once a Chorister magazine was published in November on our website and my thanks go to all the contributors and, especially to Honorary Secretary, Alastair Pollard who collected, collated and edited the publication again this year. We have received a few more newsletters for posting on our website and I encourage all member Associations to send us your newsletters for inclusion on our website, if appropriate, or an edited version if preferred. In addition to our activities, in April, CMT announced the appointment of TV and radio presenter, Alexander Armstrong as their Choral Ambassador and I was delighted to meet him over Zoom to discuss the objectives of his role and how the Federation could work with him. In July the RSCM announced International Chorister Day, which took place on 19th September with the aim of celebrating the benefits of choristership.

In October, CMT hosted a special concert in partnership with Coventry Cathedral, in aid of the Diamond Fund for Choristers. Directed by Rachel Mahon, fifty young singers representing ten cathedrals and greater churches across the Midlands, came together in Coventry. A number of Associations managed to hold "in-person" reunions, notably St Mary's, Warwick and Salisbury Cathedral who both focused their events on celebrating 30 years of their respective Girls' Choirs.

Looking forward to 2022, the highlight for the Federation will be the AGM/Festival weekend at Ely and we hope that many more Associations will be able to return to face-to-face events. If you are holding an event, please do invite the Federation to join you. I will make every effort to be there and, if I am not able to, my Executive Committee colleagues have said they will try to do so. Also, do allow us to promote your event on our website and Facebook page. Send us the details in the format you would like it posted and also send us a report with photos after the

event. As you will see in Once a Chorister, Coventry Cathedral celebrates the 60th anniversary of the consecration of the new cathedral over the weekend of 21st – 22nd May. Former choristers from the choir at the consecration will come together to sing evensong with the current cathedral choir on Saturday 21st and Federation member Associations are invited to attend.

The final of BBC Songs of Praise, Young Chorister of the Year 2021 was broadcast on Sunday 2nd December. The winner was a girl chorister (Ruby) from Guildford Cathedral. We send our congratulations to her, all at Guildford and, of course, all the other competitors in this year's competition. In the words of judge, Lesley Garrett, "it is good to know that the future of choral music in the UK is in safe hands".

**Support for Choirs:** In the not too distant past the Federation kept a record of the support provided by member Associations for their current choirs, which we published on the website. As it fell out of date and we weren't informed of initiatives being delivered by Associations, the list was withdrawn. We would like to reinstate it. Do you support your choir in some way? Perhaps you provide bursaries or pay for singing lessons. Do you fund a scholarship or contribute to choir tours? Perhaps you pay for an annual party or contribute to some fun stuff for the choristers at Christmastide. Whatever you do, please let us know about it and we will maintain an up-to-date list on the website.

**Survival – A Call To Arms:** In my article for the 2020 edition of Once a Chorister, my first as Chair of the Federation, entitled A Manifesto for Change, I set out some objectives to ensure the long term survival of the Federation. I believe we are making progress to meeting these objective but we still have a long way to go. To help us secure the Federation's future I am calling on you, our members, for help. Every organisation depends on people. Without them nothing happens. It is people who organise events, write minutes, collect money, send newsletters, manage data, create websites etc. Successful organisations are those that plan for the future and plan for succession. With every respect for my fellow members of the Executive Committee, none of us is getting any younger. If we fail to recruit our successors



then the Federation will cease to exist and we will have failed in our duty. In normal times, for organisations like the Federation, recruitment takes place when people meet but we have not met, in person, for over 2 years and those conversations that might have taken place have not done so. If you – or any member of your Association – would like to join the Executive Committee, we would be delighted to hear from you. We meet 3 or 4 times a year, now, usually by video conference and the more people we have involved, the less the burden on any one person. We are also looking for help in two specific areas. We need to update and develop our website and we also need to implement a database/data management system.

Any help or guidance you can provide in either of these areas, as a member of the Committee or not, would be very gratefully received.



**Nick Hodges**  
[chairman@fcoca.org.uk](mailto:chairman@fcoca.org.uk)

Congratulations to **Clare Fowler** who married Adam Hollingshurst on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at St. Mary's Church in Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. They were not able to have a choir, but were able to sing the hymns, "Love Divine" and "Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer". The occasion was after Clare and Adam had had to postpone their wedding at the Cathedral as reported in the 2020 newsletter.



Congratulations also to **Victoria-Jade Leonard** who was married to **Nathan Booker** on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December in the Cathedral, just before the building was closed for eighteen months. The service was conducted by Nathan's mother, the Revd Canon Alison Booker and the music was directed by **Chris Ouvry-Johns**.

Victoria and Nathan, who was also in the choir at the Cathedral as a Young Songman, are now both Choral Scholars at Leeds Minster and some of their friends from there came down to sing alongside members of the Cathedral Choir and the Choir of Billesdon Church, where Alison is priest, for the service. The music was the hymns "The Holly and the Ivy", "We pledge to one another" and "O come all ye faithful" and the choir sang the anthems "The Tiffany Anthem" by **David Fisher**, a favourite both of Victoria and of the choir, "Ave verum corpus" Mozart and "O holy night" Adam with **Emma Trounson** as the soloist.

The organist was the Organ Scholar of Leeds Minster, Will Campbell, who played in the "Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" Handel and out "Toccata" Widor. **James Upton** was the best man and **Candice Young**, a former

 **Weddings**

Congratulations to **Ian Wilson** and Jane who 'tied the knot' during a very small ceremony at Great Glen Methodist Church on 21st April. They are now living in Uppingham.



Leicester chorister, was one of the bridesmaids.



As Organist to the University of Leicester he played annually at graduation ceremonies in the De Montfort Hall and thrilled audiences with his mastery of the great Taylor organ there. The university conferred on him the honorary degree of MMus and in 2013 elected him as a Distinguished Honorary Fellow. In 2017 Ian was awarded the MBE in honour of his outstanding contribution to musical life in Leicester.

After leaving school he qualified as an electrician but was also blessed with a prodigious natural talent as a pianist and organist with a very sure touch. He

could improvise on any tune you might suggest, and if he came anywhere near a piano in a pub, he would delight an informal audience with appropriate repertoire.

In his youth he took organ lessons with Dr George Gray at Leicester Cathedral but never aspired to formal qualifications, yet he gave numerous recitals in and around the city. A humble man, he made many many friends, he was that sort of person; he would never fail to greet you and would always have a story to tell, often with his impish sense of humour. His life was devoted to the church and music at St Nicholas, playing right to the end.

In June 2021, he manned a sponsored 'Hymnathon' on his 84th birthday playing 84 hymns to raise money for local charities. For many musicians in Leicester his passing marks the end of an era. He was a lovable man who will be greatly missed.

**Laurence Rogers,**

(A former chorister and deputy organist at St Nicholas Church)  
*Derby District Organists' Association*



## **In Memoriam**

The music community in Leicester was mourning the loss of **Ian Imlay MBE** who died on 16th August 2021 from Covid. He had been Organist at the city's oldest church, St Nicholas (next to the Roman Wall in the city centre) for over 60 years.

For many of those years St Nicholas church hosted the Anglican Chaplaincy of the University of Leicester and as such Ian was choirmaster to many generations of students who sang in the choir there. Under his direction the choir reached the highest standards with a wonderful repertoire and would annually become a visiting choir to many cathedrals, including Derby. He also served as organist in the chapel of Leicester Royal Infirmary.





Ian Imlay

Ian was a very generous Patron of our Association and his funeral service was held in St Nicholas Church on the 9<sup>th</sup> September led by the Reverend Canon

Karen Rooms, followed by a private cremation. Due to limited seating in the church, the service was live streamed via Facebook and YouTube. The organist was **Simon Headley** and the choir was comprised of present and former choristers, and other singers who had strong connections with Ian over the years. The choir sang the anthems "Thou knowest Lord the secrets of our Hearts" by Purcell and "Thou wilt keep him" by Wesley and also sang the "Nunc Dimittis in D" by Walmisley before the "Sortie in E flat" by Lefebure-Wely was played on the organ at the end of the service. Refreshments were then served in St Martins House.

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October, a Musical Thanksgiving for the Life of Ian took place in Leicester Cathedral consisting of organ and choral performances by Ian's friends and colleagues. The organists who took part in playing many organ pieces were **Christopher Ouvry-Johns**, Director of Music at the Cathedral; Laurence Rogers, a former assistant organist to Ian and Organist Emeritus of Melbourne Parish Church; Anne de Graeve, freelance organist; Simon Ainge, a former organ pupil and now organist at Billesdon Parish Church; Iain Harvey-Ashenhurst, organ tuner for St Nicholas Church and freelance organist and **Simon Headley**, Principal Organist of Loughborough Parish Church and formerly Cathedral Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Leicester Cathedral. (Unfortunately space does not permit listing here the many organ pieces played but were available in the event programme if anyone would like a copy). The three choir pieces were "Hail, gladdening light" by Charles Wood, "Te Deum in B flat" by Charles Stanford and Benjamin Britten's "Jubilate Deo".

Thanks were expressed to John Thawley for masterfully organising the programme, to David Necklen for rehearsing and conducting

the choir and to **Simon Headley** for accompanying the choir. Those present had gathered that evening because, in the words of Canon Karen, "they were so very conscious of the absence of his musical expertise and his playful and friendship and there is a great silence without him"

We were also sorry to learn that the Bishop had announced the death on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021 of **The Very Reverend Derek Hole, Hon DLitt, Hon LLD** at the age of 87. Derek was



ordained in Leicester in 1960 and served his curacy at St Mary Magdalene, Knighton. He ministered in Coventry and Peterborough before moving back to Leicester where he was Vicar at St James the Greater from 1973–1992. During this time, Derek served as Rural Dean, Chair of the House of Clergy and was Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen. From 1992 to 1999, Derek was Provost of Leicester Cathedral and until last year he held the Bishop's Permission to officiate. So much of Derek's ministry had been in this diocese over such a long time.

The Very Revd David Monteith, Dean of Leicester, said that "Derek knew so many people across our churches where his pastoral care has been greatly appreciated. He was also a very well-known figure in public and civic life and across the wider community. This had included much involvement in the Leicester and De Montfort Universities, the Leicester Rotary Club, the Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters and many other organisations. He had an immense capacity for friendship and so many will be giving thanks for his encouragement in the light of his encouragement of so many others. The Cathedral Community remains grateful for all his service here."

On the evening of Friday 24th September, Derek's coffin was brought to the church of St James the Greater for a Requiem Mass to which all were welcome. The coffin rested overnight in the church before a "Service of Farewell and Thanksgiving for Derek's Life and Ministry" took place the following day. There were four hymns "There's a wideness in God's mercy", "Lord for the years, "Now is eternal life", and "Christ triumphant ever reigning" The choir, directed by Michael Rule, sang the anthem "And I saw a new heaven" by Edgar Bainton. The organist, Timothy Lees, played "Gaudeamus Igitur" from the Academic Festival Overture by Brahms at the beginning of the service, "Te Deum Prelude" by Marc-Antoine Charpentier whilst the family followed the coffin to the font and "Grand Choeur" by Theodore-Cesar Salome whilst the family followed the coffin out of the church.

Refreshments were served after the service in the church hall and Derek had requested that donations in his memory would be divided equally between The Friends of Saint James the Greater and the Hope Foundation for Cancer Research.

Derek had given his full support to the music department at Leicester Cathedral whilst Provost and had been a very generous Vice President of our Association over many years. The winter edition of the magazine of St James the Greater "The Shell" for 2021/2022 runs into 30 pages and was dedicated almost entirely to Derek. If anyone would like a copy, Richard Belton would be pleased to email or post a copy to any of our members. There will be a small charge for printed copies.

Following the announcement last year of the death of another former Provost, **The Very Reverend Alan Warren**, the Cathedral Eucharist on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October included thanksgivings for his life. We were delighted that Sylvia and the rest of the family were able to be present.

Alan specifically noted in his last wishes that he hoped that if there were to be a Memorial event that it could happen during the 'normal Sunday morning communion service at the Cathedral', since he established the Cathedral Parish Communion on a Sunday morning at a time when Matins still generally held sway. Alan chose hymns and lovely music



to be included in the service including the playing by **David Cowen** of a piece of organ music composed by him.

The music was sung by the Senior Girls and Songmen of the Cathedral Choir and the Mass setting was the Mass in G by Franz Schubert. The hymns were "For all the Saints", "Come down O Love Divine" and "Thine be the Glory" and the anthem was "Let all mortal flesh keep silence" by Bairstow.

**Simon Rose**, a grandson and former chorister, read the first reading and during the notices, a cheque was presented to the Dean from the family of Alan towards the Cathedral Music Foundation. After the service, everyone was invited to stay for light refreshments in St Martins House.

We were very sorry to learn of the death of **Michael Gray** in the early hours of Christmas Eve, 2021.

Michael had been a very proactive member of the Cathedral family for many years and a staunch supporter of the music at the Cathedral as a Patron of our association and a trustee of his late father's successful Memorial Trust. (See also the trust annual report on page 3) **George Gray** was very proud of both of his two sons when together they were elected as churchwardens of the Cathedral back in the 1980's. The photograph shows Michael outside the Cathedral after receiving his Maundy Money from the Queen in 2017.

A Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for Michael's life took place in St





Mary's Church, Old Woodhouse on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The hymns were "Dear Lord and Father", "The King of Love" and "The day Thou gavest". "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by Bach" was played on the organ at the

beginning of the service with "In Paradisum" by Faure at the end. Rosa Gray, a granddaughter of Michael, played "Gabriel's Oboe" on an oboe given to her by Michael. The Revd Canon Alison Adams gave her memories from the Cathedral and a copy of these is available from Richard Belton. Donations in Michael's memory were invited for "Dementia UK Leicestershire" or "St Mary in the Elms PCC."

Michael was a truly gentle man with a living relationship with his God. He had an extraordinary capacity to recognize God's promptings and to act on them.

### Other News

The notes for the New Year commenced on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January with congratulations to **John Thorpe** on his 75th anniversary of becoming a chorister, now a Songman Emeritus, at Leicester Cathedral – see the earlier article by John.

**Revd Canon John Craig** was sent a photograph from the Leicester Mercury showing the inside of Lichfield Cathedral which was adapted for use as a vaccination centre for the corona virus epidemic. John wrote "Thank you so much for forwarding the Leicester Mercury cutting. The splendid news of such an imaginative idea has certainly got around! On 20<sup>th</sup> January, Olivia and I had our vaccination in the nave. It felt so appropriate."

**Claire Bampton** is now the Programme Manager for Shaped by God Together (SBGT), a process seeking better ways to support the churches and worshipping communities in the Leicester diocese as they pursue their vision of the Kingdom of God, living out their Everyday Faith. It is about discerning and implementing a new diocesan programme [changes to the way we run our *ministry, finance & buildings*] in order to answer the Three Key Questions whilst continuing our strategy of being Shaped by God Together. It has been clear for some time that patterns of ministry in the Church of England need to change, both nationally and in our Diocese. It's also been increasingly apparent that we need to find better ways of supporting each other in the use and maintenance of our buildings. We have known for several years that our financial model is not sustainable with an increasing gap between income and expenditure.



Two of our former choristers took part in the spring season of online lunchtime concerts. **Sophia Ramnarine** gave a recital of solo cello music. She has performed across the UK, mainly in Cambridge, London and Leicester, as well as internationally, most recently in Madrid and Stockholm. She studied music at the University of Cambridge where she held an award for 'cello studies with David Strange at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She is active in Leicester's music scene, including

leading the 'cello section of Leicester Symphony Orchestra.

**Matthew Farrell** gave a recital of unaccompanied music for Viola da Gamba from 16th and 17th century from England, France, Germany and Spain. He graduated from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in July 2020, where he studied the Viola da Gamba under Dr Lucy Robinson, and Double Bass under David Stark. Matthew was awarded the Simon Clarkson Memorial Award, which is awarded for general musicianship to the best all-round musician in the College. During his time at RWCMD, Matthew's love of early music flourished. Although his undergraduate degree was in the modern double bass, the viol has become his new favourite instrument. Having only started to play in October 2017, under Dr Lucy Robinson, Matthew picked up the instrument quickly and decided to focus a high proportion of his time on it. His love of the viol has grown fast, and in his fourth year at the RWCMD, Matthew performed two of his three performance exams on it, playing the Bach G minor sonata, Marais' *Sonnerie*, Rameau's 5ème *Pièces de Claveçin en Concerts* and Telemann's twelfth 'Paris' quartet. For his degree, Matthew wrote his dissertation on the Music and Politics of the English Civil War, focusing on how musicians lived and worked during these times. As a result of this dissertation, he was asked to give a talk to the Viola da Gamba Society. Due to COVID-19, this lecture was given on Zoom, and had participants from all over the world, including America and New Zealand.

As well as learning with Lucy, Matthew has gained experience through lessons and masterclasses with Sarah Cunningham, Vittorio Ghelmi, Reiko Ische, Jonathan Manson (RAM), Rachel Podger, Imogen Seth-Smith (AAM), and Sam Stadlen (Fretwork). Whilst on the Marnaves Summer Baroque Courses in 2018 and 2019, he worked with Margaret Faultess, playing violone in the large baroque ensemble, as well as receiving coaching playing bass viol in chamber ensembles and the course's viol consort. As well as playing in masterclasses at



RWCMD with Rachel Podger, Matthew has also played in the Brecon Baroque Festival Orchestra (director Rachel Podger), playing alongside members of Brecon Baroque, and performing music such as the Mozart Prague Symphony on period instruments, as well as Benda's Concerto for Harpsichord in F minor with Chad Kelly at the Harpsichord.

In addition to performing on the bass viol as a soloist, Matthew plays all instruments in the viol family. In September 2018, he founded the viol consort Arculo, with whom Matthew has played many concerts as well as playing an accompanying role at Evensongs with cathedral choirs. During the coronavirus Pandemic, Arculo have played two live-streamed performances and released an album of three-part music. As an ensemble player, Matthew has also performed on the violone, notably a concert with the Exeter Cathedral Choir, playing the *Vivaldi Gloria*, *Zadok the Priest*, *Bach Cantata (BWV 194)* and *Handel's Organ Concerto in F*. In January 2020, Matthew successfully auditioned to be a member of Rosafresca, a Bristol-based ensemble that specialises in performing Renaissance music from the English and Spanish Courts on Renaissance instruments.

Matthew is also a professional singer, having trained as a chorister and young songman at Leicester Cathedral. He is currently singing as an Assistant Lay Clerk at Hereford Cathedral, as well as being a regular deputy with the Cathedral choirs of Gloucester, Worcester and Llandaff. During his five-year relationship with the Hereford Cathedral Choir, starting in 2015, Matthew has taken part in two of the Three Choirs Festivals, which included notable highlights such as singing the *Monteverdi Vespers* with Rachel Podger and Brecon Baroque. In June 2018, Matthew went to Rome with the Hereford Cathedral choir to take part in a week of singing in the Vatican, including a concert in the Sistine Chapel with the Choir of the Sistine Chapel. He is also a member of the Genesis Sixteen 2020/21 cohort, an auditioned youth choral training scheme run by Harry Christophers and the Sixteen.



As well as being a classical musician, Matthew is regularly involved in musical theatre productions and session work around the country, including some touring. Most recently, Matthew has taken part in a touring production of *The Last Five Years*, by Jason Robert Brown. This was the Welsh professional premiere of this show, and it toured Wales throughout November and December 2018.

Another former chorister **James Upton**, took part in the summer season of online lunchtime concerts and presented a collection of Baroque, Classical, and Romantic baritone repertoire. James is currently in the final year of his A Levels at English Martyrs Catholic School, studying Maths, Physics, and, of course, Music. James joined Leicester Cathedral Choir at the age of 5, and progressed from Probationer to Head Chorister at 13. He now sings in the Senior Choir and has performed many solos with the choir, such as the Baritone solos in Fauré's Requiem, *Libera Me & Hostias* at the Cathedral concert and *A Spotless Rose* by Herbert Howells. Through the Cathedral he has performed at prestigious events such as services for the reinternment of Richard III, concerts at De Montfort Hall, and tours to Germany, the Isle of Man, Worcester Cathedral and Durham Cathedral. He is currently a Choral Scholar with Leicestershire Chorale. Next year he will read Engineering with a Choral Scholarship at Kings College London.

In April 2019, James achieved a distinction in his Grade 8 Singing, under the tutelage of Emma Trounson and is working towards the ARSM Diploma with his current singing teacher, Tom Williams, director of Leicestershire Chorale and member of world leading choir for new music, Exaudi. James has appeared as a guest soloist with local choirs: Fosse Singers, Semper Singers and further afield with St Cecilia Singers.

As a member of the National Youth Choir for five years, James has enjoyed performances in London at the Royal Albert Hall in 2016 and in Sunderland with a nautical-themed programme in 2019. He is also a keen trombone player and a proud member of the National Schools Symphony Orchestra where he attends yearly residentials at Malvern College.

Congratulations to **Tom Moore** and his brother Stephen who have both gained their FRCO's this year.

**Geoffrey & Gill Carter** were invited to **Ivan Linford's** home in Oakham for afternoon tea where Ivan has a two manual organ on which, as part of the "afternoon entertainment", Geoffrey and he played duets using various of Bach's organ pieces, Ivan playing the manual parts on the upper keyboard and Geoffrey playing the pedal part on the lower one. It was very enjoyable and successful both for players and listeners.



The annual Animal Blessing Service took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at St Andrew's Church in Jarrom Street, Leicester and was conducted by the Rev Alan Hawker who gave an entertaining talk about St Francis of Assisi. The service is always held on the closest Sunday to this particular feast day. Thanks were expressed to baritone **Roy Birch** for his wonderful singing contribution.

In December, Roy wrote "With what has been a somewhat troublesome year about to come to a close, and with the prospect of things perhaps becoming worse before they get better, I simply wanted to keep in touch with those who I haven't seen or had sufficient contact with over the last 12 months. I have so many friends and colleagues; those in the local branch of the Western Front Association (the WFA) and at the County Record Office in Wigston, who have helped with my continuing WW1 history research; and others more generally. Similarly, to those with and for whom I have had the pleasure and indeed the privilege of singing with since we came out of "lockdown" in April, I think it was. Singing has

indeed been my salvation during the last 12 months or so, and I look forward to exercising the lungs and the vocal chords, even more, once we get through the present difficulties.

**Andrew Long** wrote "I spent Christmas with the family (Chris & his wife Becky) in Radstock and all the grandchildren were able to be present. Two new grandchildren arrived in 2021 – Wilfred born in February to my son Chris & daughter-in-law Rebecca; and Charlotte (Lottie) to my daughter Hannah and son-in-law Guy, in May. Hope to be off to Radstock in early February for Wilfred's first birthday – he is not quite toddling yet, but pulls himself upright and takes a few faltering steps! I have managed to stay Covid-free, having had my two jabs plus the booster. It appears we may receive a fourth jab later this year.

I didn't want to be at home for the anniversary of Crista passing away, so in early January I went on a Cunard cruise (Queen Elizabeth, from Southampton) to the Canaries and Madeira. A bit rough on the outward journey in the Bay of Biscay – force 9! But warm and sunny in the islands!

We are awaiting the arrival of a new Vicar at Flitwick, as both our previous Vicar and Curate left last summer for pastures new in Bedford. The Rev. Claire Harald is due to come to Flitwick in May after she is fully priested. She is currently the Curate at Norton/Letchworth Garden City, Herts. Her likely induction at Flitwick could be the 5<sup>th</sup> May".

**David Fisher's** musical life stuttered, as it did for all musicians in the pandemic lockdowns. The one saving grace was a request by David Blackadder, an ex-pupil of mine who is one of the finest natural trumpet players in the world. How can I make this statement? Well, just seek out Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F on YouTube or other platforms with David playing the tiny natural trumpet in F with the Dunedin Consort directed by John Butt. His playing is amazing. One of the best-ever recordings on that virtuoso work... He also played solo trumpet in the introductory Handel aria as the Duchess of Sussex entered St George's Chapel, Windsor, on the occasion of her wedding to Prince Harry. David asked me to write a new version of my 1979 "Viva Italia!" which was performed on September 23rd for 4 cornetti, 4 natural horns, 4 natural trumpets, 4 sackbuts, 1 serpent, timps and percussion. It was a vast undertaking being over 12 minutes long and very difficult to do as I had to rescore it from 8 modern brass instruments (3,1,3,1) to 19 authentic Baroque/Classical instruments. Originally written for the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra's Brass Ensemble in 1979 when they toured Italy. It was always intended as a musical joke - rather poking fun at Italian tunes and adding a couple sections from Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony for good measure. This time I even added "Nessun Dorma" as that didn't become popular until the Italia 90 World Cup. Most of you will know all the tunes but hearing C19th & C20th melodies

on early C17th instruments will seem strange especially as the natural trumpets can only play the harmonic series. It'll be on YouTube some time later in 2022. Just use the key words "Viva Italia" and "Blackadder Baroque Brass" – it is humorous! Here [left] I am with the group.





Later this year, I hope to return to Germany for the first time since December 2019 to hear several of my carols in new orchestrations. They've been written over 14 years for Joachim Diessner's annual series of "A Countertenor's Christmas" in Köln. The photograph of this appeared in the last newsletter.



### **An extraordinary sight over the Cathedral**

The following paragraphs are taken from the Cathedral Newsletter earlier this year:

"After the final service in the Cathedral had finished and with umbrellas to the ready (due to the torrential rain that had fallen during the service) the clergy and others walked across with the Sacrament to St. Nicholas Church. I wonder if they glanced behind them to see what they had left behind?

Obviously, Geoffrey is somewhat slow and we were almost the last people to leave the building. Umbrella-less, we hesitated to adjust our coats but thankfully the rain seemed to ease, and by the time we were walking by St. Martin's House it had stopped. In re arranging my coat collar I turned back to look at the Cathedral. The rain-soaked brickwork of the spire shimmered golden in the sudden burst of strong sunlight from the setting sun. I called to Geoffrey and on looking back together we saw a half rainbow curving from behind the buildings in Peacock Lane and stopping at the top of the Spire which continued to shine, still reflecting the sun's

rays. We looked, marvelled and looked away. In the space of 10 seconds or so it had increased to a full glorious bow reaching its highest point seemingly right over the spire and descending behind the buildings in Guildhall Lane. The rainbow colours grew stronger and seemed to encase the whole Cathedral building. I was completely transfixed by the experience, Constable painting Salisbury

Cathedral or a camera could nowhere near capture the glory of that moment. "Everything is going to be all right" I said to Geoffrey. The whole experience lasted at the most five minutes but I will remember it always."

**Gill Carter**

**David Fisher** adds:

I too was fully intending to join the Dean and the other clergy in taking the Sacrament to St Nicholas Church but I noticed a glow on the cathedral spire which was something I hadn't experienced before. It appeared almost that the spire was gilded [*front cover, top*] so I broke away and joined Geoffrey and Gill looking up at the cathedral. In a very short time, a rainbow appeared above the spire, eventually becoming a complete semicircle. The effect was stunning [*above & back cover, top*]. Gill is right in that my phone just couldn't capture the brightness or the iridescence but it is seared in my memory. All three of us felt that, after the final service in the cathedral for at least a year and a half, it appeared to be almost a divine acknowledgement that the alterations to our wonderful cathedral would be the right thing to do. It was a propitious moment that we'll never forget.

The last service at the cathedral before the break [January 2<sup>nd</sup>] was well attended and, I felt, was a most moving service that seemed very intimate in the nave whilst the torrential rain battered the building thunderously. I took the opportunity that afternoon to photograph much of the interior of the cathedral such as

the view of the east end of the Great South Aisle which is on the inside back cover.

...which will be one of the most altered areas. In a couple of years, God willing, I'll have before and after pictures for you in the 2023 newsletter. It is all very exciting and hopefully, in the interim, we'll provide you with an update on the progress of the work in our 2022 newsletter.

### More lunchtime recitals

Apart from attending services and hearing the choirs sing, the loss of the wonderful series of well-attended lunchtime recitals is keenly felt. Two of them have already been mentioned earlier but here are a couple of photos from the last two which were from November 2021. Both involved stunning performances from solo singers and their accompanists. The first on November 8<sup>th</sup> featured **Philip Leech** [tenor] with our Director of Music, **Chris Ouvry-Johns**, on piano and organ. Phil is a stalwart

Emma Cayeux:



of the choir and also a trustee of the Dr. George Gray Memorial Trust. What a superb treat this proved to be from a home team.

The St Cecilia Day recital [November 22<sup>nd</sup>] introduced us to the remarkable Malaysian baritone, Clinton Fung. He is a singer of immense charm and ability with a wide range of colours in his voice and his programme was well-chosen for the occasion.

Here, Mr Fung is in mid song accompanied by

### The Leicester Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers

The Guild celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021 and to mark the occasion, Rosemary Mason published an in depth history of the Guild in a book containing over 200 pages. Rosie is a third-generation bellringer and married to Kingsley, also a bellringer. She is also a florist and holds a Royal Warrant to HM The Queen as Supplier of Nosegays.

There are a few of our association members mentioned in the book which include **Brian Warwick, Winifred Warwick, Harry Poyner** and **Derek Goodman**, who had all been members of the Cathedral Band, and **Tom Belton**. Out of this group, Harry is the only former chorister still alive. Winifred accepted an invitation to be a Patron of our association to maintain a link with us in memory of Brian.

Brian's name is mentioned in the book on a number of occasions and he was President of the Guild from 1986 to 1988. The book contains two pages about his ringing



career from joining the Rothley band in 1946, to his home tower of St. Thomas', South Wigston and of his final peal, rung on a broken hip, at Loughborough Bell Foundry. Despite



considerable pain he continued to play the organ for services at St Hugh's in Eyres Monsell and still attend ringing meetings right up to the final week of his life in 2006. In total Brian rang 3,428 peals of which he conducted 2,924 of which 2,500 were with Winifred. Brian was also in fifth place as the top conductor for handbells. Both of which were almost certainly individual records for any Guild or Association. Away from bellringing and music, Brian's main passion had been for UK railways and his father had been assistant stationmaster at London Road station in Leicester.

Tom was the founder of our association and sang alto in the cathedral choir. He was not only a Lay Reader in the Leicester Diocese, but the last in a line of generations of bellringers at his home tower in Barwell. The book recalls the reunion event for elderly ringers which Tom had been responsible for arranging in May 1965 at Coleorton Hall and which included his father Charles Belton. Fleets of cars brought the veterans to the church and there were some lovely reunions before evensong took place. A sumptuous spread then awaited the party at Coleorton School before a programme took place of handbell ringing, musical items and the reading of many reminiscences and extracts from "The Ringing Worlds" of the 1920's and 1930's until the

party was brought to a close at 8p.m. with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne"

Harry is listed as one of the Leicestershire ringers who have rung over 1,000 peals and along with Derek is shown on a photograph of seven handbell ringers plus two umpires at the Staniforth residence at 150 Narborough Road South, Leicester who rang a Kent Treble Bob 14 in 1951, the first peal ever rung in this method on fourteen bells.

Rosie remembers handbell peals being rung in the room below her bedroom and when the Cathedral had a Youth Club in and around 1969, the members thereof were welcomed on one occasion to the Staniforth residence in order for them to test their grasp of this art. The male contingent were all choristers and could have included **John Nutting, Kim Peacock, Chris Fent, Spencer Basford, Richard Parsons, David Hughes, Andrew Long, Richard Belton** and **Nicholas Miller** as they are all present on a photograph of the members in the same year.

### Reminiscences

*The following article is from a letter which was published in the Leicester Mercury in June 2021. The LCOCA consequently made contact with Sheila. She was pleased to receive a copy of our 2020 Newsletter and was looking forward to receiving a copy each year in the future.*



## **“Many years were spent in city pubs – but also at the Cathedral**

I have been reading with great interest the nostalgia stories in the Leicester Mercury, in particular those on Leicester Cathedral. My father, Alan Hammond [*pictured on the previous page*], lived in the King and Crown, which stood opposite the back of the Cathedral, when he was about 10 years old and was a choirboy there around 1914.

My grandfather (Thomas Hammond) had many pubs in the city. My father, Alan, was born at the George & Dragon, in Peel Street, off St George Street, in 1904, prior to moving to the King & Crown, in Town Hall Lane, now called Guild Hall Lane. My aunt kept the Fountain, in Humberstone Gate, another aunt had the Hat & Beaver, in Highcross Street, and also the Sir Charles Napier, in Glenfield Road. My grandfather later had the Bakers Arms, in Queen Street, which my father later took over in 1930.

I was born in 1932 and lived there until we were bombed out in the blitz of Leicester on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1940. We had to move out and my father had to go on war work. We lived in Scraftoft which was then a small village. After he was released from war work we went to live at the Durham Ox in Upper Conduit Street. I was married from there and he retired from there in 1961. Only one uncle kept a village pub, Stanley Hammond, who had the Bulls Head in Desford.

**Sheila Arnold, Fleckney”**

### **The ‘Old’ Song School**

The greatest change to the cathedral is occurring on the site of the ‘Old’ Song School (which, of course, was not that old when John Thorpe was a chorister!) and its demolition is rather sad for all those Old Choristers who were auditioned there, rehearsed the vast music repertoire many thousands of times over the years and where many musical careers began. This is one of the last pictures showing the corner of the Song School before its demolition:



Looking at this pre-demolition picture below one can see that at the top the original skylight has been filled in. When I was a chorister, the skylight still had its blackout blind which could be drawn by with a cord pulley system.



Sad to see it come down but positive that the new addition to the cathedral will improve facilities for congregations and revitalise the experience for the many visitors. The advanced storage capacity will certainly help the Vergers as they set out the cathedral for so many different occasions.

**David Fisher**





### Pre-cathedral history of St. Martin's preparing for the 2027 centenary

The following extract is taken from ***Cathedrals, Abbeys and Churches of England and Wales*** edited by Prof. T. G. Bonney [Hon. Canon of Manchester]

*The volume containing this description of St. Martin's Church was published by subscription but no date is mentioned in the volume. However, as Bonney is named as an Hon. Canon of Manchester it must date from the last quarter of the C19th because the diocese of Manchester was created in 1847 and the author mentions the Brandon spire of 1867. I have included it as one of the interesting pre-Cathedral articles which will appear over the next few newsletters as we approach the centenary of our Cathedral in only a few years. Next year's newsletter will feature fascinating historic details of St Martin's printed in the Leicester Mail of March 23<sup>d</sup> 1922 on the elevation of the parish church to a Collegiate Church in preparation for it becoming the Cathedral. Leicester, as most of you will know, was created a city in 1919.*  
[Editor]

"LEICESTER MAIL"  
COLLEGIATE CHURCH SPECIAL NUMBER.



ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH FROM ST. MARTIN'S EAST.

## Leicester's Churches by Jay Pendrell Broadhurst

To the archaeologist and student of town-lore, the narrow tortuous streets of Leicester speak plainly enough of their history; but it is to be feared that the ordinary casual visitor regards Leicester merely as a busy, inelegant town. As a matter of fact, few Midland towns have a longer or more interesting history; and, at all events from an architectural point of view, several of its churches are very curious and attractive.

Saint Martin's (or St. Cross as it has sometimes been called) is the largest church in Leicester, and has been the most intimately connected with the history of the town. It is a cruciform church, of great width, having three aisles, two on the south and one on the north; and it has a fine central tower supported upon arches, and an elegant spire put up in 1867 from the designs of Mr. R. Brandon. The body of the church is Early English, but the existing windows were inserted in the Decorated period. The chancel was rebuilt about the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the great south aisle, which is almost as wide as the nave, the archdeacon holds his court. This aisle contains two chapels or oratories - the chapel of Our Lady at the east end and that of St. George at the west end: but neither of them is now used. The altars of these chapels, together with a high-altar, were destroyed at the Reformation. These oratories were the chapels of the two powerful guilds that were along attached to the church: the Guilds of St. George and Corpus Christi. The confraternity of St. George possessed many peculiar privileges; and the "Ride of St George," which it annually performed, was a gorgeous pageant. There was formally in the church an effigy of a horse decked in the brave trappings that were used on the yearly festival day of the confraternity; but at the Reformation it went the way of the three altars, and is recorded to have been sold for a shilling. The Guild of Corpus Christi was the more ancient of the two, and was invested with an odd mixture of civil and religious jurisdiction. There were two joint masters of the confraternity who were empowered, in association with the mayor, to impose fines upon members of the corporation who misbehaved themselves.

The roofs and woodwork of Saint

Martin's are very fine; and the church happily still retains its Norman Piscina. There is also in a creditable "Ascension" by Vanni, formally used as an altarpiece, which was presented by Sir William Skeffington, Bart. Here is the unpretending tomb, bearing the date of 1710, of Abigail Swift, mother of the Dean of Saint Patrick's. Of the several tombs of members of the Heyrick family, none is of special interest. The church has unfortunately now finally lost the ancient font which was removed during the Usurpation. It was sold in 1651 to one George Smith for seven shillings, and a new one erected near to the reading-desk, as was common in Puritanical times.

But nine months after the Restoration a parish meeting was held, at which was agreed "that the font of stone formally belonging to the church will be set up in the ancient place, and that the other now standing near the desk be taken down;" and a little more than a year later the font was repurchased from George's Smith's widow for the same price that has been given for it eleven years previously. St. Martin's suffered much during the civil wars. A Parliamentarian garrison, that was driven out of Newark, took refuge in it, and converted it into a barrack. The church was stormed, and many of the soldiers were killed within its walls, while others were cut down in the market-place nearby.

In 1729 a violent and unseemly dispute broke out between the Rev. Mr. Carter the Vicar of Saint Martin's, and Mr. Jackson, a Confrater, who afterwards became the Master of Wigston Hospital. Mr. Jackson disbelieved, or affected to disbelieve, the doctrine of the Trinity; and on several occasions when the Vicar in his Sunday morning sermon had upheld that doctrine, scandalous scenes were caused by Mr. Jackson going into the pulpit in the evening and denying the Vicar's teaching. Upon one occasion the churchwardens commanded him in the middle of his sermon to leave the pulpit; and at another time he was stopped on the steps of the pulpit by the sexton. A judicial decision was obtained to the effect that the Confrater's action was illegal.

The tendency of time is always to raise the level of the streets in an old town; and at Leicester several of the more ancient churches are considerably below the street line, and are entered by descent of two or three steps.

*It is a shame that the book does not contain an etching of St. Martin's but it does have this wonderful image of St. Mary de Castro. There cannot be a single person reading this that does not miss that beautifully elegant spire. It is a great loss to Leicester's skyline.*

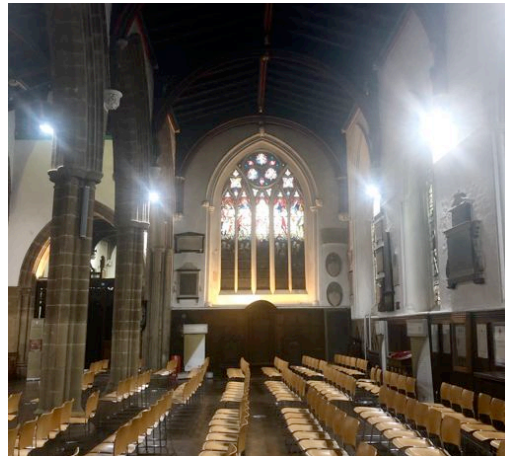


*Whilst there isn't an etching of St. Martin's, regular readers may remember that a few years ago one of the LCOCA newsletters had a photograph from 1890 which is about the time of this article:*





*I've also added this photo reminder of the interior in 1907 from the nave with the bottom of the crossing arch very clear to see – and, of course, the East Window prior to the WWI memorial window [1920] by Christopher Whall [1849-1924]. Fascinating to note that the pulpit steps are as they are now where the preacher approaches the pulpit from the left whereas, presumably in the Nicholson reordering in the 1930s, it was altered to be approached from the other side. The tester must have been added [replaced?] at the same time. It looks too as if the chandeliers are electric which seems early for 1907.*



On the left is a view along the Great South Aisle towards the east taken on January 2nd. This will be one of the most changed views in the reordering of the cathedral interior in 2022-2023.



## **More memories of the Song School**

*Nick Basford has an astonishing level of recall when reminiscences of his time in the cathedral choir are offered to the LCOCA newsletter, as many readers will remember from past editions. Times have certainly changed but they are, in the main, very happy memories. I've added some small additions to his account – in blue. [Editor]*

### **Entering the Song School for the first time**

It was a sunny afternoon in early September, a Thursday in 1960. In Saint Martin's East, a dozen or so small boys were waiting quietly and anxiously by the cathedral door. A small distance away, their fathers waited, equally anxious but rather more talkative; indeed there were friendships begun that afternoon which were to last long after the boys had left the choir. Eventually, Mr Innocent (verger) opened the door with its customary hollow rattle and the boys made their way towards the Song School. The fathers melted away, presumably to a local hostelry...

Entering the Song School, the wall of dark oak cupboard doors extended on our right. On our left were four rows of dilapidated music desks, most with pale, white wood showing through the wood stain, some with their bottom rails hanging from one end and lying on the floor at the other. We made our way towards the upright piano, where Dr. Gray <sup>[1]</sup> arranged us in two semi-circles so that we could all see the ancient blackboard which was perched on the piano's music desk. Dr. Gray himself was perched upon a cathedral chair and a stack of old kneelers, his right leg permanently crossed over his left to more comfortably reach the sustain pedal. And so our time as probationers had begun.

Dr. Gray used the blackboard to introduce us to note values, counting and pitch, and a lot of time was spent singing scales and doing aural exercises. But the greatest mystery to me were the breathing lessons. With his thumbs lodged in his waistcoat pockets, Dr. Gray would place his hands around his middle and breathe in slowly and gently. His shoulders would stay perfectly still but his waistcoat would expand considerably. How did he do that? At a quarter to five the rest of the choristers would arrive and one of us would get the job of putting the blackboard away by the side of the safe (who would be honoured this week?).

*Unlike Nick, I was a late addition to the probationers. I was ten and had been*

*recommended by Nick's father [who was headmaster of my primary school] and my music teacher Miss Joyce Moon. I had sung in many festivals and done very well so Mr Gray [as he was at the time] accepted me at an age later than was usual. My arrival in the Song School for the audition was terrifying as it was at my first rehearsal as there were so many bigger boys. I won't list them all here but possibly Jonathan Gregory and Richard Belton were the Head Boys at the time. The music desks [whatever happened to them?] were carved with the names of many previous choirboys (which I naturally added to) and, fortunately, we probationers went through the same wonderful learning processes as previous generations – and what music we sang in that room! More of that next year.*

### **Choosing our cassocks**

Our piano-side session was curtailed one week and we descended upon the 'probationers' cupboard' (the one closest to the song school clock and door.) The drawer was well stocked with clean ruffs of assorted sizes and a few cassocks were hanging from the rail. The majority lay in a crumpled heap in a corner of the floor. We dived in and after a few false starts, exchanges and kindly comments from Dr. Gray ('a little short, try this one.' 'No, you'll trip over that...') we gathered around to look at each other in our new finery. A more motley collection of cassocks you never did see! The shades of red and fabrics differed slightly, the designs quite a lot. My example had a row of buttons all the way down the middle, with not a matching pair in sight. We were given strict instructions to take these robes home and bring them back the following week, after our mothers had carried out such repairs and improvements as were possible. My mother dutifully bought a new set of buttons and was very pleased with the finished result. I was less convinced. At least my mum hadn't tried to wash the thing! This fate later befell another classic cassock, which turned pink as a result. One very relieved probationer was allowed a replacement.

*As for the cassocks, Nick is right, as they were a motley assortment of designs until 1967 when were all measured for tailor-made cassocks to be worn for the cathedral's ruby celebration in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The new ones were very smart and had wide belts so they looked good when surplices weren't worn. In a frank admission after almost 60 years, I own up to the fact that it was my dear (if misguided) mother who washed rather than dry-cleaned the cassock that went 'pink'. I was mortified and*



*surreptitiously snuck the offending garment into the cupboard and never wore it. Apologies to those who may have had to! I did love the double ruffs though and my mother was keen to starch it. The result is evident in my photo seen earlier when I was about 14.*

### **Song School activities on Sunday afternoons**

Anyone looking in on our Sunday afternoons would have been struck by the contrasts. Choral Evensong was the high point of our musical week, with an elaborate setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis followed by an anthem which itself might take 12 minutes or more to perform. We would then be left to our own very boyish devices until the full choir practice for Nave Evensong at 6 o'clock. Our packed tea was the first priority, with the smaller boys choosing to climb over the rows of spare chairs to eat sitting on the song school window sills. So, what next? Very occasionally, a member of the clergy or a songman would organise a talk or a slide show to fill a winter's afternoon. One week I assembled an Airfix kit of a World War 2 tank. Sometimes we did our homework. *Never me!* But more flippant activities were far more likely.

*As to the activities between Sunday evensongs, they were various and sometime rather physical. We often had races around the grounds and on a few occasions played British Bulldog. Derek Buxton, the Succentor at the time, would often get involved and we really enjoyed the exercise. I do remember gaining bruises at times and, on one occasion, a beat policeman hearing our shouts and screams of happiness came onto the cathedral lawns and told us off because we'd fallen into a heap of flailing bodies on sacred ground. He was, however, much bemused when the Rev. Buxton [see the 'Stop Press' below] extricated himself from the mêlée to explain that we were with him. Much hilarity ensued.*

Paper plane making contests using out of date service sheets were the despair of Mr. Innocent when squadrons of the things became stranded in the remains of the war-time skylight blackouts. Some of these masterpieces would also land in amongst the long metal extension ladders which then resided upon the top of the robes cupboards. Small boys' school caps would also find their way up there, and these would need to be retrieved. The technique, which involved climbing up the shelves in the probationers' cupboard and then using the top of the door as a hand-hold to get onto the top surface of the cupboards, seemed to have been

passed down the generations and was fairly straightforward. Getting down again was not. On one occasion, I jumped and stung the soles of my feet considerably in my efforts. I was not a frequent exponent.

**Nick Basford**

*A small but crucial point for reading music, was when the bulb-encased glass globes on the ceiling were replaced with fluorescent tubes [see later]. Their brilliance seemed blinding after the old lights went but I do recollect that they were tested so they didn't buzz and affect our music-making.*

**David Fisher**

As mentioned before, during Dr Gray's tenure as choir master, most of the choristers didn't go home between the two evensongs on a Sunday afternoon and evening and were mostly left to their own devices during that period of time.

**Stephen Wain** distinctly remembers the "Torch Light" game which would be played on inclement afternoons, which incidentally was instead of playing football in Alderman Newton's playground (after first climbing over the their railings!!.) There was an old desk in the corner of the room and one of the choristers would stand on it with a torch, the lights would be put out, and the object of the game was to try and creep up to the person in the dark without being spotted, if you succeeded it was then your turn. He also remembers when races around the perimeter of the room took place on the chairs, one sitting and one pushing.

**Richard Belton** remembers one occasion when a few choristers, (still not named to the present day), lit fireworks on the outside window sill with a long fuse attached which was timed so that they went off during the rehearsal. Then there was the initiation ceremony when new choristers were taken outside to the "Letter E" in St Martin's East and given the holly bush treatment. Those who cycled into the Cathedral sometimes went to the empty market place to ride in and out of the individual market stalls. The door through to St Martin's East still bears the marks made by numerous choristers as they navigated their cycles on the way down the steps to the internal passageway to store them until after the services.

In the 1980's or 1990's, **John Thorpe** used to supply and fit replacement bulbs and fluorescent tubes in the Cathedral and song school. On one such occasion, the late **Geoffrey Cox** helped John with the task of replacing all the tubes and cleaning and washing all the diffusers in the six old song school light fittings. This took the best part of a Thursday afternoon, removing all the dead flies and moths and other vermin resident therein. Having just completed the job, **Peter White**, the

Master of Music at that time, walked in and being dazzled by the massive increase in luminosity that had resulted from their efforts, asked: "**Would you be sure to put the old ones back for Lent?**"

### **Stop Press**

**It was announced in the Loughborough Echo on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March that the Rev Canon Derek Buxton, former Precentor, passed away on 17th March 2022. We are sorry to inform you of this but a full report will be included in the next edition.**

*As almost the final contribution to the newsletter, we have another very interesting article from Old Chorister **Roy Birch**. Roy is a dedicated and long-time member of the LCOCA so, although not directly about the cathedral it highlights Roy's expertise on WWI matters which fits in nicely with the Christopher Whall memorial East Window and Leicester generally.*

### **A TRUE SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST**



Leicester's Victoria Road Baptist Church, then just 20 years old, was the setting for a notable society wedding on Tuesday October 19<sup>th</sup> 1886. The bridegroom was a budding architect and Liberal politician, recently elected to the Borough Council and, by the age of 35, destined to be Leicester's youngest ever Mayor. This was Arthur Wakerley (1862-1931), whose bride, 22-year-old Bertha Elizabeth, was a daughter of Thomas James Gunn & Co., "fancy hosiery manu-

facturers", of Crafton Street, Leicester. The couple were to have six children; Gwendolen, Dorothy, Margaret, and Constance, all of whom now have roads named after them in Leicester's North Evington district (LE5), plus Kathleen Veronica, the baby of the family, who died in infancy. The remaining child was Arthur and Bertha's only son, Arthur John, known familiarly as "Jack" and sometimes as "young Arthur".

Born in Leicester on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1893, he first attended Stoneygate School before entering The Leys School, Cambridge where he was said to have been "universally liked". The choice of The Leys was hardly surprising, given the family's staunch allegiance to Methodism, and such was his own adherence to the faith, that young Arthur duly became a pastoral assistant and an increasingly popular preacher on the local Circuit. By 1914, while an undergraduate at Peterhouse, Cambridge, he resolved to make a life-long commitment to the Methodist Ministry. But events of an unprecedented magnitude soon presaged a more earthly call to arms; one which Arthur "Jack" Wakerley, among untold tens of thousands, was unable to ignore.

By Spring 1915, therefore, having placed his trust in The Almighty and with his university studies "put on hold", the now 21-year-old joined the Army and enlisted in his native county's Leicestershire "Tigers" Regiment. He was promptly commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant (The

Supplement to The London Gazette 21<sup>st</sup> July 1915), and posted to the "Tigers" 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, crossing to France on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1915. Promotion to Temporary Lieutenant came on October 31<sup>st</sup>, his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, and by November 12<sup>th</sup>, "his" Battalion's fighting strength was restored almost to what it had been on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1915, when numbers had been severely depleted during an heroic but ultimately unsuccessful attack on the enemy's Hohenzollern Redoubt. Now, with the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> Leicesters returned to front line trenches at Richbourg St. Vaast, rats among the rations were reportedly almost as great an irritant as the attentions of The Hun. Welcome respite came with troops under canvas at Marseilles in January 1916, until the pleasures of sea and sand yielded by the heaths and thickets of The Somme where, mercifully, the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> were spared the worst of the carnage.

It was during the quieter weeks of 1916 that A.J. Wakerley wrote to his sister Gwendolen in Leicester. His letters typify those of the privately schooled and university educated "gentleman officer" in penning a strictly sanitised portrait of army life, deliberately intended for home consumption. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, for example: "We are in an exceptionally good dugout; twenty feet underground, containing wire beds, table and seats, heated by an oil lamp which we have recently purchased. The corrugated iron walls are decorated with sundry pictures cut from illustrated papers. The weather is splendidly invigorating and one quite enjoys touring the trenches while supervising the different working parties".

His steadfast faith doubtless permeated dealings with the bereaved especially. Confiding in Gwendolen on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1916, he wrote: "Since I came out here I've had many beautiful letters in answer to notes informing parents, friends, sweethearts, that the person nearest and dearest to them has perished in the field, and giving what comfort I could. Someday you shall see these letters and from them you will learn something concerning other classes of the community than the one to which we belong". Yet the disposal of the enemy is every officer's supervening task. By Spring 1917, with some 18 months field experience, Wakerley was a seasoned campaigner whose service was recognised in further promotion; to Acting Captain from 31<sup>st</sup> March 1917.

By mid-April '17 the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> Leicesters were billeted in a heavily industrialised area near Lens, with enemy snipers targeting the British from derelict buildings and skulking in cellars to fire unseen. Raiding parties to expel the Germans were primed for action by June, with orders to launch an assault towards Hill 65 from Cite Du Riamont. Three companies of the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> would act as "moppers-up" behind two companies of the 5<sup>th</sup> Leicesters and one of the 4<sup>th</sup> Lincolns, who would spearhead the attack, scheduled to begin at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June. All went broadly to plan, with "B" & "C" Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> gradually gaining ground in spite of a troublesome machine-gun and the proverbial uncut wire. On their left, however, "D" Company encountered stiffer opposition while supporting the Lincolns and suffered heavy casualties; one being the 23-year-old Company Commander, Captain Arthur Wakerley.

Although the 1<sup>st</sup>/<sub>4</sub><sup>th</sup> Leicesters' Battalion Diary describes "B" & "C" Company's part in the operation as "a great success", it seems that the raid overall was only partially successful; one of the chief benefits, perhaps, being the capture of two German officers. Of "D" Company's part, all that was recorded was that "The enemy trenches were entered and many dugouts bombed and many casualties inflicted". Not that the Battalion's own



losses were altogether light. While Captain Wakerley was the only officer killed, four others were injured and 70 "men" were either killed or wounded. Arthur John Wakerley was eventually buried in Loos British Cemetery in north-west France. Fulsome tributes were paid to the deceased officer during a special memorial service at Leicester's Bishop Street Methodist Church on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1917. In addressing the congregation at the Wakerley family's regular place of worship, The Reverend Henry Wostenholm told how the young subaltern had been "concerned that his company should acquit itself nobly as a unit in a fine regiment", which indeed it had. Individually, the Captain had "put his best into the Service as a man, a soldier, and a Christian".

**Roy Anthony Birch**

**PLEASE NOTE!** *We are always glad to receive photos of events in which the cathedral features. For example Leicester Bach Choir or other performances conducted by previous Masters of the Music. This highlights a point made earlier in which we have asked for memories from Peter White's or Jonathan Gregory's tenures. Those times have been under-represented in previous LCOCA Newsletters. If you are able to redress this imbalance, please contact the Secretaries.*

**From page 4:** Martin Gray, his wife Peggy and their two daughters, **Julia Dickson** and **Penny Gray-Smith**, both former choristers.



### The Cathedral Music Foundation Festal Evensong - 2021

The continuing legacy of the cathedral's music is demonstrated in the photo of Dr. Ouvry-Johns [*front cover bottom*] in which he conducts the choirs and orchestra at a festal evensong in support of the Cathedral Music Foundation. The **Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F** was by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and the anthem was the huge sixth movement from Brahms' **Requiem** [*Denn wir haben hie keine Bleibende Statt*] during which the Musical Director also sang the baritone solo. The service was very well attended and the redoubtable David Cowen was at the organ.



**Continuing the Song School reminiscences**, the photograph above is the only one of the choir I remember being taken in the Song School. It is Easter 1966, shortly after Sunday afternoon evensong judging by the time on the clock, and contains some of the people mentioned in this newsletter. Does anyone else possess interior photos of the 'Old' Song School? Please contact the Secretaries if you have...



