



Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association

OCA Christmas Newsletter

December 2019

Dear member,

Please find enclosed our 2019 Christmas Newsletter, kindly compiled and written by our Chairman, Tim Hurst-Brown. OCA news is also available to view on our website: oldchoristers.weebly.com/news. Some highlights below...

Next year's reunion

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 13th June 2020. Please save the date, and encourage your friends to attend!

USA choir tour

If you would like to support this exciting tour, please donate directly to our tour fund, using online or mobile banking (sort code: 20-67-40 | account number: 23621707). Further information can be found on our website: oldchoristers.weebly.com/usatour2020. Thank you to everyone who has already generously donated.

Christmastide Evensong

We will be singing at Peterborough Cathedral before the Old Petriburgians' Association Reunion at the Brewery Tap on Friday 27th December 2019. More details can be found on our event page: oldchoristers.weebly.com/ocachristmas. All welcome.

Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association is always glad to hear from members with whom it has lost touch over the years. Former choristers of all ages are encouraged to join, as well as anyone previously or currently affiliated with Peterborough Cathedral Choir. If you're on social media, please like our Facebook page, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram (@oldchoristers).

As well as assisting former choristers to keep in touch with Peterborough Cathedral's ministry and music, we fund current chorister singing lessons, which are a valuable part of their musical education. Membership to the OCA costs £25.00 per annum. If you don't already contribute, or haven't yet reviewed your regular giving, standing orders using online or mobile banking are most appreciated (sort code: 20-67-37 | account number: 60709816). Alternatively, please fill in the enclosed standing order form and hand in to your bank. Thank you.

It costs over £150 to post correspondence each year. Please do sign up to our mailing list so we can save time and resources, and remove this expense entirely: oldchoristers.weebly.com/contact

Wishing you a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year,

Louise Laprun
Hon. Secretary

Encs

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Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association

2019 NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL REUNION 2019

This year's reunion, which fell on Saturday 14 September, began with a rehearsal in the stalls under the direction of Tansy Castledine. Just before Evensong, JOSEPH HORNSBY laid a wreath at the foot of the plaques in St. Sprite's Chapel that commemorate former choristers and old boys of The King's School who gave their lives in the two world wars. ALEX SPIRES read the first lesson at the service. The Annual General Meeting took place in the Knights' Chamber following Evensong. The reunion dinner was held at The Bull Hotel in Westgate where, following an excellent meal, Mr. Neil McKittrick DL, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, proposed the health of the Association in a witty and thought-provoking speech. Neil graced the function by wearing his official (and most elegant) High Sheriff's attire. RIA ABBOTT and AMRINDAR BHATTI replied to the toast, describing their time in the choir and the benefits they had received from being a chorister. A presentation to ALEX SPIRES concluded the evening. Our grateful thanks are due to LOUISE LAPRUN who, with her customary skill and unobtrusive organisational ability, masterminded the whole occasion. It was a very happy and delightfully nostalgic day.

DATE OF NEXT REUNION

Next year, we shall revert to our erstwhile tradition of holding the reunion in the summer term. The 2020 reunion will take place at the Cathedral on Saturday 13 June and The Bull Hotel has been booked for the annual dinner. Please make a note of this date in your diary NOW and do make a very special effort to be with us.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a very warm welcome to the following young people who have recently joined Peterborough Cathedral Old Choristers' Association:

RIA ABBOTT, ALFIE ALLEN, REUBEN BARKER, AMRINDAR BHATTI, CAITLIN GOODLIP and SARAH REID.

PAUL HERBERT MATTHEWS, MA, B.MUS, 1928-2017

Paul Matthews died on 3 October 2017 at a care home in Cullompton, Devon. He was eighty-nine and had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease. His wife Pamela, to whom he had been married for sixty-five years, died a few weeks earlier.



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Paul, who was born in Peterborough on 21 January 1928, was a chorister from 1939-1943. He was a pupil at The King's School under W. F. F. Shearcroft and Reg Hornsby. Being a gifted musician, he often played the piano for school assembly. In 1946 he won an organ scholarship to Lincoln College, Oxford, where he took his degree in English in 1949. Following National Service in the RAF, he returned to Lincoln to study Music. He married Pamela Stainton in the chapel of Lincoln College in December 1952. The Rector wrote of him at that time: "P. H. Matthews was one of the best Organ Scholars we have had." He possessed perfect pitch, was an excellent sight-reader, and had the ability to transpose at sight and to extemporise without apparent effort; in addition, he was a first-class accompanist. Paul took his B.Mus in 1954. For three years he was assistant organist at Lichfield Cathedral and a member of staff at the Cathedral School. He was Director of Music at King William's College, Isle of Man from 1955-1967, where he also taught some sixth form English and for many years was in charge of the RAF section of the CCF. He then moved on to Hele's School, Exeter. His stay there was brief, as he was appointed Director of Music at Blundell's School, Devon in 1969. Paul remained at Blundell's until he retired from full-time teaching in 1984. Thereafter he was an examiner for Trinity College, London, and lectured in music on an extra-mural basis.

This very talented man was an ebullient raconteur, an authority on Chaucer, a gourmet, a wine expert and a caustic wit, in addition to being highly skilled at solving 'The Times' crossword. We extend our belated sympathy to his daughters, Helga and Deborah. Requiescat in pace.

PETER JAMES BOIZOT, MBE, DL, MA, D.LITT, 1929-2018

Our good friend Peter Boizot died suddenly on 5 December 2018. He was eighty-nine and had been in failing health for some time.

PJB was born in Walton, Peterborough on 16 November 1929, the son of Gaston and Susannah Boizot; the family later moved to All Saints' Road. Peter attended St. Mark's Junior School before passing on to The King's School in 1940. He was a chorister under Dr. Henry Coleman and later Dr. Cooper Francis during the dark days of the Second World War. (In after years Peter delighted in showing people where he had carved his name on the Cathedral choir stalls). He often spoke of his time as a chorister: "Singing in the choir was a wonderful discipline", he would say, "discipline with beauty". He was greatly influenced at King's by the Headmaster, the imperious Reg Hornsby. Peter played in the Rugby 1st XV in 1946 and 1947, was Captain of the 2nd XI Cricket team, and was a member of the 1st XI Hockey team in 1948. He was a prefect and Captain of Tudor House and in his final year was Head of School. On leaving King's he joined the Army for his National Service, spending a good deal of time in Egypt. In 1950 he went up to St. Catharine's College, Cambridge to read History, entering the College as a Choral Exhibitioner. During his time at university, Peter played for various teams, including hockey, for which he gained his College colours. He graduated in the summer of 1953. In later years, he was a very loyal supporter of St. Catharine's and generously funded the College's all-weather hockey pitch. In recognition of his years of devoted service to the College, he was made a Fellow Commoner of St. Catharine's in 1996. The day after his death, the College flag flew at half mast in his honour.

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After graduating, Peter spent ten years working in Paris, in Switzerland and later in Rome. His entrepreneurial skills sprang from that experience. Following his father's death in 1964, he returned to this country and the following year opened the first Pizza Express in Soho, after failing to find anywhere in London serving Italian food (he had been a vegetarian from the age of six and had become extremely fond of pizza whilst living in Italy). Peter gradually built the company into a national institution (Pizza Express now has more than 500 restaurants worldwide). He soon became deeply involved in various activities in London. He was Chairman of the 'Save Piccadilly' campaign and a founder member of the Soho Society, Chairman of the Soho Restaurateurs' Association, a council member of the Westminster Chamber of Commerce, Founder of the Soho Jazz Festival, a member of the advisory board of The Royal Academy of Arts, President of Hampstead Hockey Club, proprietor of Kettner's and Pizza on the Park restaurants, and publisher of 'Jazz Express'. Peter was also a notable philanthropist, raising more than two million pounds for the 'Venice in Peril' fund. As a result of this, he was created a Knight Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in 1985. Many further honours came Peter's way: he was appointed MBE in the 1986 Birthday Honours list, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Westminster in 1995, became a Deputy Lieutenant for Cambridgeshire in 1998, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Loughborough in 2000, and was made a Freeman of the City of Peterborough in 2008.

Throughout his life, Peter never forgot his roots and was much involved with numerous activities in the Peterborough area. He was the Liberal candidate for the City in two General elections in the 1970s. In 1993, he purchased The Great Northern Hotel, adjacent to the railway station. Four years later, he bought the struggling Peterborough United Football Club ('The Posh'), and over the next six years invested over seven million pounds to put it on a firmer financial footing. He also acquired the Odeon Cinema, which was later opened as The Broadway Theatre.

Despite being an astute businessman and leading an extremely busy professional life, Peter was deeply committed to helping others. He will always be remembered for his generosity and kindness to so many people in so many different walks of life. He was devoted to the Cathedral and also to The King's School, both foundations benefitting handsomely from his munificent altruism. He was undoubtedly one of the most outstanding benefactors of the Cathedral in recent times. He also had an abiding interest in the Old Petriburgians' Association, of which he was a Vice-President. After his death, he was very fittingly described in the local press as 'A great Peterborian' and also as 'Mr. Peterborough'. His funeral was private, but on Friday 8 February a huge congregation attended Peter's memorial service, which took place in his beloved Cathedral. The choir sang beautifully under the direction of Tansy Castledine, a number of moving tributes were paid to Peter, and the occasion proved to be one of proud thanksgiving for a life well lived.

With affection and kindly remembrance we bid him farewell. To his sister Wendy and her family we extend our sincere sympathy in their great loss. We shall all miss Peter beyond the telling of it. Requiescat in pace.

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SEBASTIAN SCAMMELL, 1994-2019

It is with the greatest sadness that we record the untimely death of Sebastian Scammell, who has passed away at the age of twenty-five. Sebastian, from Market Deeping, was educated at Peterborough High School and was a chorister from 2002-2005. He left the choir in Year 6, having won a music scholarship to Oundle School. Sebastian was an extremely talented musician, being a highly accomplished pianist and an excellent violinist. He was awarded his ABRSM diploma while still at school. After leaving Oundle, Sebastian went to Bristol University to read Philosophy. There he gained an M.Sc in Law and Business. At the time of his death he was a trainee solicitor with the legal firm iLaw, which he joined in April 2018. He assisted the corporate and commercial departments on a broad range of matters including corporate finance, share and asset acquisitions, corporate governance, and insolvency. He was also a member of the SCL's Junior Lawyers' Group committee.

Sebastian's death at such a young age was sudden and completely unexpected. His funeral service will take place in the Cathedral on Tuesday 7 January 2020 at 11.00am, followed by interment in Stamford cemetery. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the members of his family. Requiescat in pace.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

At this year's annual general meeting ALEX SPIRES stepped down from the role of Hon. Treasurer, having held that post with great distinction for twenty-five years. He has been an outstanding officer of the Association, a tower of strength behind the scenes, an extremely hard worker for our organization and a very prudent voice on the committee. Like his father and grandfather before him, ALEX has been (and continues to be) a most loyal servant of the Cathedral. It is excellent news that he wishes to remain on the committee and assist his successor, SAMUEL BARBER, as the latter takes over the financial reins. During the reunion dinner we presented ALEX with two delightful early 19th century engravings of the exterior of the Cathedral as a small token of our thanks and appreciation for his exceptional work over a quarter of a century. SAMUEL has now given up his role as Federation representative in order to manage the Association's purse strings. It is a most responsible position to hold, but – with the unstinting support of his predecessor – he will assuredly be a very successful Treasurer and we wish him well. Our new Federation representative is OLIVER HAMILTON-BOX, to whom we extend our thanks for taking on this role. Finally, our longstanding Hon. Auditor, JOHN WATSON, tendered his resignation at the AGM, having been in post for the past fifteen years. We are most grateful to him for his hard work and unobtrusive commitment to the Association. His successor has yet to be appointed.

CATHEDRAL CHOIR TOUR TO AMERICA

The choir tour to America will begin on Thursday 13 February and end on Monday 24 February 2020. All senior choristers (boys and girls in Years 6, 7 and 8) will take part, in addition to an ATB team of twelve. The first weekend will be spent in Los Angeles, the middle of the week in Santa Maria, and the second weekend will be in San Francisco. This exciting venture will be a mixture of concerts and services, in addition to some excursions to places as diverse as Alcatraz, Universal Studios and The Getty Centre. There will also be time for relaxation on the beach!

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The current choir consists of children from all backgrounds, many of whom have never been abroad. This trip will be an excellent and well-rounded educational experience that will provide them with some fantastic memories to cherish. Tansy Castledine, who has been working hard to raise money for the trip, has planned that there should be no financial burden on the Cathedral. All senior chorister parents are donating and helping with fundraising efforts. The total cost will be approximately £55,000. Some funding has come from The Hastings Trust, profits from choir concerts, individual contributions and also from company grants. The Old Choristers' Association has pledged £2,000 from its funds.

Tansy would be delighted if any individual members of the Association would like to make a contribution to the tour fund. Please go to: oldchoristers.weebly.com/usatour2020. Alternatively, your donations can be sent to: Tansy Castledine, c/o Cathedral Office, Minster Precincts, Peterborough PE1 1XS (cheques payable to: Peterborough Cathedral). Thank you.

THE REVD. CECIL HARRISON

2019 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Cecil Harrison's departure from The King's School, where he was headmaster from 1951-1969. CMH was educated at Westminster School, passing from thence to Trinity College, Cambridge. He subsequently taught Classics at Nottingham High School, Dulwich College and Charterhouse before becoming headmaster of Felsted after the Second World War. Following an altercation with his chairman of governors, Cecil resigned from Felsted and applied for the vacant headship at The King's School. He moved to Peterborough in 1951 and immediately the school began to flourish under his leadership. Owing to his background, he ran King's (then a small grammar school for boys) like a public school. Harrison, who was imbued with a high standard of discipline and service, possessed an intellect of pristine sharpness and clarity. Many of his pupils found their way to university (unlike today, it was only a fairly small percentage of sixth formers who passed on to higher education then). Who could forget that tall, broad figure sailing down the corridors at King's, his gown billowing out behind him? Little wonder that boys automatically cleared a path for him when he passed by! (To observe him gliding through a large gaggle of pupils always brought to mind the story of the parting of the Red Sea from the Book of Exodus). Lytton Strachey's description of Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby is perhaps not inappropriate: "the...schoolboy walked in a holy dread of some sudden manifestation of the sweeping gown, the majestic tone, the piercing glance". For many years Harrison was a lay reader. In 1966 he was ordained deacon in the Cathedral, and was made priest twelve months later. For the remaining years of his headmastership, he ministered to the congregations of All Saints' and Christ Church, Dogsthorpe at weekends, as well as attending weekday evensong at the Cathedral where he always sat in the Headmaster's stall. In the spring of 1969 he was offered the living of Aislaby in North Yorkshire by George Snow, Bishop of Whitby (former chaplain at Charterhouse and father of broadcaster Jon Snow). Cecil, only too aware of Dean Wingfield Digby's implacable determination that King's should become a comprehensive school, accepted the offer and left Peterborough rather abruptly at the end of the summer term. He and his devoted wife Phyllis stayed at Aislaby for ten years, before retiring to the village of Rosedale Abbey. It was there that CMH died in August 1986. Many ex-members of staff and old scholars (including the present writer) attended his funeral on a beautiful September afternoon. The address was given by The Very Revd. Richard Eyre, erstwhile Dean of Exeter and a former pupil. Cecil, in the words of Rupert Brooke, was "Unforgettable, unforgotten".

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PERSONALIA

GRAHAM ANDREWS has recently left the Diocese of York, having been Diocesan Surveyor for the past fourteen years. He is now working for Connells, a firm of chartered surveyors, in their Valuations and Survey team.

Dr. DAVID COLE sends greetings from Christchurch, New Zealand, where he works in the main hospital. He still occasionally sings in hospital shows. David manages to return to the UK a couple of times each year, visiting family (and also the Cathedral) in Peterborough. He has warm recollections of his time as a chorister under Dr. Stanley Vann.

ALICE CUNLIFFE is working as a freelance photographer, based in Cambridgeshire. CHARLES CUNLIFFE is currently studying at The Royal Academy of Music, and has singing engagements all over Europe. EMILY CUNLIFFE is a Music teacher living in London. JAMES CUNLIFFE, who lives in Norway, is a radiographer. He is married to a Norwegian and the couple have two children. And TOM CUNLIFFE, a primary school teacher, lives in Leeds. In his spare time he runs his own brewery. He is married with two children, and is much involved with church life.

CHRISTOPHER GOWER, Master of the Music 1977-2004, celebrated his eightieth birthday on 15 March 2019. A second significant occasion in the Gower household occurred later in the year when Christopher and his wife Sylvia marked their Golden Wedding on 27 September. We send them our warmest congratulations.

Our felicitations to JULIA HAMILTON-BOX, who recently completed a Psychology (Conversion) M.Sc with Distinction. She will be graduating from Canterbury Christ Church University on 31 January 2020.

WILLIAM HAMILTON-BOX was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn on Saturday 29 June. He is serving his first curacy at St. Luke's, Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush and will be ordained priest at Petertide 2020.

PETER HANDLEY is currently Head of the Resource Efficiency Unit at the Secretariat General of the European Union in Brussels.

We are pleased to have re-established contact with JAMES HOGAN, Hon FCRA. He was a chorister from 1954-57 in the early years of Stanley Vann's reign. James is a publisher: he founded Oberon Books, a leading theatre publishing company, in 1985. The company is an independent drama publisher specialising in the performing arts.

It is good to welcome KEVIN HOLLANDS back into the fold after a long period of absence. We hope to see him at the annual gathering in June 2020.

In August TIM HURST-BROWN was awarded the Best Male Performer prize at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Harrogate for his portrayal of Sir Joseph Porter in "HMS Pinafore".



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It was very good to see Colonel CHRISTOPHER MENEHOTT, OBE at this year's reunion. He had not returned to Peterborough since he left the choir in 1960. Chris thoroughly enjoyed singing with the ensemble at Evensong, as well as meeting several people from his time as a chorister. He plans to be with us for the 2020 reunion.

NICHOLAS MORRIS was guest speaker at The King's School Speech Day, which was held in the Cathedral on Friday 13 September. Nick, after taking his degree at Cambridge, trained as a singer at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). He recently sang in the world premiere of "King Kong". He has lately appeared in professional productions of "La Boheme", "Trial by Jury", "Der Rosenkavalier", "Billy Budd", "Carmen" and "Don Giovanni". Nick has also played leading roles in numerous contemporary operas. On Speech Day he sang Rossini's "Largo al factotum" in his superb baritone voice before handing out the prizes.

GABRIELLA PINEDA-RODRIGUES, accompanied by pianist Kate Wishart, sang in a concert in the Cathedral on Saturday 14 September to mark the closing of the Gaia exhibition. The programme included songs from various musical shows including "Carousel", "Les Miserables" and "The Sound of Music", in addition to some operatic arias.

We have recently re-established contact with MICK RENDLE, who left the choir in 1956. He lived at number 2, Minster Precincts, as his father was one of the Cathedral vergers. After leaving King's, Mick joined the Royal Navy and spent 18 months at a Royal Naval Air Station in Malta. He married Dacia, a former County School girl, in 1966; old chorister DAVID ROSSER was best man. Mick's next job was on the staff of the Flag Officer Aircraft Carriers based in Portsmouth. He and Dacia moved to married quarters there in 1967 and have remained in the area ever since; they now live in Portchester. The couple, who celebrated their Golden Wedding in 2016, sing in the choir of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Southsea. We hope to see them at the 2020 reunion.

DAVE STANLEY sings in the choir of Newark Parish Church, Nottinghamshire, under the direction of Dr. Stephen Bullamore. He formerly sang in the choir at Southwell Minster, and before that at Newcastle Cathedral. Dave and the assistant organist at Newark, Mike Dutton (previously assistant organist at Newcastle Cathedral), have just made a CD together.

PETER WATTS was in contact at the beginning of the year to reminisce about the late PETER BOIZOT. He recalled that in 1996 the small Jazz label that he worked on won Jazz CD of the Year and the award ceremony took place at Pizza on the Park. He received the prize from Humphrey Lyttleton and it was at that time that he got to know PETER BOIZOT. He tells us that the latter's contribution to the jazz scene in London cannot be overstated. PW was delighted to organise a number of jazz recordings over the years at PJB's premises in Dean Street, Soho.

ARNOLD WILLS has recently been appointed as a lay representative on the Chapter of Wells Cathedral. He is also the chairman of the Wells Cathedral Chorister Trust, and is the Bath and Wells FCM representative. He continues to sit on the committee of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations.



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MURRAY WILLIAMS has re-established contact with us after a very long period of time. On leaving school, he undertook a four year Aeronautical Engineering apprenticeship at RAF Thurlleigh in Bedfordshire. He subsequently worked for Reuters in London, and later moved to Singapore (still with Reuters). In 2000 he relocated to the USA, where he currently lives. He and his wife Julie have two children, Max (10) and Lucca (9). Murray now runs a private Healthcare Services business.

POSSIBLE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR REUNION DINNER

It has been mooted that the 2021 reunion dinner might take place in the New Building at the east end of the Cathedral, instead of in a local hotel. Bearing in mind that the dinner has been held in a hostelry for very many years, it was felt important to canvas opinions on this possible move and the whole matter will therefore be discussed at next year's AGM.

OLD CHORISTERS' EVENSONG: 27 DECEMBER 2019

Members of the Association are warmly invited to sing Evensong in the Cathedral before the Old Petriburgians' Association reunion at the Brewery Tap on Friday 27 December. The rehearsal will take place at 4.30pm, followed by Evensong at 5.30pm. The music will include the Brewer in D and Sans Day Carol. Old Chorister CHRIS BROWN, now Head of Music at Chipping Norton School, will direct the choir. The organist will be JEREMIAH STEPHENSON (former Organ Scholar and currently Assistant Director of Music at All Saints, Margaret Street). Dress code: dark suits/all black. Please let LOUISE LAPRUN know if you are able to take part, preferably via the facebook event, which can be found on our website: oldchoristers.weebly.com/ocachristmas.

With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year,

Tim Hurst-Brown

Chairman

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Reference

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Frequency of Payment (Weekly/Monthly/Annually)

Date of first payment / /

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Section B - Amend an existing Standing Order (Who you are paying?)

Beneficiary Name

Amend payment amount from to

Amend payment date from to

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Amend reference number from to

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Amount

Usual payment date

I wish to cancel with effect from / /

(For Direct Debit details you should also advise the originator of your cancellation).

All relevant sections must be fully completed for your request to be processed.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU SIGN AND DATE THE FORM.

(Where signing mandate is 'both' or 'all'; all relevant parties must sign to authorise.)

Customer Signature(s)

Contact Telephone Number Date / /