



# SOUTHWELL MINSTER OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2019

Dear Former Chorister,

Welcome to our 2019 newsletter. It is our aim to use this newsletter to, once again, get our association up and running and bring you up to date with what has been happening in the Minster Choir, since our last official meeting and keep you informed of dates of future events we would like to run. We have setup a new Facebook group, so if you are member of Facebook, please request to join as we would like to use the group to post event details but also share stories and memories. For those not on Facebook we would like to hear from you as to what forms of media you would like to hear from us. Please let us know your up-to-date details, so we can keep in touch more easily.

We are planning a reunion weekend for the last weekend of the Summer Term, to coincide with and celebrate 30 years of Southwell Minster Choir Association. Please see the Key Dates and Events section for further information.

### News from the Cathedral Choir

Since the last official meeting at the annual St Cecilia concert in 2010, a lot has happened within the Minster's music department!

In 2014 Paul Hale celebrated 25 years as Rector Chori and in 2016, after 27 years at the helm of the Minster Choir, Paul took the decision to retire. His final weekend was suitably joyous, with a number of former choristers attending the end of term Evensong, and the traditional end-of-term cricket match and choir social. After a two-term interregnum, Paul Provost arrived as the new Rector Chori in Spring 2017, having served previously as Assistant Director of Music at Guildford Cathedral.



Paul has now been in charge of the music at the Minster for five terms, and in this time has seen the choir through two St Cecilia Concerts, two very successful Christmases, and in May 2018 the boys and men embarked on a tour of the Netherlands.

Since our last meeting, we have also welcomed a new Assistant Director of Music, Simon Hogan, who directs the girl choristers (originally set up as a separate girls' choir, but now considered very much part of the Cathedral Choir alongside the boy choristers), and under Simon the girls have recorded a disc of Marian music on the Regent label, and toured to Southwell's twin town of Sarzana in Italy.

The Girls' Choir was formed in 2005, and therefore celebrated a very happy 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on Mothering Sunday 2015 with a celebratory Evensong and reception afterwards.

The running of the music department relies hugely on the skill, dedication and good humour of our organ scholars, and we've had a great succession of these too since the OCA last met. Recent post-holders have included Edward Turner (now assistant at Derby), David Quinn (Organist of Bradfield College) and Hilary Punnett (assistant at Lincoln Cathedral).

We hope that all Old Choristers feel a strong and happy connection with the Minster, and we'd love to see you at a service or concert here some time. Do get in touch and let us know you're coming!



## Contacts

### **Old Choristers Association**

**Admins: Andrew McIntosh & Simon Hogan**

oldchoristers@southwellminster.org.uk

### **Southwell Minster Choir Association**

**Secretary: Michael Davidson**

m.d46@btinternet.com

### **Paul Provost - Rector Chori**

rectorchori@southwellminster.org.uk

If you have any feedback regarding this newsletter or would like to submit information or an article for a future publication, please send us a message.

## Welcome from the Rector Chori



Dear Former Chorister,

I am delighted that we are re-energising the Southwell Old Choristers' Association. Southwell Minster has a long musical heritage of which we are rightly proud, and it is very important

to us to keep links with those who have been part of the music here over the years. We hope in time to ensure this is an active association that seeks to connect members, to report on news about Minster music, and to encourage choristers to remain a part of the family once they have left. Much has changed over the years and we continue to evolve, but the music still thrives: I look forward to seeing you at exciting events in the coming months and years!

Paul Provost

## Southwell Minster Choir Association

### **Celebrating 30 Years in 2019**

If **you** were a chorister at Southwell from 1989 onwards, then you would surely have benefited in some way from the influence of Southwell Minster Choir Association. For *SMCA*, as it is affectionately known, was set up by the former *Rector Chori*, Paul Hale, soon after his appointment in 1989, expressly to support the cathedral music foundation, and **especially the choristers**. 30 years on and *SMCA* is now a thriving support group with a membership of over 100 subscribers, and is open to **all** who value the long standing tradition of music in worship at the Minster.

It is particularly pleasing that our members include a fair number of **former choristers**; some who sang under either Sir David Lumsden or the late Kenneth Beard, as well as those who sang during Paul Hale's tenure (to July 2016). There are parents and grandparents of former choristers too! And current chorister parents contribute much to *SMCA* as elected members of the committee, particularly organising the termly leisure or educational activities such as **you** experienced—the annual bonfire and fireworks or the summer term BBQ for instance; or visits to Leeds Armouries or Duckworth Imperial War Museum for example. Or perhaps you remember the Sunday evening football! No doubt **you** would have enjoyed the experience of perhaps two or three tours abroad in your time as a chorister—they have taken place biannually from 1990 to Sées in Normandy, through to Utrecht in the Netherlands in 2018 (boys), and to Norway in 2009 and Holland in 2013 (girls). **You** may have featured on an annual Christmas card, or sang on a CD recording—'*Messe Solennelle*' recorded in Sées (boys), or '*Christus Rex*' (girls). There are many more!

They are just some of the ways choristers especially have been supported by *SMCA*.

It is always a pleasure to meet up with former choristers, to share memories and to catch up with their time since leaving the choir. I am delighted that *SMCA* and *SOCA* are working together, not least because it provides an opportunity recognise the contribution of former choristers in upholding the highly regarded choral tradition, and a chance to work together in the promotion and development of cathedral music in Southwell in future.

I commend to you the plans for the gathering in July and look forward to celebrating *SMCA*'s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the re-launch of *SOCA*.

Michael Davidson (Secretary, *SMCA*)

## People News

### An Interview with former chorister, Edward Turner



**Edward, you joined the Minster Choir as a junior chorister in 2000. For how long were you a chorister, and what were the highlights?**

I remained a chorister until the summer of 2005, by which stage there was barely any note I could sing above middle-C that wasn't the characteristic hoot of a boy's mid-teenage years. Five years doesn't seem that long, but it definitely formed an integral part of my childhood that I look back on with deep affection. I struggle to identify particular moments as highlights, since part of the joy was the routine: one day we might be singing *Zadok the Priest* as a new Bishop was installed, and the next we could've been singing *Faire is the Heaven* in front of a congregation of one. Each moment had something to treasure – large or small – and there was always something to look forward to!

**Do you recall having any favourite pieces? And any that you really didn't enjoy singing?**

There were definitely certain favourites that often elicited a subtle 'Yesss!' from my chorister colleagues when they appeared in our piles for rehearsal. I was 'that' chorister (there's always one) who had a copy of the termly music list in my place so there were never any surprises, but I do remember looking eagerly through the music list when it arrived in the post ahead of each term to see what was coming up. We would always look forward to the big anthems – Walton *The Twelve*, Finzi *Lo the full, final sacrifice*, Elgar *Give/Great* etc. – but we also had some bizarre predilections. The Fifteenth Evening Psalmody was one such example, but I suspect the appeal was more to see how quickly we could rattle through it, rather than any musical or narrative content. (The head chorister had his own special copy with a table of past performance times!) Generally speaking, I enjoyed most of what we sang, though I must confess to much of the Tudor repertoire not really 'doing it for me' at the time.

**How has your time as a chorister influenced or helped your subsequent career?**

A vast amount. It seems like the sort of cliché I use to recruit choristers now, but the skills and passions I developed over my time as a Chorister really did set me up for life. It goes without saying that the rigorous training of singing 6 days a week for five years provided me with an incredibly comprehensive musical skill-set, but there were other aspects of the chorister life that have also stood me in good stead. The ability to structure my time helped me a great deal at school; balancing a social life with GCSEs, A-levels, piano lessons, horn lessons, organ lessons, driving lessons etc., as well as participating in as many school ensembles as I could. This was again put to the test at university, with all the academic demands placed upon me there, on top of the chapel music. The ability to work in a team, look after my juniors, and use my initiative are also skills I continue to value today. More recently (and more specific to my career as a Cathedral Organist), my experiences as a chorister mean I am able to understand my own choristers and tailor my work with them accordingly.

**How did you find returning to Southwell as Organ Scholar?**

When I saw the ad go up on Church Times, I dismissed it immediately thinking 'I've done Southwell, time for something new', but the more I thought about it, the more I realised how much the Music Department had developed since I left in 2005. Closer inspection of the duties of the post revealed it to be more of a sub-assistant organist post, being principal accompanist to both the Minster Chorale and the Girls' Choir, the latter of whom were by now a first-rate choir of extraordinary young women. It turned out to be the perfect job for me. Little did I know that just three terms later I would have the genuine pleasure of directing the Girls and Chorale, and accompanying the Boys and Lay Clerks, as Acting Assistant Director of Music. It was fascinating to be able to compare my experiences as a chorister with how the department looked as a member of staff, not to mention a great platform for me to learn a vast amount of music, and to work with some fine musicians. The joys of the job, combined with the collegiate and familial social life, resulted in two very happy years indeed.

**Would you recommend life as a Cathedral Chorister?**

Very much so. Not just with the rose-tinted spectacles of my own choristerhood, but more recently seeing how the experience helps develop all children who come through Cathedral Choirs. It's such a good preparation for life, and would recommend to any child with an interest in music.

## Key Dates and Events

### Friday 19 July

#### SMCA 30th Anniversary Concert

7.30pm—an opportunity to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Southwell Minster Choir Association with music sung by the Minster's choirs. All welcome!

### Saturday 20 July

#### Old Choristers' Re-launch event

12.30pm Welcome lunch in the State Chamber  
 1.30pm Recital and masterclass by Marcus Farnsworth  
 3.30pm Tea & coffee break  
 4.15pm Rehearsal with Paul Provost and the Cathedral Choir  
 5.30pm Evensong (to be sung by all former choristers!)  
 6.30pm Drinks reception

*Please help us to spread the word of these events—it would be wonderful to see lots of old boy and girl choristers!*



## Just for fun... Can you find the Composers?

S	E	N	I	P	O	H	C	E	H	N	B	B	L
M	S	B	S	C	H	O	E	N	B	E	R	G	H
A	Z	T	Y	C	B	W	W	A	G	N	E	R	S
S	O	C	R	P	D	E	B	U	S	S	Y	B	M
M	I	N	I	A	H	A	N	D	E	L	B	E	E
H	L	I	D	S	V	L	I	S	T	Z	N	E	T
A	R	M	L	C	D	I	P	U	O	S	H	T	E
R	E	A	A	H	N	S	N	D	Y	A	H	H	N
B	B	H	V	U	A	I	T	S	A	H	I	O	A
Z	Y	L	I	B	L	H	H	I	K	L	C	V	I
D	B	E	V	E	P	B	A	C	H	Y	E	E	E
T	I	R	U	R	O	A	P	U	C	C	I	N	I
S	I	R	C	T	C	A	W	E	B	E	R	N	E
S	C	H	U	M	A	N	N	I	I	N	R	P	H

HAYDN  
 STRAVINSKY  
 BACH  
 WAGNER  
 SCHUMANN  
 COPLAND  
 PUCCINI  
 BRAHMS  
 BERLIOZ  
 SCHOENBERG  
 HANDEL  
 SMETENA  
 BEETHOVEN  
 DEBUSSY  
 CHOPIN  
 SCHUBERT  
 MAHLER  
 LISTZ  
 WEBERN  
 VIVALDI