



NEWS FROM THE CHOIR SCHOOLS' ASSOCIATION SINGING OUT!

The benefits of a Choir School education

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PATRON: THE DUCHESS OF KENT



● Canterbury Cathedral Girls' Choir sang their first Evensong on Saturday 25 January which included music by Vaughan Williams, Dyson and SS Wesley. As the girls processed out from the Quire stalls they received a standing ovation. Under the baton of Assistant Organist, David Newsholme, the girls will initially sing at services when the boy choristers are on their twice-termly breaks. Their next Evensong is on Saturday 29 March, followed by the Diocesan Service celebrating the 20th anniversary of Women's Ministry on Saturday 10 May.

The sixteen girls are aged 12-16 and attend eight different schools in the area.

CHAIRMAN ROGER OVEREND WRITES...

On 22 November more than 100,000 young people worldwide, including many of our choristers, sang the music of Benjamin Britten. They were celebrating the centenary of the birth of one of the greatest composers of the 20th century.

Our cathedrals and college chapels continued to ring with the sound of glorious music sung by our choristers through Christmas, with much of it brought to the fore through radio and television. This term we are working towards Easter and I asked Christopher Walji, Head Chorister of Rochester Cathedral, to reflect on these two major Christian festivals. You can read his thoughts on page 3.

But we should not forget the work that choristers do day by day, singing the weekly round of services, sometimes to only a handful of people in the congregation, but always to the glory of God. What they do continues that long tradition of choral services in our great buildings which has given so much to choristers, worshippers and listeners over the centuries.

Without choristers there would be a huge void, so it is important that they are not

taken for granted and that they are fully supported, musically, socially and financially. Music of a high quality often comes at a price, but I believe that any money spent on cathedral music pays for itself many times over. It gives pleasure to the listener, engaging many entering our cathedrals and college chapels for the first time, and introduces young people to the wonder and power of word and music mixed with superb architecture.

Music must be seen as a vital part of cathedral/college outreach work, not just by the music department, but also by Deans and Chapters. Touring, both home and abroad, also comes under the outreach umbrella. Our unrivalled choral heritage is enjoyed all over the world either through broadcasts, recordings or, as *Singing Out!* reports on page 6, through trips abroad.

Choir schools educate over a thousand choristers in an environment where music

permeates each day and where what they do is highly-respected by fellow non-chorister pupils.

But it is also important to take stock of the continuing outreach with local primary schools – an initiative which started with CSA and has grown, thanks to early government funding, to be an important part of cathedral mission. Turn to page 4 to learn more of the very valuable activities our music staff undertake in their local community.

We must continue to spread the word about choir schools and what they stand for so as to attract a steady stream of boys and girls putting themselves forward for choristership.

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News from Overseas Members

USA Catholic Choir School joins CSA

CSA is delighted to welcome the USA's only Catholic boys' choir school into Overseas Membership. St Paul's Choir School educates the choristers for St Paul's Church, Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Their English Director of Music, John Robinson, was a chorister at Hereford Cathedral before heading to St John's College, Cambridge, Carlisle and Canterbury cathedrals.

John writes: "We value this opportunity to join CSA, both to lessen the degree of our 'splendid isolation' and to re-align ourselves with the ancient traditions of music-making in which boys' choirs have their roots."

St Paul's has only 43 boys at present, all of whom sing as probationers, as changed voices in the Schola Cantorum, or as choristers in the Choir. The latter is structured much as an English cathedral choir with choristers and a professional back row.

John continues: "The focus of our school life is in serving the liturgy at lunchtime Masses, the weekly Vigil and at Sunday morning High Mass. We perform widely within the state of Massachusetts and make regular domestic and international tours – most recently to Washington DC, New York and Rome.

"We hope that our CSA membership will allow us to form transatlantic friendships with comparable choirs as well as broadening our options for exchanges and tours. We look forward to showing our young men all that is excellent in the choir school tradition."

From New York...

200 miles south of Cambridge, Massachusetts is St Thomas Choir School in New York City. Again, a small school with just under 30 choirboys in grades 3-8 this academic year.

Hailing primarily from the northeastern United States, the boys benefit not just from the Choir School's specialized musical education, not simply from its location in the heart of one of the world's great cities, but also and importantly from its connections across the country and around the globe.

Last June an ongoing chorister exchange programme with The Prebendal School in Chichester enabled two boys and a staff member to spend an 'amazing' week in England. There are plans to expand this programme in 2014 to include exchanges with Escolania de Montserrat in Barcelona.

St Thomas's recently welcomed three gap students. Two came from CSA members (Hereford Cathedral School and King's College School, Cambridge). This year's

gap students are former choristers from Montserrat and St Paul's Cathedral, London.

In March the school will embark on a domestic tour to the South and Midwest, so that the boys can share their talents and spread the word about the Choir School. It is also a good way of exploring different regions of their own country and expanding their vision.

Headmaster Charles Wallace, who regularly attends the CSA Annual Conference, says: "Connections such as these enrich the lives of our students and enhance their educational experience far beyond school walls."

...to Washington DC

Travel another 200 miles further south and we have Washington National Cathedral on the CSA map.

The Choir of men and boys was founded in 1909 and the boys, aged 8-14, are educated at St Albans School. The Cathedral has had a girls' choir since 1997, the first of its kind, with its members educated at the National Cathedral School.

As with our choristers, their schedule includes recordings, concerts and tours. However, at the end of August they also attend a week-long choir camp at the Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, Virginia. They use the time working on new music for the coming year, leading services in local churches, and getting to know fellow choristers.

Over to New Zealand

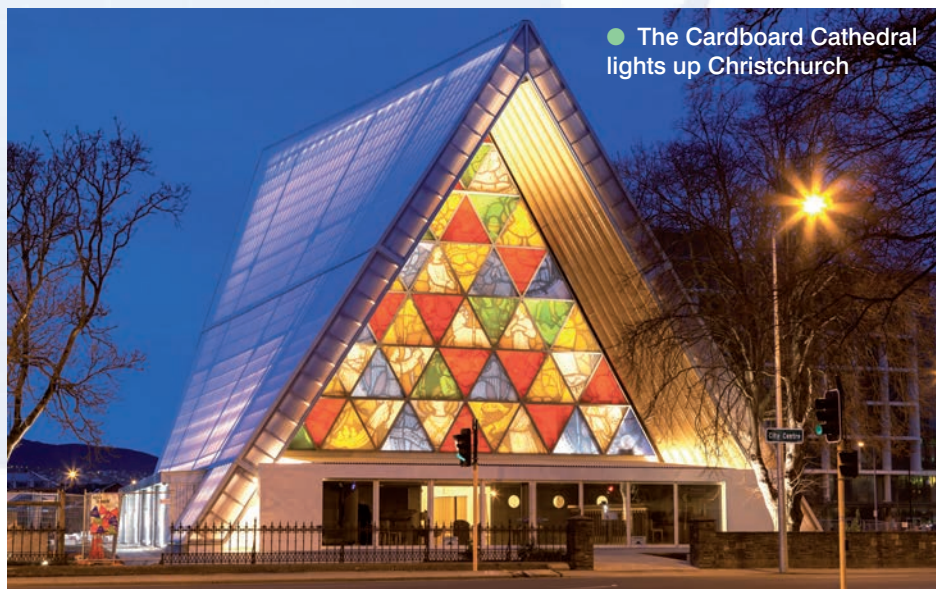
Christchurch Cathedral in New Zealand is nearly 9,000 miles from Washington and almost 12,000 miles from London.

The earthquake of February 2011 left Christchurch's Anglican Cathedral tower destroyed and subsequent aftershocks chipped away at the building's stability. Ever since, its future has courted controversy, not least over the suggestion that it be replaced by a temporary cardboard cathedral.

It wasn't easy finding a suitable site but was eventually erected on part of the St John's Church site – also a victim of the earthquake. The original design, by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, was for a building that would last 10 years. However, it is now a permanent fixture in Latimer Square, costing roughly one-tenth of the proposed new Cathedral.

The Cardboard Cathedral opened last August, the first significant civic building to be completed in the City's reconstruction programme. Its detractors are much quieter and it is becoming a hopeful symbol of the new Christchurch.

"It is fabulous for our choristers to be back in a cathedral at last. The school has also enjoyed being able to use the cathedral once again as a place of worship," says Paul Kennedy, Headmaster of the Cathedral Grammar School.



● The Cardboard Cathedral lights up Christchurch

Last but not least....

Closer to home is St Patrick's Cathedral Choir School in Dublin. The Cathedral Foundation goes back to the thirteenth century and its choir school was founded in 1432. It has had an almost continuous history of educating choristers with just two interruptions – The Reformation and Cromwell's Commonwealth.

The school is unique in Ireland. Today it is housed in modern buildings opposite the Cathedral and is a co-educational national school. All 21 boys are choristers in the cathedral choir.

FIRST WILLCOCKS SCHOLARSHIP

Roger Overend interviews Felix Kirby, a pupil at York Minster School and the first Sir David Willcocks/CSA Organ Scholar.

When Felix was about 5 years old, he found a copy of the *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* by J.S. Bach. He tried to play the *Toccata* and from this point was hooked on music.

He took formal piano lessons from the age of 7 and later became a chorister at York Minster where he currently sings at Decani 10. He hopes that being a chorister will give him a springboard to Eton when he tries for a music award in 2015.

Felix also plays the bassoon in the school orchestra and, having been captivated by the sound and power of the Minster organ, now has organ lessons with David Pipe, Assistant Director of Music at the Minster. He is lucky enough to have an organ in his house to practise on! He also finds time to compose and has written several pieces for piano and piano and voice.

Currently his favourite organ piece is *Fête* by Langlais and he adores Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, particularly the section *I will consider my cat Geoffrey*. On the piano he is studying music by Balakirev. He does listen to some popular music but prefers classical in all its genres.

With such musical talent, one might think Felix would wish to pursue a career in music, but he told me that after university he would like to become an investment banker! He is certainly a boy who aims high.



● Roger turns the pages for Felix

Jack makes history

2013 was quite a year for 12 year-old Jack Topping, a chorister at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and a pupil at St Edward's College.

Not only did he become the youngest solo artist to sign for Decca records but he is also the youngest singer to be appointed an ambassador for 'Save the Children'.

His debut album *Wonderful World*, released in November, reached Number One in the Classical Album Chart in the first week of its release. His public engagements included singing in front of the Queen at the BBC's *Festival of Remembrance*; he sang the National Anthem at the *Royal Variety Performance Show*, which Prince Charles attended; he performed at the *Classical Brits Awards* and sang on *Strictly Come Dancing* on Christmas Day.

As well as singing *Tomorrow* for the 'Save the Children' advertising campaign in the run up to Christmas, Jack also travelled to

South Africa to learn more about the education programmes run by the charity.

In Qwa Qwa he witnessed first-hand the difficulties children his own age face living in a shanty town. He says: "I'm so lucky to be an ambassador for the charity and to have met some of the children they are helping. I'd seen schools on TV on 'Red Nose Day', but it was amazing to see them in real life. It was a long flight but it was definitely worth it."

● Jack with new friends in Qwa Qwa



Christmas v. Easter?

Christopher Walji, Rochester Cathedral's Head Chorister, gives his view to Roger Overend, Headmaster of King's Rochester Preparatory School: "I find the difference between Christmas and



Easter is often the feeling in the Song School and Cathedral, and of course the style of music we perform.

Christmas is obviously nothing but jolly and happy, but Holy Week is a more reflective period, but then there is the joy and brilliance of Easter Day.

"At Christmas we sing numerous carols and very joyful anthems and hymns. We also give an annual concert of music from *Messiah* with carols accompanied by an orchestra which is always quite special. Midnight Mass is very atmospheric and Christmas Day services are magical. I enjoy the week after the school term has ended when we just have rehearsals.

"On Palm Sunday there is the hope and expectation of something special. As Holy Week proceeds you really sense the cold and emptiness which appears in front of you and makes you think what it must have been like on the cross all alone. There is some beautiful, but difficult, music sung during this period.

"Then there is the hope and delight that Easter brings, with all the great celebratory music. Even though we have to get up at 4.00 am in the morning to rehearse for the Easter Service at 5.00am, none of us minds as it is a very special day. We get a good breakfast before the usual morning Eucharist and finally our Director of Music gives us Easter eggs as we depart for home. Both periods of the Church Year are wonderful for all choristers."

OUTREACH PROJECTS THRIVE

Three years after the withdrawal of government funding for chorister outreach programmes the majority of projects are still going strong.

27 CSA member foundations are running outreach projects locally, either working in schools or organising junior choirs. Funding comes from a variety of sources – cathedral, school, local charities, from primary schools ‘buying’ in the expertise of professional choral trainers or modest subscriptions, as in the case of some junior choirs.

Several foundations, including Exeter and Wolverhampton, are actively involved with the government’s Music Hubs, now in their second year of looking after music provision in schools.

St Peter’s Church, Wolverhampton has a particularly strong commitment to the City’s Hub as its Director of Music, Peter

Morris, is the current Chair. He comments “I regard this as a huge privilege. It puts our choristers firmly at the centre of things and raises our profile.

“There is a strong commitment in the Hub to singing at both primary and secondary level and our Hub partners include the Birmingham Conservatoire where our

present Organ Scholar is a second year student.”

Activity breaks down into three categories. Some foundations are concentrating on either their junior choir or continuing to work with local schools. Some are finding sufficient funds to do both.

‘Out of Hours’ singing

King’s Junior Voices (KJV) is a free, non-auditioned independent choir for 7-13 year olds, which meets on Saturday mornings at King’s College School, **Cambridge**. It is a registered charity attracting financial help from a number of sources and is run by Lyn Alcántara, Director of Music at Wolfson College and a member of the BBC Singers.

Durham Cathedral Young Singers are regular performers in and around the City and two years ago enjoyed being part of *Carols of Light* when they shared a stage with the likes of Joe Mcelderry, Sir Thomas Allen and Rick Wakeman. Last summer many of the choir’s members sang in the Lindisfarne Gospels Choir, the community choir formed especially to celebrate the three-month display of the Anglo-Saxon Lindisfarne Gospels on the Durham World Heritage Site.

Director of Music Outreach at Durham, Mish Kelly, has set up two more initiatives to encourage singing. The Minstrels are age 5-7 and have lots of fun through singing and musicianship games.

DCYS VOX initially had just six members – two boys and four girls who were part of DCYS and didn’t want to give up singing. Mish says: “Numbers have grown and the group sings comfortably in three parts, with music ranging from Byrd to the Beatles. New singers are expected to have some music reading skills and the confidence to develop them further.”

Ely continues to run its hugely popular Imps choir, funded by the Cathedral. Its first concert, with 100 7-13 singers, was given in a packed Cathedral in 2006 under the baton of John Rutter. They regularly sing with the Cathedral Choir and have performed with the likes of Aled Jones.



● Lichfield’s MusicShare Chorister Outreach Programme’s 10th birthday coincided with the centenary of Benjamin Britten’s birth and the Cathedral staged a ‘Festival of Britten’ to celebrate. A production of *Noye’s Fludde* brought together over 170 ‘animals’ from schools across Lichfield. With cast, crew and musicians numbering nearly 250, the performance was yet another example of the wonderful team spirit that has been at the very heart of MusicShare over the past ten years.

Photograph: Christopher Lockwood

Stephen Tanner, Director of Music at **Exeter** Cathedral School says: “The Devon County Junior Choir (DCJC) is very much a permanent strand of our outreach work and goes from strength to strength with numbers around 45. Over the last couple of years my colleague Rachel Smith has also developed a senior version known as Schola Exe.”

Hereford’s ‘Singing Club’ has been going for 10 years and 30 boys and girls (7-16) meet weekly under the direction of Martyn Lane. Funding is solely from the weekly £3 subscription and they receive invitations to sing around the area. They performed at the Three Choirs Festival Fringe for the first time in 2012.

Lincoln Minster School funds a variety of Saturday activity for local children – ‘Ready Steady Choir’ and ‘Ready Steady Play’ – as well as organising instrumental days.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Queen’s Silver Jubilee Trust, The **London** Oratory School has been able to continue

with its outreach project in primary schools as well as running two choirs on Saturday mornings. There has also been sufficient funding to commission two small new works for Fulham and Hammersmith children to master.

Salisbury Cathedral Junior Choir continues to be a resounding success and has a busy programme of events. The choir is conducted by Ian Wicks, Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral School. He reports: “Last term we took part in an RSCM Young People’s Festival, sang in the BBC Wiltshire Carol Service, at the opening of the Salisbury Christmas Market and at the Cathedral Family service on Christmas Eve.

“The choir is around 40 strong and both boys and girls enjoy coming and making a strong, robust sound. We rehearse on Saturday morning in term time in the Cathedral. It is open to children in school years 4-8 and there is no charge or audition – only enthusiasm and commitment are required!”

The repertoire for **Sheffield** Cathedral Young Voices is all secular. This group of young singers aged 7-12 put on at least one performance a term. The choir has sung at Sheffield City Hall, the Octagon centre at Sheffield University, Opera North in Leeds and last year at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain Worldsong event.

Truro, where the outreach initiative was born, continues to run both a Youth Choir and Junior Choir.

The older children in **York** Junior Youth Choir, which is 45-strong (aged 7-15) love it so much they don't want to leave. So Alison Forster, Director of Music at The Minster School, has been forced to start a Junior Youth Chamber Choir for those in Years 7 and above!

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Jan Faulkner (1953-2013)

Jan was a leading light within the Chorister Outreach Programme (COP) and we were so very sorry to hear she lost her battle with cancer in December.



For many years she was a professional symphonic percussionist and was a member of the percussion teaching staff at Wells Cathedral School for 16 years. In September 2003 she became the School's first Outreach Officer, responsible for building sustainable links with schools in the local community, and nationally as part of the Sing Up programme.

She was a truly inspirational teacher for musicians of all ages and abilities and her extraordinary ability to communicate was demonstrated time and time again, whether with children with Special Needs, adults with Alzheimers, or choir school heads at their annual conference.

Thank you Jan for the joy you brought to so many people.

There will be a memorial service for Jan in Wells Cathedral at 3pm on Monday 12 May.

What's happening in Primary Schools?

The simple answer is lots! Most of the Chorister Outreach Programmes have continued to work with local schools, more often than not taking regular singing sessions before inviting the children back to the cathedral to show off their new-found skills and to sing with the choristers.

With limited space it is only possible to give a snapshot of the superb work that is continuing up and down the country.

Ampleforth's Director of Music, Ian Little, confirming that the College Outreach Programme was still going strong said: "Schools are still very interested – it's so worthwhile and gets enthusiastic responses from Head teachers. As always I am looking to find new ways of involving children without finance and without cost in terms of staff time!"

Outreach thrives in **Blackburn** (the team are working with 60 schools in the area); in **Bristol, Durham, Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Guildford, Leicester, Lichfield, London Oratory, Manchester, Norwich, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Southwell, Truro, Wells, Westminster and York.**

A number of the programmes have been running for ten or more years and there is no sign that enthusiasm on the part of providers or recipients is waning. They are an important part of mission and purpose for most foundations.

Ely Cathedral was one of the first to explore the possibility of primary schools purchasing the expertise of animateur Rebecca Duckworth. Now they offer a range of packages to local schools. Cambridge Music has helped with modest funds to keep costs to schools down. A number of other foundations have commented on how much they too enjoy a continued working relationship with the county music staff.

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- THAN A NICE-TO-HAVE. THE CSA IS STRONGER BECAUSE OF IT."

Elizabeth Cairncross, Headteacher
Wells Cathedral School and former CSA Chair



● Durham primary school children in the Cathedral, singing a song called *The Lambton Worm* – a local folk song which tells the tale of the slaying of a worm that lived at Worm Hill.

Cathedral choirs... on tour

Cathedral choirs have been touring for the best part of a century now. The earliest recorded overseas trip seems to be a joint effort by two 'Royal Peculiars'.

Twelve Westminster Abbey choristers joined eight gentlemen from St George's Chapel, Windsor for 'the great tour of Canada' in 1927. The Windsor choristers were younger and left at home as it was thought the tour would be too much for them.

The choir sailed from Liverpool to St John New Brunswick on the *SS Montrose*, travelling through 80mph gales. Despite sea sickness they still managed a full evensong mid-Atlantic!

The party travelled 16,000 miles singing 25 services and 35 concerts from the east coast to the west coast and back. They met Red Indians in war paint and feathers, and were greeted by huge crowds wherever they went. Concerts and services were packed out – in Toronto 10,000 people were turned away from a service but were then treated to a repeat performance the next day.

It was mid-winter and the Canadians kindly provided appropriate clothing. In their luggage was the music, all by English composers, AND school books. While on the move they had managed to fit in two hours school work every day!*

Touring has become a regular part of many choir programmes and most choristers will experience some overseas travel. In recent years there aren't many parts of the world that remain untouched by our glorious choral tradition.

However, the chorister role as ambassador is equally important at home. Last Easter King's College Choir, Cambridge sang at the Prime Minister's Easter Reception for Christians. Anyone who watched the final of Gareth Malone's *Singing in the Work Place* final in Ely Cathedral in December could not help but be impressed with the confidence and superb way in which the choristers shared their knowledge and experience with the three finalist choirs.

TWENTY YEARS AGO...

24 cathedral choirs made 29 trips overseas in 1993. Asia was the only continent not to enjoy a choir visit. Christ Church Oxford went to Brazil, King's Cambridge went to Australia.

In the previous decade Wells Cathedral embarked on a 'World Tour', St George's Chapel, Windsor headed to the USA for the first time, Chichester choristers ventured behind the Iron Curtain, King's Cambridge were in Scandinavia while Ely set out to conquer Normandy.

Two years later Lichfield choristers were granted a Papal Audience, King's Cambridge choristers were 'mobbed' in Japan, Lincoln Choir went to Le Mans and St James' Grimsby headed off to Iceland.

Great Britain had been in the Common Market for twenty years by 1993 and many of the choirs visited a variety of European destinations that year, including Denmark, France (New College sang a reconstructed mass at the Chapel Royal, Versailles), Holland, Germany and Spain.

Long before Poland's entry into the EU there was a link between the universities of York and Lodz and Richard Shephard, then Headmaster of The Minster School, York organised a trip for the Minster Choir and the school's drama group in 1993.

Richard said at the time: "The visit was an important first step in a relationship between the churches in York and Lodz; an educational experience for all of us; a taste of the English choral tradition for the Poles; friendships between Polish and English children; and in my case at least, a desire to return to Poland soon to learn more about this historic and fascinating country."

By 1995 English cathedral choirs were adding Scandinavia and The Lebanon to the tour list as well as regular trips to North America where they have always been a huge attraction.

Worcester broke new ground when they became the first English cathedral choir to visit South Africa.

Both Lambeth Palace and Westminster had to endorse and support the tour and Archbishop Desmond Tutu gave his blessing before it could go ahead. Donald Hunt, then Master of the Choristers, insisted it must be a multi-cultural tour and one of the highlights was a visit to the New Brighton Township and a joint celebration with the Wellington Choir, bringing together two completely contrasting styles.

Back home Worcester was cold and foggy in December 1993, but in Worcester, South Africa the concert was given in temperatures of around 40°C. Overall The Choir won praise from critics and audiences alike and it is worth reproducing the Cathedral Dean's comments to *The Church Times*:

"The hospitality we received was very generous. Everyone was put up in people's homes. This enabled real dialogue to take place. It was interesting to discover how black African choirs appreciated our musical tradition (Bruckner was a great success). We found a real thirst for culture which, for many, has been lacking for a long time.

"We were sometimes surprised at how very English the worship was in some Anglican churches, but Soweto showed us how the African culture is shaping the worship in its own way. This is a process which will undoubtedly increase as the society changes. We certainly appreciated the deep emotion, spontaneity and musical skills of African worship.

"We were humbled by the warmth and enthusiasm of the welcome; we were glad to share what we offered; but we came away aware of a quality of discipleship and commitment which puts us to shame. We received more than we gave."

Matron's view Pam Head, a chorister mum at New College, Oxford reminded *Choir Schools' Today (CST)* readers that touring is not all glamour and fun. Someone has to worry about food, beds and crumpled cassocks – matron!

She was part of the team accompanying the choir for an Easter tour of Holland and France in 1990. On the first morning she wrote: "After some exploring the boys went off to rehearse and the matrons started 'the dreaded job' of pulling out the pleats on the heavily starched ruffs.

"The first concert that evening went smoothly, just one headache and a nosebleed."

*Source: A history of Cathedral Choir Schools by Anne Page



● Hereford Cathedral Choristers take a close look at the organ at the Cadet Chapel, West Point, USA. They enjoyed a highly successful tour in The States over the autumn half-term which included concerts in Washington DC.

TWENTY YEARS ON...

The desire to travel remains undiminished. King's College Choir, Cambridge has regularly toured overseas and 2013 was no exception – The USA in May, Korea, China, Hong Kong and Singapore in August, and The Netherlands in September, with Australia on the horizon next summer.

Closer to home, The London Oratory's Schola Cantorum was in Rome in February 2013. Southwell's choir recorded in Normandy last May and the girls' choir sang in Amsterdam. Sweden was popular with visits from Llandaff, Portsmouth and Truro choirs. St John's Cambridge was in Copenhagen in April and in Munich and Stuttgart just before Christmas.

Peterborough's choir went to France and Belgium in the autumn. Chris Johns particularly enjoyed taking Leicester Cathedral choir to Osnabruck in Germany where he had been Assistant Organist.

Exeter's boy and girl choristers spent a wonderful week in Vienna in the summer. Director of Music Andrew Millington said: "Concerts were given to enthusiastic audiences in The Schubertkirche, Peterskirche, Vittekirche and we sang Evensong in the Anglican Christ Church. One highlight was singing High Mass in the splendid Augustinekirche, performing the Langlais setting from the West Gallery with the mighty Klais organ.

"We also fitted in a visit to the United Nations Building where we gave a short, informal concert in its entrance way, the



● Director of Music, Andrew Nethsingha conducts choristers from St John's College, Cambridge on a trip to The Netherlands.

Rotunda, to entertain diplomats, workers and passers-by".

Winchester Quiristers were in Belfast just before Christmas while Blackburn Cathedral choir and the girls' choir enjoyed a trip to Brussels, Ypres (to sing Mass at St Martin's Cathedral and The Last Post Ceremony) and on to Ghent to give a concert in St Bavo's Cathedral.



Photograph: Carl Turner

● Exeter Cathedral Choristers pictured at the United Nations in Vienna last summer

ON THE HORIZON...

Planning is well under-way for a number of trips this year including: Canterbury (Norway and The Netherlands), Guildford (USA), Leicester (The Isle of Man), Portsmouth (France and Belgium), St Paul's (Switzerland), Salisbury (Belgium and Germany), Southwell (Leipzig), Truro (The Scilly Isles) and Winchester Quiristers (Russia).

CSA People



● After 17 years at the helm of St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, Jennifer Rimer handed over to **Dr Kenneth Taylor** last Easter. Jennifer taught piano and academic music at the school before becoming Principal in 1996. We wish her a very happy retirement!

Ken was educated at Dulwich College and the University of Edinburgh. He has a strong academic background in university science research and education and for the past 15 years held teaching and management posts in a wide range of Scottish schools.

He combines his enthusiasm for education with a deep love of music. He is a keen singer and plays the viola, piano and organ. He and his wife Katherine have two sons and a daughter aged 14, 12 and 9 respectively.

St Mary's is one of the nine MDS (Music and Dance Schools) in the UK and is choir school to St Mary's Cathedral. It offers music and academic education to young musicians aged 9-19.

Like many English choir schools, outreach has become an increasingly important part of school life. More than 100 local children benefit from the expertise of music staff, thanks to Saturday Morning Music Classes. This year they have introduced Dalcroze Eurhythmics – learning fundamental musical skills through movement – an excellent preparation for learning an instrument and developing listening skills.

MILES AMHERST (1931–2013)

It is with great sadness we record the death of Miles Amherst, exactly forty years after realising his dream of founding a choir school for Tewkesbury Abbey.

Miles, who was 82 when he died last May, was 21 when he first saw the Abbey. After a teaching career spent largely at King's School, Ely, he returned in 1973 to buy the former Tewkesbury High School for Girls, which was conveniently opposite.

Jonathan Milton, who succeeded him as Headmaster in 1990 writes: "Miles was a remarkable man. Those of us who were privileged to have worked with him could not but have both huge affection and huge admiration for him.

"To have founded The Abbey School in Tewkesbury was quite simply an act of great vision. In what were often difficult circumstances, he was utterly committed to the ideal of a choir school education, seeing within it the sort of holistic approach that only choir schools can provide.

"In the days before policies, anxieties about regulatory compliance and intrusive inspections he was able to create a wonderful environment in which children were able to grow and flourish. His schoolboy jokes often misquoting the psalms or gently teasing colleagues were always made with affection, and that gentleness permeated throughout the school.

"He was the most generous of headmasters who allowed us all to do our



● Miles pictured here with two pupils and his successor Jonathan Milton

own thing, and there were enormous riches. The Abbey School was Miles, and those of us who followed in his footsteps did so in an attempt to keep his vision alive. He remains an inspiration to this day."

It is several years since the closure of The Abbey School but the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum goes from strength to strength from its base at Dean Close School, Cheltenham.

There will be a Festal Evensong on June 26 to mark the first Evensong, 40 years ago, sung by choristers from The Abbey School in Tewkesbury Abbey, and to give thanks for the life of Miles.

The Choir's Choristership Fund is raising money to name a choral scholarship in his name.

More information is available from Jane Lyons at jl Lyons@dean-close.org.uk

● Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford held a special Evensong for retiring Headmaster **Martin Bruce** in December. Included in the service were some of his own compositions: his setting of the *Preces* and *Responses* and his *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. He

has been head of the choir school for 8 years and CSA wishes him and KT a very happy move to East Sussex.

● **Richard Murray**, a housemaster at St Edward's School, Oxford for ten years, took over at Christ Church Cathedral School in January. He read English, History and Philosophy at St Chad's College, Durham before joining the staff at another choir school – King's School in Gloucester. He then moved to Rendcomb College, near Cirencester where he was a deputy housemaster in the junior boarding house. He comments: "I was in charge of prep school liaison at St Edward's, which has

given me a significant insight into the move from prep to secondary school."

Richard is married to Hannah, a Classicist, and they have three sons.



SINGING OUT!

is edited by Jane Capon, CSA's Information Officer.

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