

GCCA NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2016

FROM THE ORGANIST AND MASTER OF THE CHORISTERS...

Happy Advent / Christmas to you all! This newsletter comes to you with my best wishes for Advent and the approaching Christmas season. The Cathedral Choir has faced a new challenge this term in that it has been singing weekday Evensongs on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays off site at St Nicolas Church, Guildford, where we have received a very warm welcome from Father Andrew, Tim Woodford and team. Monday Evensongs (men's voices) continue to be sung at the Cathedral, but in the Lady Chapel (although we routinely sing the first Monday Evensong of the month there in any case).

The AGM is written about further in this newsletter, but it was a delight to welcome members here on Saturday 17 September and to enjoy companionship, music and memories. On Tuesday 1 November, we sang Duruflé's Requiem liturgically accompanied by 'cello and organ, for the Solemn Requiem Mass of All Souls. Recruitment of boy choristers has been very successful, and we have four new recruits from a total of twelve auditionees – a bumper crop!

Our Advent Carol service took place on Sunday 27 November at 6.00 p.m. The music sung was as follows:

Matin responsory – *Palestrina arr. Ledger*
Vigilate – *William Byrd*
A Hymn to God the Father – *Edmund Rubbra*
Im Advent – *Felix Mendelssohn*
Jesus Christ the apple tree – *Elizabeth Poston*
Vox dicentis – *Edward Naylor*
A Spotless Rose – *Herbert Howells*
Threshold of night – *Tarik O'Regan*

Forthcoming services including the Crib service on Thursday 24 December at 4pm featuring the Stag Hill Phil, an orchestra made up of ex choristers and current choristers, Midnight Mass on 24 December at 11.30pm, the Eucharist of Christmas Morning at 10am and our Lessons and Carols service on Christmas Day at 4pm.

Music for the Christmas Carol service and procession is as follows:

Adam lay y-bounden – *Boris Ord*
Rorate coeli – *William Byrd*
Faryfax carol – *Thomas Adès*
A maiden most gentle – *arr. Andrew Carter*
Balulalow – *Peter Warlock*
Quem Pastores laudavere – *Michael Praetorius*
The Three Kings – *Jonathan Dove*
Benedicamus Domino – *Peter Warlock*

I do hope that some of you may be able to join with us for these occasions.

Best wishes

K Dienes-Williams

A SELF-STYLED CELEBRATORY SUCCESS

For those who had agreed to take on the task of planning and producing an extended public thanksgiving for the life and work of Michael Barry (aka 'Mike', aka 'Self'), an already daunting undertaking was rendered so much the more challenging by the untimely, wholly unexpected death of GCCA Chairman Paul Rickard.

Nor were things made any easier for the planning team by the continuing transmogrification of an erstwhile young, beautiful cathedral into a building site disfigured and half-suffocated by scaffolding.

Despite having to cope with these unwelcome exogenous shocks, the Cathedral authorities and the GCCA's officers somehow or other managed between them to ensure that the very special event held on cathedral premises over the course of eleven hours on Saturday 17 September was a resounding success.

To plan, oversee and deliver this outcome was a magnificent achievement on the part of the members of the broad-based planning team, who were heroes all. Particularly impressive was the quality of the decision-making inescapably required at each and every stage, including on the day itself.

One happy outcome of the planning team's herculean efforts on our behalf was that (for those of us whose role was largely confined to being invited to turn up, cough up, sing up, sup up and also – when requested to do so – shut up) the opportunity was there to enjoy a hugely satisfying experience simply by assembling our own activity pack for the day from amongst the various events the planning team had prepared sequentially within a programme that began around noon and ended about an hour before midnight.

For my wife Ann and me, Michael had been a special person in our own lives for over 50 years. Naturally, therefore, we decided (a) to attend everything that it seemed appropriate for us to attend (b) to encourage various folk living in and around Guildford, none of whom had ever met Michael, to come along to what we felt sure was all set to be a truly memorable thanksgiving Choral Evensong; (c) to visit former lay clerk and longstanding pal Clifford Mould in Dorking on the Sunday ('the morning after the day before'), enjoy his company and conversation as usual, and give him a detailed account of an event he would have dearly loved to attend had his health allowed. Quite a package, I suppose, for two senior citizens to embark on, but we did so gladly, and felt well rewarded by its many positive outcomes.

As always, Ann and I treated the opening event ('**Optional lunch in the refectory**') as mandatory, it being the best opportunity for us 'catch up with' folk. This year, the big bonus for Ann and me was to have John Dexter show up – a joyous surprise for us, our not having seen him since the time when (in the 1960s) he for his part was a truly outstanding treble and Head Chorister and his parents gracious, hospitable hosts to many a young, impecunious, unmarried lay clerk correctly identified by them as being in need of some form of sustenance.

This year, with many of 'the usual suspects' also once again putting in an appearance, the lunchtime mini-gathering made for a fine start to what already by this stage looked set to be a day-long immersion in self-indulgence.

With this extended lunch period having run its course, Nicholas Thistlethwaite went on to conduct with simple dignity a short ceremony that culminated in **the interment of Michael's ashes** in the Garden of Remembrance.

It was a moving occasion. Nicholas has the rare gift of being able to discern unerringly the approach that a particular occasion requires, and of then going on to deliver it impeccably. His welcome

capacity in that regard has enriched our own annual 'Guildford experience' time and again in recent years, and never more so than in the Garden of Remembrance on 17 September last

For me, the biggest single highlight of the **GCCA's AGM** was Barry Rose's tribute to the late, much-lamented Paul Rickard. The committee having decided that both the Choral Evensong and the annual dinner should continue to focus, as originally planned, very largely on the life and work of Michael Barry, the AGM became the most appropriate forum within which to insert a fulsome tribute to Paul.

As at many other times during the day, such sound decision-making was amply rewarded when Barry Rose delivered yet another deeply moving tribute to a former choir member no longer with us. Well researched as always, and illustrated with two recordings of appropriate poignancy and relevance as well as of exceptional choral musicianship, Barry's presentation made for a much appreciated contribution to what had already become a truly memorable day in the cathedral's history.

There was also a second AGM highlight: the election of Rowland Sidwell as the GCCA's new Chairman, an outcome which, to me, brought a sense not only of relief but also of optimism, for his appointment establishes a talented trio who went on throughout the rest of the day to demonstrate not only a capacity to identify what the day's ever-changing circumstances required by way of a response from them, but also a willingness and ability to 'deliver the necessary' at the drop of a hat.

During the course of the annual dinner, for example, the Radley & Stevens partnership made a success of the raffle and, for his part, Rowland created an opportunity to thank publicly, on everyone's behalf, the couple who, as Michael's longstanding neighbours, had been not only among Michael's outstanding friends and supporters over many years but also became his *de facto* volunteer carers in his final months. In recognition of their sustained, valiant efforts, Maureen and Tony Blaxall were guests of the Association for the evening. They were greatly touched by Rowland's well-chosen, timely words of appreciation.

For Ann and me, the annual Guildford reunion centres around the opportunity to be back in an environment in which, in the mid-1960s, George Abbot School for Boys, plus George Abbot School for Girls (separate schools at that time), plus Guildford Cathedral generated between them an inescapable series of sometimes gruelling commitments by which our daily routines were ruled more often than not.

For me, these modern-day reunion gatherings are more leisurely than the 1960s activities ever were, with the bonus of offering the added pleasure of being once again back on Decani, seated contentedly alongside mellifluous 'Mindors' (Phillip Mindenhall) *for auld lang syne*, and once again enjoying the privilege of joining in the singing of Choral Evensong.

For the two of us, the quality of the annual **Choral Evensong** experience is a key determinant of whether or not we continue to make an annual September pilgrimage to Guildford, involving as it does at least twenty-four hours of car-driving, spread over the course of four days.

This year's singing experience was outstanding. It was also, however, just a tad guilt-tinged, for me at least. That was because, when a last-minute call went out for some of us to share our music copies with others who did not have sight of a copy, I steadfastly avoided doing so. That was because, these days, I am one of several regular participants whose eyesight has deteriorated in recent years, and for whom having to share music is a guaranteed spoiler of personal enjoyment as well as of personal performance.

Of course, if *everyone* were to let the organisers know well in advance that they intend to be present and singing, the powers that be would ensure there were sufficient copies to go round, and nobody would then be asked, or required, to share a copy with a fellow singer.

Successive Masters of the Choristers have ensured that the privilege of participating in the choral singing also becomes a pleasure. This year, Katherine's handling of **the rehearsal** of an unusually large and diverse group of singers was, for me at least, tantamount to a master class in how to allocate severely limited rehearsal time to optimum effect. As far as I was concerned, her judgement on what to focus on (and what, therefore, to leave singers' own resourcefulness to attend to successfully with little or no rehearsal) was spot on.

Despite all the actual thrills and potential spills associated with tackling the Stanford setting and the Bairstow anthem, for me it was the singing of Psalm 89's fifty-one verses that will linger longest in the memory. In the service itself, faced with this challenging long haul, Katherine led her flock as through a wilderness, strewn as it was with potential pitfalls such as punctuation, pauses and tacets. Her every gesture had relevance, being tied in so closely to the enriching performance instructions which she had so painstakingly set out in our copies, and which accompanying organist Paul Provost interpreted and embellished so beautifully.

Katherine's meticulous planning throughout gave all of us 'old lags' ample opportunity to sing to the limits of our own current capabilities whilst also enabling us to re-visit, and remind ourselves, of the demands, the joys, the disciplined teamwork that choral singing involves.

As a result of the endeavours of herself and others, the overall level of performance in **the service itself** came tantalisingly close to being optimised; not blemish-free throughout, but probably delivered to as high a standard as it was realistic to aim for and expect in the circumstances prevailing.

Particularly noteworthy was the work that Katherine (and also Daniel Phillips of King's College School Wimbledon) had clearly put in on their respective choirs, both prior to the day and on the day itself. Their young charges were barely into the start of a new singing year, with all the demands that this newness brings, and to have them perform to the standard they achieved on the day was testament to their respective directors' skill and commitment as well as to the attributes of the singers themselves.

Later on in the service, the tributes paid to Michael by Roger Lowman (speaking on behalf of the cathedral) and Ian Morris (on behalf of King's College School Wimbledon) respectively were outstanding. Each of these two speakers had skilfully identified what kind of presentation the occasion required of them in terms of style, coverage, emphasis, encapsulation and exemplification, and each was exemplary in relation to the aspects of Michael's life and work they chose to concentrate on, and in their mastery of their judiciously selected material. Having been handed the potentially daunting task of 'speaking for all of us', each did so with insight, warmth and lucidity.

Roger spoke first. In the course of his observations, he made clear that (in addition to Michael being a treasured member of the teaching profession with a breadth of interests and an irrepressible lifelong capacity to promote enthusiasm in others) Self's talents as a singer were such that he would have been warmly welcomed as a member of any cathedral choir anywhere at any time. Roger's tribute to Michael was so perspicacious, comprehensive, pertinent and eloquent that I was all set to applaud at the finish.

I felt, however, that it was the Precentor's prerogative to decide, and also to indicate, what the most appropriate form of response was at each part of the service on the part of those congregated. So it was that, his role having been fulfilled to the great satisfaction of those he was representing, Roger returned to his seat amid silent admiration and (on the part of many of us) considerable gratitude, for he had indeed spoken for us all.

As things turned out, the service did actually end with a round of applause, the large, broadly-based congregation having done as asked by remaining silently in their seats until the final notes of the closing organ voluntary had ceased reverberating around what has already become a far more satisfying acoustic as the 'work in progress' on the cathedral's fabric continues.

With this special Choral Evensong having lasted 90 minutes (rather longer than anticipated) **the post-service reception in the marquee** began late, but not absurdly or disablingly so as far as most people were concerned. Courtesy of some rapid re-thinking and the ready co-operation of refectory staff, those attending the reception found it well worth their while to be there.

Happily, this important outcome was achieved without detriment to the interest and expectations of those staying on for the annual dinner, for whom some skilful last-minute rescheduling ensured that, when we were eventually called through from the marquee to the refectory and invited to take our seats, nothing served as part of the meal had been allowed to spoil.

For the planning group, having to decide who sits with whom at **the annual dinner** is a logistical challenge in itself, with so many factors requiring careful consideration. On this occasion, the task was further complicated when space had to be found for folk whose intention to attend became apparent only *after* places at each table had been allocated and the table plan printed and published.

Full marks, therefore, to the refectory staff and also to Richard, Darroll and Rowland for handling the required last-minute personnel adjustments so expeditiously and so tactfully. In the course of their endeavours, our own intended table of eight became a table for nine and thereby a touch more intimate than had originally been intended. Happily, this turned out to be to our advantage, as the additional person was most congenial company and a source of added interest and entertainment.

For me, the biggest single highlight of the dinner was Andrew Millington's amusing address, not least because, in the section devoted to memories of Michael, what he chose to say complemented so neatly Roger's earlier observation that 'Self' was widely regarded as a 'one-off'.

Whilst accepting such to be the case, Andrew had done enough recent reading of the memoirs of erstwhile cathedral deans, choir directors and the like for him to be able to establish that (notwithstanding the fact that Michael's particular mix of idiosyncrasies, mannerisms, witticisms, predictability, unpredictability etc. might have seemed to be peculiar to himSELF) Mr Michael R Barry was but one of a sizeable selection of lay clerks who, over the centuries, have earned a place in both hearts and history books by dint of their way of going about (or not going about) their business. As a contribution to the evening, Andrew's humorous presentation was well judged, and its warm reception well deserved.

Thus ended a day which had been so eagerly looked forward to by so many, some of whom (e.g. several of Self's remaining fellow Guildford pioneers) had spent much of the time visibly animated, their hopes for (and expectations of) the occasion being fully fired up even prior to arrival. Recognition that such would almost certainly be the case had put the day's organisers under great pressure from the outset to 'come up with the goods' on the day, there being no prospect of a second chance.

That so many aspects of this major event passed off so well reflects great credit on all those involved in its planning and delivery. Congratulations and thanks to you all. You did us, and Michael, proud.

Robert Wilson (bass lay clerk, June 1961 to August 1968)

REQUIESCANT IN PACE

Sincere condolences to the families of Jeremy Deller and Clifford Mould. Tributes will appear in the following edition of this newsletter.

CHORISTER SUCCESS



Further success in the BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition – Hannah Dienes-Williams was selected as a finalist in this year’s competition, and performed brilliantly in Manchester Cathedral on Monday 24 October, being highly complimented for the quality of her performance both by the judge Bob Chilcott and listener Barry Rose!

FAREWELL TO NICHOLAS THISTLETHWAITE

On Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 October, we bade a fond farewell to Canon Nicholas Thistlethwaite. Below are some of the tributes paid on that occasion:

From the Organist and Master of the Choristers

How then to sum up this remarkable man, scholar, musician, organist, singer, liturgist, doctor, priest, friend?

Nicholas' wit, humour and laughter have permeated the Music Office for years. He has had to put up with our penchants for breaking into all types of song, our moments of fancy dress, our laughter, our tears, our frustrations, our elations, the emergency whisky bottle, revelatory new forms of worship brought to us by the internet. He has dined with the lay clerks, gossiped and drunk with the organists, been subjected to innumerable moments of trickery such as being in receipt of potential job applicants' folders where candidates' papers have been creatively edited to include amusing pictures such as roosters (he has a phobia of chickens but once famously declared at a staff meeting that although he didn't like chickens he was partial to a bit of breast). He has undertaken acting roles in the pursuit of light entertainment, he has given us a fascinating insight into his life through his desert island discs appearance, and has been entrusted to Her Majesty's inner sanctum as a Chaplain to the Queen. He has been cajoled into playing the organ as part of the first Guildford Organathon (only after hours), he has sung every liturgy with care and beauty, just as he has prepared and carried out every act of worship in the same vein. He has faithfully engaged with the Cathedral choir family throughout his time, continuously enquiring after not just those choristers and lay clerks presently in the choir but those who have left, and he has cared deeply for his staff and colleagues. He has a natural pastoral gift and although much of this is unseen and unspoken, he has brought love and healing into the hearts and minds of so many – those able to be present in the congregation, and those unable to be to whom he has journeyed. He is a man of deep prayerfulness, deep humility, and a man of great faith amongst whose greatest gifts as a leader have been his sound teaching, his profound sense of the faith and love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To him I cannot express in words what it has meant to stand alongside him and work with him as a colleague, knowing that it was he who was and is so supportive of my appointment here, he who advocated for me to become the first woman Organist and Master of the Choristers in the Church of England, he who believed in me and gave me that chance. I will always be thankful for that and for so much more.

Nicholas, I believe, is very partial to the writings of T S Eliot, and so it is to that writer I turn in conclusion tonight, before I have the great honour of reading the New Testament lesson at Evensong tomorrow from St. Paul's second letter to Timothy on which, I understand, Nicholas will preach. With apologies to T S Eliot – to pluck these well-known phrases in no particular order and put them together seems fitting: – “What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from. The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless. You are the music while the music lasts'. And all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well”

A view from the Lay Clerks' stalls

"Nicholas looks really good in tights." The actual event which occasioned Tessa to utter these immortal words is lost in the mêlée of what must be one of the busiest and most diverse of careers in the Church of England. Cool, calm and utterly unflappable on the outside (while presumably, like Trollope's Archdeacon Grantly, his little be-stockinged legs are whizzing around at enormous speed underneath his new scarlet cassock), Nicholas has led, guided and supported Guildford Cathedral Choir and the music and liturgy of this amazing cathedral for 17 years. It is impossible to characterise in this short tribute a man who wears so many prestigious hats (cassocks) and who has received so many fine and varied accolades during his long and distinguished career. Most surely he is a quiet, incredibly modest and hardworking man who has achieved so much in so many different fields. Who knew for example that last year he received the RCO Medal in recognition of his distinguished achievements in organ scholarship? A published author, he has written and co-written many authoritative books and articles on organs and he lectures on the subject both in the UK and abroad. He has advised English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund on organ projects and among many other roles continues to be a Trustee of the Music Development Foundation and a member of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the Diocesan Worship Committee. In 2014 he was appointed Chaplain to HM The Queen.

And yet, at 5:30 every evening Nicholas is with us in the chancel, bringing his serene presence to daily evensong, singing the office beautifully, calmly leading our worship as if - just for those 45 minutes each day - he has all the time in the world for us, for our music and for that eternal worship which is the heart and soul of Guildford Cathedral. He will be sorely missed.

Andrew Phillips, Senior Lay Clerk

From the Bell Ringers

Since 2006 Nicholas has also been the principal clergy contact for the Cathedral's bell ringers. Always supportive, understanding and encouraging, but never interfering, he has been an excellent chairman of our annual meetings and he and Tessa have been welcome guests at our annual dinners. His help in finally securing the move of the increasingly noisy telecoms equipment from the ringing room to the top of the tower was particularly appreciated. We shall miss him.

Chris Rogers, Tower Captain

From the Guildford Cathedral Choir Association

The Guildford Cathedral Choir Association was formed 30 years ago. Whilst most cathedrals have this type of organisation ours was slightly different in that at the time most people associated with the creation and development of the choirs were still living. Since Nicholas first arrived as Precentor he has been a great friend and supporter of our aims. He has provided a huge amount of support to the committee and the association throughout his tenure at Guildford. Even when his responsibilities increased on his appointment as Sub Dean he continued to find time to attend our meetings and has always provided sound advice and guidance. His ability to take forward our requests and transform them into reality has enabled the members to continue to meet on an annual basis for a special

evensong as well as hosting major events such as the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Association's annual event in 2011 here in Guildford.

Nicholas has always maintained a helpful and supportive approach and his contribution to our work will be sadly missed. The members of the association thank Nicholas and send our best wishes to both him and Tessa for a happy and relaxing retirement.

Darrol Radley, Secretary of GCCA

From the Guildford Cathedral Music Development Foundation

It is a real privilege to have been asked to write a few words of appreciation of all Nicholas has done for music at the Cathedral and particularly his involvement with the Music Development Foundation. The Foundation was set up some years ago to establish a fund to endow the Cathedral's music. Not being one of the 'ancient' Cathedrals, Guildford had no historic endowments to promote and sustain its music. It was Nicholas' brainwave to establish a foundation to do just that. That its creation coincided with the introduction of girl choristers at the Cathedral was an added incentive.

Nicholas has played an outstanding part in nurturing and furthering music at the Cathedral. His inspirational leadership over many years has played a pivotal part not only in establishing the girls' choir but also in achieving, for the Cathedral choir as a whole, a place at the top table of Cathedral music. Without Nicholas' wisdom, his encyclopaedic knowledge of Church music and not least his own skill as a musician the Cathedral's liturgy and music would have been so much poorer. His inspiration in setting up and sustaining the Foundation, which so far has raised some £1.5m in gifts and legacies, has helped the musical life of the Cathedral to flourish. Everybody associated with its music and those involved with the Foundation in particular owe Nicholas so much. He will be much missed not only for his musicianship but also for his kindness, his friendship and his Christian generosity. May he and Tessa have a very happy retirement together. They deserve it.

David Watts, Chairman of GC MDF

From the Guildford Cathedral Singers

I know that I speak for every member of the Guildford Cathedral Singers when I say that we shall greatly miss Nicholas. He has been a staunch supporter of the Singers in so many different ways, and to know that we could always rely on his ever-wise advice on matters liturgical, musical and pastoral has been wonderfully reassuring. His leadership and the high musical standards he sets have been matched by his warm appreciation of the Singers' achievements, which in turn has been a huge encouragement to the choir. Consequently we feel respected as a valuable, and valued, part of the musical life of the Cathedral, and of its volunteer community. It is not every cathedral voluntary choir that enjoys such good working relationships, and this is in no small part due to Nicholas's influence. We shall miss him.

John Bawden, Musical Director of GCS

From the congregation and ex-chorister parents

As a member of the congregation and the parent of three former choristers what can one say about Nicholas? Firstly, he has one of the most beautiful voices of any precentor that I have heard. It is a joy to hear him sing at Evensong and at various services, including the Easter Eucharist. The way Nicholas handles himself is such an example to the choristers. None of the support he gave to

parents and to the choir wavered at all during the Dean's interregnum which he handled magnificently.

I will miss his welcome, his concern, his sense of humour, his keenness to understand what the children are up to and his leadership of the worship at the Cathedral.

Marion Roberts

From the world of Organ Advisers

Remarkably, alongside his life's tireless work as a priest, Nicholas has also found time to establish an international reputation as a major authority on church and concert organs - and in particular the English organ from around 1600 to 1900. In addition to being a founding member of the highly respected British Institute of Organ Studies, of which he was later for many years Chairman, he has also both written and lectured extensively and entertainingly on the instrument, including his 600-page masterpiece *The Making of the Victorian Organ*, published by the Cambridge University Press, which is on the shelf of every serious student of the organ across the globe.

Unsurprisingly his knowledge and experience are widely sought by musicians, academics and organ makers, and his advice is given readily, generously and modestly. As a consultant he has overseen major work on some of the most renowned and historic instruments in the country, and has lent an unseen steadying hand to countless similar projects steered by others. In the small community of the organ specialists, thronged with self-willed and opinionated artists and musicians, feelings can run high and it is rare to find someone admired and respected by all, who everyone would be pleased to consider a friend. Nicholas Thistlethwaite is that person.

Ian Bell, Independent Organ Adviser

From the Guild of Stewards

As Stewards, we work closely with the Precentor, who has responsibility for ensuring all services, special occasions as well as 'normal' Sunday services, run smoothly and are liturgically correct. With Canon Nicholas 'at the helm', we have been assured of clear, well thought-out instructions which enable us to fulfil our duties with confidence, even when services do not follow normal patterns of worship!

Over the years, the Guild of Stewards has also been grateful for his advice when queries have arisen regarding service procedures and he has always given generously of his time in these circumstances. We will miss Canon Thistlethwaite's calm approach, his liturgical knowledge and expertise and his wise counsel. We wish him and Tessa every happiness in their retirement.

Shirley-Margaret Lloyd, Chief Steward

From the Cathedral Servers

To any cathedral server, Precentors come and go and are something one has to live with. However, in Nicholas the servers at Guildford Cathedral have been privileged to enjoy the leadership not only of an efficient and knowledgeable mentor but of a kindly and sympathetic friend who could always be relied on for support in challenging times.

Nicholas's knowledge of music and liturgy is profound and this has enabled him to give sure and apt instruction to the serving team for all kinds of service, whether on great occasions, such as ordinations or civic services, at very personal events such as baptisms and funerals, or in more

recent times, when we turn up on Sunday not knowing quite what layout of building site awaits us. However, with this knowledge he combines great humility and generosity, and these attributes have enabled him to deal patiently with those of us who have argued about ceremonial details on occasion.

The congregation has seen in Nicholas a sure and efficient Precentor when planning and executing services, whether the daily offices at one extreme or the grand ceremonies of Christmas and Easter at the other. We have also seen in him a most efficient Acting Dean who directed the Cathedral community in a quiet, friendly and business-like manner.

His talents were justly recognised by his appointment as a Chaplain to the Queen.

In all aspects of his work, Nicholas has received unstinting support from Tessa. They will be sadly missed, but they have earned a rest from the many challenges of Guildford Cathedral, and it is our sincere wish that they enjoy the long and happy retirement which they so richly deserve.

Richard North, Server

A clergy colleague perspective

Nicholas is a precious colleague to us, his clergy colleagues, and we will be sad to see him go.

We value his hallmarks of loyalty, discretion, wisdom and utter care for every aspect of his work. All this is combined with a deep, rich and dry sense of humour. I often feel that we, his clergy colleagues, are privy to that more than most.

And Nicholas is good fun. We love the fact that at our weekly clergy meetings, when the rest of us drink coffee from a mug, Nicholas has a cup and saucer. It is also fun gently to tease him about his reluctance to use a mobile phone. Will retirement see his entrance into the social media environment and a Twitter presence? Perhaps not! 3G will remain the possible name of an innovative organ stop and not a means of supporting data transfer.

We all value Nicholas' example of being a faithful priest who has a deep love of the beauty of holiness and things done to the highest standards, which he combines with a strong sense of pastoral care. It has been a privilege to have ministered alongside him.

Andrew Bishop, Residentiary Canon

From a Former Dean

Over a drink - understatement - at the Deanery every day after Evensong the Sub Dean patiently explained why things couldn't be done and the next drink helped the Dean explain how we might in fact do this or that. Annoyingly Nicholas was often right but an amazingly strong friendship was forged which I have hugely valued in my retirement. The Archers has been gripping the Nation but let me tell you now 'Carry on Up the Cathedral' written and directed by Dr Thistlethwaite will one day replace the Archers to the delight of a weary world - you read it here first! Thank you Tessa for wonderful Sunday Lunches - an example of the sustaining kindness of Life in the Close that made my ten years as part of your community so hugely enjoyable and greatly missed.

Victor Stock, Dean Emeritus





GCCA ANNUAL REUNION 2017

Next year the Reunion will be held on **Saturday October 7th 2017**. Note the later date, this is due to a busy schedule in the Cathedral during September. Full details will be shared in due course. The format will follow the same pattern that we have followed over the last few years, beginning with an informal lunch from 12.30. The girl choristers will be singing this year and we hope that some of our girl chorister members will make a special effort to get a table together for the dinner and join us to sing evensong. If anyone would like to get a group of your contemporaries together for the reunion and maybe take over a table, but do not have their contact details, send me a list of people you would like to contact and I will forward your details to them on your behalf.

Darrol Radley
darrol.radley@ntlworld.com

GCCA IS ON FACEBOOK

Those of you who use the social media site will be interested to learn that the Association has [its own Facebook page](#) - @GCCAssociation. At present it has just 44 likes, but as usage grows it will be increasingly used as a forum and news platform. Please 'like' us today and get social media connected with your association!

Simon Carpenter

THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR ON YOUTUBE

As some of you may be aware there is a YouTube Channel dedicated to the early Cathedral choir archives. It's called "Archives of Sound" and features music recorded during the time that Barry Rose was at Guildford between 1961 and 1974. Search on YouTube for 'Archives of Sound' or 'Guildford Cathedral'.