

ASSOCIATION OF CATHEDRAL VOLUNTARY CHOIRS

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2000

The third Association national event was held at Chester at the beginning of July this year. 10 choirs enjoyed tackling the challenging music – including *Faire is the Heaven* (William Harris), *Hail, Gladdening Light* (Charles Wood), Blair in B minor - and, under the direction of David Poulter (Cathedral Organist) and accompanied by Philip Stopford (Assistant Organist), contributed to the worship at Choral Evensong on Saturday July 1 and the Sung Eucharist on Sunday July 2.

The weekend provided the opportunity to renew acquaintances made at the two previous national events (at Wells and Guildford), and to compare notes and exchange ideas. Representatives from Derby, Edinburgh, Exeter, Guildford, Peterborough, Rochester, Truro, Wells, Worcester and Chester all contributed to the success of the event. In a letter to David Poulter immediately following the Chester Festival, Mrs. A Lynne Browning (Vice Chairman) wrote: *“The Wells Choir appreciated the warm welcome given by everyone at the Cathedral and the excellent hospitality at Chester College. We are most grateful to the members of Chester Cathedral Nave Choir for all their hard work in planning and running such a successful weekend. It was good to see so many familiar faces present and to meet a number of others for the first time. We were very encouraged by the enthusiasm of all concerned and look forward to getting together at Worcester in October 2001.”*

The speaker at the dinner on Saturday evening was Gordon Stewart, who provided an entertaining and thought-provoking end to the first day. He suggested that the Association think seriously about how it might play its part in encouraging and educating young people in singing traditional church music to a high standard. It is interesting to note that The Friends of Cathedral Music are taking this subject seriously and have recently undertaken a survey entitled “Recruitment and retention of trebles and lay clerks in cathedrals without choir schools”.

There are now nineteen members of the Association, most of whom have made a contribution to, and enjoyed the fellowship at, three national events. The contact details of the members are enclosed. If your Cathedral has a Voluntary Choir, or is planning to start one, why not become a member of the Association – registration is free! Send your details to John Wilderspin at Worcester Cathedral - they are in charge of the administration of the Association until their event next year. The Objectives of the Association are laid out in the accompanying sheet, together with details of the Wells Initiative, explaining the reason for its formation. Your contribution could help to enhance and further these objectives.

The fourth national event is to be hosted by Worcester Cathedral Voluntary Choir on the weekend of October 6-7, 2001. This will be a further opportunity to enjoy singing together, to widen the repertoire and to delight in the differences each choir brings to the Association as it offers its ideas as host. This “continuity and change” (to quote the Dean of Chester) will continue in 2003 when Exeter Cathedral Voluntary Choir plan to host an event.

The ‘team photograph’ from the Chester weekend is now available - it looks very good, with everyone visible. Photos are 8” x 10”, in a card folder, at a price of £6 each, inclusive of p&p. Please send your order (one per choir for ease of admin.), with a cheque(s) made payable to Sue Brock for the number of photographs required to Sue at 80 Herbert Road, Rainham, Gillingham ME8 9HP by 14 September. These will be sent to the choir contact name for distribution to members 3-4 weeks after that date.