



eNotes

NEWS FROM THE CHOIR OF ROMSEY ABBEY

Sonorous music-making in Sherborne

On Sunday 4 May, we visited Sherborne Abbey to sing Evensong with the Choir of Sherborne Abbey, as part of its annual Festival.

The service drew a large congregation and began with Bernard Rose's Responses, which demonstrated the rich tone than an enlarged choir can deliver. This was followed by Psalm 136, *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious*, delivered with careful attention to the often colourful text.

The *Magnificat* was sung to Herbert Howells' *Collegium Regale* setting. It began with a hushed organ figure that introduced the first verse sung by the boys, soon joined by the altos. After a brief organ fanfare, tenors and basses made a dramatic, martial entry at *He hath shewed strength with his arm*. Agitation quickly subsided, however, as the contemplative mood of the opening returned before a sonorous *Gloria*.

The companion *Nunc Dimittis* began with an evocative tenor solo supported by the full choir, which sang initially very softly before building towards the imposing climax at *And to be the glory of Thy people Israel*.

Charles Wood's evergreen setting of verses by John Keble, *Hail gladdening light*, provided an opportunity to relish the Abbey's generous acoustic. The choir, unaccompanied and split into eight parts, made an exciting sound, not least as the trebles sent their top C soaring to the fan-vaulted ceiling with the concluding *Thy glories, Lord, they own*.

After the final hymn, *Angel voices ever singing*, we processed onto the green outside the Abbey the dismissal before a tea provided by Sherborne's Mothers' Union. This link between has been going strong for nearly a decade and is highly valued on both sides. The Choir of Sherborne Abbey will pay us a return visit in the Autumn.



Robert Fielding writes...

The Spring term has meant several things for the choir. Firstly, eight new probationers have joined our ranks and they are making promising progress. They are Oscar Hollaway, Jaden King, Matthew Damin, Ben Thomson, Michael Stewart, Ben Malone-Crossman, Archie Macintosh and Alexander Clothier. Secondly, the warmer and lighter evening enable the boys to kick a ball around (one can't quite call it football...), before rehearsals. It's a different atmosphere altogether at Evensong with the sun streaming through the West window. Meanwhile, the repertoire continues to grow with some new titles and the reappearance of works not sung for some time.

Our older boys were promoted to top-six positions in the stalls at a recent evensong: Peter Newman, Cantoris Head Chorister; Christopher Williams, Cantoris Team Leader; Barnaby Taylor, Cantoris Senior Full Chorister; Ben Teschner, Decani Senior Full Chorister; and Nicholas Newman, Full Chorister. We said a sad *au revoir* to Finlay Martin who hung up his Head Chorister badge at Easter after six years of distinguished service as a chorister. He then reappeared straight away as a Choral Scholar singing Alto on Decani! All our Choral Scholars are progressing well in their different voice parts, and are being supported by George's Trust.

When online, don't forget...

Join our *Facebook* group (search on-site for Romsey Abbey Choir), follow us at twitter.com/abbeychoir and please shop via [easyfundraising!](http://easyfundraising.com)



Our new probationers

My memories of the choir – Finlay Martin



I remember sitting in the Year 3 classroom at Romsey Abbey School; letters had been given out about joining the choir but I hadn't picked one up because I wasn't 100% sure. When a message came to the classroom that boys wishing to join should go to the music room, one of my friends, Sean Patterson, stood up to go; my teacher Mrs Howard asked if anyone would like to go with Sean, so I stood up and along with some others went up to the audition with him. After the audition, Mr Fielding asked me if I would like to join. I said yes and so joined the Choir after Easter in 2004, when I was 7. I wonder how different my life would be if my teacher hadn't asked if anyone else wanted to go for the audition that day.

Lots of my memories of the Choir are from Choir holidays. I have been on 5 Choir holidays, my first being Ripon. I remember playing a massive game of 'gang it' in and around a castle and the 'Midnight feast', in which I lost most of my sweets playing cheat.

At the 2006 Choir holiday in Norwich I remember when some of

the boys were playing tennis and someone hit the ball high over the fence surrounding the court. David Hole ran after the ball and, in his attempt to jump in the air to catch it, he tripped over some tape between several traffic cones and went flying, I laughed so much my stomach hurt.

I have sung loads of different music at the Abbey and have many favourite pieces. These include the Messe Solennelle by Louis Vierne, *I Saw the Lord* by John Stainer and *I was Glad* by Hubert Parry. I will always remember having the honour of singing the opening solo to *The Lord Is My Shepherd* at George O'Brien's memorial service.

The Queen coming to Romsey is something I'll never forget: having to arrive at the Abbey early in the morning to get through the security check and the fanfare trumpets that made a fantastic sound.

I became Head Chorister in Exeter Choir Holiday in 2008, after Henry O'Brien and Rob Newman moved to the back row. This meant that I was never Team Leader (closest to the pulpit); I instead went straight from being Senior Full Chorister to Head Chorister. I was officially made Head Chorister with James Taylor in September 2008.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the front row of the Choir and I hope to continue in the Choir on the back row as a choral scholar.

Handbags at dusk – FORAC ladies evening



King John's House was the venue on Wednesday 5 May for a Ladies Evening.

Over 30 people dropped in during the evening to chat, enjoy a glass of wine and shop in a relaxed environment. Handbags, jewellery, greetings cards and scented goods were on offer from the stalls of local retailers including Cherryjojo, Magpie, Jackie's Fantasy Cakes and Aroma.

The evening raised over £240 towards the choir holiday in August.

Dates for your diary

Important services

30 May	10am	Trinity Sunday Festal Eucharist
27 Jun	4pm	Choral Evensong (‘away’) with the Choir of St. Peter’s, Bournemouth
25 Jul	6.30pm	Choral Evensong St. Mary Magdalene
23 Aug	5.30pm	Choral Evensong, Newcastle Cath.
27–29 Aug		Services at Carlisle Cathedral
tbc	6.30pm	Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary
3 Oct	6.30pm	Choral Evensong Harvest Festival
24 Oct	6.30pm	Choral Evensong St. Ethelflaeda
2 Nov	7.30pm	Feast of All Souls Bereavement Service
14 Nov	11.30am	Civic Service of Remembrance
	6.30pm	Choral Evensong (‘home’) with the Choir of Sherborne Abbey
20 Nov	5.30pm	Choral Evensong at Winchester Cathedral

Concerts

16 Jun	7.30pm	Organ recital in the Abbey by James Eaton
12 Sep	2pm rehearsal 6.30pm service	Come and sing <i>Monteverdi</i> <i>Vespers in aid of</i> George’s Trust

Social events

20 Jun	2.30 – 4.30pm	Cream teas in the South Garth
10 July	3– 10pm	Games afternoon at Romsey School (tbc)
24–30 Aug 2010		Choir Holiday to the Hadrian’s Wall cathedrals, in tandem with George’s Trust

And finally...

Our best wishes go to **David** and **Meghann Hewett** on the baptism of Joshua Peter on 9 May.