



Spring 2007 Newsletter

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Canon Godfrey Hall

Godfrey Hall who retired as Headmaster to Prebendal School in 2005, died suddenly on 27 January 2007 at the age of 63. Before Prebendal, Godfrey had previously been the Assistant Chaplain and Housemaster at Christ's Hospital. He was appointed to the Prebend of Highleigh, traditionally associated with the school in 1993. We were all devastated on hearing the news, especially as his retirement was so short and we all send our condolences to Sybille, his wife, and the family. The funeral service took place at the beginning of February at Fyling Thorpe Church, Yorkshire followed by a cremation in Scarborough.

The Memorial Service is to be held in the Cathedral on Saturday 19 May 2007 at 16:00. It is being organised by the Prebendal School but Canon David Nason has given an open invitation to everyone who wishes to attend. No tickets are required but it would be advisable to arrive early, as it is likely the Cathedral will be full.

John Attwater who attended Prebendal 1979-1985, was a Chorister 1981-85 and now a CCCA Committee Member has sent the following appreciation of Godfrey Hall.

When you are ten and your much-beloved prep school Headmaster announces his retirement, you tend to regard his successor with more suspicion and even resentment than is strictly necessary. For me, anyway, Godfrey Hall had a mountain to climb when he took over from Neville Ollerenshaw, as I effectively told him during our first conversation when he came to sit next to me one sunny Saturday afternoon on the steps to the playground outside the Richmond Hall. Fortunately for me he was, I think, highly amused by my demands to know exactly what he was intending to change and why (he wanted to introduce rugby, I remember, which is just about his only ambition for the Prebendal that didn't materialise), and around the time he was assuring me that he too occasionally smoked Clan tobacco in his pipe I remember suddenly feeling, with a huge sense of relief, that things were going to be All Right. At the end of the conversation he told me gravely that he was going to need the help of people like me to run the Prebendal and would be counting on me, and off I went, utterly contented and mollified by this new and awesome responsibility, which had been thrust upon me.

This, I think, was the measure of Godfrey Hall: he took you seriously at whatever level he found you, for which he had an uncanny instinct; he never patronised you and was always challenging you about what you were going to do to get better yourself or make things better for other people. His history lessons achieved the same – on the one hand much was made of the virtues and characteristics he wanted us to admire: Clive of India, Wolfe, Captain Cook (another Whitby man), Cromwell et al, all courageous but usually radical or rebellious against received wisdom in some sense, and we wrote potted biographies galore on why they were great men - and on the other that careful, loopy handwriting: “This is questionable” or “Why do you think this?” and rarely more than “7/10” exhorting you to think beyond the opinions carefully cribbed from the textbook where they had been placed by well-meaning educationalists a generation earlier. Occasionally the Civil War or Industrial Revolution would be postponed in order that we could broaden our education by watching the Varsity Match, I remember – no doubt a Head Master's privilege, and much appreciated – and once he sat the Sixth Form down and made us watch the seminal anti-authority public school film “If...”. I realise now that he must have been rather disappointed when before the 1983 election we swarmed the Conservative Association HQ next door and made off with enough posters of Margaret Thatcher to wallpaper Long Dorm

several times over, or else set his jaw in that characteristically stubborn fashion as he steeled himself for the challenge ahead!

Godfrey was certainly firm in his view of discipline, although quite often in an unexpected way: we often thought him quite unpriestly when we expected soft forgiveness and didn't get it, and it is again only with hindsight that one can see a more crusading and tough morality which was, quite rightly, in some contrast to the genteel, comfortable, maybe hypocritical, form of Christianity evident elsewhere in the Cathedral precincts at the time. Things we thought we would get in terrible trouble for were often dismissed as boys being boys (or girls girls), while other things said or done unthinkingly were pounced upon and the selfishness or thoughtlessness behind them exposed to us in no uncertain terms: his was a rule where you were made to care that wasted food, for example, or a flippant playground comment, showed ingratitude for your own privileges when compared with the starving or disabled, and was far more important in the scheme of things than whose dormitory who had sneaked into when. In his hatred of arrogance and selfishness he was, one realises now, quite fierce, absolutely right and certainly influential. I do, though, remember him once letting forth an absolute tirade in assembly about missiles being unacceptable and none of us having a clue what he was on about even when it transpired someone had thrown something through a window: the only missiles I had ever seen were in James Bond films.

Later, when I went back to the Prebendal from time to time, Godfrey would always seem the same – a firm handshake, the slightly brusque, no-nonsense what-you-see-is-what-you-get air of the genuine Yorkshireman, the amused glint in the eye – but maybe as the years passed his jollity increased and he mellowed a little, or maybe that was me growing up. From my mother, who was a governor of the Prebendal in the Eighties, I learned what a moderniser he had been, and had to be, to put the school on a sounder financial and more professional footing at a difficult time for prep schools in general and choir schools in particular. He was encouraging when for a time I resuscitated the Old Prebendalians' Association, although I never felt he bought into the idea of alumni having a role to play in supporting the school, whether through an intolerance of anything seeming so fundamentally backward-looking or a wariness of potential interference in what he regarded as his own task I'm not sure. When I saw and was shown round the school by him shortly before his retirement he was still as energetic and as proud of the Prebendal as ever, which is an achievement in itself after over 20 years in one of the loneliest and most demanding jobs there is, and testament to his resilience but also to what he had achieved there. The last time we met, at the party following Canon

David Nason's installation as Godfrey's successor to the Prebend of Highleigh, he was on excellent form and seemed to me a man at ease with himself, content with a job well done, and enjoying life hugely, as he deserved to.

It was, then, a great shock to hear of Godfrey's death: when you are thirty-five and hear that your much-loved prep school headmaster has gone, you realise how much and how little has changed in a quarter of a century. I know, though, that someone whose person and work has so influenced so many generations of Prebendalians leaves an enduring legacy, for which I, for one, am very grateful.

SUMMER REUNION – 22 JULY 2007

This year the reunion is being held on the last day of the Southern Cathedrals Festival on Sunday 22 July 2007. The reunion will commence with the traditional gathering at 2 St Richards Walk by kind permission of Dr and Mrs Alan Thurlow, followed by lunch in Vicars' Hall. The AGM will be held during tea also in Vicars' Hall after Evensong when the leaving choristers will be presented with their Association ties. The Committee are aware that the Vicars' Hall is not an ideal venue for some of our members but due to the Festival, venues around the Close are in short supply, so we apologise in advance to any members who will not be able to join us.

Programme:

12:30	Drinks with The Thurlows at 2 St. Richard's Walk with presentation of Probationers Prize
13:15	Lunch in Vicars' Hall
15:30	Evensong with presentation of ties to leaving choristers
16:45	Tea in Vicars' Hall followed by the AGM

The cost for the day is £15, which includes lunch and tea but drinks during lunch will be extra. Lunch will be a buffet consisting of a main course, dessert and coffee. The AGM will take place during tea but don't let that be a disincentive!

Please note that CCCA merchandise will be on sale and a raffle will be held in aid of the Organ Recital during lunch. Please complete the booking form enclosed and return with the payment made payable to CCCA to Dily Ruffer, CCCA Summer Reunion, 40 Beaufort Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 5AN by **Friday 13 July 2007**.

BEER AND SKITTLE CONTEST

The annual Beer and Skittle Contest was held on Saturday 10 February 2007 at The Four Chesnuts in The Hornet, Chichester. This year we were able to make four teams, Committee, Close and two teams made up of current and past parents. This year the teams were competing for a trophy, which has been kindly donated by a past parent. Once again it was a close fought contest, the Committee started the contest well but failed dismally after they had eaten their food! The final result was that one of the Parent's team won for the second year running. The top scorers were Dave Grimwood (men) and Lynda Doyle (ladies). Wooden spoons were awarded to David Riley for the men and Tina Thurlow and Lindsey for the ladies!



The "Beer and Skittle" Trophy Presentation

THE FEDERATION OF CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ASSOCIATIONS

Bob Howse, (1944-1948) and Committee Member, recently attended the "The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations" AGM on behalf of the CCCA that was held Gloucester at the beginning of March. He has very kindly sent in this report:

Gloucester was magnificent, helped by a day full of sunshine, believe it or not! At 10:00 delegates, about 40, started arriving for coffee and biscuits, after which the group was split into two and were taken on a fascinating historical tour of the Cathedral. The huge east window drew an immediate interest. York, having always maintained that theirs was always larger! The original medieval glass had disappeared through neglect, eventually to be replaced by Victorian glass. At the very top the Virgin Mary was illustrated with a Crown and a couple of rows lower down was shown a figure of both her and Christ wearing Crowns with twelve disciples on either side.

We then visited the crypt, built around its chapel at the centre with side chapels. A Victorian font had been removed from its original

place in the Cathedral above to one of those chapels, as it was not liked! Many considered that the bowl was too deep for the safety of the newly baptised!

The tour would not have been complete without a visit to the organ loft. The instrument faces east/west, built on the central screen, with console on the north side. Robert Houssart (Assistant Director of Music) gave us some very detailed demonstrations of its huge capacity, including a very rude sounding 32' stop on the pedal and a rasping corneopean sound on the swell! Our fascination was held by the ability to separate the east/west sound and this was demonstrated by the use of two manuals, giving an echo effect.

Robert then played a Herbert Howell's "Pastorale", one time organist of the Cathedral, and finished with Vierne's "Finale" from his 5th Symphony – wow!

We were given a reception and welcome by the Dean, the Very Revd. Nicholas Bury followed by a very good lunch!

The AGM started approximately 2.15pm and although a further tour of the Cathedral was planned there was no time left before Evensong! The Introit was "Turn thy face from my sins", Attwood followed by Responses by Radcliffe and the Leighton 2nd Service. Tomkins' anthem, "When David head my son Absolom is dead" ended a beautifully sung service with a hymn at the end. The choir's director, Andrew Nethsingha, unfortunately is soon moving on to a new post in Oxford.

We were given a lovely farewell tea after Evensong by the parents of the choristers, who attended with members of the clergy. It was held in the Chapter House, a huge room of East Cloister Walk.

The whole day had been happy, sociable and informative and drew to its close far too soon.

SOUTHERN CATHEDRALS FESTIVAL - 19 – 22 July 2007

The SCF is being held at Chichester this year commencing with the Organ Recital, which is once again being sponsored by the CCCA, on Thursday 19 July at 7.30pm. Please find enclosed the information leaflet with booking form for the Festival. If you would like to offer a donation towards the sponsorship, the Association funds would appreciate it! Please see Reunion Booking Form!

CHOIR NEWS

St Stephens Church, Bournemouth is holding its twelfth annual May Festival being held between Saturday 5, to Monday 7 May 2007. It is a three-day festival of music and liturgy. The festival begins with a High Mass, which will include the first performance of "Love bade

me welcome”, a motet by Dr Arthur Wills. Dr John Birch will be giving the Festival Lecture at 2.30pm and Chichester Cathedral Choir will be singing the Festival Evensong at 5.15pm all on Saturday 5 May. Details of the other two days and further information can be found on St Stephens website: www.ststephensbournemouth.org or from Ian Harrison 01202 485664.

The choir will be taking part once again during the Chichester Festivities with a concert “Chichester Cathedral Choir by Candlelight” on Thursday 5 July at 8pm in the Cathedral. Postal bookings are being taken now. Telephone bookings are being taken from 29 May on 01243 780192. Website: www.chifest.org.uk

Choristers, who are leaving the school in the summer, have all been awarded scholarships, as follows:

Tom Hollister, Major Music Scholarship, Cranleigh

Henry Kimber, Music Scholarship and King Shearwood Award, Lancing

Benjamin Waugh, Music Scholarship, King Edward's, Witley

Dylan Suddaby, Music Scholarship, King Edward's, Witley

Congratulations to them all and we wish them well at their new schools and look forward to receiving their news periodically.

TREASURERS REPORT

Andrew Porter, CCCA Treasurer has very kindly submitted this report:

We have had a wonderful year, with great thanks to all of our members. You have all offered the Association tremendous support, which is reflected in a greatly enhanced balance sheet. The overall income from subscriptions was £1,285 from 94 paid-up members. This compares with a total of £890 from 76 members the previous year. The majority of you responded swiftly to our request to increase the subscription rate from £10 to £12 per year. Also some of you took the opportunity to include an extra payment towards our Scholarship Fund as well. Donations to our charity have increased with 17 members now paying via their annual subscription an average of £22 each.

A few of you have opted to pay monthly amounts, and anything in excess of £1 per month ensures extra income for the Scholarship Trust; extra work for me, but it is all worthwhile! Gift aided donations increase the actual amount you give as we can reclaim the income tax you have already paid. This year we shall be claiming an extra £350 from the Chancellor, all for free. It is worth pointing out however, that although the recent announcement of reductions in

income tax brings a (small) smile to your face, it does make charities frown. With the new rate we would only reclaim £310, not £350. Maybe you would think of this when reviewing your donations to our charity.

When our books close for the year they will show an excess of income over expenditure of around £1,000. This reflects the notable increase from subscriptions as well as prudent use of the funds by the committee and the Newsletter editorial team in particular. This is not all spare cash however as later in the year the Southern Cathedrals' Festival is being hosted by Chichester. It is during this festival that the Association sponsors the Thursday evening organ recital, which will cost us £600. I am also aware that following the untimely death of Brian Borton, calligraphy for the choral foundation record book may have to be undertaken at a more commercial cost. Alan Thurlow has very kindly offered to split any increased cost with the Cathedral Music fund, but all the same, making provision for this is prudent.

Compared to last year when we only just broke even, the small increase in the subscription rate has made a big difference. If you are aware that you still only pay £10 to us, please contact your bank (most take phone instructions and surely Prebendal educated students can manage this for themselves on the internet) and increase it to £12 plus. I am reassured that this year has made us more financially established again, with all thanks to you.

NEWS FROM THE CLOSE

Chris and Vikki Larley have announced the birth of their daughter Eve on 6 April 2007 at 08:21 weighing in at 8lbs 7ozs! Congratulations to all of you.

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Advent Reunion: Saturday 1 December 2007 at 6.00pm. Further details in the Autumn Newsletter but keep the date free.

Carol Services:

There will be three Carol Services held this year:

- Friday 21 December at 6pm (tickets required)
- Saturday 22 December at 6pm (tickets required)
- Sunday 23 December at 3pm (no tickets required)

Further details and tickets for these services can be applied for directly through the Cathedral Offices.

Don't forget to book your Reunion Tickets!