

The Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge

Newsletter Summer 2014

News of Associates:

We are delighted to welcome as new Associates:

Helena Granath, Veronica Spalding, Dr. Matthew Ward and Rachael Ward (the Schola of St. Joseph's, New Malden), and Robin and Jane Wickenden.

We record with sadness the deaths of Margaret Evans, Bernadette Selous, and Dorothy John, all Associates of long standing and staunch supporters of the Schola. Our condolences go to Reg; he and Bernadette will be missed at Associates' events.

SIGNING OFF – a message from your recently retired ex-Director

It is hard to believe, looking back, that my association with Schola goes back nearly 33 years – I don't even feel that old inside (though progressively more so on the outside!), let alone find it credible that my memories can extend that far – to 1981, when I first received an invitation from Mary to join a project she had in hand to give an afternoon concert in Ghent of chant and associated pieces for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14th September, the day of the concert itself.

For the rehearsal period ('Have you all got your Schola pencils?') of some three days we were lodged in collegiate luxury at Newnham, dining with such fellows as were about and taking tea in Mary's rooms; it was all utterly and delightfully traditional. On the day of travel we set off in a minibus at some ungodly hour to catch the red-eye ferry from Lowestoft to Zeebrugge, a party of two or three cantors, a number of under- and recent graduates forming the choir, the late, dear Dom Alan Rees OSB from Belmont (who described himself as Mary's 'tame Benedictine'), and Ann Bond, who was to play some chant-based pieces on a chamber organ. We arrived in rather good time (a feature, I was soon to realise, of all Mary's travel arrangements) and so had the opportunity to fortify ourselves with a mug of tea in the rough and ready caff among all the hairy-armed long-distance lorry drivers while we waited for our boat to be called. At what must have been about 5am boarding was duly announced; and Mary, nothing abashed, leapt to her feet and intoned 'Procedamus in pace', to which the keener and less bashful lustily responded 'In nomine Christi. Amen'. The lorry-drivers looked completely incredulous, and I seem to remember even Fr Alan staring at the floor with an air of 'I'm not with these people' about him; but we were away from the starting blocks of my first, unique, slightly mad and utterly uplifting Schola trip.

The concert itself was a revelation. We were to perform robed, with lots of Catholic processions and bits of ceremonial, in one of those big brick-built mediaeval churches you get in the Low Countries that first of all get turned sideways in the early 17th century so that the central focus is on the pulpit erected on a side wall (the sermon being the main event in the particularly dour species of post-Reformation religion in that part of the world), and then become museums to all intents and purposes. Mary managed to make it a veritable basilica. But the most astonishing thing was the size and composition of the audience; standing room only in this large church, mothers with toddlers in pushchairs, young and old, all virtually swinging from the rafters. And this for a concert of chant? You simply would not have got this response in England at that time, or, I sadly have to admit, at any time since.

With the wild applause still ringing in our ears we made our way back to the ferry (I *think* it was that very evening) to take the night boat back to Lowestoft, crammed into basic sleeping berths 4 to a small room (a bit like I imagine being in an overcrowded prison cell feels). Unwinding with a beer in the bar before bed, the conversation became rather heated, and one of the choir, evidently a student of the chant, shrilled in a high-pitched Welsh accent ‘But you don’t seem to realise that the quilisma had disappeared from the manuscripts by the 12th century’ at just the moment that the whole room (more lorry-drivers) fell silent. More incredulity from the assembled company, but the speaker won my eternal admiration for adding, in the awkward silence that ensued, ‘There, that shocked you, didn’t it?’

Well, I could retail any number of such tales from the ensuing decades, when several times a year the call would come to take part in Mary’s projects, and always the same delightful mix of the weird and wonderful, exquisite music and frantic travel arrangements, astonishing venues and completely liberated companionship, often a sense of triumph against the odds; and always in an atmosphere of innocent joy unlike anything else I encountered in my professional life where status-anxiety, competitiveness and haughty grandeur tended to make for a rather uncomfortable experience. Of course Mary was strict; ‘It’s a Schola rule – no alcohol to be taken on the day of a performance’ was honoured as much in the breach as in the observance, and ‘If you do that in the concert, I will throttle you’ said in such a way that you really believed she might! But she also invested a lot of trust in her singers, letting them off the leash when it was productive, and, in a very understated way, a lot of love in both them and the whole undertaking; and you felt it. I suppose she was one of the last of those firm and formal but loving teachers there seem to be so few of nowadays.

Over the years Mary took me more and more into her confidence, and I was glad to be able to help her from time to time, organising a recording session for a demo disc at 24 hours notice on one occasion, or recruiting a large local choir for a one-off event here in St Albans on another, and suchlike. She in return very graciously consented to become a patron of Spode Music Week, an annual residential course of which I am chairman, and several times came to give us a talk or rehearse a Vespers, all for love alone. That course was held at that time at Hengrave Hall, and it was at our

Associates' weekend there in early 2004 that, having co-opted me as Assistant Director in I think 1999, she took me aside and solemnly laid her hand on my shoulder and said 'You must keep all this going when I'm gone'. Of course we knew her health had been declining, and I suppose we sensed dimly what she perhaps knew more clearly, that she wouldn't go on for ever. She went on to explain what her hopes had always been for the Schola, not just its public face but its inner ethos and atmosphere too, and I promised that I would do what I could, which in all humility was all that I could promise. Being only an amateur of the chant, only fairly-well informed about it, I couldn't hope to bring her personal authority to the work; but as a singer and musician I might be able to contribute something relevant, and certainly as the chairman of my Music Week I understood what she wanted to carry forward as the social ethos of the Schola.

A little over four years later I found myself held to my promise, and over the ensuing five I have done my best to keep it. I started by completing the last project Mary had in hand, the Templars, and then settled down to the routine of our twice yearly Associates' weekends, with two other major projects to follow, Fontevraud/Las Huelgas and Charlemagne/Antichrist (the latter sounds rather alarming when you put it like that!). I also tried to get a continuous buzz of day workshops going, and if that hasn't quite come true for us, it is not least because many others are also undertaking the same work, and the main thing is that the chant gets sung. I have indeed invested a lot of time and energy that I don't really have in these projects, but I have little doubt that it is some sort of intervention from upstairs that has made a little go, I hope you will agree, a long way. And above all, I've received the unstinting support and affirmation from all of you without which I could never have kept going. In particular the Trustees, and among them especially Bernard, Grey, John and Patrick, my academic face-saver Dr David Hiley, my indulgent and untiring mentor and Associate Philip and all the Assistants, and all our dear and indispensable friends from CJ at St Benedict's have put in at least as much as I have (how on earth did Mary, with only Sr Alicia at her side, manage to get so much done?) and for that I thank them with all my heart. My retirement was marked, as those of you who were there will remember, with a most heartwarming and humbling celebration dinner at Whitby. I was a little too overcome to thank you properly for that honour, but I do so now, and assure you that every time my Le Creuset tatin dish comes out (often please, Julia!), I will remember not only my years as Director of the Schola and what an honour it was to have been able to be of service, but all the delightful individuals who carried me along.

But this is not a farewell, just a change of hats from Director to Trustee and I'll be seeing as many of you in the coming years as often as I can, just like old times. It only remains to join in the unanimous chant of *Ad multos annos/Feliciter* to our new Director, Christopher.

Jeremy White

TAKING UP THE BATON – from the new Director

There are rare moments in life when we are privileged to see the world not merely as it is, but as it could be.

One such was a rainy Sunday morning a few months ago, when I was able to attend Mass in a parish I hadn't visited before. By the time Mass began the church was packed full, with close to three hundred people present, including many families with children (fifty of the younger ones went out to the Sunday School during the Liturgy of the Word). A team of about eight boys processed with the priest to the altar, carrying candles and incense.

During the Introit, as at the Offertory and Communion, the small choir chanted the Proper texts of the day in English using Adam Bartlett's Simple English Propers with light organ accompaniment. The music for the antiphon was provided to the congregation so that they could join in, but there was also time at each of these points to sing good, time-honoured hymns. As Mass continued, the priest sang his words to the tunes in the Roman Missal, and the congregation responded confidently. The Ordinary of the Mass was sung in Latin chant: Mass XI (Orbis factor) rather than the more widely-known Missa de Angelis. The strength of the congregational singing suggested deep familiarity with the Gregorian melodies, and this was demonstrated in stunning fashion at the Alleluia, where the whole congregation joined the choir in singing one of the authentic Gregorian Alleluia tones, complete with its melismatic jubilus.

Considered from an artistic point of view, the Mass demonstrated a pleasing aesthetic unity: a happy marriage of English and Latin chants and with some familiar hymns interspersed. In other words, the music served the liturgy, and was for the most part an integral part of it, so that the aesthetic experience was also a liturgical experience. The essential key to achieving this was the priest's singing of his parts: the sung dialogue between priest and congregation impressing silently upon us that music was the medium by which the words of the liturgy became the praise of Almighty God.

Where, you might wonder, was this remarkable parish, this model of good liturgical praxis? This was a typical Sunday at St Mary and St Ethelburga, Barking.

At first sight Barking might seem like an unlikely venue for the scene I have described. The church is a modest brick building constructed in the 1970's, with pews on three sides of the altar and a leaky roof. The congregation I saw was as diverse as any in the country; people who might be described as 'White, British' were certainly a minority, and the parish could hardly be described as wealthy. The choir consisted of a handful of faithful volunteers, led by an organist who helps out playing sacred music on Sunday mornings even though his real *métier* is jazz piano on Saturday nights. Perhaps the only indisputably excellent feature of the church is its small pipe organ, a chamber instrument with a lovely tone which was donated to the church some years ago.

If you are familiar with English parish life you will already realise—it could hardly be otherwise—that the liturgical achievements of the parish are largely due to the tireless work over many years of the parish priest, Fr William Young. Possessed of few resources and largely self-taught, he has nevertheless achieved a genuine realisation of the spirit of the liturgy in his parish; a celebration that is at once genuinely inclusive, culturally rooted and faithful to the practice of the Church.

If this can be achieved in Barking, it is hard to see why it cannot be achieved everywhere. Many of this country's parishes have considerably greater material resources and the potential to achieve very much more. Yet in practice too many liturgical celebrations are marred by uninteresting music of secular inspiration with little relation to the liturgy. Good music can lift up souls to God, but a bad aesthetic experience tends to reinforce an atmosphere in which prayer and reverence seem out of place.

Barking has been able to achieve something better—something with aesthetic integrity—because its liturgical music makes clear reference to the authentic structure of the rite. This structure is most clearly defined by the repertoire of Gregorian chant. Resources do not at present permit fine renditions of the Gregorian propers and so simpler solutions have had to be found; yet since these make reference to the Gregorian tradition they participate to some extent in its spirit and are therefore satisfactory substitutes.

It is therefore clear that the Gregorian tradition is ultimately the key to the aesthetic, cultural and religious success of the liturgy in this parish, and if other parishes do not match this standard the most obvious reason is lack of knowledge of that tradition. Here of course the importance of the ongoing work of the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge becomes clear. The gap between the ordinary realities of parish life and the kind of ideal celebration of the liturgy, in Latin and with chant, that is so familiar to us from Schola weekends, might seem immense to the casual observer. Yet in fact there is no contradiction: the one serves as a model to guide the other; the demands made of the participants differ only in degree, not in kind. In promoting the Gregorian tradition in all its richness, we are helping to make possible its ordinary, even unremarkable presence in parish life, where its liturgical function is every bit as important as in the great monasteries where popular imagination typically locates it.

When Mary Berry founded the Schola in 1975 her primary motivation was the preservation of a great cultural treasure that seemed about to be entirely lost. Since then, and in no small part due to her efforts, much has been preserved, and in many places there are signs of revival. Yet the work of Schola is far from over. Today there is increasing receptivity to the chant, but more than one generation has grown up with little experience of it in its proper liturgical context; a far cry from those who remember being drilled in chant by nuns in their pre-conciliar schooldays. Our great challenge is to pass on this great tradition from generation to generation. This cannot

be done quickly; results will be achieved person by person, parish by parish. But there is every reason to believe that if we persevere our efforts will be richly rewarded.

The Schola's vision for the promotion of the chant has always been a holistic one. Education and training remains one of the Schola's key priorities, and is an area which I am keen to develop; our recent weekend at Downside saw some developments in this regard with more study sessions, and we have also held two days in London this year which combined a liturgy with an extended rehearsal.

Recordings and concert performances are also important as a way to bring the chant to new audiences. At the start of September our team of professional cantors will give a concert at Quarr Abbey, and in November we will field a choir to sing Dupré's Vespers, which the Schola recorded many years ago. The worsening economics of recording may prevent us from undertaking a major project for some time, but in this area too we must look for new opportunities. The Schola also takes a close interest in promoting and disseminating scholarship and in providing resources for singers and choir directors, and I hope that the coming years will see some significant developments in this regard.

I am becoming ever more aware as I begin my time as Director that there is very much more to be done than I can possibly do myself, and that the talents, resources, contacts and experiences of all the associates are essential to our mission. If there is any way in which you can help, please do not wait to be asked! Our most pressing task is to recruit a new generation of associates: this is essential to our mission, if we are to pass on the tradition with which we have been entrusted, and something with which everyone can help. In order to achieve this we will need to overhaul our website and our internet presence, for which skills in media and graphic design are especially needed. We also need to increase our fundraising efforts, not merely to ensure our long-term financial viability but also so as to be able to offer a greater number of bursaries to students and clergy, and to undertake major projects such as publications and recordings.

Jeremy speaks movingly in his letter of the responsibility which Mary entrusted him, to carry on the work which she had begun. He has indeed made an outstanding contribution in recent years, with a tremendous commitment of his time and talents. But in truth the responsibility to carry on the Schola's work is one which belongs to all of us who at various times over the years were privileged to study, sing and pray with Mary. She has surely gone to her reward; we must still try to merit ours. Please pray for me as I take up my turn at this task.

Christopher Hodkinson

EVENTS SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

Impressions of a Whitby weekend

Whitby was a favourite holiday destination of my childhood years, and although I have continued to make short visits there, it is some years since my last one. Catching sight of the great abbey church proved quite a nostalgic experience. It suddenly appeared high on the horizon as it almost floated into view, its gaunt shell outlined against the sky. Countless visitors to Whitby over the centuries must have sensed awe when first glimpsing its ancient stones, although before the ravages of the Reformation and a naval bombardment in W.W.1, it would have presented an even more inspiring sight than it does today.

An abbey has occupied the same cliff top location high above the town since its foundation in the year 657 by the formidable and saintly Hilda. It rapidly established a reputation for sanctity and learning, attracting pilgrims and scholars from across Christendom, and famously was the venue for the historic “White Synod” of 663. Pondering on these past glories, it struck me that much of the chant we would soon be singing would have formed a large part of the daily lives of the monastic community. They would, I am sure, have approved of its return to Whitby by our Schola, if only for a brief weekend, since we were, like them, to offer it in a liturgical setting to the glory of God.

Sneaton Castle, our venue for the weekend, is situated in an elevated position outside Whitby, and has, from its grounds and windows, views of the abbey, the North Sea and the moors. Although castle-like in appearance, it is in reality a mix of later architectural styles, from Georgian to Victorian to modern, all blending happily together. A community of Anglican nuns occupies part of the building. The remainder, once a girls’ school, has become a conference and retreat centre. The Castle proved an ideal venue for us, providing conference rooms and facilities, visitor accommodation, bar and restaurant, plus comfortable lounges. Additionally we had the use of the excellent nuns’ chapel for our services.

On arrival we were welcomed by Bill and Holly, who throughout our stay worked quietly behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly. The substantial pack of music, which they handed out, promised a busy time ahead, and this indeed proved to be the case. Almost immediately we commenced with a short rehearsal in our conference room, followed by Requiem Mass in the chapel, celebrated, as on many previous occasions, by our chaplain for the weekend, Fr. Richard Conrad, O.P. We then enjoyed a very acceptable supper in the impressive dining hall, after which we returned to the chapel for Compline, and were joined by the community. The last event of the day was a rehearsal by Jeremy, in which we were introduced to music for St. Charlemagne, which some of our members would be performing the following weekend at a public concert in the Temple Church in London. Afterwards those who

still had the energy repaired to the elegant bar for a well-earned nightcap (or two) before joining the majority for a much needed night's sleep.

Saturday proved to be our busiest day. A brief rehearsal immediately followed breakfast, then the Mass of the day, dedicated to Pope St. Clement. After coffee we attended an interesting and stimulating lecture by Eleanor Giraud on Charlemagne and Gregorian chant. This concluded with a lively question and answer session. Lunch preceded a further session on St. Charlemagne which carried through to a rehearsal for Vespers. The Office of Vespers, expertly led by Jeremy, was again attended by the Sisters. This beautiful Office was competently accompanied and enhanced by Christopher on the rather fine chapel organ and was felt by many to be one of the highlights of the weekend. Supper, which followed, proved to be quite a banquet, and included wine, and was held in the rather grand Garden Room. During the meal Grey delivered a speech of thanks to Jeremy for his unstinting and inspiring leadership of the Schola, and presented him with a piece of 'Le Creuset' kitchenware to mark his imminent retirement from the position of Director of the Schola, a position he has held with distinction and dedication since taking over from our late founder Mary Berry, our sadness at his retirement being tempered by the knowledge that he would continue to have an involvement with the Schola, and that his position would be assumed by the very able and knowledgeable Chris Hodkinson. While still recovering from the effect of the good food (and wine) we returned to our conference room for a quite jolly semi-dress rehearsal of the "Play of Antichrist". Since many of us were sight reading an unfamiliar work there were more hilarious moments than the text suggested, but despite this Jeremy managed skilfully to hold it all together. Then because of the late hour and the chapel being locked we concluded with Compline in the conference room. The bar proved a final destination for the more hardy souls among us, although the majority, not surprisingly, opted for bed.

Sunday began early with an Anglican Eucharist celebrated by our old friend, the Rev. Andrew Macintosh. After breakfast came the final rehearsal of the weekend for the Mass of Christ the King, which also marks the last Sunday of the Church's year. The Mass was sung, quite competently, under Jeremy's direction, and was celebrated by Fr. Conrad who preached a fine sermon to his usual high standard. Over lunch we made our farewells and left for our journey home with pleasant memories of inspiring liturgy, good food and companionship, and expert tuition. All of us were aware and appreciative of the tremendous amount of work put in by all involved in making the weekend, once again, such a great success. We are now looking forward with eager anticipation to hearing news of the next Associates' weekend in 2014.

John Burton, November 2013.

“Laetare Jerusalem” (et “Respice...”) – Downside Abbey 29th-31st March 2014

“Respice” it was, for the second of four brothers all schooled at Downside over 21 years; much was changed and added to the buildings over 50 years, but the Abbey itself and much besides was comfortably familiar, not least as the home of my first serious experience of the Gregorian Liturgy.

The carefully researched and prepared programme encompassed two Complines and two Vespers sung with our monastic hosts; likewise the Masses on Sunday and Monday. Study sessions, separately crafted for the more and the less experienced participants, allowed education and enjoyment for both “boarders” and “day pupils”. We also prepared the office of None.

I believe I echo the gratitude of all of us to Christopher Hodkinson and Philip Duffy for their care of us, both in our learning and in our liturgies. We are also grateful to Dom Benet who, in the absence of the Abbot in America, escorted us on a tour of the Abbey (including opening the Reliquary Cupboard, offering spiritual refreshment only, of course) and the Sacristy. Dom Benet also provided an enlightening and suitably relaxed addition to the study sessions on monastic Vespers, None, modality, and two of the more complex chants.

Jeremy White made a welcome, if flying, visit from his professional work in London. I do hope that Jeremy’s successor felt that the efforts of himself and Philip, both as teachers and cantors, were rewarded by a reasonably acceptable performance, albeit punctuated by an occasional “Obbligato for random misericords”!

In a community whose numbers are in delicate equilibrium, the welcome of Dom Anselm (the choirmaster) and his brethren was generous, as was the catering and the accommodation. The food was cheerfully produced by the mostly local staff, and the accommodation, in a warm, comfortable and new block that houses girl pupils (what else? – no chilly dormitories for the modern Miss), was matched by the warm welcome of Helena Graham of the Bursar’s office, who saw us in and out and did whatever else was needed.

As a footnote almost, we were guided round Glastonbury Abbey ruins by an adept and costumed guide, before lunch on the Monday. Apart from uncovering some mosaic remains, which he poked helpfully with his rapier, he was knowledgeable and helpful. More to the point, we then sang None, just fitting into the small but lovely chapel of St Patrick and ending our liturgies in a place well-suited and well-decorated.

I believe the community, and the visiting clergy and laity who joined us for Mass and Office, were glad to find that the Chant is still not just alive, but more comfortably finding its place in our liturgical development – certainly amongst us at Downside and in my own Sussex parish. Not as an antique throwback but – whether in Latin or the

vernacular, and with suitably chosen polyphony – as a companion for all who wish to know and treasure the historic wealth of our faith.

I returned home richer, rested and grateful to all who organised the event.

Cluniacus

Workshop Day at St. Oswald’s Church, Askrigg, Saturday 26th April

Relaxing in St. Oswald’s Church before another day of chant I dreamed that the theme tune for “All Creatures Great and Small”, filmed here at Askrigg, could have been one of the beautiful chant melodies we were about to sing under the benevolent direction of Philip Duffy. Following upon last year’s popular day of chant, MaryRose had arranged a similar instruction day on this Saturday after Easter. Roughly half of the forty singers attending had come last year, and so were able to refresh their voices with the idiosyncrasies of square notation, whilst the others concentrated on the Gregorian highway code. Philip then skilfully guided the group through the high points in the development of chant notation, and then demonstrated some Alleluias singing the tuneful Easter hymn “Ad cenam Agni provide”. We then sang the Easter Sunday Introit “Resurrexi”, “I am risen, and am always with you”, a quiet 4th mode antiphon, reflecting the awe of the disciples as they came to realise the stupendous event that was taking place before their very eyes that first Easter morning. This was followed by a burst of excitement as we sang the Alleluia “Pascha Nostrum”, and several more rapturous Alleluias.

After a good lunch break, during which a wedding was fitted in in this busy church, we resumed our progress by going through Vespers, Philip’s superb direction giving the singers the confidence they needed as though they were singing it every day. Michael Murphy, director of the Leeds Schola, kindly joined the singers as cantor, and a small group of Associates familiar with Vespers were happy to give vocal support to enthusiastic participants fortified with tea and delicious home made cake.

All agreed as they departed that it had been a highly instructive, sometimes challenging, but always enjoyable day, at the heart of the Schola’s endeavours to encourage the use of chant in the liturgy. Our founder, Mary Berry, often used to say at the end of a day “wasn’t that fun!” This day followed that tradition. Hearty thanks were given to MaryRose for organising the event.

Grey Macartney

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Young Catholics Association, Douai Abbey, September 19 – 21

Following last year's successful weekend at Cold Ash the Schola has been asked to support the association again. It is an opportunity to advance chant with young people.

Last year Chris tutored them, including a core group of enthusiasts, and we shared liturgy with them.

This year we return to Douai. The cost including board is £120. If you are able to attend to provide support please contact John Curran (01509 852259 or *JPCSeate@aol.com*).

Portsmouth Mass — Sunday 26th October

Last year it was the Schola's great privilege to sing at a Mass celebrated in Portsmouth cathedral in the presence of the bishop, Mgr Philip Egan, the first. This year the Latin Mass Society has invited us once again: this year's Mass will take place in the afternoon on Sunday 26th October, the feast of Christ the King according to the old calendar. Associates who are interested in taking part are invited to contact The Administrator for full details (contact information is given in the final section of this newsletter).

Dupré Concert — 9th November

A small group of the Schola's Cantors and Associates will perform Marcel Dupré's Vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary with organist William Saunders at the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, near Ipswich, on Sunday 9th November at 7 pm. Participation in the choir is by invitation only, but all associates are warmly invited to come and support our singers!

Richard III Mass at Fotheringhay

The Requiem for King Richard III at Fotheringhay Parish Church, originally scheduled for August, had to be postponed until a later date; at present a date in March 2015 seems likely — please watch this space!

Please also check the website for notices of events announced between newsletters!

INSTRUCTION

Opus Anglicanum Gregorian Chant Workshop at Glastonbury Abbey Saturday September 20th. Led by John Rowlands-Pritchard

A day of chant in the recently restored and wonderfully resonant Abbot's Kitchen; an entertaining, informative and enjoyable experience preparing participants to perform Vespers of St. Dunstan, using at first simple recitation in English, and working towards more adventurous Latin chant.

The day is open to anyone, and is a chance to experience and sing Gregorian Chant in a friendly context. All are welcome; those with knowledge of the chant, who will have the chance to deepen their insight and whose contribution will be invaluable; singers who wish to learn from scratch about this richly rewarding repertoire; and even non-singers fascinated by the idea of the chant and interested in cultural history.

Structured around the monastic choir services the course will study chant composed in Anglo-Saxon England in the 11th century in honour of St. Dunstan in Somerset, listening to the angels on the Mendip Hills.

The price includes a specially edited music booklet and morning and afternoon refreshments. To book please call 01458 832267 or e-mail info@glastonburyabbey.com 10 am to 5 pm £10 per person

All Saints' Church, Dulverton, TA22 9BU, Saturday 18th October Gregorian Chant Workshop led by John Rowlands-Pritchard

Come and sing Mediaeval chant for a day. A rewarding and enjoyable opportunity that is open to anyone with no specialist knowledge or skill. Structured round the original regular Offices of Terce, Sext, None and Compline, the workshop includes background history and notation, and will explore the riches of adventurous chant.

9.30 am Register, 10 am chant basics and service of Terce, continuing with the Little Hours, and ending the day with a chant sequence 'St. Dunstan' at 4 pm.

Cost: £10; baguette lunch £4.50. 'Phone for bookings: 01643 831006

John Rowlands-Pritchard studied with Mary Berry at Cambridge, and is now an authority on mediaeval monophonic song. He sang in Ely and Wells Cathedral Choirs and founded Opus Anglicanum in 1988. Mary Berry called him her 'Arch Cantor'. He is an inspirational teacher coupled with a superlative voice.

London Chant Evenings directed by Dr. Peter Wilton Starting on 30th September.

These Tuesday evenings will include practical instruction in chant performance, music for the Mass and daily Offices from both English and Latin texts. Anyone able to sing in tune is welcome, with or without chant experience.

Place: St. Ignatius Chapel, Farm Street Church, 114 Mount Street, London W.1 (nearest stations Bond Street or Green Park). From 6.30 pm to 8 pm. Cost: £5 per evening or £50 for the whole term.

Peter Wilton is the Schola's Director of Music for the London area, and editor of chant for the office of Vespers for Westminster Cathedral. An excellent teacher, his infectious enthusiasm for the chant and its fascinating history makes these evenings both enjoyable and instructive, concentrating the mind on a world far removed from our daily routine.

Enquiries to Grey Macartney

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PERSONAL VIEWS

A visit to the Abbey of Notre-Dame d'Argentan

One of the earliest expeditions of the Schola, led by Mary Berry soon after its foundation in 1975, was to the Abbey of Notre-Dame d'Argentan, Normandy. Aged Associates recollect with pleasure the welcome they received from the community, and the opportunity to hear the chant being sung in its full liturgical splendour, demonstrating Mary's aim to restore the chant to its rightful place in those churches where it had been so rapidly lost in the few years since the Vatican II reforms.

From that trip lasting friendships blossomed, with visits by parties from the community to England, and visits to the Abbey by Associates, especially by those Associates who have become Benedictine oblates.

I write this as I return to Portsmouth on a comfortable modern ferry after my first acquaintance with the Abbey, having been invited to join a small group of oblates and friends to stay there for a weekend. I was touched by the warmth of our welcome. Mother Abbess took an enormous interest in each of us, chatting with us on a wide range of topics from the history of the community from its origins in the 8th century to the forthcoming vote on Scottish independence. In the Benedictine tradition of hospitality Mère Anne-Catherine, the guest mistress, saw to our every need, ensuring that we were regaled with delicious home-cooked meals, much of it from the Abbey's

own farm produce. On the Saturday afternoon we put on a little concert of hymns and songs from various parts of the British Isles, and one of our group who had been to Palestine and speaks good French talked of the problems of those living in Gaza.

In accordance with the Rule, seven Offices are sung each day in the Abbey Church from the Psalterium Monasticum in Latin, with French translations alongside, and also an Ordinary rite Mass from the Roman Gradual. The congregation is encouraged by a nun acting as ‘animatrice’ to alternate with the choir in the Ordinary on Sundays. Some of us also alternated with the choir in several of the Offices, and Alan Henderson, the Schola’s Director of Music for Scotland, was asked to sing at Mass the lovely 5th mode Gradual ‘In Deo speravit’ for the 17th Sunday of Ordinary time, much to the delight of the Abbey Schola. The organ accompaniment at all services was perfect, gentle and restrained, allowing the sacred texts to stand out.

A totally different aspect of the work of the Abbey is that of lace making by a method unique to the Abbey of Argentan. This special secret skill is passed on from one member of the community to a younger one, but is never revealed to any other person. Mère Colette showed us samples of “Le Point d’Argentan”. Even to the untrained eye the steady hand and sharp eyesight needed to create these miniature works of art using the thinnest of thread and a tiny needle are truly remarkable. A museum nearby is devoted to the display of exquisite examples of this beautiful and intricate lace.

My stay at the Abbey was a truly happy and uplifting experience.

Grey Macartney
July 2014

Meeting of the Chant Forum, Quarr and Ryde Abbeys, 1 - 5 July 2013

At the beginning of July 2013, two years after the previous meeting at Douai in May 2011, the Chant Forum gathered at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight. There had been no such meeting in 2012, because the Monastic Musicians that year made Gregorian Chant the focus of their own annual session. This Quarr event was the seventh Chant Forum gathering. Hitherto the formula had been for a meeting of two full days only, but this time we made it three full days.

How many attended the Quarr meeting? That’s by no means an easy question to answer. There were fourteen resident guest participants at Quarr. It was good that several of these were lay folk involved in the running of Gregorian Choirs. The number of monastic communities represented was, however, disappointingly small. These fourteen were then augmented by three Quarr monks who attended all the sessions; also by one or two others who dropped in for single days; also by nuns from Ryde, and the former Wantage Sisters, who came, in varying numbers, for most, if not all of the Quarr sessions. That would add up to round about twenty five people. But on the day spent at Ryde Abbey, the sessions took place in the large parlour, so that Ryde

Sisters could attend from their side of the grille. Counting all of those, our numbers rose to around forty.



Instruction was given by three speakers: Joseph Cullen, Dr. Giedrius Gapsys and Dom Xavier Perrin OSB, Prior of Quarr.

Joseph is very well known to many of us. He has often visited both Pluscarden and Ryde, in both a personal and a professional capacity. He gave memorable sessions, in tandem with James MacMillan, for the Panel of Monastic Musicians, meeting at Pluscarden in 2000. Joseph is a professional vocal coach, choral director and organist. Perhaps the best known of the choirs he has worked with are the London Symphony Chorus and the Huddersfield Choral Society. As well as giving many solo concert performances on the organ, and acting as occasional organ consultant, he has been organist or assistant organist at Leeds and Westminster Cathedrals. Joseph is currently involved in the new John Henry Newman Institute for Liturgical Music in Birmingham, the Ste. Cecilia International School of Gregorian Chant in Rome, and the Musica Sacra Institute in Glasgow.

At our Quarr meeting, Joseph gave six sessions, all marked by his unforgettable style: most entertaining and amusing, and also, without any question, forceful. Joseph is a man on a mission. He has declared open warfare on lazy, sloppy singing; on incorrect pronunciation of Latin vowels; on the unthinking insertion of gaps in the music to follow gaps on the printed page; on breathiness; on Latin diphthongs! Many are the exercises and tricks he has to teach, both to those who wish to sing well, and those who have the responsibility of directing choirs. He is also a man on a mission as a passionate lover of Gregorian Chant, and in general of music that is truly worthy of the

liturgy. He is very much a lover also of Benedictine monastic life: and all of that came across in no uncertain terms during these days.

Our second speaker was Dr. Giedrius Gapsys. He is a Lithuanian musicologist who lives with his wife in France. He is fluent in French and also in English. He gained his doctorate from the Sorbonne, and was a fellow student with Jaan-Eik Tulve at the Paris Conservatoire. Now he teaches at the Conservatoire school; working also with the Gregorian Choir of Paris. Those of us who know Jaan-Eik could recognise many common traits, rooted in shared doctrine and experience. But their specialities are entirely different. Jaan-Eik is interested in the practicalities of directing choirs which sing Gregorian Chant. Giedrius is very much the theoretician, fascinated by the intricacies of modal theory, and by the layers of evolution according to which the Chant as we know it took shape.

Giedrius gave nine sessions. He has actually read, and understood, the ancient and mediaeval treatises on music of which we have perhaps heard, but which for most of us had remained, hitherto, impenetrably obscure. The subject is certainly very far from simple, but Giedrius succeeded in shedding much light on it, with the help of many handout sheets, blackboard writing, reference to examples in the Graduale, and his own limitless enthusiasm. He is an avowed disciple of Dom Jean Claire of Solesmes, who first articulated the theory of three archaic modes, based on the notes C, D and E. He is in accord also with the published musical theories of Dom Daniel Saulnier, who was principal editor of the new *Antiphonale Monasticum* published by Solesmes.

To recapitulate it all very briefly: already in the 4th and 5th centuries, a simple musical language had developed for the sung pronunciation of the words in the Latin liturgy. This musical language was passed on orally. Some of our simple and common melodies (“*Dominus vobiscum*”) survive intact from that period. But this musical language evolved, or developed, as if by its own natural force, and musicologists are able to trace its progress. By the end of the 5th century, at least, a “*Schola cantorum*” was singing the more complex pieces of the Mass. Members of these scholae were semi-professional singers, who spent long years learning the repertoire by heart. This all worked very well until around 780, when the Frankish rulers of much of Europe North of the Alps decreed that the Gallican liturgy had to be Romanised. The Gallican liturgy was Latin, but its Chant had evolved independently from the Roman Chant, and had acquired its own proper characteristics and peculiarities. Now the Gallican singers had to re-learn their entire repertoire, in order henceforth to sing it in the approved Roman way. Two important changes resulted. The first was that the music in the Frankish Empire itself changed, neither remaining purely Gallican nor becoming purely Roman, but morphing into a hybrid mixture of both. We call what resulted: “*Gregorian Chant*”. And since it proved almost impossible to teach or learn so much material in so short a time, ways were sought of writing it down: also of explaining it in a coherent and easily memorisable fashion. So the theorists at this time set about forcing the music they already knew into conformity with the musical rules they had learned from the Byzantine East. Hence arose our system of eight Gregorian Modes:

the “octoechos”. Giedrius convincingly demonstrated in multiple ways that this is a very ill fit. It was devised long after the melodies themselves had been composed, and many of them stubbornly refuse to fit into it. Melodies composed after around 800 would be consciously devised to conform to the Rules of the octoechos; but in earlier Chants - the “authentic repertoire” - we can still detect very ancient formulae which elude its strait-jacket definitions.

The four line stave we know came into being in the early 11th century, and Giedrius took us through the complicated evolution of that also. Once that had been refined and become well established, for the first time in history composers could write notes for others to sing, independently of a living aural tradition.

According to Giedrius, in order to interpret a piece well, we need to bear in mind three or four of the elements that go to make it up. The first is the text; then the mode in which it is set; then the notation which attempts to transcribe what is sung onto the page; then the melodic formulae which are used.

Although Giedrius is very much an academic musicologist, nevertheless his love of the Chant is not merely abstract. He not only recognises the greatness of this music; he also values it as a favoured vehicle for prayer; for conveying the faith of the Church. Like Joseph Cullen, he also is an unashamed lover of the Benedictine life, and repeated many times how happy he was to have the opportunity to contribute to our session.

Our third speaker was Dom Xavier Perrin. He himself is no mean musician and Chant scholar; also a very experienced organist and choir director. He was the main speaker at the Downside Chant Forum meeting in 2009. His focus at the Quarr meeting was on the spirituality of the Chant. How do we pray the Chant? How do we enter into its spirit? How does it help us enter truly into prayer; help us praise God worthily? As Père Xavier loves to insist, through the Chant we pray with our bodies. The true Cantor of the Chant is Christ himself. Singing the Chant, or even just listening to it, we pray with him and in him; adoring his Father; with him receiving the Father’s love. Or sometimes, as his Bride the Church, we pray to him; or else we address the world, calling on it to praise him (“Omnes gentes plaudite manibus!”) The choir director has to situate his choir within the space of this prayer; he has to help it receive what the Chant has to give it. This reception continues without end. Even when a piece is frequently repeated, and known entirely by heart, it will always have something new and fresh to teach us.

A dictum about the Chant current in early mediaeval times may be adapted to sum up all this teaching. What Joseph Cullen taught us above all was the *Ars bene dicendi*: the art of pronouncing the sacred words well. For his part, Giedrius Gapsys taught us the *Ars bene modulandi*: the art of singing these words well, according to their modal conventions. And Père Xavier taught us the *Ars bene orandi*: the art of praying these Chants well.

Clearly this was a wonderful meeting, very much appreciated by all who took part. It was generally agreed, though, that the constituency is probably too small to warrant meeting each year. A hope was expressed, *nem. con.*, that the Chant Forum re-convene some time in 2015. Most participants seemed to think the formula of three full days to be a good one.

Nothing has yet been decided about any of that: but Giedrius has already expressed his willingness to come again, and to speak to us, perhaps on the subject of Gregorian musical formulae. As for venue: again the field remains at present open. Perhaps it may be said here, though, that Quarr has many advantages. It is quite well placed for those living in the South of England. It has plenty of space, and is close to Ryde. It belongs to the Solesmes Congregation, with its venerable tradition of excellence in the Chant, and is always very open to those who wish to deepen their knowledge and ability in that. We shall have to see what eventually transpires, according to the mysterious workings of Divine Providence.

Dom Benedict Hardy OSB (used with the author's permission)

April 2014

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Trustees have resolved to invite Associates to contribute a minimum subscription of £20 per year in place of the £10 per year set in 1984 when the Schola became a charity. It has always been the policy of the Schola that no one should be precluded from being a supporter on account of their circumstances, and Associates have always helped the Schola in its work over the years in countless other ways. However, the cost to the Schola of engaging the very best cantors to give instruction in the chant, fostering study and research, enhancing the liturgy by educating the public in and performing Gregorian chant to the highest standard in order that the chant may take pride of place in Catholic liturgy, and the cost of administration such as the production of newsletters, music for events, maintenance of the library, robes and equipment needed for exemplary performance of the liturgy, has increased so much since Mary Berry founded the Schola in 1975 that the yearly cost is now well in excess of our subscription income and is depleting our precious capital reserves. This is despite the Schola carrying out its work with the bare minimum of expense, the Trustees and many of the Associates freely giving their time and expertise to the Schola. Incidentally, I see that the RPI has increased from 86.84 in Jan 1984 to 252.60 in Jan 2014.

The Trustees wish to continue pursuing the aims of the Schola with especial emphasis on instruction of the clergy, music directors and singers, the income of the Schola being used to support or subsidise these courses. The aim is to ensure that everyone who could benefit from education in the chant should be welcomed to participate regardless of their means. The Schola is unique as a charity entirely devoted to the

promotion of Gregorian chant. Our founder, Dr. Mary Berry, CBE, was honoured by His Holiness, John Paul II, supreme Pontiff, bestowing upon her the medal “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” in recognition of her work in promoting the chant through the Schola. Since 1975 over 10,000 singers have been introduced to the chant via the Schola, and through numerous recordings and research public awareness of the chant is now far greater, and consequently demand by congregations for its use in the liturgy. With the help of Associates the Schola will continue vigorously to pursue these aims.

I now invite all those of you who have been paying an average subscription of less than £20 per year to consider an increase. And if any of you who are already contributing more than this can offer any increase your benevolence will be accepted with open arms! I know that for some of you an increase may not be possible. All subscriptions are voluntary, and we do want to retain you as an Associate regardless of what contribution you feel able to afford. Equally essential is support of Schola events, encouraging new Associates to join us, and advising the Trustees of forthcoming opportunities to offer instruction and support to churches interested in including chant in their liturgy.

Grey Macartney

Membership Secretary

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SCHOLA INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Website and Newsletter: www.scholagregoriana.org

Please (continue to) use the website, since it is the location for the most up-to date news, which any Newsletter such as this can never provide. Please be assured that this Newsletter will continue in “hard copy” form, even though the information contained in it is now included on the website.

Regional Directors of The Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge

South and West: Jeremy White.

London: Peter Wilton

North: Philip Duffy

East and Midlands: Christopher Hodkinson

Scotland: Alan Henderson

Please make contact with them, initially, through the Administrator (details below).

Chant workshops' check list

A check list of things to remember about when you are arranging a chant instruction day or workshop is available for anyone contemplating organising one in your locality. The hardest bit is ascertaining that a reasonable number of singers will attend. After that it is plain sailing. Do have a go! We will do all we can to help.

Message from the Membership Secretary

Associates who do not have Standing Orders for payment of their Annual Subscription are requested please to send a minimum of £20 in favour of The Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge to the Membership Secretary, Grey Macartney, 26 The Grove, Ealing, London, W5 5LH. If you can sign a Gift Aid form he will send you the new Gift Aid form for completion.

Enquiries

Further information plus details and booking forms for events can be obtained from: The Administrator, The Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge, 124 Cambridge Rd, Barton, Cambridge CB23 7AR. Tel: 01223 263063 Fax: 01223 264859.

E mail: *scholacambridge@talktalk.net* **(please note this has changed recently)**

Newsletter and Website Contributions

Contributions (e.g. reviews of events, news about anything related to the chant in your area, personal experiences) by Associates are always very welcome. Please forward them in electronic form if possible to Paul Rouse, email *schola@doynnton.org*, or if that is not possible, pass them to any trustee or to the Administrator (contact details as above.)