



The Journal of Schola Gregoriana

Saulnier; 'freezing the gesture'

Douai Chant Festival 2024

Mary Berry's Tombstone

September 2024

Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge

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## *Introduction*

It is very pleasing to be able to present in this issue the first of a series of articles from our Director Iain Simcock. As a talented organist, Iain's c.v. does of course contain the 'normal expected appointments' including St George's Chapel Windsor, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, various radio & tv performances, and so on. Perhaps, though, it is Iain's time at places such as Solesmes and Le Barroux which enables *us* to benefit from his incredible experience. This combination of musicianship and experience makes him one of the foremost authorities on performing Chant in this country, so that when he speaks on the subject or directs our singing, his love and understanding of Chant is wonderfully transmitted to us. In this issue, he is presenting a translation of an article by Dom Daniel Saulnier (p5), in English in the public

domain for the first time, we believe; we are *most* grateful to Iain for his work on this.

The new 'masthead' of this issue is a tribute to our founder Mary Berry; please see the article about her tombstone (p32).

We missed the presence of the YCA at Douai this year but nevertheless benefitted from a profound spiritual and musical experience; reports may be found below (p26).

New events appear on our website, so it is worth checking there regularly (<https://www.scholagregoriana.org/>).

Similarly, we send out details of events via email. If you have not received any emails since our last newsletter issue, we either do not have your address, or our records are faulty in some way. In that case, please email [membership@scholagregoriana.org](mailto:membership@scholagregoriana.org)

## *Associates News*

### *Salve*

We are delighted to welcome new Associates **Jane Chalaby, Henry and Auguste Darlison, Rhoda Dullea, Rosi Leivas, Steven Maxson, Gilbert Méal, Anthony O'Malley, Claire Fitzgerald, and Carmen Wheatley.**



## *Vale*

Please pray for **Judy Fell, Jill McKenzie, and Margaret Wood.**

*Requiescant in pace*

In addition, we are very grateful to Margaret for leaving us a most generous legacy. This has enabled us to purchase a set of Graduale Triplex from Solesmes to be used at Chant courses, so that the Schola can continue to be at the forefront of performing Chant at its most authentic; every time we open one of these books we shall be reminded to pray for Margaret via a suitable bookplate.



**Please remember the Schola is here,** even at difficult times. For example, Schola Trustees are most anxious to ensure that Associates and their family members are supported in Requiem Mass arrangements, including musical help where that is possible (contact one of our regional directors). The [Latin Mass Society](#) provides some excellent information about organising an 'Old Rite' Requiem Mass. Careful planning well beforehand and swift action at the time will help ensure an appropriate outcome.

**Please also think of the Schola when drawing up or amending your Will.** We are a Registered Charity so bequests are not subject to Inheritance Tax, and we receive the entire sum which you leave to the Schola. It is wise to mention our Registered Charity number 287319, our formal name (Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge) and the Schola's current registered address, which can always be found on our website. All bequests will be most gratefully received, and will help support the work of the Schola.

# THE WRITING DOWN OF THE FRANKISH-ROMAN REPERTOIRE

DOM DANIEL SAULNIER (1995)

*Introduction by Iain Simcock*

For many people, attached to the singing of Gregorian chant within the beauty of the liturgy, aspects of semiology and manuscript study are low on their list of priorities. We must all nevertheless remember that we are deeply indebted to those of the patient, calm and analytical nature necessary to undertake such painstaking work. Without these codebreakers and jigsaw-builders, we would not have the extraordinary editions from which we can sing this glorious music today.

The monks of Solesmes, who first started this restoration work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were astonishingly accurate with very limited technological means; an accumulation of many tens of thousands of monk-hours travelling, copying, accumulating and comparing manuscripts from every available source across Christendom. No wonder that in common French parlance, one speaks of *un travail de Bénédictin* for any task that requires minute detail and indefatigable application. This work continues by specialists across the world, accelerated by the easy availability of so much information. A scientist recently suggested to me that emerging AI technology might be harnessed to help decipher the manuscripts that still elude us today.

The following article, by DOM Daniel Saulnier OSB, who sadly passed away last year, is an overview of the important source material from his perspective. All of the manuscripts mentioned may be consulted online in fantastic quality. Readers are also encouraged to consult the page on our website:

<https://www.scholagregoriana.org/dom-daniel-saulnier-osb-2/>

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“If the sounds are not remembered by man, they are lost because one does not know how to write them.” (Isidore of Seville, c. 560-636)

Without doubt every real musician has encountered, one day or another, the limits of musical notation, confirming for himself this famous quotation from the holy Hispanic musicologist. There is something in music that cannot be written. In the case of traditional musics, writing can become a true cause of its decadence.

Notation, used other than as a means of analysis and reference has a curious effect on musical development. It inverts the mental process and obliterates certain characteristics. The grammatical structure and composition of the music predominate and the basic elements of melody, harmony and rhythm, deferring to their symbols, become secondary. One performs a musical structure received from the outside before perceiving the significance, or the expressive harmonic and rhythmic elements. The mental process of the interpreter is the inverse of that of the composer.¹

We would like here to review some of the practices of the mediæval scribes which reveal the formidable challenge that they must have faced when they tried to “freeze” onto the parchment a vocal gesture which essentially escapes being written down. Their research lasted several decades; the documents of the time reveal successive approximations and try-outs. Faced with this difficulty, the writers often had to adopt an attitude of compromise, notating an aspect of the musical reality and neglecting - more or less consciously - another. Sometimes, they were obliged provisionally to distort the application of their principles of notation, to enable the transcription of

¹ A. Daniélou, *Sémantique musicale*, Hermann, Paris 1967, p. 27

some rhythmic or melodic nuance which went beyond the possibilities of their system of writing.

***Ordines*² or chant books?**

The most ancient written collections containing the Frankish-Roman repertoire of the Mass were united in the *Antiphonale missarum sextuplex*³ (AMS).

- Compiègne Antiphonale
- Corbie Graduale
- Monza Cantatorium
- Rheinau Graduale
- Mont-Blandin Graduale
- Senlis Graduale

These manuscripts have habitually been considered as chant books, even though they lack musical notation. Looking more closely, two of them nearly justify this title: those of *Compiègne* and *Corbie*.⁴

Of the other four, though the Monza *Cantatorium* contains the totality of the texts of the tracts, it often limits itself to transcribing the *incipit* of the graduals. The Rheinau *Graduale* only partially transcribes a large number of pieces. The Mont-Blandin *Graduale* also uses many abbreviations. Lastly, the Senlis *Graduale*, practically speaking, boils down to a table of *incipits* ordered liturgically. It is indeed more accurate to describe these as *ordines* than chant books: they indicate which pieces are to be sung for each liturgical circumstance, but don't give all the substance.

² Plural of *Ordo*, the liturgical year calendar and guide

³ Ed. René-Jean Hesbert 1935

⁴ This analysis of non-notated sources deliberately neglects the alleluia verses and verses of offertories, pieces recently entered into the repertoire.

Concerning the other two books in the *Sextuplex*, it is the Compiègne Antiphonale which gives us the best complete text of the repertoire. It carefully cross-references *incipits* to their corresponding complete transcriptions elsewhere in the volume. The psalm verses are shortened in a way that presupposes the existence of another book. As far as the gaps in the manuscript allow us to judge, there is only one absence from this complete transcription: the verses of the Gradual *Haec dies*, for Easter week.

The Corbie *Graduale* is almost as complete as that of Compiègne; it lacks only the texts of the Tracts and *cantiques* of the 2nd mode.

The comparison between these six books, from the point of view of the sung text, already reveals different approaches by the scribes. Probably the use for which the book was intended is key to understanding this. For example, to conserve a list of *incipits* ordered by liturgical circumstances,⁵ or to transcribe a text carefully for study or rehearsal. The relative vigour of the oral tradition of the place where the book was copied and where it was intended to be used, was probably important as well.

First truly musical indications

Models of composition

The Compiègne manuscript contains the oldest complete version of the Antiphonal of the Office.⁶ It is there one has to look for the first musical indications linked to the Frankish-Roman repertoire, in the series of antiphons of the Office of “Adieu à l’Alléluia”,⁷ on Septuagesima Sunday and in the series

⁵ This is the traditional system of ancient lectionaries.

⁶ The Compiègne Gradual and Antiphonal have been united under a single ms. Reference: BN lat. 17436

⁷ In some places there is a custom of ‘burying the Alleluia.’ It should take place no later than Evening Prayer on the eve of Septuagesima. It may even be appropriate after the morning

of Alleluia-antiphons united at the end of the liturgical year, before the series of “green” Sundays. These pieces are, in effect, identified by the *incipit* of the non-Alleluia antiphon whose melody served as the model. Example: “*Quem vidistis, Alleluia* etc.” means an Alleluia-antiphon composed on the melody of the non-Alleluia antiphon *Quem vidistis*. We find the same procedure used in later manuscripts, jointly with neumatic and even solfegic notation. This rudimentary system of musical information is praiseworthy. We find it already in the titles of several psalms in the manuscript. Essentially, it is linked to a well-functioning oral tradition.

Modal indications

Looking at the Corbie *Graduale*, from the second half of the 9th century, it also contains musical information: the indication of the mode, indicated in the margin by a group of letters, for pieces sung with a psalm. This is a more ancient practice, at least in the region north of Paris. Other manuscripts — the “Tonaries” — contain similar information, dating from the end of the 8th century. The oldest of them, the “Tonary of Saint-Riquier” (Fig 1 below), is roughly contemporary with the oldest known Gregorian Graduals: Reichenau, Mont-Blandin and probably Monza.⁸

Mass on Saturday, or even after Mass on the previous Sunday, to encourage the participation of the faithful. The Hymn *Alleluia, dulce carmen* is appropriate at this point, and may accompany the procession of a plaque or scroll bearing the word ALLELUIA to its place of ‘burial.’ This plaque or scroll, which may even include the chant of the solemn Alleluia for the Easter Vigil, may then be brought to the Priest before the intonation at the Easter Vigil.

⁸ Though the dating of Monza is far from being agreed (8th or 9th century?), the liturgical archaism remains uncontested.

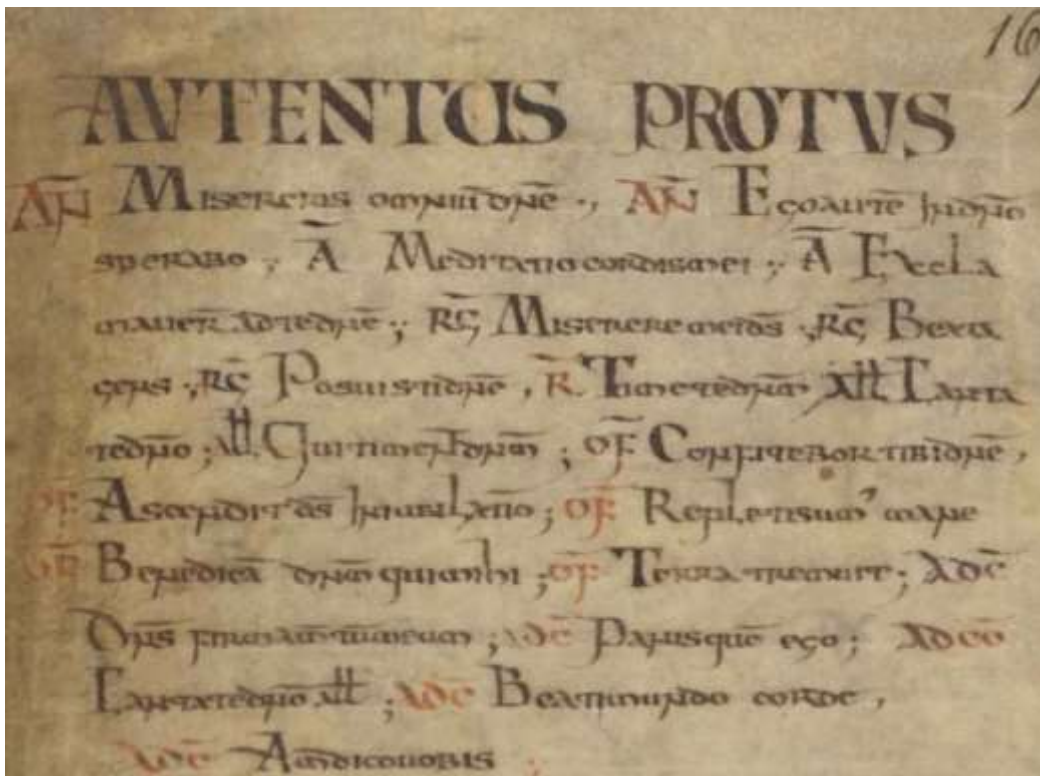


Figure 1 Saint-Riquier Tonary

The comparison of the modal indications given by these tonaries and first chant books turns out to be rich in information.

Firstly, we notice a difference in procedure between editors, according to the type of book and its projected use. The Corbie *Graduale* is the first of a new type of books of notated chant. Orientated towards the practical use by a singer or a *schola*, it makes clear how to sing the verses of the Introit and of the Communion. This is the logic of *tone* (psalmodic) and practitioner (cantor), even if the terminology used is that of theoreticians (“plagal”, “authentic” etc.). The Saint-Riquier Tonary is a book for study and reference. The eight

official categories claim to govern the whole of the repertoire. This is the logic of the *mode* and of the theoretician (*musicus*).

A detailed comparison of the modal indications given for each piece by these different sources reveals some differences:⁹

		Saint-Riquier	Corbie	Mont-Renaud
Co.	<i>Dominus firmamentum</i>	AP	PP	PP
Co.	<i>Laetabimur</i>	PP	AP	AP
In.	<i>Exaudi Domine vocem</i>	PD	AD	
Co.	<i>Panem de caelo</i>	AT		PTR

Four pieces with psalm from the Saint-Riquier Tonary are classed differently by the Corbie and Mont-Renaud Graduals. The cause of this divergence is well known today. For certain pieces, the tradition has always hesitated between a psalmodic tenor at the 5th (authentic mode) and a tenor at the 3rd or 4th (plagal mode). The performance of a piece forces one to make a choice. Depending on the places and the periods, this choice was linked either to the *incipit*, the final cadence, or to other characteristics of the piece. Whatever the decision, the piece doesn't fit into either of the two categories, and the hesitation proves this. In the Middle Ages, a symptom of this is the flowering of categories, sometimes pejorative, such as *tonus irregularis*, *peregrinus*, *barbarus* or *neophytus*, to designate musical realities that official classifications aren't able to encompass.

⁹ This table doesn't carry explanatory remarks about the abbreviations of modal indications. E.g. AP = Authentic Protus; PP = Plagal Protus. The author uses this to illustrate simply that musicians of the time evaluated pieces differently when they didn't fit easily into the existing categories.

NEUMATIC WRITING

The large systems

The best-known notations — Saint Gall, Lorraine, Brittany and French — share a certain number of characteristics which make them eminently comparable from the point of view of our study. Notably, they constitute a symbolic representation of vocal gesture, an artistic representation destined to speak directly to the musical imagination of the singer. The particular design of each notated form generally reveals clearly the number of sounds of the chant it represents. Certain musical contexts nevertheless cannot be put onto parchment without some ambiguity.

Cursive and non-cursive glyphs

Comparative study of the various glyphs, with the addition of the episemas and additional letters, led to a terminology applicable to the diverse writing schools: *in campo aperto*.¹⁰ A glyph is called cursive if it traces a gesture that is “easy, supple, fluid as water” where one says that it “flows from its source”. On the contrary, the glyph is called non-cursive if its drawing shows a heaviness of hand, for example an angularity, if it has marked pressure-points, or a fragmented line. Faced with these signs, the interpretative work of the singer is still to be done. Different rhythmic values must translate the two types of notation. But one can see clearly that just these two categories of glyph, must express many different imaginable rhythmic nuances. It is the study of context which enables clarification of the indeterminate nature of each.

¹⁰ These early staffless neumes, called “*in campo aperto*” or *cheironomic*, appeared as freeform wavy lines above the text. Various scholars see these as deriving from cheironomic hand-gestures, from the ekphonic notation of Byzantine chant, or from punctuation or accent marks.

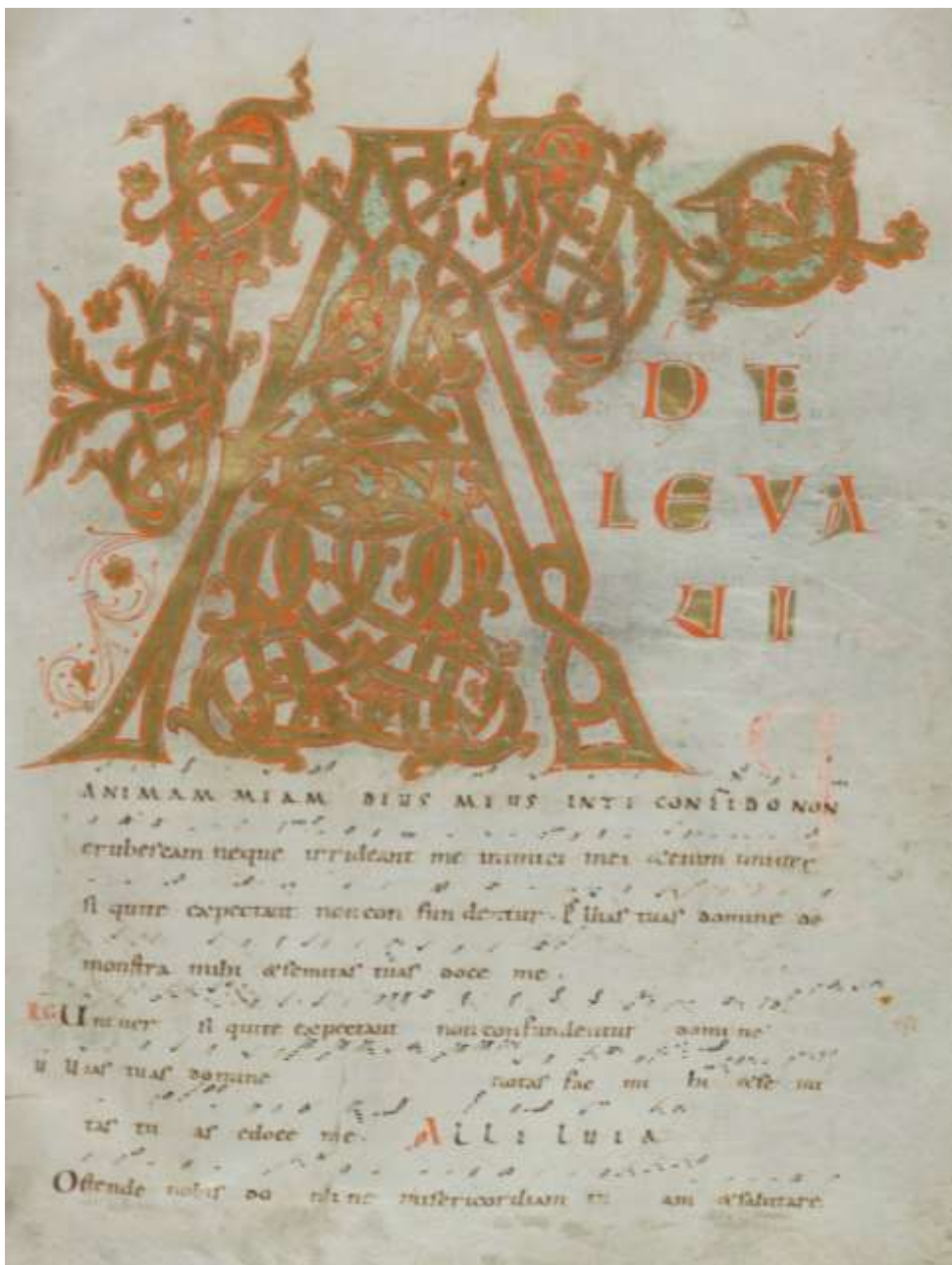
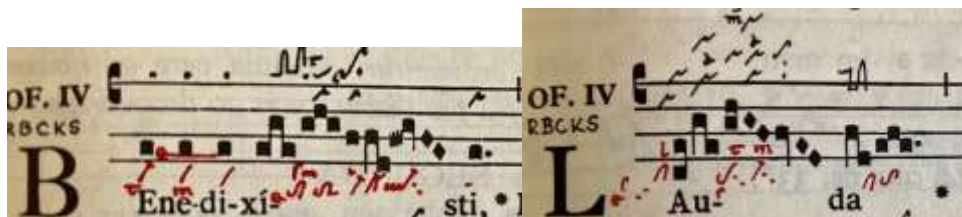


Figure 2 Saint Gall 339

First of all, the context is, of course, the text: syllable, word and phrase. The differentiated quality of the syllables of a word (pre-tonic, accent, post-tonic and final) is fundamental rhythmic information; the notations usually assume the interpreter's intimate knowledge of it.

The context is also the placement within the piece. For example, we have known for a long time that the nuances referring to cadential interpretational "lengthenings" were easily neglected by the scribes.¹¹

More precisely, one must also consider the positioning of the glyph in the concrete development of the melody. It is notable that divergences in the writing between the manuscripts of Laon and Saint-Gall show up clearly in the musical treatment of important words. The divergence of writing shows the care that the two scribes consciously gave to the declamation of this word, rather than any notable difference of interpretation. (eg. *Benedixisti* GT 23, *Lauda* GT 221).



The study of context also includes the musical and liturgical genre of the piece: there are glyphs and letters that only appear in the Offertories; others only appear in the verses of Offertories or Alleluias; similarly for the style of the piece (quasi-syllabic, ornamented, melismatic) and the technique of composition. Thus, in the usual forms of melody types and in intensely

¹¹ E. CARDINE, *Sémiologie grégorienne*, Solesmes 1970 p. 11

centonized¹² pieces, the additional letters are slightly rarer: the oral tradition is strong. Conversely, when there are differences, the rhythm is made clearer by added letters: also, for the notation of original melodies or of certain passages that are melodically delicate, there are more letters.

Of course, at this level of detail, the context is the manuscript itself. Careful reading of a manuscript, in the order of its folios, reveals certain habits of the copyist. Habits that, by the way, sometimes evolve in a copy that might have taken several months; habits that were sometimes weakened by the intervention of another copyist (reviser or corrector), or by the changing of hand. Two examples that are difficult to explain are given by the manuscript of Mont-Renaud. In the Gradual, the *torculus non-cursive* of a redundant cadence is used only ten times, principally at the start of the manuscript. In the Antiphonary, the letter 'c' used near a *podatus* appears frequently from f° 97 to f° 112, but is absent from almost the whole of the rest of the manuscript.

Additional letters

The manuscript of Einsiedeln 121 (Fig 3 below) gives a remarkable example for the study of the status of additional letters, by virtue of the importance it gives to them.

¹² The concept of centonization was borrowed from literary theory, and first applied to Gregorian chant in 1934 by Dom Paolo Ferretti.

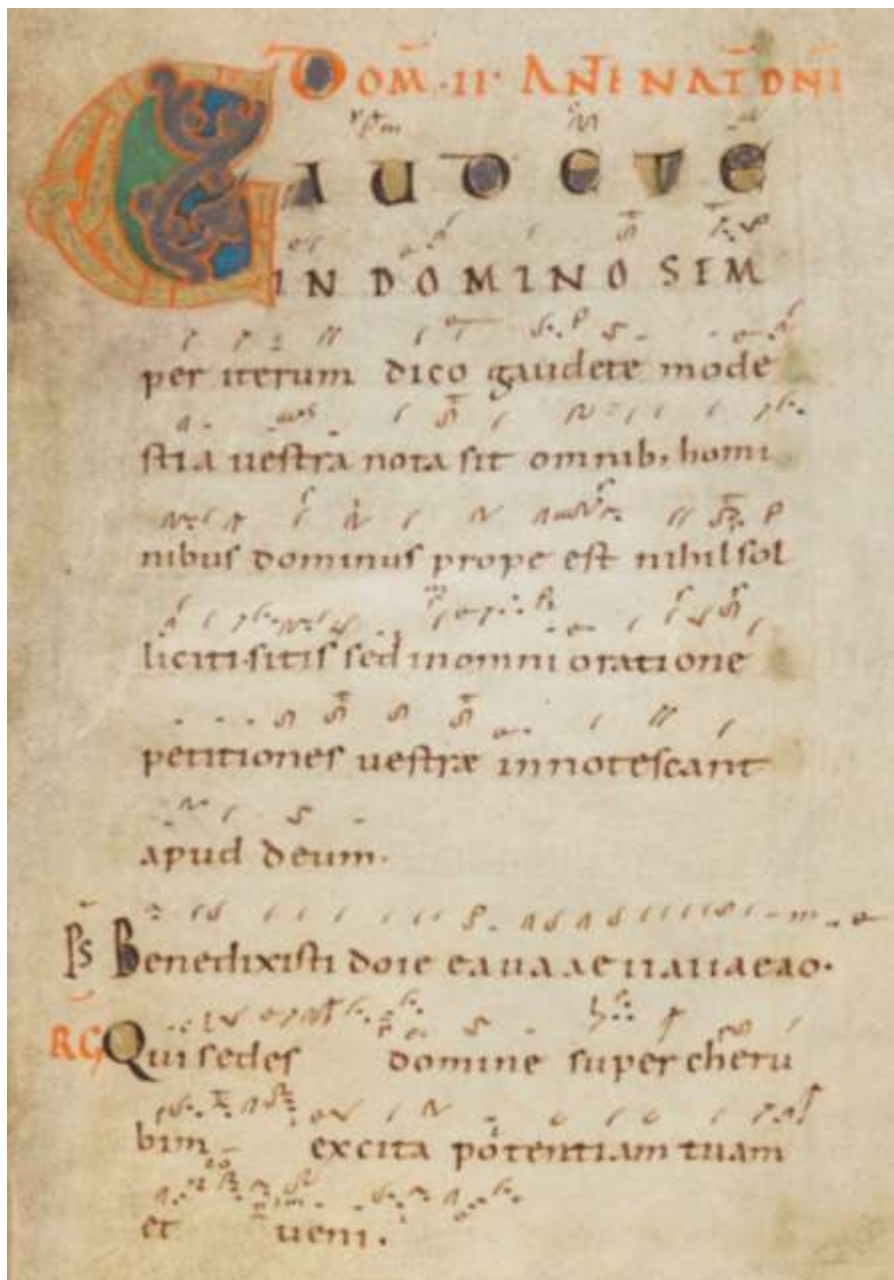


Figure 3 Einsiedeln 121

In the Roman tradition, these letters are considered to be the abbreviation of a word expressing a rhythmic, melodic or expressive nuance. This is very probably their true origin, because we find some of these words in the vocabulary of the first theoreticians (eg. Aurélien de Réomé uses the words *sursum*, *iosum*, *altius* to describe the movement of the melody). Both predate the first neumatic manuscripts. We are therefore far from the indication of an absolute value: the letter is only a means of specifying a glyph — it requires in turn an interpretation.

Careful study has thus shown that while ‘*e*’ (*equaliter*) habitually signifies the melodic unison, it can occasionally designate an interval of a semitone and, more rarely, be applied to the interval of a tone. But ‘*e*’ can also indicate the simple identity of a melodic motif.

The letter ‘*s*’ (*sursum*) clearly designates a high sound, in itself or in relation to what preceded it, or compared to what one might expect by analogy with another passage of the repertoire. But we know that some instances cannot be explained by this melodic reasoning alone. The ‘*s*’ then, would also have an expressive signification, prompting the refinement of the sound that it affects, to set it apart, to accent it in some way, as if it were particularly high. The letter ‘*s*’, essentially melodic, also verges on rhythmic signification. What then can we say about the indications given by rhythmic letters? These are not clear indications, but extremely subtle nuances which escape all quantification.

This reasoning is corroborated by the observation that, in the manuscript of Einsiedeln 121, the letters were not all written in at the same time (eg. Intonation of *Confirma hoc*; Fig 4 below).¹³

¹³ Cf. *Graduale Triplex* (GT), p. 255

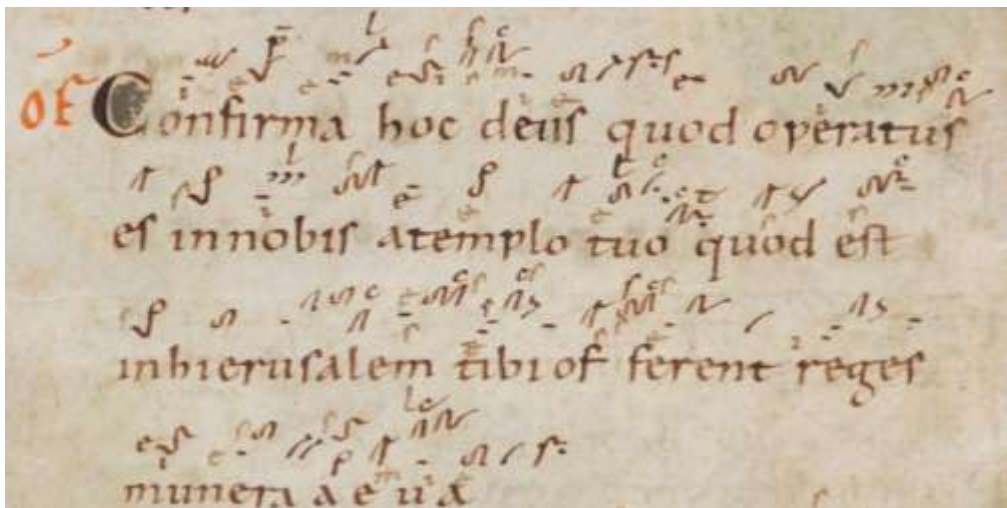


Figure 4 *Confirma hoc* (Einsiedeln 121)

The choirmaster who possessed the manuscript must have corrected his notation in some way year by year, depending on the performance given by the singers of his community, perhaps also depending on the evolution of his own sensitivity. The result is this matchless richness of melodic, rhythmic and expressive annotations. From year to year, the sung work itself specifies its own transcription on the parchment.

Liquescence

Modern editions of Gregorian chant position the neumes to the *sofegic* grille of the staff. In this way they avoid the problem linked to liquescence. Even when they don't, we mostly know how to resolve the uncertainty of a liquescent glyph by comparing it to a clear context either in the same manuscript or with another manuscript. Mediæval cantors didn't have these possibilities. It was from their daily experience of the repertoire, through a particular sensitivity to the sonorities of the sung Latin words, that the melodic and rhythmic nuances were spontaneously born, which the scribes then wrote down in an ambiguous manner. Neumatic notation here affirms

its superiority over the *solfege* notations that followed: the subtlety of its design can translate a sounding reality which can't necessarily be reduced to what we call a "note". The contours of syllabic articulation, which concern their melody, rhythm and timbre are essentially vague. Use of liquescence as a musical procedure, also appears particularly eloquently in certain glyphs (ex. Laon 239: *Gaudete*, f° 11, *Invocabit*, f° 40).¹⁴

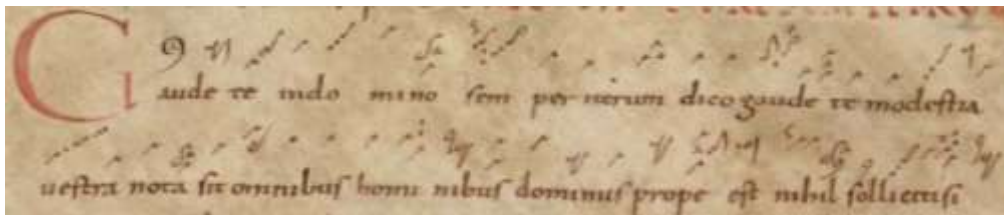


Figure 5 *Gaudete* f° 11 - Laon 239

The start of the neume

An analogous phenomenon is found at the start of the neume, which sometimes appears indistinct. The first element, of a fragile-sounding quality and of undecided melodic identity, disappears in certain glyphs. Here again, the correct nuance of execution wouldn't have caused difficulty for those who sang within the oral tradition: it was a living given. But it is remarkable to observe that certain schools of writing developed a special drawing for this first element of the neume. A special drawing which doesn't make clear its particular melodic and rhythmic nature, but which signals the proper character of the intonation.

Should one deduce that the absence of this special sign in a system of notation supposes the absence of the corresponding nuance in the sung repertoire? One must probably respond in the negative. The absence of this special sign can simply show that this nuance was executed without hesitation by

¹⁴ GT p. 21

contemporary cantors, or that it wasn't one of the fundamental points of interest to the scribe, or perhaps that the scribe hadn't succeeded in developing a special sign... In this case, one is forced to admit that the initial parts of certain neumes in this writing should be considered attentively. Either the first sound, even feeble, was notated as a normal note, or on the contrary, it wasn't notated at all but the habit was to "do a little something".

The first palæo-Frankish¹⁵ writings

One cannot talk today about the writing down of the Frankish-Roman repertoire without respectfully evoking the research of Mr Kenneth Levy on the origin of neumes and the palæo-Frankish writings.¹⁶ Since the work of Jammers, one has easily acquired the habit of referring to palæo-Frankish writing in the singular. Yet, the dates of the fragments we have access to — there is no complete manuscript notated in "palæo-Frankish" — are spread over four centuries, which is enormous for a school of writing; and the places of its use cover a considerable geoglyphal area. A quick examination shows that, in what we call "the palæo-Frankish notation", there are *two* very different realities: the old and the new, which constitute two distinct systems, each irreducible to the other. What we call the new palæo-Frankish, the more recent, is in reality reducible to the well-known systems *in campo aperto* (Saint-Gallian, Breton et French).

On the other hand, the first palæo-Frankish glyphs are based on another conception of the drawing of the neume. The melodic movement is drawn, but the number of its successive moments, or notes, is not clarified. This way of writing, with fewer symbols, seriously ambiguous, has every chance of being properly archaic. Even if we never find a complete neumed chant book in this first palæo-Frankish notation, the existence of simple fragments proves

¹⁵ palæo- a prefix meaning 'of ancient times'.

¹⁶ K. Levy, "On the origin of neumes", *Early History of Music* 7 (1987), p. 59

that there had been evolution and progress in the technique of neume notation.

SOLFEGIC WRITING

With solfegic writing, the viewpoint changed completely, to become radically conventional. The interest of the scribes here, strongly suggested by the theoreticians, is on identifying the notes and intervals of the melody. It is a patent fact that these writings almost completely neglect the rhythmical nuances. The technique is based on two previously independent elements: the lines, a heritage of the parchment ruler, materialising in a continual scale; and the clefs, vestiges of solfegic letters, formalising the structure of this scale. These two elements constitute a theorisation and play the role of a filter with regard to the musical reality. With this writing system the scribe is confronted with several dilemmas:

- There is a note or there is not a note
- The note is on a line or between two lines
- Between two adjacent notes, there is a tone or a semitone

Yet the first solfegic manuscripts are evidence of practices tending to escape from these aporias.¹⁷ In this way, the manuscript Bénévent 34, often resorts to a vertical translation of a fragment of melody to translate the mobility of a note, for example, the intonation of *Laetare* f^o 89v (Fig 6 below).¹⁸

¹⁷ Conundrum or state of puzzlement.

¹⁸ Cf. *Graduale Triplex* (GT), p. 108

I tunc ad condempnacionem multorum anime domini ut nunc go.
 et condempnacionem bonorum amplus noluit peccare se.
 Dominice.
 et nunc iherosolima & conuincam iherosolima.
 faciat omnes qui diligunt eam & exhereditat eam
 equis in eam & asinus in eam & asinus & asinus in eam
 ab ubi bus consolacionis ut iherosolima. **P.** **L** et nunc sum iherosolima
 que dicatur sicut michi in domum domini iherosolima. **Gr.**
L et nunc sum iherosolima que dicatur sicut michi
 in domum domini iherosolima. **P.** **L** et nunc sum iherosolima
 in iherosolima et abundans

Figure 6
Laetare f° 89v -
Bénévant 34

The manuscript Paris B.N. lat. 776 (from Albi), only has one line, like many Aquitanian mss. It always indicates the same note, most often linked to the mode of the piece. But this unique line doesn't necessarily imply a diatonic scale with the familiar fixed semitones (Communion *Scapulis*, f° 36v).



Figure 7 *Scapulis* f° 36v - Paris B.N. lat. 776

It is true that most of the Gregorian melodies are of diatonic essence. Yet the repertoire contains some delimited incises, where all the solfegic manuscripts suddenly diverge, whereas the neumatic manuscripts stay in agreement with each other. This probably means non-diatonic passages, which the first solfegic notations were incapable of rendering perfectly (eg. Intonation of the Offertory *Confirma hoc*, see fig. 4 above).

CONCLUSION

This overview shows an awareness of the limits of the musical writing of the Gregorian repertoire and allows us to enter into a familiarity with the first scribes, witnesses of the living oral tradition. Put to good use by a competent musician, these considerations can help him in perfecting his vocal interpretation, rendering it more supple. Far from distracting from the study of semiology and of an objective research into interpretation, these considerations send one back to them. The mediæval neumes are the only vestiges that we retain of the ancient melodies. If the main principles of their composition were discovered by those who patiently scrutinised the manuscripts, it is by the same path that one will also elucidate the details that still escape us. Without doubt, this is the signification when Dom Jean Claire said, indicating the manuscripts of the *Scriptorium* at Solesmes:

“What we are looking for is somewhere here”.

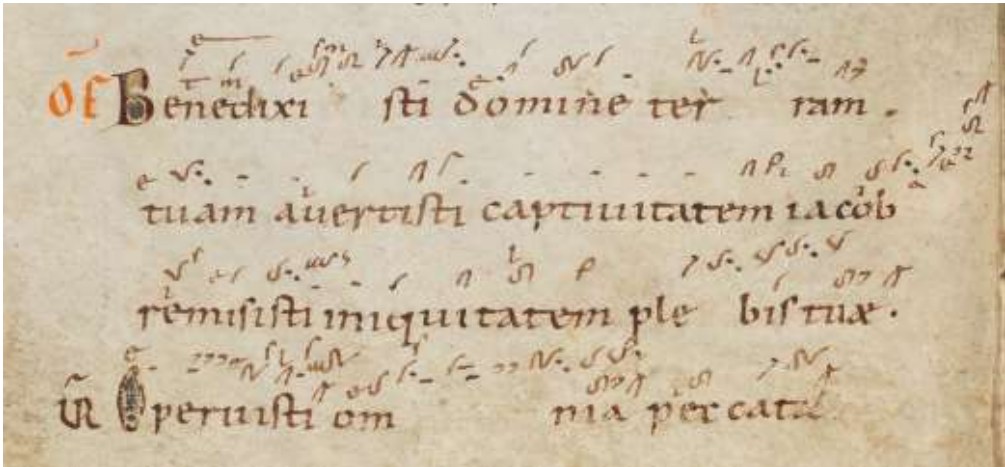
Translator's note:

Daniel Saulnier OSB was both a remarkable musicologist and a fine musician. These are not synonymous! Solesmes was blessed with a long line of such exceptional monks. This article was written for another of them, Dom Jean Claire OSB, for his 75th birthday, the 50th anniversary of his monastic profession and his 25 years as *Maître de chœur* at Solesmes. It formed part of a collection of essays for a book entitled *Requientes modos musicos* (Solesmes 1995). Thirty of the most eminent *Grégorianistes* came together in this book to offer thanks and homage to Dom Claire with a specialist article on either the liturgy, the chant or more personal recollections.

As one might expect from such a work, the original French is destined above all for connoisseurs and scholars. Daniel Saulnier, however, refers to it as a *tour d’horizon* and therefore, whilst remaining faithful to his careful choice of words, I have clarified the text in a few places to make his overview of a complex subject as clear as possible, within the confines of a respectful “version”. In this, I have been blessed with the generous help and advice of gifted friends, notably Fr Paul Dean, Dr Reuben Thomas and the Trustees of Schola Gregoriana. Any remaining imperfections are entirely my own.

The original has no illustrations, just mss. references. We are privileged today to be able to add these from the comfort of our own homes. This was certainly not the case when I first received the book when it was published, during my time as organist of Solesmes in 1995.

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Offertory 'Benedixisti' f°8, Einsiedeln 121

Douai Chant Festival May 2024

From the Director

Chant courses at Douai have been a feature of the work of *Schola Gregoriana* (SG) for several years and have always proved to be popular and successful. This year was no exception and we were faced with some very difficult pieces of Chant. The challenge was, therefore, even greater than usual.



The Ferial Mass on the 29th May gave us the opportunity to sing the proper chants for the First Sunday after Pentecost, which are rarely sung outside monastic communities, as they are always trumped by the chants for Trinity Sunday. We also took the opportunity to sing some of the supplementary Mass Ordinary pieces, again less often used.



The liturgical focus of our stay was celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi together. 1st Vespers was one of the most beautifully sung that I can remember in my time with SG. Singing the Office always presents the problem of chanting the psalms with fluidity and expression, so demanding of a group that doesn't do this every day. The Magnificat is, of course, the high point of Vespers and the Antiphon *O sacrum convivium* (Mode 5) is one of the most beautiful and ornate of the year. Everyone rose to the occasion wonderfully!

On Thursday morning, Mass of Corpus Christi offered the delights of exceptional chants, the Introit, *Cibavit eos* (Mode 2), the Alleluia, *Caro mea* (Mode 7) and the ensuing Sequence, *Lauda Sion* (Mode 7). With the sublime text of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the flowing chant with its very demanding tessitura, is one of the great privileges of the repertoire. Modus septimus - angelicus!

Taken as a whole, we sang pieces in all the modes of the Gregorian Octoechos, reflecting on some aspects of modal sentiment and the particular musical aesthetics of each mode. This is a subject on which I hope we will build in our future work together.

“... all the modes of the Gregorian Octoechos ...”

All the participants are to be thanked most warmly for their enthusiastic participation and their generosity of spirit, both of which made our time together so enriching - spiritually, socially and musically.

Special thanks should go to Fr. Thomas Crean OP for kindly agreeing to be our Celebrant at short notice. Thanks also must go to our servers, who made the liturgies run so seamlessly.

Heartfelt thanks should also go to the Trustees of *Schola Gregoriana*, who worked so hard to organise this marvellous event, without whose dedication nothing would have been possible.

Iain Simcock

From a 'newcomer'

I attended the Chant Festival at Douai in May 2024, thanks to a friend who sent me the flyer. I've been singing Gregorian Chant regularly since 2020 but was unfamiliar with Schola Gregoriana. However, I later realised I'd been listening to the Schola via various playlists and YouTube videos for many years!



Iain Simcock was to lead the course. After reading his biography, I was impressed by his experience, particularly at Solesmes and Le Barroux. As someone who has chanted in parish settings of varying standards, I was eager to learn how the chant might begin to approach the levels I'd heard it reach in French monasteries.

I wasn't sure what to expect. Would this be a beginner's crash course or a masterclass for experienced singers? Would we be chanting for the traditional or reformed liturgy? I was pleased to find the course suited a range of experience levels, and private Masses and Vespers were organised according to the traditional books.

The tuition turned out to be of a high standard, comparable to that of a music college. Iain's knowledge and expertise were evident. This wasn't just about hitting the right notes and pronunciations—it was about musicality, movement, shape, line, phrasing, ensemble, and above all, moving beyond the notes on the page.

“... above all,
moving beyond the
notes on the page ...”

One of the many highlights of the course was Iain's lecture on the Gregorian modes and the great depth to be found in their individual characters. This was an intriguing side to the chant I was less familiar with, but one that informs so much of how one should approach the chant.

I left the course feeling inspired and eager for more, but also a bit saddened at the prospect of returning to environments where the chant is unappreciated, or where a mechanical and unmusical approach often prevails.

In summary, the Chant Festival at Douai was an enriching experience. Over the course of two days, the chant was elevated, becoming much more refined and informed, which, in turn, elevated the liturgy with greater reverence and beauty. The Vespers and Mass of Corpus Christi were most moving.

I'm grateful to all those involved in organising the event and am eager for the next one.

Anthony O' Malley



Photo: Jonathan Such

Thank you Philip Duffy!

*We belatedly announce, with great gratitude and a measure of sadness, the retirement of **Philip Duffy** from the role of Associate Director and Regional Director (North) of Schola.*

From Jeremy White, Trustee and ex-Director

I first knew Philip when I was a treble in the newly-formed choir of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool, just before his departure for music college. He was already a huge asset in any formation, having a very fine voice and being able to sing alto, tenor or baritone. By the time he'd graduated and returned, it was as our new choirmaster, his predecessor and the founder of the choir, Christopher Symons, having found it impossible to continue under the new liturgical arrangements. And so it was that Philip was responsible quite shortly afterwards for the music at the grand dedication and opening of the Cathedral in 1966, where he continued for several decades to maintain an exceptional standard of repertoire and execution. He helped me to prepare for my Oxford auditions, and when I was fortunate enough to gain a Choral Scholarship at Christ Church under Simon Preston, I found that the standards at that legendary establishment, high as they were, in no way overshadowed my earlier experiences at Liverpool.

“... already a huge asset ...”

Philip always seemed, and seems, to have boundless energy coupled with a very willing spirit – for many years he ran his own record programme on Radio Merseyside alongside all his other activities as a kingpin in the busy Liverpool music world, and in due course after several years our paths crossed again, he, like me, having been drawn to Mary's work and been recruited as a cantor for various projects at home and abroad. Next he allowed me to strong-arm

him into assisting as a conductor and generally useful musical presence at Spode Music Week, an annual Catholic residential liturgical/general music course which has just celebrated its 70th anniversary; his invaluable presence continued with unstinting energy for some twenty years till there too we had to accept his need to retire.

I first worked with Mary as a cantor in 1981, and was able additionally to assist unofficially in a number of other capacities, until in 2004 Mary, realising her energies were dwindling,

asked me to become her official Assistant Director. I took over several projects when she was too unwell to take the reins herself, and in due course, when she died in 2008, I became the Director. One of my first actions was to persuade Philip to be my Associate Director – he'd been one of my first teachers in the chant and in music generally, and it was a joy to have him at my side, half assisting and half mentoring. He was a tower of strength through my five years of Directorship, when we pulled off three major concert/recording projects (where his ability politely but firmly to keep certain elderly ladies who didn't understand the disciplines of the recording studio in check was invaluable) as well as innumerable smaller events, and all the time he kept up his activities on behalf of the Schola, including a regular workshop at Askrigg and a notable St Cuthbert celebration in Durham.

We wish Philip every happiness in his retirement, though it appears he is not taking much in the way of a rest, but now investing his limitless time and



energy into a continuous series of Bach Cantatas and Passions in and around the area with The Liverpool Bach Collective. I have managed to attend one or two, and I heartily recommend anyone in the area to do so too: see their programme at <https://www.liverpoolbach.com/>.

Jeremy White

Mary's Tombstone

Tucked away in a delightful corner of countryside south-east of Oxford is the architectural jewel of **St Birinus** church, Dorchester on Thames. And in one beautiful peaceful corner of the graveyard may be found the grave of our founder, Mary Berry. It was the privilege of a group of Associates to sing the solemn Salve Regina as part of a series of events to mark her centenary in 2017 – we mention it again now, as we have used the graphic on her tombstone as the header of this issue.

“Honoured by Queen and Pope” – and, we have no doubt, by the Lord also. *Requiescat in pace...*



Photo: Alastair Tocher

Hail to the Chief!

Julian Berkeley has been our Chairman for many years, valiantly and expertly steering our ship through all the turbulent waters and rocky hazards that have been thrown our way. Sadly, the time has come when he feels he wishes to relinquish this role.

The Trustees reluctantly must of course accept his wishes, but remain concerned at the prospect of losing the particular qualities that Julian has brought to this role. Accordingly, the Trustees have divided the Chair role into two; Alan Gardner will take on the co-ordination aspect as the new Chair, whilst Julian has been asked if he will accept a new role of 'President', so that the qualities he brings to the Schola can be retained. Julian has kindly agreed to this arrangement, has made clear his undiminished commitment to the Schola's aims, and remains a full Trustee.

We take this opportunity to give our heartfelt thanks to Julian for all his hard work over the years – and to welcome him as the first President of the Schola!



Forthcoming Dates and Events

Please *always* keep checking our website, which will inevitably be more up-to-date than the last issue of the journal!



For more information on each of the below, please see our website: to book a place;

info@scholagregoriana.org

St Mary's Chislehurst week beginning 7 Oct

Not an 'SG event', but may well be of interest to Associates; a programme of Chant training one evening a week, St Mary's Chislehurst, BR7 5PL. Use *these* details: Chris Richardson; cp.richardson@virginmedia.com; 07771 985959

Wimbledon Chant Day Saturday 12 Oct

At the lovely church of the Sacred Heart, Edge Hill, Wimbledon, London, SW19 4LU, 10:45 – c.6pm

Culminating in singing First Vespers of the 28th Sunday per annum.

A.L.L. Open Meeting and AGM Saturday 26 Oct

An event organised by the Association for Latin Liturgy (with similar-but-not-identical aims to ourselves), at Blackfriars, St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LY; use *this* website: <https://latin-liturgy.org/meetings>

Requiem Haverstock Hill Saturday 2 Nov

The *beautiful* music of the **Requiem Mass**, preceded by rehearsal, for **All Souls** and for **deceased Benefactors, Associates** and **Friends** of the Schola, St Dominic's Rosary Shrine, London NW5 4LB, 11am – c.3:30pm; Dominican Rite

Evening workshops London Spring 2025

Very often we are asked when these workshops will resume – and it has been a continual frustration to us that we have been unable to provide this help to singers. *Laus Deo*, that is going to change! **Jeremy White** is shortly to retire from the ROH, and is willing to take this on – we're *most* grateful to him!

SCHOLA INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Directors of the Schola Gregoriana

Director: Iain Simcock - Iain.Simcock@scholagregoriana.org

Associate Directors: Jeremy White, Matthew Ward, Peter Wilton, Alan Henderson

Please make contact with them, initially using info@scholagregoriana.org

Trustees

Julian Berkeley (President, Website), Julian Burling (Legal Advisor), Alan Gardner (Chairman, Journal Editor), Bernard Marriott (Secretary & Treasurer), Jeremy White (Membership Secretary)

Membership Secretary, Subscriptions, and General Enquiries

jeremy.white@scholagregoriana.org

Web Site, Email Addresses, Facebook

Email for enquiries: info@scholagregoriana.org

Web site: www.scholagregoriana.org

<https://m.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Schola-Gregoriana-of-Cambridge-170532176336149/>

Hon Treasurer: Bernard Marriott

Registered Address: 47 Western Park Road, Leicester LE3 6HQ

Registered Charity No: 287319

Chant workshops check list

If you think a workshop in your parish / area might be fruitful, do please get in touch.

If you are thinking of *arranging* such an event, a check list is available. The hardest part 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.

Email info@scholagregoriana.org

Notification of future activities and material for future issues are always welcome from all Associates – please send to:

info@scholagregoriana.org

