

The Annual Award to a Chorister of St Paul's Cathedral School

The first donation by the Company to St. Paul's for a Chorister was in 2000, and the 15th year of this award provides an opportunity to explain a little more about it.

St. Paul's Cathedral School has a long history; it was almost certainly founded in the seventh century, at the same time as the Diocese of London, but no details are known about it until the twelfth century when the Bishop of London, Richard de Belmeis, refounded it for the choristers. The boys were in the charge of the almoner who, as well as looking after them, was responsible for their education. Over the centuries the school suffered various changes of location, and was even closed for several decades in the late 18th century when there were insufficient funds to support the choristers; they

were put out onto the streets and left to fend for themselves but were still expected to perform their choral duties! Fortunately matters improved and a new home for the boys was found in the early 1800s. The current purpose-built school building in New Change dates from 1965.



Hector Revill, the Company's present chorister

The School today has 27 full choristers plus 6 probationers, all aged between 9 and 13, and all of whom board at the School. The regular schedule for the boys is an exacting one, with rehearsals before and after school on four weekdays and two rehearsals on a Saturday. They sing five days a week with the addition of Mattins and Eucharist on Sunday morning, and at Christmas they have additional performances and may sing to as many as 20,000 people throughout December. In addition there are concerts and broadcasts outside the usual Cathedral duties, so that along with their educational classes the boys are kept very busy during their time at the School.

It costs some £14,000 per year for the Chapter of St Paul's to educate a chorister, and their families need to find an additional £8,000 per year for the school to house them, but many of the boys receive a Chorister Trust means-tested bursary towards these costs. The Cathedral has set up a scheme, which asks participants to commit to a regular donation for at least 5 years (the typical stay of a boy at the School), and some 15 Livery Companies



Julian Leang, the Company's first chorister (2000)

currently support this scheme along with the Musicians' Company. The donation funds a scholarship rather than a specific named chorister, so unlike many of our other awards there is no element of competition. The Company provides St. Paul's with a silver Company badge and the

Trust nominates a chorister to wear this for their time in the choir as a symbol of the Company's generosity. The Company's donation in 2014 was £5000 and this may be increased in time. Individuals may also join the donation scheme, and the St Paul's website has more details if you are interested in being an individual supporter.

The choristers nominated to wear the Company's badge to date are detailed below, and it is interesting to note that a number are still actively involved with music:

- 2000** Julian Leang – now a teacher at Uppingham School
- 2001** Benjamin Sheen – an accomplished organist, he became a Company Silver Medallist in 2011 and is currently Assistant Organist at St Thomas Fifth Avenue, New York
- 2002/3** Joshua Allen – went on to Forest School, London
- 2004/5** Cem Hurrell – studying Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College, London
- 2006** Freddy Ireland-Rose – current whereabouts not known
- 2007/8** George Raikes – currently on gap year in New York where he is singing in the choir of St. Thomas Fifth Avenue. George has been awarded a place at Jesus College Cambridge to read music under the direction of Mark Williams in September 2015
- 2009-2013** Kevin John – currently a music scholar at King's Canterbury
- 2014** Hector Revill – in year seven with one to go

Look out for our next nominee in a future edition of *Preserve Harmony!*

Liveryman **MARGOT MOUAT**

Photo: Julian Leang

Photo: St Paul's Cathedral School