



# Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir



Newsletter Spring 2016

## Introduction

I am pleased to present the new format FOCC newsletter and I hope you like it. Over the following pages you will find a snapshot of the many things that we do as part of our fundraising and some of the social activities and events we run for the choirs and wider community. There are also articles and features from faces past and present.

Fundraising is the key focus for FOCC and it is increasingly important to help fund choir activities such as the Choir Tour and CD recordings. In the current economic climate it can be a challenge; however, the combination of innovative ideas and a very dedicated team has seen us, as a charity, go from strength to strength.

In the past year our activities have raised over £16,000 generating a surplus, after costs, of £12,447 which is a fantastic result. The disbursements



Where in the world?



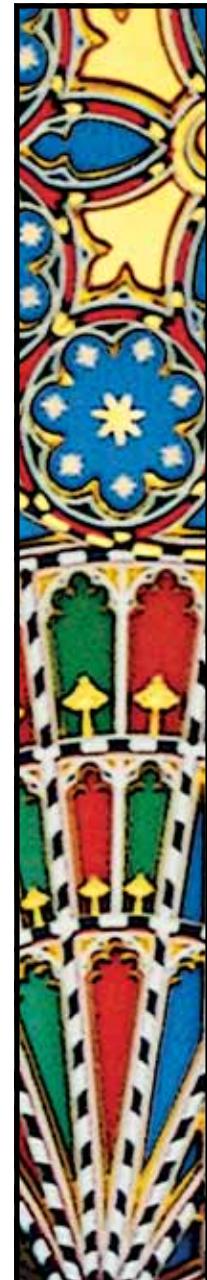
we have made include contributions to: the Choir Tour (£15,000); coach hire for Diocesan Choirs' Festival (£230); choir recruitment leaflets (£419); and new chorister jumpers (£550).

None of this would be possible without the great team of volunteers we have and the wonderful support of the membership and wider cathedral community. The key to successful fundraising is to offer people things that they value and the FOCC community has a fantastic track record of achieving this.

On behalf of the FOCC I would like to thank you all.

Richard Franklin  
Chairman, FOCC

PS - I would very much welcome your feedback on the newsletter and ideas for future content!





## From the Director of Music

Welcome to the new look FOCC newsletter! May I take this opportunity of thanking you most warmly for your support of the FOCC, either by your annual subscription, membership of the 500 Club or by offers of practical help at special events. If you are reading this and are not currently a member, please consider becoming one!



RSCM  
Celebration Day

Since April last year, the Cathedral Choir has been busy with its usual round of weekly services, spiced with some special events. On our first Sunday back after the Easter break, we installed Ethan Grimwood as the new Head Chorister. His predecessor, Sol Franklin, had been installed as Head Chorister in January and stood aside as Head Chorister Emeritus. I put some questions to both of them recently - you can read their responses later in this publication.

On Sunday May 10 we travelled the short distance to Barrow to sing Evensong in the delightful church there. We try to sing once a term in a church somewhere in the Diocese. As I write, we're booked up until the Summer of 2017!

The Choristers covered themselves with glory at a performance of Britten's

War Requiem with the Bury Bach Choir, as part of the Bury Festival. They earned many plaudits for their wonderful sound. I pointed out to the kind people who made these remarks that the Choristers always made that sort of sound; it was just that these kind people hadn't heard them before! I am very pleased that the FOCC has agreed to fund the publication of new recruitment leaflets for all our choirs and I hope that this will be one of many ways in which we might raise the profile of the choral singing that goes on in the Cathedral.

There has been a flurry of Old Chorister weddings this year: Tim Alderman (who left the choir in 2003) in May, Peter Clayton (2001) in August and Gareth Scourfield-Thomas (2000) in October. Very many congratulations and best wishes to them all! Perhaps I'll be here long enough to welcome Choristers' children to the Cathedral's Music Department.

It was a privilege to provide music for the enthronement of the 11th Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich in June. After a very long interregnum, Bishop Martin Seeley was duly placed in his Episcopal Chair (= cathedra in Latin) at the east end of the Cathedral and a very splendid occasion it was too, with new compositions by Malcolm Archer and yours truly.

It was with a certain sense of alarm as well as sadness that we said farewell to no fewer than seven Choristers at the end of the choir's year in July. I was much relieved therefore when the remaining singers got off to an excellent start at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term. This was in no small measure helped by the

arrival of the ex-Head Chorister at Rochester Cathedral, Henry Skillern. Henry's family has relocated to Bury St Edmunds and, knowing he had to leave the Rochester choir at the end of Year 8, Henry's choirmaster got in touch to ask if there might be a place for him here. The answer was: of course! One of the major advantages in not being tied to a Choir School is this ability to be flexible in the number of singers we can accept at any one time. (There are major disadvantages too, but they can wait for another occasion). Henry had met his new Chorister friends on the very enjoyable choir camp at the end of August and fitted in perfectly. Thank you, Henry for joining us and to your parents for all your support. Congratulations to Rafe Elliss and Tom Upton on their appointment as Head and Deputy Head Choristers respectively.

The RSCM held its annual Celebration Day here in the Cathedral on October 3. This was combined with the annual Diocesan Choirs' Festival so, including the Cathedral Choir, around 200 singers made a very splendid sound in a service celebrating the sealing of the Magna Carta in 1215. The RSCM took the opportunity of bestowing honorary awards upon some eminent church musicians.

The term's parish visit took place on October 11, when we were warmly



Bishop  
Martin Seeley

received at Fornham All Saints and an excellent tea was enjoyed by all after the service.

It was very good to get the Fauré Requiem back into the repertoire. The choir gave a moving rendition of it on 1 November at a service for All Souls' Day.

Looking ahead, in 2016 we have much to look forward to: the installation of the new Bishop of Dunwich; the biennial Choir Tour after Easter - this time to Perugia, Italy; participation in the Bury Festival in May and celebrating the 90th birthday of HM the Queen, Deo volente.

Again, thank you for your support of the FOCC which in turn offers much support to the Cathedral's music making. Happy reading!

Best wishes,

James Thomas





# Moves

## Since January 2015

**Salvete:** William Lowden; Henry Skillern; Tudor Weyers (all September)

**Valete:** Harry Mayall (January 2015); Henry Alexander; James Bradley; Oliver Cannon; Sol Franklin; Ethan Grimwood; Drew Stark; Evan Sykes (all July).

## 10 Questions

The Director of Music asked two former Head Choristers ten questions. Here are their responses:

**1. How did you initially become involved with the Cathedral Choir?**

**Ethan:** The director of music came into my school in year 3. He auditioned us to see who would be good enough to become a Colt. It then led on from there.

**Sol:** I was auditioned at my old school in year 3 to become a Colt by Mr Thomas.

**2. For how long were you a chorister?**

**Ethan:** Almost six years.

**Sol:** Five Years.

**3. What did you enjoy most about singing in the Cathedral Choir?**

**Ethan:** The experiences that it gave me such as the tours and the famous people I have met.

**Sol:** The vast repertoire we sang and all the social events around the year.

**4. What have you learned as a result of being a Chorister?**

**Ethan:** Being a chorister has taught me to be more confident.

**Sol:** I have learned how to sing properly and it has dramatically improved my music theory as a whole.

**5. Are there any memorable moments that you could share with us?**

**Ethan:** Probably singing for the Queen.

**Sol:** Being made up as a chorister in the Sunday Eucharist service.

**6. What were the highs and lows?**

**Ethan:** The highlight of being a chorister would be the services and concerts around Christmas time. A low would be finishing late one evening and remembering a piece of homework that needed to be in by the next morning.

**Sol:** The tours we went on were great and I always looked forward to choir outward bound each summer. My favourite tour highlight was singing in a chapel down a salt mine in Poland. The acoustics in the mine were amazing. As for lows, occasionally some of the Sundays could be quite tiring, especially when there were services that were longer than usual.

**7. Do you have a favourite piece of music from your time as a Chorister?**



Ethan: Either the 'War Requiem' by Benjamin Britten or 'Let all mortal flesh keep silence' by Edward Bairstow.

Sol: 'I Was Glad' by Hubert Parry. Allegri's 'Miserere' was also fun to sing.

8. After you left the choir, did you take up anything new to fill your time?

Ethan: No. I still am busy revising for GCSEs.

Sol: Not as of yet, I am using the time to focus on my school work in my GCSE year.

9. Are you still singing?

Ethan: Yes. I sing in the St Cecilia Chorale and the school choir.

Sol: I still sing at school and in the St Cecilia Chorale at the Cathedral.



10. What would you say to current members of the Colts Choir who were considering auditioning to become a Probationer and then ultimately a Chorister?

Ethan: I would tell them to take the opportunities that they have laid before them as a chorister.

Sol: Don't hold back!



## FOCC Family Bike Ride



In June we had the Family Bike Ride on the forest trails at High Lodge Brandon. We were greeted by a lovely summer's day and 24 boys, girls and parents had fun cycling the various challenging trails covering up to a very respectable 28km.

It is always a great fun day and everybody is welcome... although I'm not sure Nick can fit many more bikes on the truck!





## Peter Wood

Peter Wood was christened in the cathedral 90 years ago and is still a regular member of the congregation. As his family moved to 47 Cornfield Road, he became a choirboy at St John's Church where Mr Pamment was organist and remembers singing '*Blessed be the God and Father*' as a treble.

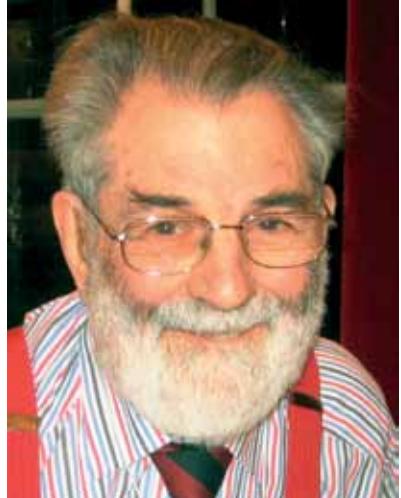
He attended the Silver Jubilee School (now King Edward's) and it was here that he began his life-long interest in chess. He was West Suffolk Junior Champion in 1940 and played for the county in Cambridge.

During the war he served with the Grenadier Guards in Palestine and when he was demobbed initially resumed his work at the outfitters, Aubyn Davies, before becoming a Design Draftsman at Robert Boby Engineering and then Barber Greene's.



Peter on board  
'Minty' at the  
Magna Carta  
Pageant 1959

Peter joined the Cathedral Choir as a bass in 1950 and sang Walmisley in D minor for his audition with the organist, Percy Hallam. There were 16 men and about 30 boys at that time and they sang Matins at 10.45 and



Evensong at 6.30 every Sunday with a Sung Eucharist once a month.

Peter remembers Vaughan Williams being at the Diocesan Choirs' Festival in Ipswich in 1950 and Benjamin Britten visiting when he wrote the fanfare for the Magna Carta Pageant in 1959 – Peter was a baron and had to learn to ride a horse (Minty) for the part! He has also met Heathcote Statham, Harold Darke, Francis Jackson and Herbert Howells.

At the suggestion of Fred Oxley (Director of Music 1958-84) Peter established the Choir Club for choristers (boys and later girls) which ran every Saturday night in the Abbot Anselm Room (up the metal stairs opposite the Cathedral office). Boys played cricket and football against St Mary's and Newmarket. He was a founder member and first treasurer of FOCC and looked after the finances of the early choir tours.

Although he retired from singing in 1982, until very recently he still distributed choristers' pay and is our link with the Federation of Old Cathedral Choristers Association.

On his 90th birthday he was given an engraved plate to mark his long service to the choir and was made an Honorary Life Member of FOCC.



Peter Wood receiving his commemorative plate



## 50 Years Ago: January & February 1966

**Harrison Oxley** was Organist and Master of the Choristers, his Assistant was **Wilfred Mothersole** and the Precentor was the **Revd Stanley Clarke**.

**Before Christmas:** 'Under the guidance of our invaluable Peter Wood, the choirboys have just completed delivery of 1,000 circulars, one to every house in our parish, telling people about the choir and its work and urging our need for more boys.'

**Philip Griggs** appointed new Head Chorister

**Choirboys** went to the pantomime '*Tambora and the Singing Crown*' at the Theatre Royal

**Girls' Choir** sang at Hartest in January

**Choir Dinner** was held in the Masonic Hall in February

**Janet Baker** is to sing in Bach's St Matthew Passion in the Cathedral in March

**Harrison Oxley** reflected on his organ recital tour to America (Indianapolis, Kansas, Flint, Denver & New York) the previous summer.

### From the Music List

**Communion Services:** Wood in the Phrygian Mode, Darke in F, Ireland in C, Stanford in C.

**Evensong Canticles:** Ireland in C, Statham in E min, Wilson in C, Ireland in F, Byrd second service, Armstrong in D min, Sumsion in G.

**Anthems:** *Lo, star-led chiefs* (Crotch), *How dear are thy counsels* (Crotch), *Hide not thou thy face* (Farrant), *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels* (Bairstow), *Laudate Deum* (Purcell), *Seek him that maketh the seven stars* (Elgar), *Wash me throughly* (Wesley).



## Old Choristers

### James Garside



James at Ministry of Sound

On leaving school I became a Choral Scholar at St Edmundsbury Cathedral! After which I studied Music at UEA, mostly playing the violin but I also learnt how to conduct. From 2006 I trained at Sandhurst to become an Army Officer. It was a tough and challenging year but a fantastic experience. Following 15 months of training I joined the Royal Anglian Regiment. My Battalion was soon posted to Iraq, during which I commanded an infantry platoon of about 30 soldiers. I left the Army at the rank of Captain in 2012.

Returning to a life outside the Army, I missed having music in my life so I began an MA in Music Business Management at the University of Westminster. This luckily led to an internship at Ministry of Sound and I have since risen through the ranks to become a Product Manager (PM). As the PM I'm in charge of running

a music service called 'LIVE' and we deliver non-stop music through apps and web to an audience around the globe. I lead the innovation, strategy and research & development of the service, keeping us competitive with the fast-moving landscape of digital design.



### Simon Wall

Simon was a chorister at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in 1985 when Harrison Oxley and Paul Trepte were Directors of Music. He became Head Chorister in 1988 and gave a solo recital '*Simon Sings*' in the Cathedral before joining St John's School, Leatherhead. After a year at Portsmouth Cathedral he became a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge.

When he graduated Simon worked as personal assistant to composer John Rutter, whilst often being invited to sing with **The Sixteen**, **The Monteverdi Choir** and **The Gabrieli Consort**. In 2002 he won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London and his career began in earnest.



He now combines the position of Lay Vicar at Westminster Abbey with his busy solo and consort career. In 2015 he returned to the Cathedral as a member of the Tallis Scholars.

Simon Wall

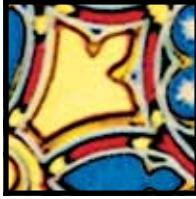


Andrew Porter in *The Times* described him as '*a model of unforced, attractively direct English singing*'. He has performed operas by Monteverdi, Purcell and Charpentier, premiered solos in John Tavener's '*Veil of the Temple*' at the BBC Proms and has made many recordings. Simon has appeared as a soloist for the conductors Laurence Cummings, John Eliot Gardiner, Richard Hickox, Stephen Layton, Paul McCreesh, John Rutter and the late Sir David Willcocks.

## The Year Was 1996

How many can you name?





## The Fellowship of the Mug

The Fellowship of the Mug was launched in 2014 following the introduction of the special edition FOCC mug. There were 144 first edition mugs produced and the proud owners of these constitute the Fellowship of the Mug.



M5 Willow Man  
Clockwise –  
British Museum;  
Mount Snowdon;  
Rwanda tea fields;  
Buckingham Palace;  
New York  
Metropolitan  
Museum.

Front cover: Great  
Wall of China!

The idea behind the Fellowship is to collect photos of the mugs visiting interesting places; mugs with famous people; mugs containing your favourite beverage; or simply mugs featuring anywhere that makes an interesting picture.



Since its inception, the mugs have travelled far and wide and to date the destinations have included Rwanda, South Africa, Canada, Manhattan,



Kevelaer, Santiago de Compostela as well as the top of Mount Snowdon and Buckingham Palace. We have even had a mug make it to the Great Wall of China!



In 2015 a second design was produced which added a further 140 mugs for potential members. The Fellowship remains exclusive though, and given the number of inevitable casualties, the membership becomes more exclusive as each month passes!



If you feel you are missing out on the fun there are only about a dozen of the second design mugs left. (priced at a very reasonable £5.00 each +p&p!)

[www.facebook.com/FellowshipoftheMug](https://www.facebook.com/FellowshipoftheMug)

## Events



The annual FOCC quiz took place in February with 13 teams of eight competing for the coveted trophy. David Butcher, from the BBC, again provided a very entertaining quiz and at the final tally *Thinker Failure Solver Pass* were declared the winners.

The 4th July saw a great party atmosphere at the Barn Dance, a joint event held with Bury Abbey Rotary Club. It was a warm summer's evening but past chorister parent, Trevor Smith, got everybody dancing and a very convivial evening was had by all.



At the end of the summer term we held the annual barbecue. On this occasion our run of good weather faltered, however, David Cockram, Chair of the Friends, kindly offered the use of the Friends' marquee and

this worked perfectly. It proved a very enjoyable get-together and fitting send off for seven of the choristers.



October saw the return of Starry Night, FOCC's answer to *Britain's Got talent!* A packed house at the Unitarian enjoyed a wonderfully eclectic programme featuring music and entertainment from our very talented community. It proved another very memorable evening and one of our most successful fundraisers.



To dance off the winter blues, FOCC held a ceilidh in January; another joint initiative, this time with the Suffolk Law Advice Centre. The event was held at the wonderful Haughley Park Barn which was generously offered to us free of charge. It proved another great evening with a fantastic FOCC team that ably took on the task of preparing a warming two course meal for 100 covers!



## From the Back Row

### Chris Movley

It all started in 1954 when I joined the choir at Christ Church Harrogate as a probationer, my father previously having been a chorister at St Peter's Harrogate and before him my grandfather a chorister at Leeds Parish Church in around 1898 not long before Dr Edward Bairstow was organist there.



Chris and his younger brother

When my voice changed I sang in 'the back row' first as an alto then progressing via tenor to bass.

It was soon time to give all this up and leave home to study Applied Chemistry at the University of Salford. There was not much time for singing now and bell ringing became my favourite pastime joining the Manchester University Guild ("The MUGS!").

Jane and I married soon after graduation and we settled for a few years in Baildon near Bradford while my working life started in the rapidly changing Gas Industry.

A career move brought us South in 1976 and Jane, Victoria and I arrived

in Bury St Edmunds on Friday 26th March 1976, and we moved into a small cottage at the Southern end of Guildhall Street on the following Monday.

The Norman Tower was undergoing major restoration at the time and was shrouded in scaffolding, the bells were at the foundry being re-tuned before re-hanging, so there was limited local bell ringing opportunity and a return to singing was the obvious thing to do.

On 18th April 1976 (Palm Sunday) having spoken to the Precentor (Michael Booker) I was auditioned by Fred Oxley with a view to joining the Cathedral Choir. Fred accepted me as an Alto and asked if I could join them on the planned week in residence at York Minster beginning on Easter Monday – as we had just relocated from Yorkshire I declined this invitation and joined the choir at the start of the summer term!

Following nearly ten years during which Victoria also sang as a treble, another career move was upon us and during the early part of Paul Trepte's tenure as Director of Music in 1985 I left to join BP Exploration in Aberdeen.

On arrival in Aberdeen I became an alto Lay Clerk at the Episcopal Cathedral (St Andrews). Jane was also able to continue her career and became a ward sister in the surgical unit at The St John Hospital.

Following the Piper Alpha disaster there was a requirement for industry specialists to be recruited to regulate safety in the offshore oil and gas



industry and yet another career move to London resulted in our relocation to Guildford.

Daily commuting permitted me to be only a weekend Alto Deputy Lay Clerk at Guildford Cathedral and I had time to join the excellent twelve bell band at Guildford.

In 1994 another move was upon us, back to East Anglia and we decided to move near to Bury St Edmunds although my office would be in Norwich which was the optimum location related to the Southern North Sea offshore oil and gas industry.

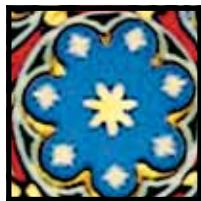
At that time Mervyn Cousins was Director of Music and the Alto department was full! So after deputising for a few months I offered my services as a Bass.

I look back now on what has been for me a rewarding career in the onshore



and offshore oil and gas industry coupled with memorable experiences singing in choirs located in the South of England and North East Scotland and a couple of places between!

It is particularly pleasing that my granddaughter Alice is now a chorister in a girls' choir and my grandson Felix will soon be a probationer in the boys choir at the same church, thus continuing the family tradition.



## Cricket – Can v Dec 2015

At the annual choristers' cricket match in July we enjoyed magnificent weather and it was great to see a record number coming to support and enjoy the picnic. At the crease it proved a close contest with some promising batting and agile fielding displays.



**Can** was set a target of 57 runs and chasing this down the team fell short by just seven runs giving **Dec** the honours on the day!

## Fundraising, Volunteers and Having Fun!



Throughout the year we provide drinks' services and cushion sales at the Cathedral's concerts and events and also for the Bury Concert Club series at the Unitarian Meeting House. We currently have a great team of volunteers assisting with this and it's an important part of our fundraising.



Every month throughout the choir term we hold the cake stall. It's another great initiative and I'd like to thank all the bakers, including

many of the choristers that support us in this endeavour. I would also like to thank our very entrepreneurial sales team who do such a fantastic job every month!



At the Christmas Fayre we ran a stall selling our

FOCC mugs, bags and chorister decorations and also the Carol dice game. It's always a bit of a marathon event, but there was great support to man the stall and we raised several hundred pounds.



And finally, in the spring we sold the FOCC Easter egg mug sets...



...and we became official suppliers to Lambeth Palace!

## Rounders

Returning from the summer break, the new term kicked off with the Family Rounders Match and picnic. The good weather returned and it was another great attendance with 34 people joining in the fun. And the final result was a narrow victory for *Can!*



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please help us support the Cathedral Choristers and the Cathedral Choir

The St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir works to the highest standards to provide music for the Cathedral's services. The choristers' commitment averages around 13 hours per week and includes three mornings before school. There is no Cathedral choir school and the boys attend many different schools, some travelling considerable distances each day to attend practice.

The choristers are very dedicated and show tremendous commitment, often at the expense of other interests and in addition to their school activities. The Lay Clerks are all volunteers and sing four or more services each week. The FOCC's primary objective is to raise funds to support activities that augment the choristers' music education and provide special experiences for the choir, such as tours, recordings, concerts and visits.

Membership of the FOCC is open to all and is one way in which members of the Cathedral Community and the public at large can support the choir and the wonderful provision of music that is an integral part of Cathedral life.

## Friends of the Cathedral Choir (FOCC)

FOCC is an independent charity established with the objectives of

- Supporting the education and training of the Cathedral choir
- Assisting with the funding of choir tours, recordings and special events
- Promoting choral music to a wide audience

## WHAT FOCC DOES

- FOCC's primary focus is fundraising to support the choir and this is achieved through a broad and innovative range of initiatives
- We organise a wide variety of fun and social events for the choristers, cathedral community and general public
- We promote awareness of the Cathedral Choir

## BECOMING A FRIEND

- Please join us and help support the Cathedral Choir and the musical life of the cathedral
- Fill in the application form overleaf for membership or making a donation and return to us
- Please complete the Gift Aid declaration as this can enhance your membership donation by 25%
- If you are able to complete a Bank Standing Order this saves us time and expense on administration

## 500 Club

The FOCC 500 Club is another way of supporting the Friends of the Cathedral Choir. Each number costs the member £2 per month and there are three cash prizes offered in the monthly draw. If you are a winner you can opt to receive a cheque or you can choose to donate the prize to a charity of your choice.

- To join the 500 Club please complete the appropriate section of the form overleaf.

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT



# APPLICATION FORM



I wish to become:

an Individual Friend (minimum £10 per annum) .....

a Joint/Family Friend (minimum £15 per annum) .....

a Life Friend (minimum £150).....

a Corporate Friend (minimum £75 per annum).....

OR

I wish to make a donation.....

AND/OR

I would like to join the **500 Club**.....

I would like ..... number(s) @ £2 per month

The annual payment for this is (Nos x £2 x 12 months) £.....

Please send any prize to:

My address below.....

Or to the following charity .....

.....

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

MR, MRS, Other.....

Name.....

Address.....

..... Post Code.....

Telephone .....

Email .....

I would like to pay by Bank Standing Order (see opposite) ....

OR

I enclose a cheque made payable to

FOCC for £.....

Signature..... Date.....

## BANK STANDING ORDER

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

To ..... Bank

.....

Bank Address .....

Bank Post Code .....

From MR, MRS, Other .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Post Code .....

Telephone .....

Please pay to:

Lloyds Bank plc, 28/34 Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds

Sort Code: 30-91-49 Account Number: 01274924

Account Name: Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir

The sum of £ .....

on ..... (date)

and every year on same date until further notice.

My Account No: - - - - -

My Bank Sort Code: \_ \_ / \_ \_ / \_ \_

Signed.....

Date.....

Name (BLOCK LETTERS).....

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

Please complete this declaration by ticking the appropriate box

I am not a UK taxpayer .....

OR

I would like Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir to reclaim tax on all my donations until further notice.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that I must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax deducted from my donation .....

Signature of donor.....

Date.....

Please send your completed form to:

FOCC, The Cathedral Office, Abbey House,  
Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1LS

Charity No: 1146575