

In our perverse world, as cruise ships reach massive proportions and foreign flights become cheaper, it can become somewhat calmer and more enjoyable to opt for a holiday exploring anew our own beautiful country and revisiting places which have enriched our lives in the past. With this in mind we decided to join the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations' 2015 tour to East Anglia in September.

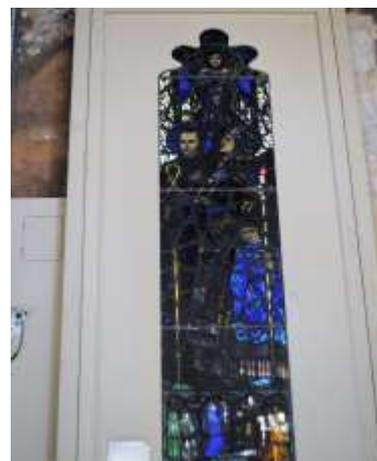
We met at 10 30 in a hotel car park behind Peterhouse College at the end of Mill Lane in the centre of Cambridge. Some, already on the coach had experienced the drive down narrow lanes and round tight corners to get there. We, who had found our own way to the rendezvous point then sat in comfort and marvelled at how well Andrew Orland (Lincoln) extricated the coach from the medieval centre of Cambridge and we knew we were in very safe hands. It was not long before we also realised what an amazing tour he had arranged for us and how patient and good humoured he was with all his passengers' dilemmas.

The weather was very kind to us as we visited the "Ship of the Fens", Ely Cathedral and its Stained Glass Museum before continuing on to Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral where some explored the Abbey Grounds and gardens in glorious sunshine whilst others attended a "Boys Only" evensong. Once again lovely weather as, on our first full day, we went to the stunning "Wool Church" at Long Melford and from thence to Lavenham. We gathered that these trips usually featured alcohol and this one was no exception as we visited Shawgate Vineyard where we saw luscious grapes, ripe for harvest, the wine making process and then had a very pleasant wine tasting experience.

We had already experienced so much and yet more to come as on day 3 we went to Ickworth and St. Georges Whisky Distillery, England's one and only, before moving north to Norwich. On Sunday we had a guided tour of the Cathedral and spent the afternoon at Blickling Hall prior to the Old Choristers singing Compline in the Cathedral. Most people had gone to morning service but Gill took the opportunity to test out a splendid medieval walk which Ayrton Westwood (Norwich) was planning to be an option for the Festival 2017 which is to be held there.

On Monday we enjoyed a boat ride on the Norfolk Broads followed by a visit to the Thursford Collection where it took little persuasion to encourage some of the young at heart members to indulge in repeated joyrides on the carousel and the gothic gondolier interspersed with the blasts of fairground and street organs. From thence, on to stay the night at Walsingham where the Old Choristers sang Compline once again.

In no way was our final day a winding down as we headed off to Sandringham for the morning and thence back to Cambridge where we had conducted tours of both St. Johns and Kings College Chapels. Andrew Nethsinger and Stephen Cleobury were both on hand to greet us and Geoffrey took the opportunity to view Rubens "Adoration of the Maji" from the organ loft. Alas, here our holiday finished, it had been a wonderful five days and we were all concerned that it may be the last. It will be a great shame if it is.



Gill and Andrew enjoying the visit to the Thursford Collection and Geoffrey's favourite window by Harry Clarke in the Ely Stained Glass Museum.

Geoffrey and Gillian Carter