

Press Release

St Paul's longest-serving singer hangs up his cassock for the final time

Tuesday, 17th July 2012

After singing at one Royal Wedding, two Jubilees and countless other important occasions at St Paul's, the Cathedral Choir's longest-serving member is set to retire.

Chris Royall, an alto Vicar Choral, will hang up his cassock for the final time this month after 34 years in the back row of the choir stalls.

The 60-year-old who lives in Winchmore Hill, joined the choir in 1978, in the days of 18 men singing regularly, becoming a Vicar Choral in 1981. Since then, Chris has sung at all the Cathedral's major occasions, including the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 and the Queen's two most recent Jubilees in 2002 and earlier this year.

Throughout his years at St Paul's, Chris has combined his cathedral duties with an active freelance career, as consort singer and soloist, as well as singing with many of the most prestigious London choirs, including the Monteverdi Choir and, most notably, The Sixteen, of which he was a founder member. He is married to the soprano Lynda Russell and has two sons, Tim and Jonny.

Chris started his musical career as a chorister at Rochester Cathedral, where his love for church music was fostered. At the age of 18, he went up to Cambridge as a Choral Scholar at St John's College and to read Geography. Envisaging a career as a geography teacher, he first of all gained a teaching qualification, but then decided to take his singing further by studying at the Royal College of Music.

Chris' friend and fellow Vicar Choral Tim Jones said: "Retirement from St Paul's in no way signifies the end of Chris' singing career. He still sings with The Sixteen and he is in the business of imparting his infectious enthusiasm to pupils in three different schools. This, coupled with his passion for walking, his love for sport and apparently boundless energy, means he is not likely to be idle. Except perhaps on a Sunday morning!"

Chris added: "It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have sung at St Paul's for so long and witnessed the amazing transformation of the building both inside and out. I wish the Cathedral and Choir every success for the future."

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For more information please contact Ed Holmes, Press and Communications Manager, St Paul's Cathedral on 020 7246 8321 or email ed@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

St Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's is the cathedral church of the diocese of London, which it has served for over 1,400 years. The current building has become a potent symbol of the life of a nation and is one of the world's most beautiful buildings. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the late seventeenth century, its stones have absorbed the hopes, fears, sorrows and joys of generations and stand as an enduring symbol of our communion with those gone before and those still to come. Each year nearly two million people flock to the cathedral for services, concerts, debates, educational events, performing arts and sightseeing. All are most welcome.

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