

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL
Music & More £3



Anticipating Christmas 2010

Blackburn Cathedral was honoured...

...to host the Annual Conference of the Deans of English and Celtic Cathedrals one Tuesday in the Spring.



The Dean of Canterbury talking with Canon Hindley

The Deans arrived by coach from Manchester Cathedral, where the remainder of their Conference was being held. Your editor remarked to Canon Hindley that the Deans were dressed informally – sweaters, open neck shirts and no ties – whereas when the Cathedral Organists meet for their Conferences, suits are the order of the day!



The Dean of Westminster, Dr John Hall, talking with Cathedral Finance Officer, Alison Feeney, with the Dean of Portsmouth, David Brindley, looking on.

After a refreshing cuppa in the crypt, **Dean Christopher Armstrong** welcomed our distinguished guests in the



The Dean of St. Paul's, The Right Reverend Graeme Knowles

(former Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was wearing a tie) told your editor that their recently appointed Director of Music (**Andrew Carwood**) is doing a great job with St. Paul's Cathedral music.

'The boys love him,' said Dean Knowles, 'and the Vicars choral respect him for, being a professional singer himself, he doesn't let them get away with anything!'

Dean Knowles added that there was a congenial

fellowship between the musicians and clergy at St. Paul's, which he warmly welcomed.

Our Virgers had, as ever, worked hard to prepare the cathedral for our distinguished guests. Dean's Virger, **Mark Pickering**, was just getting over an accident to his leg, but that didn't stop him from giving his all – as did **Jeffrey Robinson**, Canons' Virger...



... and Virger, **Alex Barnes**, who was assisting the technician, **Chris**, who would be projecting colour slides for Canon Chivers' presentation to the Deans.



South Transept, and introduced **Canon Chris Chivers** and **Anjum Anwar MBE**, who addressed the Conference about the Cathedral's outreach to people of all faiths in our community.

They were listened to with rapt concentration. Canon Chris said that Blackburn has one of the youngest populations in this country – some 47% of our citizens are under 25. Many of them gather in the public spaces outside the cathedral and it was our ministry to welcome them inside to a 'safe place' where controversial issues could be discussed freely and in depth.

Chris remarked that football is the religion of Lancashire – for many football teams claim the loyalty of so many young people. Blackburn Rovers are doing a wonderful job in their own outreach, which includes supporting the cathedral's ministry to young people of all faiths – and none.

Many searching questions were asked after that inspiring hour – one of which was very searching indeed. The Dean of Canterbury, The Very Revd. Dr. Robert Willis, asked what difficult moments our speakers had experienced in their ministry of outreach. Anjum answered straight away. She said that at their very first outreach meeting, (shortly after the 9/11 trauma when the Twin Towers in New York had been destroyed) the first question to be asked was 'Why do you fly your planes into our buildings?'

Canon Chris said that he has had his fair share of hate mail – but Dean Christopher quickly interjected, 'But not from your colleagues!' – which provoked much laughter.

The Deans, led by Anjum Anwar, then visited Daruloom Boys' Islamic Seminary for a tour and lunch, and thence to the Town Hall where the ambitious rebuilding plans for Blackburn were discussed. They returned to the cathedral at 5.15 for a glorious Choral Evensong sung by our Cathedral choir of Men and Boys.



And what a splendid programme of music was sung by our full cathedral choir of boys and men directed by **Richard Tanner**:

Introit: A Prayer from South Africa – music by James Whitbourn
words by Alan Paton – commissioned by the Chivers Family for Blackburn Cathedral Choir.

Canticles: Smart in Bb
(Henry Smart was organist here in the 1830s)

Anthem: O Sabbath Rest – music by Gordon Crosse – a world premiere. This was an astonishing anthem with a very independent organ part and tone clusters sung by the choir. It was stunning both in conception and in execution. The singing of our cathedral choir made a deep impression upon our guests, as did everything else they saw and heard that day at Blackburn Cathedral.

And the Deans all stayed to listen to **James Davy** play *Paeon* by Kenneth Leighton. Would that all our congregations would also stay after services to rejoice in the wealth of organ music which is played here week after week after week!

After Evensong the Deans enjoyed a convivial dinner in the Crypt, when our Chef **Paul Flowers** and his team excelled themselves.

It was a glorious day!

Our New Parliament

Bishop Nicholas swears his allegiance to HM The Queen in the House of Lords on the first day of the new parliament, Tuesday 18 May 2010



Our Cover Photograph...

...is of the Madonna and Child, which is an enlarged reproduction of the 16th Century *Pax* which is one of the cathedral's greatest treasures.



To quote from our recently published guide book:

'This hand-held *Pax* (Peace) – it's only 2 inches high – would have stood on the altar during Mass in pre-Reformation times and would have been kissed by the priest at the



moment when, in contemporary worship, Christians share a sign of peace with a handshake.'

The handsome reproduction in the South Transept was a gift of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral.

What looks like an altar below the statue is, in fact, one of the two giant speakers for the digital 32ft. pedal stop on our organ. (The other speaker is in the North Transept.)

OC ADAM WHITTAKER

... was one of our outstanding Head Choristers – for he not only sang numerous solos, but also helped **Joy Fielding** in training the young singers in our Lantern Voices.

He was wandering around the cathedral one midmorning in the Spring.

'Why aren't you at school?' asked your editor. 'It's lunchtime,' responded Adam. 'I enjoyed reading the Spring edition of *Music & More*,' he added. 'Thanks! What are your plans for further education?'

'I'm in the VI form at St. Wilfrid's School right now, but I'm hoping to go to Leeds Metropolitan University in the Autumn to study Management & Marketing.' 'What's that mean?' 'It means how to run a business efficiently and how to promote it.'

'Well, you can give me some tips on how to run M&M more efficiently – for we need many more regular donations to keep it going. Best wishes for Leeds!'



M&M is printed by the DELMAR PRESS Ltd.,
Nantwich, CW5 5LS, 01270-62-41-22

and supported financially by generous donors. (Thank you!)
The Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music, and
Blackburn Cathedral Old Choristers' Association.
and published by Blackburn Cathedral, BB1 5AA

OC Ian Harrison does it again!

Ian Harrison, who was an outstanding Blackburn Cathedral chorister in the 1960s, organised yet another superb Festival of music and worship in his strikingly impressive church of St. Stephen, Bournemouth. This was his 15th Festival, and he attracted a throng of cathedral organists, and retired cathedral organists, to assist him.

L-R

JB, your editor.

Dr Alan Thurlow, Organist Emeritus of Chichester Cathedral, who gave a fascinating lecture about his experiences as a cathedral musician.

James Lancelot, Durham Cathedral, gave a stunning recital on the newly rebuilt organ – which included Elgar's fiendishly difficult organ sonata.

Ian Harrison (with two glasses of wine!), who conducted his own Church choir and his Prep school choir in demanding programmes of choral music with orchestra – and more.

Dr Roy Massey, Organist Emeritus of Hereford Cathedral, who played a solo by Flor Peeters on the organ (which was brilliant as we expected, for he is a past President of the Royal College of Organists!), and

Andrew Millington, Exeter Cathedral, who had composed an anthem for the Festival and was there to hear his own Mass sung by the church choir for the opening service.

And **Sarah Baldock**, Director of Music of Chichester Cathedral, brought her superb cathedral choir to sing an exquisite Choral Evensong.

The English composer, **Percy Whitlock**, was organist of this famous church in the 1940s, and Ian had led the Appeal for £150,000 to restore this great instrument to its original glory. The **Bishop of Winchester** came to dedicate the rebuilt organ which, now, must be one of the finest church organs in this country. **Congratulations, Ian!**



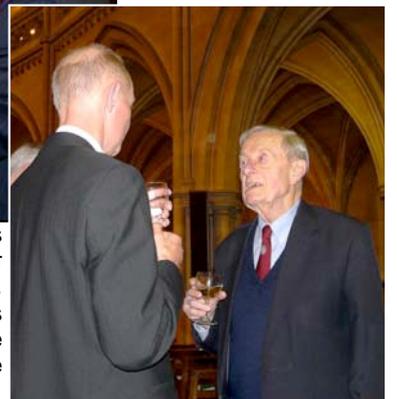
Tuba Tune – by John Stanley. At least it's what John Stanley (who was a contemporary of Handel in the 1700s) would have written if he'd had Ian's grand organ to play on!

But the main bulk of the playing for the Festival was given to **Andrew Fletcher**, whose accompanying throughout was a model of

Your editor was honoured to be asked to play it twice – once to lead the singing of *Light's Abode*, to Henry Smart's ebullient tune (Smart was organist of Blackburn in the 1830s) and also to play a solo –



what good organ playing should be. And he was so relaxed about it! Andrew began his career as organ scholar of Keble College, Oxford, and he is now Organist to Birmingham University and Organ Advisor to Worcester Diocese. It was a special joy to see the Revd. **Anthony Caesar** there. He is a former Vicar of this church and was Precentor of Winchester Cathedral. Several of his anthems were sung by Ian's fine choir. As this was the 200th anniversary of Bournemouth the choirs and audience sang a song (words and music by Whitlock) in praise of the town, which must rival '*Land of Hope & Glory*' for its singability! **Well done, Ian!**



Good for the Soles!

by Cathedral Choirman (and Chairman of BCOCA)
Stewart Hopkinson

On Saturday the 5th June my wife Sue, and I, drove to what I now know to have been my father's childhood holiday retreat of 'Kents Bank' on the Grange side of Morecambe Bay. We were to embark on a maiden journey – 'The Morecambe Bay Walk'. This had been an ambition of ours for some time and so when Dean Christopher asked if we would be interested in joining him, his lovely wife Geraldine and the equally lovely Stephen and Karen Brooke, we jumped at the chance. The walk was a sponsored event for both Blackburn Cathedral funds and the Galloway Society for the Blind, in Preston.

After taking in the coastal scenery of Kents Bank, and registering with Galloway Society, we boarded the hired coach which took us, along with others gathered, to the starting point at Arnside.



It was a warm and sunny morning with a light breeze – just perfect for walking. However, we had an hour or so to spend before setting off and so ventured to a local tea room where we met with our companions for coffee and cake. With sugar levels high, and a sense of adventure flowing, we finally set off on the 8 mile trip, herded along with some 300 fellow walkers. The route took us along the Arnside coastline, deviating for a short time through wooded areas, until we emerged at the official starting point.

I had watched a TV programme only a few weeks' earlier on the Queen's official Morecambe Bay Guide – Cedric Robinson. This unassuming fellow had walked the treacherous Bay for over 60 years and so his walking fitness was never in doubt as he led the troops, in measured stages, across the Bay. Cedric had marked the route with laurel branches and he ensured that we rested at various points in order to allow stragglers to catch up. The troops were indeed a mixed bag of all ages and ability!



We fell in line with the majority and had removed our footwear. The sensation of wet sand and dry sand and seawater beneath my feet was glorious – for a while. Walking in flat feet for 8 miles did take its toll on the soles and calves and, not least, on the upper part of my

feet; I had omitted to take sun cream and they burned for the cause! This said I was oblivious in large part to the discomfort as we walked, talked and joked, across the Bay, traversing thigh-high water along the way. I recall turning around at regular intervals and delighting in the panoramic views of the distant Lakeland hills and the coastline as they gradually diminished. It was nothing less than joyous!



Stew Hopkinson extreme left, with the Dean (centre)

Some 3.5 hours later we arrived at Kents Bank, the Morecambe Bay Walk completed. There was a definite sense of satisfaction at raising money for good causes in the process and having a thoroughly enjoyable day away with fun people. It was capped with a well-earned ice cream and a handshake with the venerable Cedric Robinson!



Well done, everyone!

The Dean added: 'This was seen as a prelude to a bigger walk next year for the Cathedral Appeal, involving the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral and the whole Diocese.'

OUR NEW CHORAL SCHOLARS

See Page 14 for more!



... are very busy, not only in the cathedral, but also in the Diocese. Tom Stockwell (L) is the new Director of Music of Burnley Municipal Choir (Wow!) and is teaching at the Blackpool-with-Fylde College and Wellfield School in Padiham. (Another Wow!)

Tom is also working with Tim Ferguson (R) in Diocesan Primary Schools as part of our musical outreach Programme (MOP) which encourages school children to sing.

And Dave Young's time is fully taken up by studying music at Manchester University – as well as singing with us at the weekends.

FRIENDS' TRIP TO OBERAMMERGAU AND AUSTRIA

by Cathedral Choir Tenor PHILIP HUNWICK

A small group of Friends of Blackburn Cathedral set off for Manchester airport at some unearthly hour of a June morning to catch the 6.55am flight to Munich.

The party included
Former Churchwarden **Jim & Audrey Holden** (who are also former choir parents)

Wendy Green (Longridge)

Charles & Muriel Leeming (Bowness-on-Windermere)

Ray & Jacqui Mallinson (Jacqui is Canon Penfold's P.A. and, with Ray, a choir parent)

Graham & Barbara Robb, and **Richard Robb** who is our Head Server.

Brian & Brenda Topham (Blackburn)

Jim & Brenda Tyrrell (Brenda was Dean Frayne's secretary)

Wilma Walmsley (Hoghton), and **yours truly**.

At Munich airport we met our guide and were transferred by coach to our accommodation in the attractive Bavarian village of Garmisch-Partenkirchen which is surrounded by *stunning Alpine scenery*.



08/06/2010 View from Hotel Hillebrandt, Garmisch

Our stay here was all too short - a mere two nights - its purpose being to allow us to attend the Passion Play in nearby Oberammergau.

The play has an interesting history. It dates back to the 1630s when the Black Death was raging in the whole of Bavaria. There had been many deaths including several in Oberammergau.



08/06/2010 Oberammergau - cliff above plague victims' graveyard

The cliff below which the victims of the plague are buried.

In 1633 the people of the village vowed to portray the "**Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ**" every ten years. After that there was not a single further plague death in Oberammergau.

The vow has been kept with a performance every ten years apart from a couple of instances - during the Second World War, for example. For over 200 years the play was performed in the graveyard next to the village church, but during the 19th century ever larger crowds were attracted from all over the world and so, to

accommodate them, the play was moved to a purpose-built theatre at the other end of the village.



Above: Theatre exterior.

Below: Theatre interior



There is much that is remarkable about the Oberammergau Passion Play. It lasts for five and a half hours with a long interval for a meal. In the past the play has started in the morning and finished late afternoon. This year, however, the director changed the timings so that the play started in the afternoon with a break for an evening meal and then an evening session finishing at 11.00pm.

This was to enable him to use lighting effects in the second half - especially for a thunderstorm as a background to the crucifixion. He needn't have bothered for the performance we attended, as nature provided a real one! The audience is under cover but the stage is open to the elements and the sight and sound of a thunderstorm rolling around the mountains added greatly to the dramatic tension.

The theatre is surprisingly large. The auditorium houses well over 4000. Organising dinner for such a large number of people in such a small village is no mean feat. It was accomplished by a voucher system. We were given tickets for the play and meal vouchers in our hotel in Garmisch; the vouchers indicated the time (there were two sittings) and restaurant at which dinner could be obtained.

The stage, too, is huge, and it needed to be as there were well over a hundred people - not to mention animals - on stage in some of the scenes. The total number of people involved in the production is around 2,400. This is impressive when one realises that the total population of Oberammergau is 4,500 and that a requirement for those taking part in the play is that they should have been born in Oberammergau or have lived there for at least 20 years! This includes not only the actors but all the musicians and the stage hands.

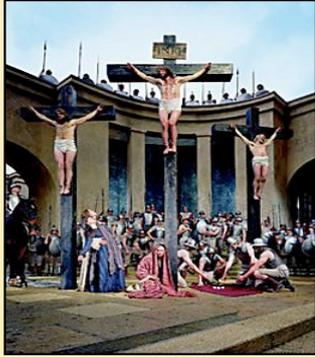
Much of the acting was very professional. The large orchestra (invisible in a deep orchestra pit) certainly sounded professional and, while there were rough edges to one or two of the solo voices, some of the soloists would not have been out of place in Glyndebourne.

The age range of the performers is great - from tiny children to the elderly who are taking part for the fifth or sixth time. Some roles have become associated with particular families over the years and men grow their hair

and beards for several months in preparation for their parts. They may be seen around the village in their "day jobs" such as in the many craft shops.

I was expecting the occasional donkey or sheep to appear on stage - but we were treated to whole flocks of the latter; there were also goats, the Roman soldiers rode horses and Herod arrived on a camel!

The first performance this year was on May 15th and the last on October 3rd with a performance on five days of each week, making a total of 102 performances. Admittedly the leading roles have a rota of actors, but it must require a great deal of stamina. It's a good job it only happens every decade!



And what of the play itself? Think along the lines of a cross between Bach's St. Matthew Passion, a medieval mystery play (without the jokes) and a Greek tragedy! The scenes of the last days of Christ's life on earth are acted out in German. An English text (quite a large booklet) is provided but it was impossible to read this after it went dark - just as well we were familiar with the story!

At intervals between the scenes, white-robed figures process across the front of the stage and sing commentaries on the action - rather like the chorus in a Greek tragedy or the chorales in a Bach passion. "Tableaux Vivants" - "Living Images" also appear between some of the scenes. These, obviously, are not the sort of still life presentations that used to be a feature of some of the old music halls, the actors involved being fully clad! Nevertheless, the technique is similar. They are tableaux in which actors hold motionless poses illustrating Old Testament events, such as the loss of Paradise, which have a theological bearing on the Passion story.

In short, it is a unique dramatic presentation which I found powerful and, at times, very moving. My only regret was that photography was not permitted during the performance. [Photo above from the web]

On the day after the play our coach took us on to the Salzkammergut area of Austria. The weather in that part of the world had been somewhat extreme in the weeks before our arrival and we saw evidence of flooding. The sun, however, shone on the righteous and temperatures were in the low 30s centigrade during the five days of our stay and it became necessary to partake frequently of cooling libations.

Salt has been mined in the area for centuries. *Salzkammergut* translates as "Estate of the Salt Chamber", a reference to the Imperial Salt Chamber - the authority which controlled the salt mines during the time of the Hapsburg Empire. The presence of salt also led to the establishment of spa towns such as Bad Ischl which was the destination of one of our day trips. The buildings associated with its spa function are most impressive, but the town's other main claim to fame is somewhat less healthy. The *Kaiservilla* (set in the beautiful Kaiserpark) is where the Emperor Franz Joseph signed the declaration of war with Serbia on August 1st 1914.



We also saw here the church where Bruckner was organist for several years.

Another day was spent amid the grandeur and beauty of Salzburg. A day was nowhere near enough to appreciate all the town has to offer - ancient buildings such as the Hohensalzburg Fortress, and the

Cathedral Church (Dom):



... the beautiful gardens of the *Mirabell Palace* (as featured in *The Sound of Music* - or so I'm told as I've managed to avoid seeing the film!), Mozart's birthplace and so much more.

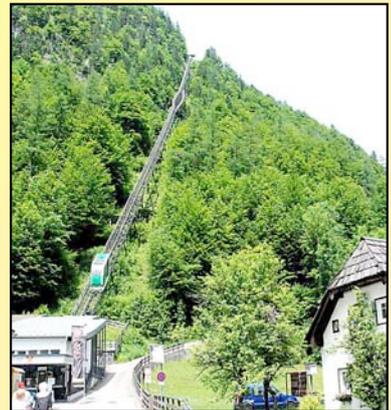


Our hotel was located near the Attersee, one of several lakes in the Salzkammergut - the lakes and mountain scenery being the main tourist attractions of the region.

Boat trips were enjoyed on both the Attersee and the Hallstattersee and some of the more energetic, led inevitably by Jim Holden, viewed some of the scenery on foot. Perhaps the most spectacular views, however, were to be had, after going up a funicular railway, from a restaurant in Hallstatt perched high above the lake.

The time to return to Munich airport for the flight home came all too soon. We had been fortunate not only with the weather but also with the standard of our guide, our coach driver and our accommodation.

The company wasn't bad either! We were all very grateful for the hard work which **Jim Holden** put in to making the trip such a success.



Phil Hunwick (L) with the Mallinsons and the Robbs.



In the News

From Choir Mum Amanda Snape

Hello, John,
I have attached a photograph of Christopher singing the anthem at the wedding of his uncle on the 29th May 2010.

Christopher was asked if he would chose an anthem that could be sung at

the wedding of his uncle to his French fiancée.

As the wedding was also being held at the Catholic church of Assumption de Marie, Evain les Bains, France. Christopher decided that "A Gaelic Blessing" would sound well. It did!



Christopher sang the anthem beautifully, especially considering that there was no organist and no accompaniment whatsoever. His sister, Hannah, also did the reading.

Unfortunately Christopher suffered a head injury in the hotel swimming pool the day after which resulted in him having to have 6 stitches across the top of his head. As his 21 year cousin later stated "Chris, your singing is awesome, but your diving is really rubbish!"

Regards

Amanda Snape

Well done, Christopher!

Heartiest Congratulations to

Old Chorister PETER FIELDING
who celebrated his 80th birthday
with a grand party at Whalley Abbey
which was attended by many members of the
Fielding Clan who came from far and wide
(brother Gordon flew in from France just in time)
and many fellow Old Choristers.



Andrea and Peter, with some of their guests, tucking in to the delicious birthday supper provided by the Abbey.

From Tom Daggett
Former Jr. Organ Scholar,
Blackburn Cathedral,
now Organ Scholar of
Lincoln College, Oxford



Dear John,

I thought you'd be interested to see a few snaps taken during the installation of our new organ at Lincoln College.

We're now in the final stages of preparation for our choir's tour to Japan, where we shall be singing services and concerts. *(Let's hear all about it for our next issue! JB)*

I'm now preparing for my final year at Lincoln, during which I take up the role as Senior Organ Scholar. My Junior, Joe Mason, from Abingdon School, is starting his first year, and is a brilliant organist, so I'm excited about the year ahead!

Best wishes, **Tom**



*Tom, this looks as though it will be a stunning addition to your historic and most beautiful College Chapel. May you enjoy a super final year in that lovely place where your predecessor was **Jonathan Turner** – now organ scholar at Southwell Minster and also former Blackburn Cathedral Organ Scholar.*

Heartiest Congratulations to

Mrs. Dorothy Green

a most faithful member of our congregation
who recently celebrated her 100th Birthday



Dorothy's late husband,
FRED GREEN
was a member of our
cathedral choir
for many years,
and also a highly respected
Churchwarden.

Between them,
Fred and Dorothy
have given outstanding
service to our cathedral.

Dorothy, we salute you!

MORE MUSICAL NEWS

Our Cathedral choristers gave a stunning performance of Britten's **GOLDEN VANITY** (sung entirely from memory) during the recent Ribchester Festival. Conducted by RICHARD TANNER with JAMES DAVY at the piano, they attracted a capacity audience in Ribchester's historic church.



And so great was their success that they were persuaded to give a repeat performance in the cathedral crypt a few weeks' later.



The costumes added much to the performance. Well done, indeed!



How appropriate it was that **Dom Chivers** was promoted to Cathedral Choir Prefect just before he and his family left us in the summer. Dom has given outstanding service to our cathedral music – two of his compositions have been sung here, to great

acclaim. **Canon Chris Chivers** (see p. 12) left us after his own outstanding 5 years of service, to become Vicar of John Keble Church in London.

Seen here are Canon Chris with Prefect Dom, and youngest brother **Jonathan Joe** – whose teddy graced a Canon's stall during Evensong that day! That must be another first for any cathedral!

YET MORE MUSICAL NEWS

Major concerts have become a widely acclaimed part of our cathedral's life, and this was made apparent yet again when the **Renaissance Singers** gave a scintillating performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* in the summer, with a bevy of brilliant soloists.



RICHARD TANNER conducted this work, of course, and it was accompanied by two pianos – played by our JAMES DAVY, and ERIC MILLEST director of music of Westholme.



The sparkling music played by the pianos was enhanced by the addition (as Rossini intended) of music played on a harmonium. The harmoniumist was our American organ scholar, JUSTIN MILLER, who took his eyes off the conductor just once – when your staff photographer happened to have him in his sights!



Justin contributed enormously to our music-making and fellowship last season; his playing was brilliant and his company was delightful. He endeared himself to us all by his gracious gentleness, and we wish him well as he continues his studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music in Ohio.

Thank you, Justin, for blessing us all so richly.

ROYAL VISIT

His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, honoured us with a visit in the Spring. (He is The Queen's cousin – their respective fathers, King George VI and the former Duke were brothers.)



The Lord Lieutenant, Lord Shuttleworth, presented the Dean to HRH, who then met Mrs. Gail Stanley, DL, who chairs the current Cathedral Appeal.

And Mrs. Stanley, in her turn, presented the members of her strong Appeal Committee.

HRH was shown some of the evidence for the need for the Appeal – for some alarming cracks are appearing in the structure of the Jesus Chapel,



and some of the paint in the nave ceiling (the paintwork is 45 years old) is beginning to flake.



The Cathedral Choristers were there in force, for a major part of the Appeal is for the Cathedral's music programme and musical outreach to the Diocese: Richard and James were duly presented to HRH.



And the Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP for Blackburn, was also amongst our distinguished visitors. He showed himself, as ever, to be a most gracious and friendly guest.

HRH had special words of praise for the work of Canon Chris Chivers and Mrs. Anjum Anwar MBE, whose ministry among people of all faiths, in Blackburn, in the Diocese and beyond, has drawn us all together in a much more understanding and loving way.



Young people, who represented the youth of Blackburn, also took the opportunity to talk with HRH, as did leaders of the community

It was a most happy and successful visit for everyone had taken immense trouble to prepare for that significant hour. Two of the churchwardens, Stuart Rothwell and Old Chorister Philip Carr, in their Sunday best, had independently chosen identical ties!



Why isn't my news in M&M?

Because you haven't sent it, with JPEG photographs, to The Editor, Dr John Bertalot, john@bertalot.org

A little bit of financial help would be appreciated, too!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From OC JOHN KEEN

who celebrated his 40th birthday not so very long ago.

I've deliberately booked a day off work to see in my 4th decade.* I was planning to go sculling for an hour or so on the river Trent but tomorrow's forecast is for wind, plus the river level is already quite high. Sculling is like sitting on a pencil and trying to stay upright on the river. With a high river the water is more swirly so it's quite easy to get a loose connection with one of the sculls (oars) – without due care, that can cause the boat to flip. Add to that increased ripples kicked up by a strong wind and it can make for quite an unenjoyable experience. On reflection, a nice lunch somewhere dry and warm is quickly becoming the more attractive option.



'Then on Easter Saturday, it's a small family gathering at the folks'. I've also enjoyed trips to watch a couple of games in this year's 6 Nations Championship: France v Ireland in Paris and Scotland v England in Edinburgh. The former fixture I enjoyed the company of some friends from my degree course at University. The latter fixture provided a great opportunity to catch up with some old school pals from Edinburgh.

I've been in touch of late with a now fluent in Spanish OC **Chris Birchall**. Chris hit 40 last year but looks barely a day older than how I remember him as a teenager. I still remember the RSCM course in Canterbury with Chris in 1981 (along with **Graham Dean**, **Ian** and **Peter Banks** and **Andrew Anderson**) - lots of singing but also lots of football and jumping off diving boards into the King's School outside swimming pool. In time I'll try and meet up with him.

I don't know where you get all your energy from for 2 am parties or how you remember all these birthdays - you are truly an inspiration to us all. But staying up until 2 am for **Richard Tanner's** 40th does of course set a benchmark for my own 40th. If I get past the midnight hour I'll be happy. Belated happy returns to Richard of course.

Best regards

John

* [It's your 5th decade isn't it? Ed.]

From Canon Brian Selvey in Keswick

*Brian was Cathedral Curate when JB first came to Blackburn in 1964.
We both lived, temporarily, in the YMCA!*

Many thanks for sending M&M. It is even more outstanding than the annual Christmas Newsletters you sent to 1,000 of your friends all round the world during your 16 years in Princeton NJ!

Mention of Tommy Duerden always makes me think of Provost Norman Robinson who always viewed Lent with anticipation for TLD inspired the choir's most moving rendering of Bairstow's *Lamentations*. [TLD was a pupil of Bairstow.]

I also remember when TLD retired. If my memory is correct 60 to 70 musicians applied to succeed him ... Thankfully JB got the job and built up a wonderful choir with a tradition that continues to this day.

Last year I celebrated at Keswick the 50th anniversary of being ordained priest in Blackburn Cathedral by Bishop Walter Baddeley. You played for my 40th anniversary service in Blackburn Cathedral!

Jill and I love living in the heart of the Lake District. It is absolutely beautiful day by day, but we do miss not being near Blackburn Cathedral where we were married: you played on the little 4-rank temporary Walker organ!

So glad all is going well with you

Brian

You do remember that **Emily Crewe** is now the Concerts Manager for *The Sixteen's* world tours! She is so wonderfully efficient – and delightful, too! →

From Dr. Harry Grindle

former Director of Music, Belfast Cathedral

Dear John,

Thank you very much for the latest issue of "Music & More" which, as always, is an absorbing read. I can well believe that your magazine is, as Dean Armstrong says, "the talk of the C of E" since there cannot be anything to compare with it anywhere! What a hive of musical activity Blackburn Cathedral is!

Kind regards and best wishes,
Harry

From Constance Heald whose late husband, Peter, was a founder-member of BCOCA



Dear John

A belated but nonetheless heartfelt thanks for your contribution re Peter in the Spring edition of *Music & More* - the Dean (of Ely) had seen a copy during the Deans' Conference visit to Blackburn Cathedral for a day in April. I have received two more letters to date, one from a former Bach Choir member, **Mildred Whiteside** as she was then, who we met last at the 40th Reunion, and the other from **Dr David Price**, Director of Music at Portsmouth Cathedral, who was an Assistant at Ely some time ago now.

I'm gradually getting into a new kind of normality but life remains rather strange at times. I've finally decided to retire as Chapter Clerk of Ely Cathedral which will happen in the next few months - enough is enough, especially after almost 28 years!

Thank you for the notification re the BCOCA Reunion in September - I'm booked in to stay with sister Dorothy and David and hope to be with you for Saturday Evensong and Dinner.

With best wishes
Constance

From outgoing Senior Old Chorister Emily Crewe

Dear All,

A BIG THANK YOU to all of you who made the Ceilidh which I organised last night in the cathedral crypt for BCOCA! It was a fantastic evening.

We raised is £625 for BCOCA funds!

Thank you again!

Emily Crewe



Emily being invested with her SOC chain of office last year, by outgoing SOC **David Smalley** – who has just been appointed Professor Emeritus of the North and Midlands School of Music.

Congratulations to Emily & David!

Cathedral Canon is now a London Vicar

Canon Chris Chivers is the new Vicar of John Keble Church, Mill Hill, London. Canon Chris, who has for the past five years been Canon Chancellor at Blackburn Cathedral and founding Director of **exChange**, the cathedral's award-winning education, outreach, community cohesion, and interfaith development agency, took up his duties in September. He brings wide experience to the Mill Hill community, having worked previously as Precentor, in charge of the worship of two of the world's most contrasting communities: Westminster Abbey and St George's Cathedral, Cape Town.

Canon Chris signing his book, 'Fully Alive' which is an account of his outstanding five-year ministry here in Blackburn and, indeed, world-wide.



Many were the farewells that were held in July – leaders of Blackburn's community were invited, by Mrs. Anjum Anwar MBE, to speak about Chris to a packed audience in the North Transept, and their words revealed just how much Chris has done to ease racial and religious tension, and how much he has meant to us all.



He and his family, **Mary, Dominic, Greg and Jonathan Joe**, have been greatly loved by us all, and we shall miss them sorely.



Presentations were made by Canon Hindley (the Dean being away) to Chris and his family after Sunday morning Eucharist in July.

Being, doing and letting-go

A sermon preached at the 0900 Parish Communion

18 July 2010 by Canon Chivers

Blackburn Cathedral

Gospel: Luke 10: 38-42

Michael Mayne, one of the great pastors and spiritual writers of the last century, who encouraged me a good deal as a young priest and was writing to me up to the year of his death – my second year at the cathedral – once told me about a glorious misprint in the Cambridge Evening News – famed for leaving the final letters off words to devastating effect! – on the occasion of the departure of a local minister. The readers were informed that 'at the end a large crow remained in the Church singing *Abide with me!*'

In another context, I also remember him telling a marvellous story about the great 18th century Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, Isaac Barrow, the teacher of Sir Isaac Newton.

Barrow was invited to preach at a church. His sermon he told the priest had two parts. The first treated of slander, the second of lies. "I beg you," said the priest, "to confine yourself to slander." He did so for an hour and a half! You would have thought that the church might have learnt its lesson. But no, they invited Barrow back again. After he had preached for a solid hour the vergers called for the organ to play, and so a diarist at the time informs us, 'Barrow was *blowed down.*'

I'm trusting my musician and virger colleagues in this regard but I realise that people get impatient here after about ten minutes. I will do my best. I will also try to confine myself to reflections which spring from today's Gospel.

What is it basically saying?

Something I think about the potential – and often very real – imbalance in our lives between doing and being.

It's a truism that British people work far too hard, for more hours than most others, and are much more likely to be suffering from stress than their continental European neighbours, or their American or African ones.

It's a fact that we know well – and as I leave this community, a strong part of my reflections concerns the fact that I've got the balance wrong more times than I've got it right. Each of us, I suspect, knows that the imbalance is there. You don't need me to bang on about it.

The question for each of us is how to address it.

Allow me to read a poem that I think could help, a poem by the Scottish poet, Norman McCaig, called *Small Boy*:

He picked up a pebble and threw it into the sea
And another and another he couldn't stop
he wasn't try to fill; the sea
he wasn't trying to empty the beach
he was just throwing away nothing else but
like a kitten playing he was practising for the future
when there'll be so many things he'll want to throw away
if only his fingers can unclench and let them go.

I'm not sure where you're summer will take you. Maybe you'll go to an actual beach – if the weather holds. Maybe it will only be to a metaphorical beach of the imagination. But wherever it takes you allow me to suggest that using this poem, thinking about throwing aspects of your life – indeed throwing the whole lot into the sea – might give the opportunity for you to see what re-emerges on the beach. For that's of course where those pebbles always return, changed, smoothed by life in the ocean.

Maybe you'll be able to throw away some things that are burdening you, you'll be able to discard some doing baggage that's stopping your being or becoming what God wants you to be. Wherever the process takes you I wish you, in the psalmist's words, good luck in the name of the Lord.

And I'll add just one thing: know already that who you are has influenced profoundly who I am in ways for which only the words thank you are an appropriate response. But know much more importantly that who you are with whatever imbalances of being and doing – and mine as my wife will undoubtedly tell you are legendary! – is already loved and cherished by God.

Thanks be to God.

From 'new' Old Chorister Ian Stancliffe in Cumbria

(who joined us after seeing a copy of *Music & More*)

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter and copy of *Music & More* which I have read with great interest.

My associations with Blackburn Cathedral goes back many years. My Father sang alto, trained by **Dr. Brearley**, and was a member of his Cathedral Choir and then later with **TLD**. Then my twin cousins **Harold ('Stan' – who died last year) and Ernest Stancliffe** were also choristers before doing duties carrying the processional cross.



Ernest worked for the BBC and was, in part, responsible for broadcasts of religious music whilst I saw Harold in October at my sister's Golden Wedding celebration on the south coast. Another cousin, **John Highton**, who is about my age also sang in the cathedral choir whilst I was Head Chorister at St. Philip's Church – now sadly demolished.

I joined the Cathedral Choir I guess around 1950 at the same time as **Walter Heald** [Peter's father]. Peter Heald and I both worked at Walpamur, now Crown Paints. Peter's stay there was not long, but I stayed on for 35 years to manage the company's nationwide colour and design services. As such I was able to give some modest support to **Provost Kay** as minor developments of the Cathedral interior took place, before the later major works on the Lantern Tower and so on. Provost Kay was greatly respected, a godly man I remember fondly, despite his inability on occasion to meet eye to eye with **TLD!**

TLD's Friday evening choir rehearsals were always a true joy and sometimes, if TLD was in the right frame of mind, entertaining. Memories abound of the **Fielding Family**, basses **Tom Robinson**, **Jim Smith** and alto **Fred Green** and the rest of the names which fade as the years go by.

Then the choirboys included **Peter Heald**, **Peter Crowther**, **John Halliwell** and **Stanley Roorcroft** who represented Blackburn Cathedral Choir in the special choir formed for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953. And **Lionel Walmsley** who gained fame as Lionel Morton, pop star with the 'Four Pennies'...



All, in one way or another, have since had memorable careers thanks to the unique educational experience offered – and thankfully still offered – by our Cathedral Choir.

I left the choir in 1960 or so when my other commitments moved to Cumbria. I still miss it however and occasionally take the opportunity to call in to the Cathedral to see the wonderful place it has become. I cannot help but think that both Provost Kay and TLD would approve!

Music & More has brought back so many treasured memories and I look forward with keen anticipation to future editions.

Sadly these days ever advancing years mean that I do little travel, but I am away on holiday in Scotland in September, so will be unable to attend this year's Annual Reunion – next year perhaps?

Thank you again for contacting me.

My best wishes for the future of *Music & More* and the BCOCA.

My hair is now slightly greyer!



Assistant Director of Music James Davy wins top prize as a composer - 23/7/2010

Assistant Director of Music **JAMES DAVY** has won the Choir & Organ Composition Competition 2010 with his anthem *Domine clamavi*, a setting of words from Ps. 141.

Since coming to Blackburn in 2006, James has been asked to write a number of works for the choirs at the Cathedral by Director of Music Richard Tanner, starting with a piece for a Radio 4 Broadcast on his second Sunday here.



Speaking to *Choir & Organ* magazine, which ran the competition in association with the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, James said: *"This piece focuses on the reflective aspect of worship. At the cathedral, psalms are part of our daily tradition. In these particular verses there's a lot that sums up worship, and music for it – it is quiet and reflective in nature, rather than triumphal. For me it expresses an aspect of worship that often goes by unnoticed, and that is certainly underrated."*

The competition was judged by Gabriel Jackson, John McCabe, Andrew Nethsingha, John Rutter, and the editor of *Choir & Organ*.

The premiere will given in November by the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, directed by Andrew Nethsingha.

From former Blackburn Head Verger, **EDWARD KEEN**, now retired to Hereford.

Hello John

It is a long time since you have heard from me. I have a computer and with some help have found your email address. I keep in touch via *M&M*, the cathedral magazine.

My career took me to Winchester Cathedral where I was a verger for many years. I now live in mid-Wales. Unfortunately, my health is not great and following a stroke I am now in a wheel chair. I have good carers and also help at home so am able to remain cheerful.

Yours sincerely, **Edward**

My dear Edward,

How very good to hear from you after all these years. Yes, you were (and are) a very special person in the lives of all of us who were with you in Blackburn Cathedral all those years ago - and we were so proud that you were promoted to Winchester. That was great! One of your successors at Blackburn is now Dean's Verger at Chichester (**Howard Waddell JP**) - as you will have seen from our cathedral magazine.

I remember you telling me, when I visited you at Winchester, after I'd asked if **King Canute's** remains were in one of the mortuary chests near the Winchester high altar: you said, 'Yes, for I dusted them last week!'

You always did have a great sense of humour - so, keep it up.

Ever, John

Edward would love to hear from his former friends in Blackburn – his e mail is eg@keen.myzen.co.uk



New young talents grace our cathedral

Thanks to generous sponsorship and the creative enthusiasm of Richard Tanner and James Davy, AND with the approval of the Cathedral Chapter, we are delighted to welcome not only a new Organ Scholar, **Chris Woodward**, but also a Junior Organ Scholar, **Mary Ann Wootton**, AND three brilliant young Choral Scholars, all of whom will enhance our already brilliant music programme here in Blackburn Cathedral.

CHRIS WOODWARD comes to us from the King's School, Peterborough where he collected a dazzling array of 'A' levels, and also a distinction in grade 8 organ. As well as playing at Peterborough Cathedral he has also played at St. Peter's, Rome AND at St. Matthew's Church, Northampton (where JB was Director of Music last Millennium!).

He is now studying for his ARCO diploma and would like to become a cathedral Director of Music himself.

MARY ANN WOOTTON is a 16 year old pupil of Stonyhurst College who began to play the piano when she was only 4 years old. At the age of 10, she gained her Dip LCM with Honours on the Electronic Keyboard with the London College of Music and Thames Valley University, becoming the youngest person ever to have achieved this. Mary Ann passed her Grade 8 piano exam with distinction aged 12.

A year later she played Beethoven's 1st piano concerto and gained four more piano playing diplomas and has also been featured in several BBC programmes AND she has played in Norway and Russia. What talent!



AND we have three young choral scholars



TOM STOCKWELL was a chorister at Salisbury Cathedral, (along with his other two triplets!). After leaving Salisbury he gained grade 8 exams in singing, piano, bassoon AND organ!

He then won a scholarship to Lancing College and was closely involved in its own fine music programme, as well as being a prominent sportsman AND an active member of the combined cadet force!

He has come to Blackburn after being an outstanding choral scholar in the choir of Truro Cathedral and lay clerk in The Queen's College, Oxford. During this time he led many other choral projects, which included singing in St. Peter's, Rome (did he see Chris Woodward there?)



DAVE YOUNG comes to us from Repton School where he, too, gained a dazzling array of 'A' levels. He has also been closely involved with the Hallé choir – not only singing but also conducting some rehearsals. He is also in demand to sing with Manchester Cathedral choir, and also the choir of Saint

Anne's Church, Manchester, where our former assistant organist, **Ronald Frost**, directs the music.

Dave's choral activities abound in and around Manchester – and he will be studying at Manchester University this year as well as singing with us at Blackburn.

TIM FERGUSON comes to us from Manchester Grammar School from where he sang with many excellent choirs – touring Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, France and Spain as well as singing under the baton of some of the finest choral conductors, such as John Rutter, Sir Mark Elder and Sir David Willcocks. He like our other scholars, has several grade 8s to his credit!



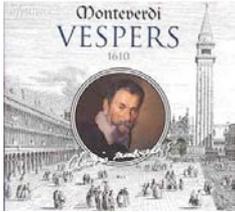
He's also sung at the Royal Albert Hall for two Prom concerts, and taken part in the esteemed Oundle course for organists where he studied under 'our own' David Briggs, amongst other virtuosi. (David was, of course, the consultant for the rebuilding of our organ in 2000 – he gave his very first organ recital here when he was only 14 – playing entirely from memory!)



And **PHILIPPA HYDE** will be giving regular master classes for our young singers. They, and we, are in for a wonderful year!

An Eating and Singing Day!

by Cathedral Choir Mum, and Cathedral Choir Wife
Rachel Fielding



On September 4th the Renaissance Singers came together after the summer holiday for a training day to become acquainted with the **Monteverdi Vespers** which we shall be singing, with authentic instruments and authentic soloists, on Saturday Nov. 20th.

We were tempted to rehearse for the whole day - not only to sing, but to partake of delicious morning coffee, a lavish lunch and cream tea prepared by the wonderful **Peter Crewe**, who, it must said, had moved house the day before.

On arrival we were greeted with coffee and a Danish pastry and so went fortified to the song school.



Once we had settled (it took 10mins to organise us - Richard made the point that we should be early rather than on time!) we were introduced to the new choral scholars - **Dave, Tim and Tom** who will be singing bass with us, and **Chris** - the cathedral's new organ scholar. We are very lucky to have these talented lads with us and we only hope that they can understand our northern vowels and humour!

After about an hour and a half we returned to the crypt for a sumptuous lunch - salmon with a mustard and prawn sauce, buttered new potatoes and feta and olive side salad, followed by apple pie with cream (some members had seconds ... we know who you are!!!!)

Again fortified we raced back to Richard in the Song School, not quite on time but improving. Another very useful hour or so passed until it was back to the delights of Peter Crewe in the crypt - this time tea, scones, cream and strawberries.



By now we had timed ourselves correctly and so we started the final session on time, much to Richard's relief.

In the final session we were able to cover any unsure moments and we sang a couple of movements in the North Transept as our finale.

Musically the day was a wonderful experience greatly enhanced by Richard's patience and James's playing of the chamber organ.

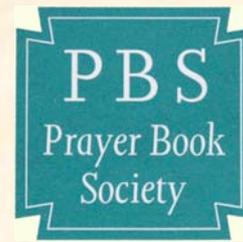
But after all that singing and all that food there was yet more partying! Many members, who, surprisingly, were still feeling hungry, (singing Monteverdi does need a plentiful supply of calories!) gathered at **Calypso**, a Caribbean restaurant at The Woodlands Hotel at the top of Preston New Road. and we feasted.

All in all a marvellous day both singing and eating with the Renaissance Singers.

If you like singing and if you like feasting, come and join us. No audition for food, but yes, an audition for singing - which we all enjoy enormously ... and so will you when you come to hear us on **Saturday, 20th November.**

Constance Heald and her sister **Dorothy Wade** reminded JB at the BCOCA Reunion that the Blackburn Bach Choir (aka **Renaissance Singers**) had sung **Monteverdi's Vespers** with orchestra in the Cathedral in 1975. 'And the choir sang all the solo parts, too!' she added. 'It was a wonderful performance.'

So come to THIS performance, too - with authentic instruments!



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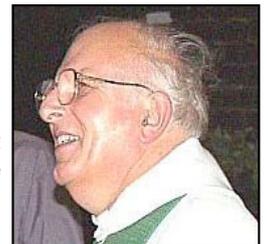
**Hon. Secretary,
Neil Inkley,
6 Knot Lane,
Walton-le-Dale,
Preston PR5 4BQ**

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**From
Dean DAVID FRAYNE
in Dorset**

John

It MUST BE your birthday about this time! Sorry we've not got the actual date to hand - but we wish you well as you go up the numerical scale!



Good wishes too for the BCOCA weekend. Do give my good wishes to any who remember us! I recall with great pleasure that great occasion when Blackburn welcomed the annual national Former Cathedral Choristers' Association - as well, of course all the domestic "Blackburn only" years.

Which leads me to "Are you going to have a September BCOCA weekend year 2011? The point being that in 12 months' time, I shall be giving thanks for my 50 years as a priest. The Dean has indicated that he would welcome a (sort of) "official visit" to mark this "milestone".

If next year's BCOCA's gathering would be an appropriate "co-incidence" that would be nice. (I only ask at this remove because that Dean has indicated that there is a big British Legion event at the Cathedral on Saturday, Sept 17 2011 which leaves me wondering about the BCOCA weekend for 2011)

Love from us both, DAVID

David: thanks so much for yours. Yes, next year's BCOCA Reunion is provisionally planned for 17-18 September, but because of the British Legion Service we have yet to make detailed plans. It will occur two days after my 80th birthday (DV). It would be wonderful if we could celebrate both our milestones together! JB

OC WILLIAM HEAP REACHES THE TOP! (He's been climbing mountains!)



Hi John

Back from the Alps, though, as you know, the weather prevented me from summiting Mont Blanc - just too dangerous, I'm afraid. However I went round to the Italian side and climbed Grande Paradiso which was some consolation for this was over 4000m.

(Will's on the left)



This was the latest in a series of annual events I've undertaken over the past few years to raise funds for the charities I'm interested in.

Previous ones include the 192 mile Coast to Coast walk from St Bees to Robin Hoods Bay which I did with Janet. Also last year was a 15-Peak challenge in 24 hours, climbing the highest Snowdonian peaks. As a result of the magnificent support I have received from friends, colleagues, clients and my employer, (Barclays, in the Isle of Person) we have raised over £8000 for **Childlifeline**



Will with Lydia, a Ugandan child he is supporting

www.childlifeline.com

is a charity set up by my cousin's late husband. The primary objective is to assist orphans in Busenabatia, Uganda - a place I visited in October 2008, to enable the young children to complete their schooling so they can use this to the advantage of their local community. The sponsorship goes directly to a child and, simply, should the sponsorship cease, the child will have to leave school and face an uncertain and unsafe future.

I really could go on ...

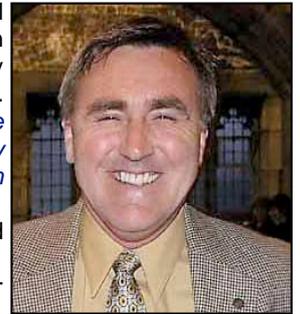
With kind regards

Will

Will, we salute you for this wonderful work you are doing to save children in Uganda – and are pretty envious at your physical prowess!

OC BERNARD HARGREAVES...

... popped into the cathedral in September. (He lives in California). 'I'm over here for my niece's wedding,' he told JB. *(Whoops – none of the photographs JB took are any good – sorry. Here's one taken 4 years ago.)*



'How's your family?' asked JB.

'I'm working hard to put our three boys through college.

'Our eldest graduated last year in Economics from the University of California in Berkeley; Zac, our second son has just been accepted at Berkeley to study Engineering and Computer Science, and Jordan, our youngest, hopes to follow his brothers to that famous University.'

'You've got your hands full!'

'We certainly have!'

Prayer Book Society's Service

When the Blackburn Branch of the Prayer Book Society held its annual gathering in the cathedral, we were honoured to welcome the Society's President, Ms. **Prudence Dailey**. She had brought her Mother with her, who told us that former Provost of Blackburn, **Norman Robinson**, was her uncle! A photo was certainly called for with the Uncle Norman's portrait!



OC **Anthony Tattersall's** fine choir, **OCTAVIUS**, sang for the Eucharist and also Choral Evensong. They are very fine – especially as they now have 12 singers.

Secretary **Neil Inkley** and Chairman The Revd. **Alan Reid**, are to be congratulated on the lively membership of the Blackburn Branch of the PBS.

Blackburn Cathedral Consort - our 8th Choir



What other cathedral can claim to have eight choirs – all of which are made up entirely of volunteers?

The Cathedral Consort is a body of even more voluntary volunteers: singers who are able to come to the cathedral to sing Evensong for special occasions.

At the end of June Richard Tanner honoured your editor by asking the Cathedral Consort to sing the special anthem JB had written to celebrate Richard's 40th birthday – *Archbishop's Blessing*. Also they sang his Responses (composed for the cathedral choir in the 1980s) and also an 8-part Fauxbourdon setting of the Canticles – which they sang after only one rehearsal!

As there were only 14 singers; that works out at 1³/₄ singers per part! Well done!

Pictured above are the members of the Cathedral Consort who sang that evening, with conductor and organist:

Back row: Jim Twigg, Phil Hunwick, Robert Mitchell, Jeremy Duerden, Phil Wilson (half hidden), Tony Robinson and our American organ scholar Justin Miller (see below).

Front row: Emily and Virginia Crewe, Rachel Fielding, Richard Tanner, JB, Helen Williams, , Kate Fulwell, Alizon Elliott and Assistant DoM James Davy.

Central: William Fielding (who sang all the right notes!)

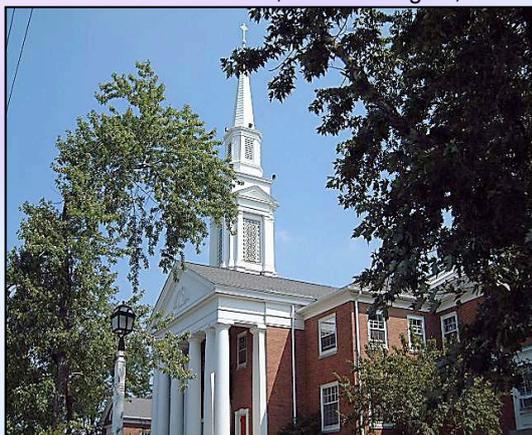
Since that evening several other cathedrals have sung JB's Fauxbourdon Canticles including Exeter, Wells and Manchester Cathedrals. Thank you!

Heartiest Congratulations to our last season's American Organ Scholar, Justin Miller

who, in addition to gaining a place at the Cleveland Institute of Music to study for his Master's degree, had just 'landed' the prestigious post of Director of Music of Christ Church, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio. This is a most beautiful 'Colonial' Church with a proud tradition of fine music.

Justin told your editor that for the audition he was up against 12 musicians who were more experienced, but that he was the successful one. Well done indeed, Justin.

And thanks for phoning me to ask for useful tips on how to go about it! Clearly they worked. JB



DAME MARY TANNER ...

... is not only the Mother of our Director of Music, **Richard Tanner**, but she is also much in demand around the world (as President of the World Council of Churches) to share her considerable expertise on church matters – in the highest places.

For example, during the recent triumphant visit of His Holiness, **Pope Benedict XVI**, who should be chosen to read the lesson in Westminster Abbey for the Pope's visit? Dame Mary, of course!



The following day, Dame Mary was with us, to present a new long-service medallion for the Girls' Choir during our Cathedral Old Choristers Annual Reunion. The design of the medallions is based on our 16th Century Madonna & Child Pax (see pp. 1, 3 & 19).

But this was not the only strong Blackburn connection during that Abbey service – the very first occasion in the Abbey's history when a Pope visited our national historic shrine, for The Dean of Westminster, **Dr. John Hall**, is a former Residentiary Canon of Blackburn, and so it was good to see, in one shot of that service, not only the Pope and Archbishop, but also our former Residentiary Canon & our present Bishop, Nicholas, - who had a very good seat!



One of the most impressive moments of that never-to-be-forgotten service occurred when the Pope and The Archbishop were invited to kiss **St. Augustine's Bible**.



This priceless book (dated AD 597 when St. Augustine brought

Christianity to this country) is now in the safe keeping of the library of JB's Cambridge College – and what is more, it is, (with other priceless manuscripts) kept within an enormous fire-proof and climate-controlled safe (as large as a room) which has been built within the rooms that JB occupied for three years when he was organ scholar of that College.

So to see the College Librarian, **Dr. Christopher de Hamel**, carry this book from the Abbey's High Altar to be revered by Pope and Archbishop, was a moment that your editor will never forget.

Look up [Parker Library](#) on the web to see more of the College Library's priceless treasures.

We heard afterwards that also in the congregation was another former Residentiary Canon of Blackburn, **Chris Chivers**, who was, of course, formerly Precentor of Westminster Abbey.



And how appropriate it was that the entire congregation of distinguished invited guests, representing all religions, burst into spontaneous applause as His Holiness and His Grace, led by Dean John Hall, processed down the nave of that most hallowed place. Hallelujahs all round!

Heartiest Congratulations to YPC Member **CALLUM SHAW**

... who, like our junior organ scholar, **Mary Ann Wootton**, has been accepted at Stoneyhurst College to study for his A levels. He will be studying biology, chemistry, maths and geography and is joining the College elite choir.



"What do you want to do when you leave school?" asked your editor, after he happened to bump into Callum one morning in the cathedral. "I want to become a Marine Biologist!" (Your editor didn't know what Marine Biologists did, but he covered up his ignorance fairly well!)

As competition for a place at Stoneyhurst is stiff (where Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of *Sherlock Holmes*, was a pupil), special congratulations to Callum and to Mary Ann are certainly in order!

The Dean welcomed these increasing links between Stoneyhurst College and Blackburn Cathedral – as do we all.

Blackburn Cathedral Old Choristers' Association Reunion Weekend

Old Choristers came from near and far for our 45th Annual Reunion in September – the longest journey was made by OC **TONY MURPHY** who flew all the way from his home in New Jersey to be with us! That's devotion for you!



Tony is seen here with outgoing Head Chorister **Matthieu Woodburn** whose outstanding singing (and ability to speak French) has greatly enhanced our choir.

Our oldest member present was **BERNARD WEST**, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday – he was a choirman with Tom Duerden, John Bertalot, David Cooper and Gordon Stewart! He was also a founder member of the Blackburn Bach Choir (*Renaissance Singers*) and its stalwart first secretary and treasurer.



Bernard West (L) talking with the Dean, with OCs **Eric Bancroft** and **Allan Holden**. Allan is recovering from a second hip replacement operation. It was good to see him with us.



MANY WERE THE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN THAT WEEKEND BUT, ALAS, WE CANNOT PACK THEM ALL INTO THESE PAGES. But Richard Tanner has put them on the Cathedral Choir Website. So 'Google' [Blackburn Cathedral](#) and find your photo there!

Also celebrating the BCOCA Annual Reunion with us were OCs (L-R)



Peter Fielding (who had recently celebrated his 80th birthday), **Adrian Wilson** from Blackburn, Choral Scholar **Tim Ferguson** from Manchester Grammar School, **Kit Dawson** – about to start his final year at Edinburgh University, and **Albert Ogden**, from the Fylde. Albert is probably our oldest Old (treble) Chorister, having joined the choir in 1936!



Draped around a convenient three-seater were (L-R) **John Marr**, BCOCA treasurer, OC Churchwarden **Philip Carr**, **David Smalley** (who still has a few sets of notelets to sell for BCOCA funds), **Gordon Shaw** – who is someone who can do anything, from installing the Dean's cooker, to producing 8 grand-daughters, and **Nigel Chew**, who joined the choir 41 years ago and, although he didn't know it, was about to get himself elected onto the BCOCA committee!



Bob Keen came all the way from Cheshire, **Mark Molyneux** (OC of Durham) is about to start studying for a policing degree at the University of Central Lancashire. It's a 2-year course – so watch out from 2012! **Emily Crewe** is our outgoing Sr. Old Chorister – who had a most successful year raising over £600 for BCOCA funds to buy two silver medallions for the Girls' Choir. (See later).

BCOCA Chairman **Stewart Hopkinson** could just be seen behind Emily, and incoming SOC **Phil Wilson** would shortly gear himself up to put on a tie.

The older generation was again very well represented (*see next page*)

Geoffrey Taylor who keeps sparkling despite being in his 80s, **John Highton**, who was also a Tom Duerden chorister, **Fred Dewhurst**, sometimes Cathedral assistant organist with TLD and in JB's early years, and **Ernie Gorner**.



Geoffrey, John, Fred & Ernie

Then came lunch – a delicious choice of sandwiches and pies and cakes prepared by our Café in the Crypt staff.



L-R **Michael Carr**, (Philip's son) **Sarah Chew** (who is in her third year at Cardiff – studying opera) and Choral Scholar **Tim Ferguson** (again!).

The young people were especially well represented this year:



Front: **Sarah Chew**, organ scholar **Chris Woodward** and Head Girl **Alex Wood**.

Back: Our three choral scholars: **Tom Stockwell** from Salisbury Cathedral, Lancing College, Truro Cathedral and Oxford. (That's impressive!)

Dave Young from Repton School, and now studying at Manchester University, and **Tim Ferguson** (again, again!).

Then followed our usual lively Annual Meeting chaired, as ever with due momentum and good humour by the **Dean**, and with a meticulous report from our attentive-to-detail secretary, **Heather Starkie**.



L-R: Chairman Stewart Hopkinson, The Dean and Secretary Heather Starkie, whose hard work had ensured the success of our whole weekend. Thank you, Heather.

Treasurer John Marr reported that funds were healthier this year, but we do need considerably more cash if **M&M** is to keep going in its present form. **Cheques: Blackburn Cathedral (for M&M), to the Bursar, Cathedral Close, Blackburn BB1 5AA. Thank you!**

Then came a remarkable rehearsal for Choral Evensong – sung by our boys and girl choristers, and our Old Choristers.

This was led, of course, by **Richard Tanner**, with **James Davy** at the organ.



The music for Evensong, chosen by SOC Emily, was
Come, my way, Cooper,
 (The Super Soloist: was **William Fielding**, below)
 Responses: Bond,
 Canticles:
 Howells Coll. Reg.
 Wesley's *Blessed be*



But Richard Tanner said to JB, 'There's no tenor soloist for the Howells' *Nunc*, so I'll have to sing the solo. Will you conduct?' **YESSSS!**



JB relished the opportunity to do this, for he hadn't conducted such a fine choir for a long time. The sound of the boys and girls was exquisite.

But Richard admitted that as he wasn't really a tenor, he would have to sing softly. No problem, for the choir were all watching the conductor like hawks – they had to, as JB was conducting (as usual) from memory and, being unencumbered with a music stand, he was able to look the singers in the eye at close quarters, which is the secret of how to challenge singers to give of their best at all times.

Well done, Choir, and very well done, Richard!



The soloist in Wesley's *Blessed be* was outgoing Head Girl **Alex Wood**. Many were the words of praise heaped upon both our young soloists.

But at Evensong there was an important ceremony at the beginning of the service. For not only had SOC **Emily Crewe** raised considerable money to buy two silver medallions for the Head Girls, but also **Dame Mary Tanner** (Richard's Mother)

had generously donated a silver medallion to be worn by the longest-serving girl chorister (to match the long-service medallion given to the boys in memory of JB's Mother).

How very good it was to have Dame Mary with us, for the previous day she had been reading the lesson in Westminster Abbey for a service with the Pope (see. 18).

And so one of Emily's medallions was presented to Head Girl, **Alex Wood** ... this was just in time, for in a few minutes she would become an OC. Alex is going to Durham University to study Maths.



And Dame Mary's medallion was presented to **Alison Holmes**. Proud parents watched all these ceremonies on Saturday and Sunday evening with much joy.

Alison would also be promoted to Head Girl at today's service – so it was all happening!



SOC **Emily Crewe** read the first lesson with her customary clarity and authority.

Then there were farewell ceremonies for **Alex Wood**, Deputy Head Chorister **Matthew Adelekan** and Head Chorister **Matthieu Woodburn** who had given outstanding service to our choirs. (Promotions to fill the boys' vacancies would take place at the next day's Evensong – for today was the Girls' turn!)

And at the end of the service our organ scholar, **Chris Woodward**, played the fugue: 'Solssons' by Maurice Durufle – very well indeed



And after the service many were the photos taken of Alison and Alex, with the donors of the medals standing proudly by. **Thank you, Emily and Dame Mary for your generosity.**



Compare the design of the Girls' new medallions with the Friends' Pax (see front cover) and the original 16th Century tiny Pax.

THE BCOCA ANNUAL DINNER

... was held that evening in the cathedral crypt – and what a successful evening it was!



There were half a dozen tables – and it was interesting to see how the OCs and their guests chose with whom to sit (with!). At the chairman's table was his wife, **Sue**; **Richard Tanner** and **Dame Mary Tanner**, and our incoming SOC, **Phil Wilson** – as well as other distinguished musicians.



At the **Dean's** table were mainly TLD Old Choristers, and also **Constance Heald** (OC Peter's widow) who thanked BCOCA for the gift of nearly £1,000 in Peter's memory for his charity.

How very good it was to welcome Constance here again – for she had been such a faithful attender with BCOCA founder member **Peter**, whom we miss sorely.



There was a bevy of beauty at the young people's table – this was a triumph on the part of SOC Emily and Secretary Heather to break the mould of men-only old choristers:

L-R: **Sarah Chew, Alex Wood, Claire Marsden, Jamie Bett, Emma Pearson, Emily Crewe**

It was especially good to see our very new OCs there: **Matthieu**



Woodburn
and
Matthew
Adelekan,
supported by
Deputy Head
Chorister
Jack
Aspinall.

And there were many more OCs and friends there – see your photo in the Cathedral’s website: [www. Blackburn Cathedral](http://www.BlackburnCathedral)



SOC Emily duly installed OC **Phil Wilson** as her successor before she dashed off to her new job, which is to organize THE SIXTEEN for all their world tours.

Phil was JB’s first Head Chorister way back in 1964 – he is highly intelligent, a wonderful singer and will contribute not only brains but also wit to his SOC year!

Thank you Emily – Welcome Phil.

But there was a surprise ending to the dinner when some of our young OCs (including our choral scholars) sang a topical song about the Pope (from the Yale Song book): *The Pope, he leads a jolly life*. It was such a success that they had to sing it again – and yet again the following morning after Sung Eucharist. Thank you, all!



And talking about the Pope (whose 4-day visit to Scotland and England was such a resounding success) – how very good it was to see that, at the end of the thrilling service in Westminster Cathedral (where the choir, led by **Martin Baker**, sang brilliantly, plus brass and glorious organ) every singer was presented to His Holiness – including Blackburn Old Chorister, **David Knight**, who is a distinguished lay clerk in that very fine choir.

David joined Blackburn Cathedral Choir as a boy in 1983

(immediately after JB had gone to the USA – though those events are not necessarily connected!) and was appointed to Westminster Cathedral in 2008. **Well done, David**



Sunday morning Eucharist in Blackburn Cathedral was again an Old Choristers’ event – with SOC **Phil Wilson** reading the first lesson, and four OCs taking the collection:

L-R: John Marr, Adrian Wilson, Albert Ogden and a worried looking Eric Bancroft. (Or did your photographer catch him at a bad moment?)



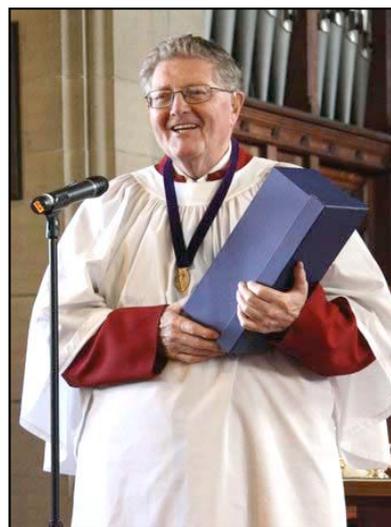
The Offertory was made by OCs **Gordon Fielding** and **Ralph Robinson** – and the choir sang Vierne’s *Messe Solonelle*.

It was a wonderful weekend – thanks to ALL.

And make sure to be with us next year (Sept. 17-18) which will coincide with BCOCA Founder-Chairman JB’s 80th birthday!

At Choral Evensong that day there were massive and well-deserved promotions to the boys’ choir. *See next page.*

Heartiest Congratulations to stalwart Tenor: Owen Kennedy



who recently received an award for being a chorister for more than 70 years. He started singing at the age of 7 in the choir of St. Paul’s Newcastle, later to Ripon Cathedral and eventually he became a most valued member of the Blackburn Bach Choir and Renaissance Singers. He looks perennially youthful, and his lovely smile and dulcet voice cheer all whom he meets.

Owen, we salute you!



Admissions and promotions in the Boys' Choir of Blackburn Cathedral, Sunday 19 September 2010
L-R Kian Hartley, Ethan Prior, Nicholas Day, Christopher Snape, Robert Mitchell, Niki Zohdi, Joseph Kennedy (*Head Chorister*),
Jack Aspinall, (*Dots Bertalot long service medallion.*) William Fielding, Harry Brookes, Elliott day, Callum Briggs, Adam Kennedy,