

## Music & More ONLINE 41

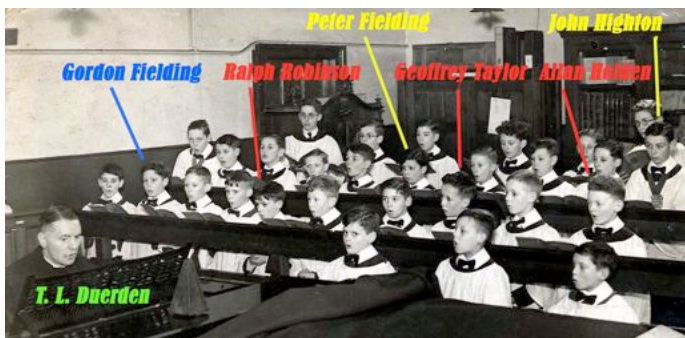
### PETER FIELDING:

### A LIFE OF RICHEST MUSICAL CREATIVITY



**Peter Fielding** (3 July 1930 -15 March 2014) was the eldest of three brothers, all of whom were choristers in the choir of Blackburn Cathedral under the legendary TLD – **Peter, Gordon & Paul**.

Their sister, **Ruth**, who died in 2003, and is buried in the cathedral along with her parents, was an accomplished pianist and singer and used to play the piano for the 9.15am Sunday services for many years. (That was before the YPC were formed.)



*The choristers and T L Duerden in the old Song School in St. Mary's House in 1942, showing Peter and Gordon Fielding, and some of their contemporaries who, happily, are still with us ... including Ralph Robinson, Geoffrey Taylor, Allan Holden and John Highton.*

Peter was part of a long line of musical Fieldings from Blackburn, going back 200 years, when one of his ancestors was married in the old parish church, which was knocked down in the 1820s to make way for the 1826 parish church – which is now the Nave of our cathedral.

Peter's father and grandfather were committed members of the choir of St. John's Church, Blackburn. When TLD was appointed to the cathedral from St. John's in 1939, he brought with him Peter and his father, **Harold** where they were soon joined by Peter's middle brother, **Gordon** and youngest brother, **Paul**.

Peter's father, **Harold Fielding** was a woodworker, and it was he who designed and made the rehearsal music desks, seen in the 1942 photo, which lasted us for 50 years and on which the present music desks are based.

Peter's middle brother, **Gordon**, was a banker and is a strong member of our Choirs' Association, of which he was a long-time treasurer. He and his wife **Sheila**, are faithful attenders at our BCCA Annual Reunions.

**Peter, Gordon and Paul** saw the completion of our cathedral as it is today, from the time when there were no transepts or central Lantern Tower.



*(We're going through similar major changes to our Cathedral Close right now with the building of a Deanery, Canons' houses, apartments for music staff and virgers – it's all happening at Blackburn!)*

The Lancashire Telegraph included a fine article about Peter in their April 11<sup>th</sup> edition.

They made the point that Peter was one of the founders of the Ramsbottom Music Festival and that he was not only a renowned pianist but also that he worked as a biomedical scientist at Queen's Park Hospital. Son **John** said, 'He was a very generous and giving man ... he followed his heart, rather than his head, all his life and devoted many years to music.'

Peter was a keen Blackburn Rovers supporter and he also took a keen interest in pathology. Brother **Gordon** said, 'Even at an early age he could often be found dissecting small creatures – dead, of course!'

Peter's youngest brother, **Paul**, sings a fine alto in our cathedral choir and plays the double bass in the Blackburn Symphony Orchestra. Paul's wife, **Rachel** is often seen as sub deacon at our 10.30 Eucharist, or server, or even assistant Virger, (moving chairs, polishing floors...) she is also a leading soprano in the Renaissance Singers.

Their two children are also gifted members of our choirs: **William** is Head Chorister, plays the organ (aiming for ARCO), piano (Stravinsky's 24 Preludes and Fugues!), cello (in Blackburn Symphony Orchestra) and trumpet. And **Elizabeth** is a member of our Girls' Choir. She plays the violin and is also seen as a server at our 10.30 Eucharist – when she recently read a lesson!



*(Above) William, Paul, Elizabeth and Rachel Fielding with Raymond Watton (a member of the FoBCM committee, who was Best Man at their wedding) at the Reception after Peter's funeral on 28<sup>th</sup> March.*

Peter's own family is amazing:

His daughter, **Hilary**, is a distinguished cellist; she and her daughter, **Sacha**, who is an equally distinguished cellist, gave a Wednesday recital accompanied by Peter 3 years ago. It was



thrilling to see and hear them all.

*Sacha, Peter & Hilary*

Peter's son, **Mark Fielding**, (see next page) is a professor at the Guildhall School of Music in London.

One of Mark's piano students was a finalist in the BBC's *Young Musician of the Year* recently. Peter and Mark have made a CD of piano duets which many of us treasure.





*Brother Paul, with Peter's sons Mark and John at the Reception after Peter's funeral.*

Peter's son **Robert**, (who was one of JB's earliest young Blackburn choristers!) is Director of Music of **Romsey Abbey** where he is also Church Music Adviser to the Diocese of Salisbury where he directs the Salisbury Diocesan Certificate in Church Music programme, *Pipe Up!* and courses for Volunteer Organists.

When Robert gave a Wednesday lunchtime recital for us, he brought his son **Richard** who was a chorister in the choir of Salisbury Cathedral!



*Three generations of musical Fieldings: Peter, Robert and Richard.*

**Beck Thompson**, (Peter's second eldest daughter) wrote:

**John, Sarah and I** inherited our dad's musical talents.

John and I were in Bury Youth Orchestra for many years as a violinist and percussionist respectively; we are all pianists and Sarah also plays the clarinet.

We might not have decided to take it up professionally like the others (they were hard acts to follow!) but we still enjoy our music.

Two of us followed in our dad's footsteps into scientific/medical professions instead. He was proud of all six of us, and of his many grandchildren.

He was teaching several of his youngest grandchildren the piano and always talked about how gifted he thought they were, and his second youngest (**Holly**) also learns the violin on a 1/8 size. We will always tell them how lucky they were to get such a great musical start from their amazing granddad.

He said that listening to Bach 'turned him inside out.'

Peter has given many piano recitals in Blackburn Cathedral, and also for the Clef Club in Accrington where he was a founder-member.

His choice of music for our cathedral recitals was always ambitious – Beethoven Sonatas, Chopin Etudes, and much more. On one occasion he finished with a piano duet – the second part being played by his young nephew, William.



*Young William and Uncle Peter bowing after their duet.*



We must also include a photo of Peter actually playing the piano - with page-turner Rachel Fielding in attendance.

Whenever he played at the cathedral he was always supported by members of the Fielding clan!



*L-R: Nephew William, PETER, grandson Luca, daughter Sarah and baby, Peter's wife ANDREA, son John, youngest brother Paul with Rachel, and middle brother Gordon.*

**Peter was also supported at his recitals by his chorister contemporaries:**

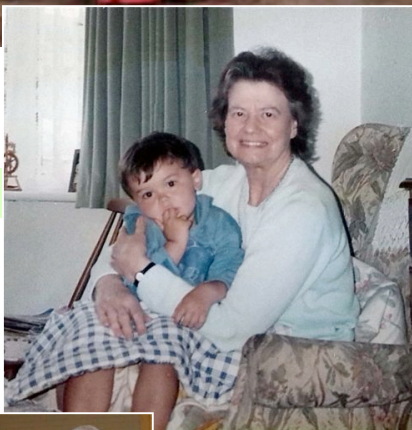


*L-R: Allan Holden, (see the very young Allan in the 1942 photo!) Tony Robinson, Ralph Robinson, Eric Bancroft, brother Gordon, Adrian Wilson and chairman Gordon Shaw.*



Peter, with his two brothers, was a faithful and enthusiastic supporter of BCOCA / BCCA, at our Choirs' Association Annual Reunions, along with their TLD contemporaries. Here we all are at our 2007 Reunion.

Peter also celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in style, with an enormous party for family and friends at Whalley Abbey. There were speeches and lots of food, lots of laughter and lots of music. (See below)



Here's Ruth Fielding, Peter's sister, with very young William.

Peter's middle brother, Gordon, wrote:

Sheila and I saw Peter on the Sunday before he died. He was surrounded by his children and grandchildren, who

always gave him so much pleasure. We sometimes referred to him as Mr Quiverful, as in The Barchester Chronicles.

He valued his association with BCCA and the friends he had from many years' membership of the choir and subsequently.

It is good that he passed on his musical skills to Robert, Mark and Hilary who were Peter & Joyce's children, to continue with the Fielding tradition.

We have many happy memories, both musically and as close relatives. We will cherish them.

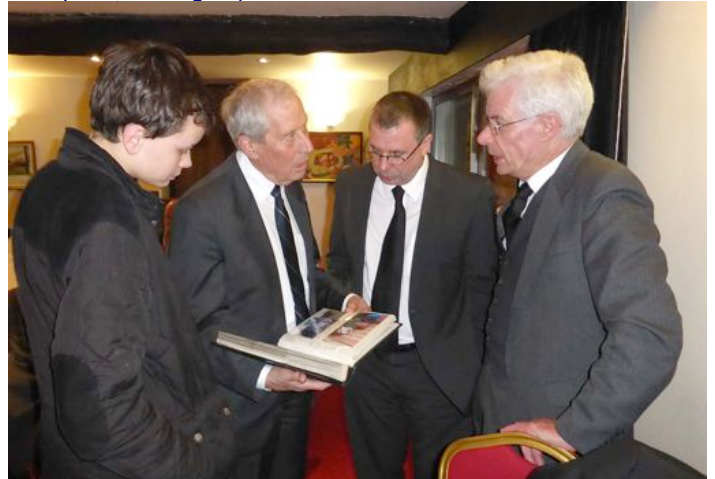


Peter with guests and food at his 80th

His funeral (which was a service of **Celebration and Thanksgiving**) was held in Dundee United Reformed Church in Ramsbottom.

And afterwards there was a Reception at Mytton Fold Hotel, near Whalley, where family and friends rejoiced in every memory of dear Peter.

*William, Gordon, Robert and Paul Fielding at the Reception, looking at photos of Peter's music-filled life.*



Peter, thank you for blessing us so richly, so joyfully and so musically for so long.

**Peter's daughter, Hilary, wrote:** My Mother and Father were married in the Cathedral in June 1955, where her 3 children, namely Robert, Hilary and Mark, were also Christened. She is Grandmother to 8 children.

**From Constance Heald in Ely:**

I can't remember a time when Peter Fielding was not around at Old Chorister events. He had such a wonderful sense of humour - another face much to be missed at such gatherings in the future.

**Peter loved parties**

Here he is with some fellow former choristers at his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday!



Allan Holden, PETER, Gordon Fielding, and Ralph Robinson

They can be seen as young lads in the TLD photo on p.1.