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see p. 2



Friends of  
Blackburn  
Cathedral Music

# BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

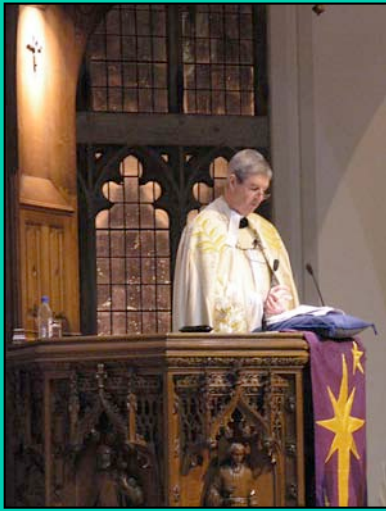
F of BCM Edition No. 17  
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**February, 2006**

Editor: Dr. John Bertalot,  
Cathedral Close, Blackburn, BB1 5AA  
[john@bertalot.demon.co.uk](mailto:john@bertalot.demon.co.uk)



Blackburn  
Cathedral  
Old Choristers  
Association



## Epiphany







**Our Epiphany Carol Service on Sunday 8th January** attracted a packed Nave, headed by the **Lord Lieutenant and Lady Shuttleworth**, and **Mayors** in their heavy gold chains from City, Boroughs and Towns throughout the Diocese.

The **Dean** led the service engagingly from the Pulpit and the **YPC**, conducted by **Greg Morris** and accompanied by **Richard Tanner**, led the music most beautifully.

The story of the Three Kings offering their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh was portrayed by **Canons Andrew Clitherow, Peter Ballard and Chris Chivers**. The sight (and smell) of the incense as it rose in clouds over the altar was stunning. (*Photos p. 1*)



Halfway through the service the clergy processed to the South Transept where **Bishop Nicholas** blest the water of Baptism. This was done out of sight of the congregation, but your staff photographer captured the moment. It was most impressive.

After the service **Dean Christopher** welcomed members of the congregation to a Reception in the Crypt.

Guests included **Lord and Lady Shuttleworth**. Lady Shuttleworth is, of course, chairman of the Cathedral Council. They were most interested in the effect the rhythmic side-drum made to the choir's singing of *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day!*

"We wondered if it was one of the stops on the magnificent cathedral organ!" said the Lord Lieutenant.



Why  
**£3.00?**

The last four editions of this Newsletter were printed *free of charge* thanks to the generosity of IMAGE WORKS and the constructive input of **Peter Abbott**, Chairman of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music. We are so *very* grateful.

But IMAGE WORKS can no longer do this for us **for each printing cost over £1,000**, and so we have to raise funds to pay for future editions. Plans are going ahead for this – not least in offering **advertising space at £50-00** per quarter page. 1,000 copies are printed which go all over the world and are read from cover to cover – and kept! If you would like a year's advertising (4 editions @ £50 each) please contact the editor immediately. [john@bertalot.demon.co.uk](mailto:john@bertalot.demon.co.uk).

We are so very grateful to the following sponsors who have so willingly and speedily contributed up to £100 each to pay for the printing of this edition. In alphabetical order: **Derek Adams, Anonymous, Christopher Armstrong, John Bertalot, Frank Hare, Stephen Holmes, Peter Heald, Bob Keen, Bryan Lamb, John Marr, Renaissance Singers, Stephen Ward, Brian Whittle and John Wilkinson. THANK YOU!**

If you haven't subscribed to FoBCM or BCOCA, please order your copies right now (4 per year) and send a cheque for **£15-00 to FoBCM, Cathedral Close, BLACKBURN BB1 5AA**



## SUCCESS UPON SUCCESS 1

The Cathedral Children's Choir, under the joyful leadership of **Nicola Mills** (with enthusiastic assistance from Head Chorister **Adam Whittaker**) goes from strength to strength.



The children rehearse for 45 minutes every Friday, and their eager gusto is very evident in this photo. Here they're doing warming up exercises before learning a song 'What I want for breakfast is (clap!) toast and marmalade'. Admirable sentiments! In December they sang three items in the Christmas Spectacular which earned them vociferous applause. See p. 23. If you'd like your son or daughter (age 4-7) to join this happy crew, phone the Music Office: **01254-50-30-91**

## SUCCESS UPON SUCCESS 2

Our Wednesday lunchtime recitals (1.00 pm) are attracting some of the most talented and joyous organists and musicians in this country. (*Whoops – organists are musicians!*)

There's never been such a regular array of scintillating visiting talent in the cathedral's history invited by our efficient music department.

In the autumn, for example, we welcomed **Richard Rowntree**, a brilliant tenor from Wells Cathedral, and **David Bednall**, the equally talented Sub Organist of Wells who gave us a sparkling programme of songs – two of them were by David Bednall himself, which were exquisite.

A delicious lunch is available in our newly refurbished Crypt Café – before and after each recital. *Who's who? See next column*



*Clockwise from the left:*

Dr. **Rachel Thornton** (Greg Morris's wife, who had brought their daughter, Anna, 'Morris Minor', to the recital), **David Bednall**, **Philippa Hyde**, **Greg Morris**, **JB** (your editor) trying to give **Richard Rowntree** a copy of the Cathedral Newsletter, (*'No thanks, I read it in bed this morning when I was staying at the Tanners'!*), **Richards Rowntree-& Tanner**, Organ Scholar **Jonathan Turner** and (foreground) **Malcolm Bulcock**, MBE, organist of Habergham Parish Church who's a strong supporter of these recitals.

## IAN LEDSHAM

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Ian Ledsham last September. He died as a result of a car accident –being hit by another car driven by teenagers who also were killed. Although he was not a cathedral chorister (he was in the choir of Ashton-on-Ribble, St. Andrew) yet he was one of the very first Bishop's Choristers along with **Ian Harrison**, **Charlie Hopwood** and **Derek Crompton**.

He sang with the cathedral choir in 1975 when we made a concert tour of Holland and North Germany and also sang with some of us on the RSCM Courses at Coventry and Canterbury Cathedrals.

He was a full-time musician with his own music business, and directed the music in several large churches. He had a lovely sense of humour and will be sadly missed. We send our deepest sympathy to Angela, and to their two sons, Oliver (16) and Alex (18).

**HABEMUS PAPAM**  
Choral Vespers for the Election of Pope Benedict XVI

**THE CHOIR OF LEEDS CATHEDRAL**

A service broadcast live on BBC Radio 3

**BENJAMIN SAUNDERS**

## HABEMUS PAPER "We have a Pope"

Heartiest congratulations to our former Assistant Director of Music, **BEN SAUNDERS**, who is now **Director of Music of Leeds RC Cathedral**, for he has just brought out two stunning CDs.

The first is a recording of the live broadcast they made on BBC Radio 3 the day after **Pope Benedict XVI** had been elected. Ben said, 'We'd been booked by the BBC many months before to make this broadcast and so we hastily had to amend our programme to celebrate the Pope's election.'

It seems from listening to this outstanding CD that our RC brethren sing even more than the Anglicans for their service of Evening Prayer. The sound of the choir is exquisite and the



majesty of their brand new organ (by Phoenix Organs of Preston) is thrilling.

Ben had a highly polished choir of Adults and Choral Scholars for this broadcast – 28 in all (our own **Matthew Oglesby** joined them last September) and a Girls' choir of 25 equally highly polished singers.

Ben adds, 'We've had another really good intake of men this year, and its really good to have **Matthew Oglesby** singing with us.

'Although the Cathedral is closed for the next year for restoration, the BBC are continuing to be keen and have offered us the Christmas Midnight Mass slot this year on Radio 4. Interestingly, we are doing it from Corpus Christi Church in Leeds (as the pretend Cathedral) which as I'm sure you know was designed by **Gordon Thorne** of Blackburn Diocese and has a **Walker** organ contemporary with the Blackburn instrument.'

Ben's other CD, **LAUDA SION** (which includes music sung by his four cathedral choirs), is equally thrilling. Heartiest congratulations, Ben. We're enormously proud of you. See p. 16 for another photo!

Phone Leeds Cathedral to purchase these CDs: **0113 244 8634**

## Our Busiest Advent & Christmas Ever? by Richard Tanner

Advent is always a busy season in any cathedral, and here in Blackburn 2005 saw one of the busiest we have had. In total, there were fourteen Carol Services at the cathedral, and at all of them the cathedral music staff were actively involved.

The season opened with the Advent Carol Service on Sunday, 27th November: the **Cathedral Choir** was on great form and music included two pieces commissioned by the choir: *Veni Domine Jesu* (1999) by Andrew Simpson and *Ave Maria* (2004) by David Briggs.

There then followed a wealth of musical events covering a wide breadth of sacred and seasonal music, ranging from my performance of Messiaen's *La Nativité* (with poetry selected by **Chris Chivers**) on Sunday Dec. 18th, attended by a select but devoted group of Messiaen devotees, to chorister **Arthur Geldard's** outstanding performance of *The Snowman* at the Christmas Spectacular on Saturday 17th December (see p.23).

A large number of musicians were involved in the seasonal music making. We were delighted to be joined by the excellent **Northern Chamber Orchestra** for the **Christmas Spectacular** (pp. 20-24) and I was thrilled to direct 200 local school children at the "Children for Children" Christmas Concert on December 5th.

Dec. 23rd is the date for the annual Blackburn Cathedral **Nine Lessons and Carols**, sung by the Cathedral Choir, but the **Girls' Choir** were also busy this season as they appeared at the **Christmas Spectacular** and **Lancashire Evening Telegraph Carol Service** (14/12) – 70 of our boys and girls formed the choir on that occasion and we gave what I think was the first performance of **JB's** lovely new arrangement of "I wonder as I wander" (repeated at Midnight Mass).

A most enjoyable feature of the season is the opportunity to form the traditional ad hoc choir from past and present cathedral choristers and Renaissance Singers for the Midnight Mass.

It was a great joy to see a full house on New Year's Eve – every ticket was sold for the concert in which soprano **Philippa Hyde** and the very talented trumpeter **Tim Barber** joined me for our now regular New Year's Eve Concert – a fund raiser for the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music, which was followed by a Champagne Reception!



The **YPC** brought the round of Carol Services to a close at the Epiphany Carol Service (as featured at the start of the Newsletter).

That does not complete the list of performers, however, as the **Renaissance Singers** had four engagements this Advent around

the Diocese (St Nicholas' Fleetwood, St Peter's Salesbury, St James' Altham and Salmesbury Hall), and of course we must not forget the **Children's Choir** who charmed us all at the Christmas Spectacular and Crib Service on Christmas Eve.

If that list leaves you breathless, don't forget that we cannot rest on our laurels as we have a busy Spring 2006 ahead, with the Mozart Festival, details of which are in this edition.

All in all I had 27 extra engagements in one month, including directing the music for 6 Daily Services on BBC Radio 4!

I have such a long list of thanks to those involved in all these events at the Cathedral, not least of all **our dedicated singers and their families, my colleagues in the music department, members of the FoBCM who provide invaluable practical help, the very patient and professional Virgers and supportive Chapter, not forgetting our highly talented and tireless editor/photographer and Organist Emeritus, Dr. John Bertalot.**

May I wish you all a very happy 2006, and I look forward to welcoming you to events here at the cathedral during the coming season.

**RICHARD & GREG: Heartiest congratulations and thanks for all that you do for us. You are amazing! Ed.**

## EXETER CATHEDRAL WORKSHOPS

Your editor had the privilege of taking part in an extraordinary day of music-making in **Exeter Cathedral** in October.

**Over 400 musicians and worship leaders** had gathered to learn more about music in worship – both 'trad' and 'up-beat'. Everything from plainsong, through hymnody and voice production to worship songs led by guitars and African drums! **JB led three one-hour workshops in the Chapter House** on (i) how to enthuse one's choir, (ii) how to enable one's choir to sing musically, and (iii) how to enable adults to sight-sing.

**Zeal, zest and joy** were evident throughout that beautiful cathedral and the whole day was superbly organized. **Choir parents** (what would we do without them?) and other adult helpers were on hand to answer questions and serve endless cups of coffee and tea. One even drove three of us to the station to catch our train home at the end of that amazing and most memorable day.



JB welcoming participants in the Chapter House

## A HARVEST OF MUSICIANS

When our cathedral celebrated **HARVEST on SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**, it also celebrated a harvest of young musicians.



Nicola Mills' Children's Choir attracted a large congregation for **PARISH COMMUNION AT 9.00 am** when they sang John Rutter's lovely *Gaelic Blessing*.



And, of course, there were the 'regulars' who always enjoy the singing of the **YPC**, who sang the *Mass of St. Thomas* by **David Thorne**, Organist of Portsmouth RC Cathedral.

A large congregation attended the **CATHEDRAL EUCHARIST AT 10.30**, sung by the cathedral choir (Mozart's *Missa Brevis*.) The choir of men and boys is enormous these days. There's not enough room for all the boys – thanks to the active recruitment programme in local schools being carried out by the music staff.

### SIX CATHEDRAL ORGANISTS!

Our new Junior Organ Scholar, **Tom Daggett** (see page 10) was there with his colleagues. And so just before the congregation enjoyed a super **HARVEST LUNCH** in the Crypt (only £2-50 each!) your editor thought it would be a good idea to photograph the three Cathedral Organ Scholars with their Mentors, **Greg Morris** and **Richard Tanner**. But they suggested that the Organist Emeritus should be included in the picture, so **Canon Hindley** wielded JB's camera with skill.



L-R: **Greg Morris, Joshua Abbott, Tom Daggett, Jonathan Turner, Richard Tanner & John Bertalot**

Where else could one find so many organists (three of them being Fellows of the Royal College of Organists – one with two prizes!) or such talented and keen organ students?

We then joined the rest of the congregation who were enjoying a delicious self-service meal with an embarrassment of choice.

There was a similar generous choice when 'pudding time' came.

**Geraldine Armstrong** was there offering us lemon meringue, strawberries and cream, cherry pie and I don't know what else.



At **CHORAL EVENSONG** (Stanford in C and Elgar's *Fear not, O land*) the **Dean** upgraded four boys and gave awards to two others. (See below)



In his **SERMON** he combined very neatly the message from the 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson (about Christian giving) with the work of our cathedral musicians, and especially the upgraded choristers! He said:

**"If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"**  
1 John 3.17.

**"The Blue Box."**

"The Kashmir earthquake has brought the **blue collection box** to the back of the Cathedral once more for donations to help the victims. And today, being our harvest festival, yet more blue boxes, conveying similar help for those in need, have appeared in surprising numbers. One box collects money only. . .



. . . but the other style of box, **the aquabox** – new to us – transports gifts that are often surplus to our requirements to those enduring traumatic conditions.

### St. John.

"If we scrutinise our lesson from the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of John today, he talks about giving as being characteristic of the Christian life. It is one of the tests of being a Christian. Had he been in charge of a church – the church which met in the front room of his house in those days – then he would have had a blue box



at the door on every occasion! Why is this? For St. John, it was a simple matter. It was the acid test of our care for our neighbour, especially for our neighbour in need.



“St. John goes further. We are not to ‘close our hearts against the needy’. Don’t withhold your compassion, he says. To be truly Christian is to be very human.

“We are all subject to the heart-rending calls for international aid and our society responds wonderfully well but Christians now try to give regularly not just from their abundance but also from *their need to give as Christians*, either abundantly or sacrificially.

“Whether it is blue collecting boxes, blue aquaboxes or blue stewardship envelopes, they issue a challenge to us all. They remind us that the test of Christianity at the turn of the second century as well as today is defined practically by our generosity. Like a blood donor, it improves our spiritual health.



**Harvesting Gifts.**

“St. John thus encourages us to see that our generosity is a human gift that needs to be nurtured by our Christian faith and by our community life. Today is our harvest festival and it is right that we should focus on God’s gifts to us in this way. We are merely stewards of these good things. We are also stewards of our own gifts and of one another. It is therefore a happy coincidence to be able to hold our choir promotions on this day for within these 4 young boys, great gifts are lodged. Who knows how they might issue further.

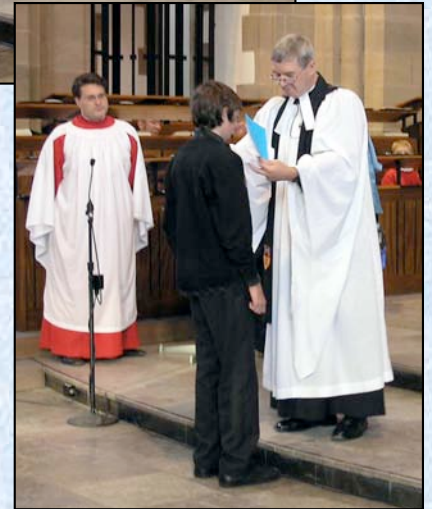


*The Dean upgrading Anthony Grey, Alex Whittaker, James Mitchell and Matthieu Woodburn to the rank of Chorister.*

“It is not a coincidence however that these gifts have been spotted either by parents or teachers or by our own music staff. Like the gift of generosity within us, or any old hammers or buckets in the garage which can be put to greater use, we have a responsibility to encourage such potential.



*Prefect Arthur Geldard receives his Dean’s Award for excellence*



*OC Tom Croxson receives his Arch-deacon’s Award from the Dean in recognition of Tom’s many years of loyal and faithful service to the boys’ choir.*

“To sing with one’s pals may not be so much of a sacrifice for these choristers themselves but it does present certain challenges to parents and schools and our own music staff. We thank them most heartily for rising to that challenge.



*The new Dean’s Chorister watches Richard Tanner closely.*

“The beneficiaries of these musical gifts may not live in Kashmir or Banda Ache or any other devastated area on God’s earth. No, but the offering of music does have a direct effect upon our ability to be generous as a community. One begets the other, though one is no substitute for the other.

**“As we recognize in these boys today the quality of their gift and their giving, let us also pray that such generosity will continue to inspire others to reach their potential as joyful givers. Amen.”**



## TWO JUNIOR ORGAN SCHOLARS by Greg Morris

Last year, **Josh Abbott** was our Junior Organ Scholar, and he was responsible for putting away music in the library after services on Sundays when Music Scholar **Emily Crewe** was away. He also played before one or two services and turned pages for me.

He is still JOS and singing in the YPC, but we now have 2 JOSs – **Tom Daggett** being the other.



We got to know about Tom through my work at St Wilfrid's, where he's a pupil. (I conduct the school choir there.) I discovered he was learning the organ by himself, and offered to teach him. I quickly discovered he's a talented player, roped him into the YPC, and he has just been offered our second Junior Organ Scholarship.

The two JOS-es' duties will be to assist Senior Organ Scholar **Jonathan Turner** with the library, page-turning and anything else when required! We will also aim to get them to play before services on an occasional basis. I teach all 3 organ scholars.

**TOM DAGGETT** told your editor about his life of music:

At the age of eight, I reluctantly began to study the piano after having been pressured by my Mum. I began to study with Mrs. Judith Rawlinson of Burnley and soon discovered a great love for the instrument.

By the age of nine, I was taking my Grade one piano exam. Following a good result, I began to compete in the Colne Music Festival where I won first place; this boosted my confidence and it was then that I was told that I had a talent. Members of my family have been musicians for generations; it must run in the blood!

I then progressed onto further grades, again scoring well. It was after about grade two that I began to compete in Burnley Music Festival; this was a larger festival than I had previously played in, however, I gained further first places.

Now that I am 15, I have been competing in festivals for almost 7 years. In 2005, I was honoured to win four prizes, one of which was the 'Junior Piano Trophy'.

I continued to work through my grades and in 2004 I took my grade 7 exam. I intend to sit my Grade 8 exam this coming spring although I have been playing Grade 8 standard pieces for a while now!

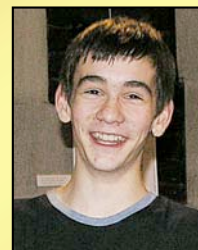
I have been in one of the school choirs for a number of years now and am currently working toward my GCSEs this year.

When I joined the senior choir at St. Wilfrid's High School, Blackburn, **Greg Morris** began to conduct our choir. I soon began to know Greg better and I discussed the fact that I had been searching for an organ teacher. Greg immediately and very kindly offered to teach me and I was overjoyed! I had been at that point 'playing around' on my church organ for a while but had not begun to play properly.



When Greg began to teach me, I felt extremely privileged to be taught by such an excellent organist and am thrilled to play such a fantastic organ!

Since then, I was presented with the title 'Junior Organ Scholar' alongside **Joshua Abbott**.



I am extremely grateful to the Cathedral music staff and the clergy for this brilliant opportunity. I am currently playing the organ at around grade 5 standard and hope to begin my organ exams soon. I have a love for the organ now as I do for the piano and it's great!

**Tom: You remind me of one of our most talented choristers, Ivor Bolton who, during my time here, passed his FRCO whilst he was still at school! Welcome! JB.**

## Dr. Gordon Stewart 1

Heartiest congratulations to our former Director of Music, **GORDON STEWART** who was awarded a well-earned and thoroughly deserved honorary **Doctorate of Letters** at the University of Huddersfield in November. (Photos, page 16)

"It was a marvellous day," he told your editor. "There was a procession of dignitaries to the Town Hall (where I've been organist for the past 15 years) and then someone said a whole lot of nice things about me and I was made a doctor!" Wow!

Gordon made yet another appearance on the BBC's TV **Songs of Praise** in October. He, along with other luminaries such as **Graham Kendrick** and the **Precentor of St. Paul's Cathedral**, explained to **Pam Rhodes** why the hymns chosen for the 'Top 20' in the country were so good!



**Our magnificent organ console made a super backdrop to what Gordon said! It made for compelling viewing.**

Gordon wrote to your editor: "I have not seen the programme yet as I have only today got back from at short tour in the US. I played in Lubbock (Texas), Williamsburg, Abingdon, Middleburg, Wilson College (Pennsylvania) and Decatur (IL). I had been to most of the places before, so saw lots of 'old' friends. All very pleasant.

Off to bed to try to get over the jet-lag quickly!"

## LETTER FROM former Asst. DoM DAVID GOODENOUGH in Edinbrrrr.

Dear John,

Very many thanks for the October Newsletter

Firstly, I'm very sorry to say that Claire and I will not be able to be a part of the 40th Anniversary Concert of the Renaissance Singers. I'll have my organist's hat on that evening myself, as I play the 'Grande Orgue' part of Widor's



epic mass for two choirs and two organs for our School Concert on the mighty Willis here in St. Mary's. See, I haven't been able to leave the music alone after all! I do hope it all goes well for you all. Please do pass on our best wishes to anyone who remembers us as you take your rehearsals.



All's going well here at Fettes, thanks, and I'm very much enjoying being a Housemaster. Once you've got used to the endless late nights and early mornings, it's not really too bad.

The FBCM Newsletter is, as ever, massively impressive. Congratulations on another superb edition. Surely, there can be no other Cathedral in the land which does it like Blackburn!

Best wishes  
**David**

## HOWARD'S END

*These photographs were taken at Howard Waddell's very last service – Choral Evensong on 30<sup>th</sup> October – when he had handed his silver Virge to Mark Pickering, the interim Head Virger. ("I feel powerless", Howard confessed to your editor after the service!)*

After an impressive morning service, there was a Reception in the crypt for Howard (who has been appointed Head Verger of Chichester Cathedral) which was attended by a host of his friends and admirers.



*Howard took the collection for the last time. Evensong was sung superbly by the men's choir, directed by Greg Morris with Jonathan Turner at the organ.*

In his remarks about Howard at the Reception, the Dean reminded us all of his Installation as Dean on Advent Saturday 2001.

"There was an interminable wait before the service began. Having received communion in the Columbarium from the hands of **Canon Galilee**, I was put in my vestry and the door was closed. All manner of life went on outside but the minutes - and probably hours! - crawled by as I pondered what might await me upstairs.

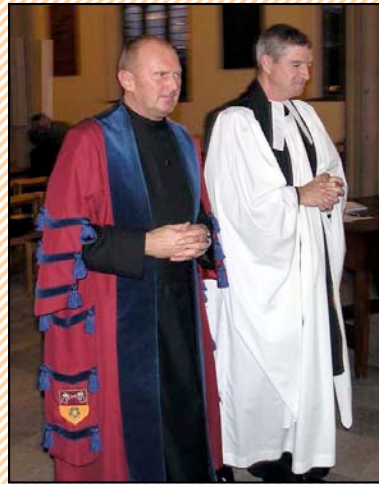
"Suddenly a quiet knock was heard on the door. In slid Howard, asking if I needed anything. 'A gin and tonic might be handy', I said in jest. Out slid Howard.

"Two minutes later, another knock on the door; in came Howard with a gin and tonic! How he managed to conjure up such resources at that critical moment was beyond me then and still is now! This was typical of the man, his thoughtfulness and his generosity", said the Dean.



The Dean went on to outline other contrasting personal gifts of the departing Dean's Virger: his zero tolerance policy for the cathedral and his spiritual maturity. "How many of us have been shown a **red card** by Howard? I have!" admitted the Dean.

The Dean also commented on the danger of all Christian Ministers - ordained or lay - from over-exposure to the sacred. (*Current choristers beware!*) "Having to celebrate the Eucharist day after day, week after week, is not only a great privilege but can also breed a contempt for The Sacraments, especially if one is late, or busy or sleepy very early in the morning.



"Howard and his team of virgers are aware of all this and conduct themselves with great sensitivity and decorum, knowing that whatever their current feelings, they are participating not only in the world's greatest mystery but also in the world's greatest drama."

*Instead of Virging the Dean after Evensong, Howard recessed with the Dean.*

The Dean concluded his thanks by reminding us of Howard's great generosity, from which we have all been the beneficiaries. "Chichester's gain is certainly our loss". All of us agreed, with much cheering.

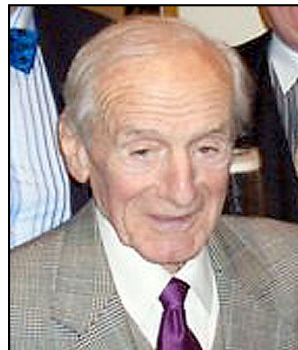


*Final photo with Canon Andrew Hindley and Dean Christopher Armstrong. Howard: Fare-well and thank you!*

## LETTER FROM

**Dr. Francis Jackson, OBE**

**Former Organist & Master of the Choristers, York Minster, who played our temporary 4-rank organ for the Rehallowing of the Nave in October, 1965**



My dear John,

Thank you very much indeed for the latest Newsletter from Blackburn. I don't know how you do it! It was good to be reminded of the great **Rehallowing and 'the royalty'** as a friend of mine referred to any member of it.

I am very thrilled that you like the recording I made of all Sir Edward Bairstow's organ music. It's a pity he didn't write more.

*Dr. Jackson's Bairstow recording is a must for all organists! JB*

*Lots of best wishes  
Always as ever  
Francis*



## LETTER FROM OC Harold 'Stan' Stancliffe in Lymington, Hants

Stan was a Prefect way back in 1940.

He a Margaret attended our 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion in September.

Dear John,

We have just received the October edition of the Newsletter and were delighted with your coverage of the BCOCA Reunion in September. It was nice of many Old Choristers to come to us to say hello although after some 65 years it was difficult to remember their looks.

We see that the meeting next year [16-17<sup>th</sup> September Ed] is at Whalley Abbey and we will try to get there.

We thought that the Six Choirs photograph was excellent and we would like to order one.

Once again it was good to meet you all and to sing in the Cathedral again.

With best wishes,  
Yours aye, **Stan**



## NEXT YEAR'S BCOCA REUNION, Saturday-Sunday, 16-17 Sept. 2006

will be at the **Cathedral** as usual  
(for lunch & Choral Evensong)

but the **Annual Dinner** will be at **Whalley Abbey**,  
with **accommodation** for those who travel long distances.

The refurbished bedrooms (en suite) are very splendid,  
so we are told!. **Only £34-00 B & B**

## LETTER FROM OC INDRA HUGHES in New Zealand

Dear John,

Seeing **Fred Dewhurst's** photo in the last Newsletter brought back memories and reminiscences, not only of him forcing us in Form 2G at QEGS to learn Shylock's soliloquy, but also of something that had a much bigger impact on me.

Did I ever tell you that when I was 11 I was a reluctantly-conscripted choirboy in **Jack Longstaff's** choir at QEGS and that year we were doing Elijah. It must have been 1979 or 1980. It was the dress rehearsal in the cathedral. Since Mendelssohn didn't write an organ part for Elijah, T.J.L. had written one for Fred to play.

**It was about half way through the chorus "Then did Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire", where he goes up to heaven in a burning fiery chariot, and suddenly this immense chord of C major came burning out over the top on full organ. I was utterly, utterly floored by this and will remember it my whole life. I remember shaking, unable to sing for the rest of the rehearsal, just totally blown away by the incredible awe-inspiring sound of the cathedral organ.**

Afterwards I went and peered through the console's smoky glass doors (now gone) to look at the stops – especially the fascinatingly-named **Serpent** and **Imperial Trumpet!** I used to hang around in the cathedral after school every day, often watched suspiciously by the then vergers Ron Holroyd (father of **OC Peter Holroyd**) and Evan Jenkins (father of **OC Gareth Jenkins**), staring up at the organ pipes and peering in to the console, vowing that one day I would get to play that organ.



**It was the sound of that chord that made me determined to become an organist** and eventually I went to T.J.L. for piano and theory lessons and sang in his parish choir up at St James's.

When **David Cooper** arrived – I was 15 by this time – he let it be known that he would take organ pupils who had grade 5 piano, so that was the start of my involvement at the cathedral.

Soon after that I ended up in the choir where **Jack Smethurst** looked after me because he had worked for the police with my Grandfather.



**Jack Smethurst had sung with the cathedral choir since he was a boy and was a highly respected and greatly loved member. He had an 'after death' experience: his riveting account of seeing God may be read in the Song School where this photo hangs.**

I wasn't up to much as a singer but when one day Justin Waters invited me to help out conducting the YPC, I discovered that I was rather better at conducting than I was at singing. Thanks to DC's training I ended up winning an Oxford Organ Scholarship and passing my FRCO and CHM with the Gerald Knight Memorial Prize. I never thought, as that awestruck (i.e. gobsmacked, in proper Lancashire language!) schoolboy at that moment when Fred played that chord, that it would have such an effect on my life and would take me to the far side of the world as a cathedral organist and now (almost) a doctor of music. And it is all your doing for having that organ built in the first place!!



My forthcoming performance of **Bach's The Art of Fugue in Blackburn Cathedral on Saturday 21st January** – I shall be flying over from Berlin especially for it, as well as playing in Germany – is going to count towards my doctorate (they are sending an examiner in from Paris - one of the ex-professors from here in Auckland) and so it seems very fitting that this latest (?almost last) part of my musical education should take place at the organ where it began with the sound of that chord.



So thank you for your vision in having that organ built. The sound of it changed my life. And I am sure that of many others too.

I very much doubt that you will remember this but you actually auditioned me as an 8-year-old treble and you offered me a place in the boys' choir. But I was never able to take it up because of family commitments. I often wonder how things might have been different if I had been able to sing as a treble. As it was I had to wait until I was 15 before coming to the choir.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Cheers **Indra**

## Remembrance Sunday 2005

**Choral Evensong, Sunday 13 November**  
**Presentation of Choral Awards by the Dean:**  
**The Chadwick Memorial Prize,**  
**The Fred Green, Dean David Frayne & BCOCA Awards**



**Dean Christopher Armstrong** always has exactly the right word to say to the right people at the right time. (See pages 5-6.) On Remembrance Sunday he did it again when he presented Awards to choristers and tied that up with the message for Remembrance Sunday. It made for riveting listening.

"There are many things that we shall **remember** today, both individually and collectively. The nation gathers around its war memorials and silences to remember the war victims whose lives have bought us unmeasured freedoms.



"We gather tonight to remember the generosity of past and present music lovers who have left prizes to be distributed to the musicians of today. As we do that – and as these well earned cheques are borne away to be spent in so many different ways – we will reflect upon the lives of **Peter Chadwick, Fred Green** – former choir member and long-time churchwarden, and my predecessor, **Dean David Frayne** for what they have given to this Foundation in so many ways.



**Head Chorister Adam Whittaker** receives his **Chadwick Memorial Prize** from the **Dean**, watched by interim **Dean's Virger, Mark Pickering**.



"There is above all the remembering we do Sunday by Sunday, day after day around the altar as we remember the sacrifice of Christ. This **re-remembering** is semantically, philosophically a much stronger form of memorial than these others that we have experienced today. We can only reflect upon their absence whereas we feast upon Christ's presence.

"The First World War poets leave us in no doubt about the appalling fear which surrounded so many of the troops at every moment of the day and night. There is a real link however between the cross and the front line for both involve sacrifice – the slaying of the one on behalf of the many. They were called; we weren't - and pray God we never will be. They were the victims whom we remember today.

"Young people and old are still called today to stand on behalf of others. We might think of the allied troops trying to bring peace to a fragmented and angry Iraq or the UN peacekeepers in Afghanistan. Choirs too are called to stand on behalf of others less capable to offer the sacrifice of praise.



**Arthur Geldard and Charles Forshaw** receive their **BCOCA Awards** from **Senior Old Chorister Stewart Hopkinson**.



"Young people are also called to **re-member** the body of Christ, to act as priests to stand in this place, at that altar, to **re-member** Christ. It may be that some of our prizewinners tonight will go on to further service in God's Church for choirs have always been rich recruiting grounds for God's clergy.

"If we forget that very dynamic consequence to choral singing the church of tomorrow will be the poorer, just as the church of today would be the poorer without their ministry of singing among us today.

"So today is a day to **remember**. There are individuals and families here who will not forget the day when **Sophie and Sarah; Naomi and Claire; Rosie, Adam, Arthur, Charles and Abigail** received their prestigious choral awards and **remembered** the generosity of the donors.



**Naomi Crewe (Fred Green), Abigail Northin (Dean Frayne), Claire Holgate (Fred Green), Sophie Brooke (Fred Green) & Sarah Chew (Fred Green)** stand with **Dorothy Green** who recently celebrated her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday!

"But this day reminds us of other donors too – and the One who gave his life for all. Who will it be that **re-members** Christ tomorrow? Amen."





# SUCH GENEROSITY!

Christmas is always a busy season for musicians (as well as clergy!). But this year it was especially busy for the Tanner-Hyde household, for **PHILIPPA HYDE** and **RICHARD TANNER** were in such demand all over the country to sing, to play and to conduct.

Three weeks before Christmas they gave the opening concert for the new organ in Alizon Elliott's church in Darwen. (Alizon, as you know, is a leading member of the Renaissance Singers – see p. 12).

A week later they gave a concert in St. Anne's Church, Fence, where they were greeted by yet another capacity audience.



Not only did Pippa sing exquisitely (as ever) and Richard play as brilliantly (as ever) but Pippa also captured the hearts of the young children in the audience by suggesting that they might like to colour the black and white illustrations in the programme with crayons whilst she was singing.

At the end of the concert she would give a chocolate to each child. Wow! Look at their faces!



And if their self-giving to us all were not enough, Pippa was driving to Guildford the next morning to sing Messiah, and Richard was driving to Scotland that same night to conduct Messiah! How richly blest we are by such overwhelmingly generous friends!

## LETTER from the Dean of Monmouth The Very Reverend Dr. Richard Fenwick who is also Warden of the Guild of Church Musicians.



Dear John,

I really want to thank you for the latest wonderful issue of the Blackburn Cathedral Newsletter. It really is quite splendid, and has very much the spirit of that lovely place, with the real "get up and go" feeling that it always had.

I remember seeing the cathedral first during your very early time there, when I had just been electrified by your recording of the Henry Smart Bb Mag and Nunc.

I know that the Guild of Church Musicians are looking forward immensely to coming up to Blackburn for our Annual General Meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Perhaps it's particularly good that we shall be coming onto the home ground of two of our own very distinguished members of the Council – yourself and Richard Tanner.

I suppose Blackburn is one of those magical places that we have all known for so many years, because of the remarkable extension work done to the Cathedral by the architect Laurence King in the 1960s. **This has produced a wonderful Lantern and also a fine acoustic.**



Many will have known Blackburn because of its tremendous musical reputation that has been built up for more than forty years. However, there are many others who will not have had the chance of getting up to see it in person. Well, they've got a treat in store! We look forward to our AGM very greatly!

With kindest wishes to all our friends in Blackburn,  
Yours ever,



**The American Organist** is a glossy monthly magazine sent to the over 3,000 members of the American Guild of Organists in the USA and beyond. (Your editor is long-time member.) In it are reviews of the latest organ and choral recordings, articles, photos of Guild members, adverts for organists' posts in the USA, and full details of the latest giant organs which seem to be built every month in that great country.

**This organ** has just been built for the First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi – a modest instrument, about twice the size of ours! Note the comfy choir chairs! *(The choir must be enormous!)* But in the October 2005 magazine of *The*



American Organist is a glowing review of BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL's **RHEINBERGER MASSES CD**:

"Richard Tanner displays the wide-ranging choral program of Blackburn Cathedral. He includes no fewer than five choirs... each of which performs admirably.

"The organ, praised in earlier reviews, is perfectly registered here by Greg Morris... It is a magnificent solo instrument and here shows itself to be a most manageable accompanying instrument as well.

"The splendid acoustics of Blackburn Cathedral "sing" as well as they "play". The choral sound is always appropriate... This collection is a welcome addition to Lammas's growing catalog."

**Heartiest congratulations! Copies available from the Cathedral shop, or direct from Lammas: [www.lammas.co.uk](http://www.lammas.co.uk)**

## OC BOB KEEN

Former Senior Old Chorister (and alto *in excelsis*) **Bob Keen** phoned your editor on St. Cecilia's Day to say how very grateful he is for all the cards, thoughts and prayers that came his way during his stay in hospital. "I had over 100 cards," he said, "but they weren't in straight lines; they were stuck on the wall with blue tack!"

He'd been through a pretty gruelling time in hospital. "The chemo wasn't as bad as I thought, but everything's coming right now."

He's been home for a couple of weeks and is taking walks. "I did 40 minutes yesterday, and aim to increase it every day."

Bob certainly sounded very cheerful on the phone. "I can't have many visitors yet; they have to be screened in case they've got an infection. But I'm looking forward to coming back to the cathedral as soon as I can."

**Bob – your many friends rejoice with you. Hallelujah!**



## RENAISSANCE SINGERS 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONCERT Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005

A full Nave greeted the Renaissance Singers as they celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their very first concert, which had been given in the newly restored Nave on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1965.

Not only was there a large audience for this concert but there were also 23 Alums, including 10 founder-members who had travelled long distances to be with us.

**OCs PETER HEALD** (from Ely) & **PETER CROWTHER JP**, (from Lancaster) were there, as well as **Duncan Stainer** (Sir John Stainer's great grandson) and **Andrew Darke** (Dr. Harold Darke's grandson) both of whom had sung with the choir during JB's time. **23 Alums** came from as far away as Berkshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Essex, Oxfordshire, Cumbria and, of course, many from Lancashire.

It was a special joy to welcome **OC BERNARD WEST** who was founder-secretary of the then-named Blackburn Bach Choir. His super efficiency got us off to a fine start. Our debt to him can never fully be repaid.

**BCOCA Chairman GORDON SHAW's** efficiency, in sorting the music, moving chairs, setting up the platform (with the noble assistance of our redoubtable virgers) and taking it down again, was the stuff of which legends are made. Similarly **Alizon Elliott**, long-time member, contributed enormously to the practical (contacting all Alums) as well as the musical side of the concert.

It was also a very special delight to see **Dr. GORDON STEWART** in the audience. He had directed the choir with brilliance from 1995-1998 and he greeted many old friends. **Canon**

**CHRIS CHIVERS** introduced us – which encouraged enthusiastic applause before we had sung a note!

**RICHARD TANNER**, the choir's current director, had generously invited your editor (who founded the choir) to conduct the concert – what a privilege and what a joy!

It was also a particular joy to welcome **LYNDON HILLS**, cathedral choir parent and former member of the Singers, to play the organ for us. He was *brilliant!* He conducted the choir in 1983 after JB left for the USA before **DAVID COOPER** arrived.

The programme included three items from our first concert: Palestrina's Marcellus Kyrie, Byrd's *Justorum* and *Beati* by you know who.

Two carols written by JB to hail the birth of two choristers-to-be were also sung – with the two choristers coming from the audience to join their Dad and Singers to sing them.

**OC CHRIS HUNWICK's** birth was marked by the publication of 'Christopher's Carol' (*Little Baby, born at dark midnight*) with the words Christ-over appearing in four of the five verses.

**OC NOEL HUNWICK's** carol was *Alleluia! Sing Noel*. It was the composer's intention that Noel should eventually sing in the cathedral choir – so the title could be read: *SING! NO-el*, rather than Sing No-EL.



**Noel & Chris Hunwick after singing their carols.**

*OC Phil Wilson (right) looks on approvingly!*

*Smiling in the back row are Mavis Bathe, Emma Jenkins,*

*Margaret Robinson & Julia Duncan.*

Both boys did become Blackburn Cathedral choristers: Noel also sang solos on TV's *Songs of Praise* and also appeared with 'Mrs. Bucket' in her second series as Hetty Wainthrop. He went on to become senior choral scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, following in the erudite steps of his brother, who went to Lincoln College. (He's Archivist at Manchester Cathedral.)



Cupid has always played a creative role in mixed-voice choirs. Of the Alums who came that day, two couples were paired for life: **OC Peter Heald** with **Constance (Coupe)**. (They were founder members along with Constance's sister, **Dorothy Wade** who sang with us.) And **Norman** and **Margery Howarth** from Norwich.

At the end of the concert the 23 Alums joined with the Renaissance Singers in Vaughan Williams' *Loch Lomond* and *Linden Lea*. That was so moving for us all!

**Richard Tanner** and **Gordon Stewart** then joined us for a souvenir photo. (See next page)

**A CD of extracts from the concert will be available.**

**Call Alizon Elliott for details: 01254-56349**





**Renaissance Singers 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert, Blackburn Cathedral, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 with Alums**  
L. front Lyndon Hills, Organist. Conductors centre seated: Gordon Stewart (1995-98), John Bertalot (Founder, 1965-82), Richard Tanner (1998-)  
Back right: OCs Peter Crowther, Peter Heald (founder members) & Norman Howarth. R. front OC Bernard West, Founder Secretary



## OC NOEL HUNWICK'S NEW JOB



Dear John

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to sing with the Renaissance Singers and take part in what was a lovely evening on Saturday.

I was getting rather bored with my job in publishing. It had allowed a nice transition from Oxford into the working world. I felt it had served its purpose, however, and I was looking for jobs in London, and had had an interview or two.

A friend of mine from Magdalen approached me with an idea he had for setting up a restaurant business. Having mulled it over for a while, and taken some advice, I decided to go for it.



It's all going rather well at the moment, although the learning curve is exponential.

I'm really attracted by the prospect of a job that offers me the chance to get involved in all different aspects of the business, and use such a variety of skills.

We intend to integrate more technology into the restaurant experience, and so at the moment we're working on developing this. This involves teaching ourselves quite a lot of technical information.

We're in the fortunate position of having a vast number of people around whose expertise we can call upon. My business partner's family have been very successful. We also know several restaurant owners and managers, management consultants, architects, property developers, young entrepreneurs, etc, and so we're busy having lots of meetings, going on courses, and absorbing as much information as possible.

Soon, though, we'll be looking at property more closely, then I'll have the chance to get involved on the design side of the business, talking to a large number of different interior designers, to try and put together a fantastic restaurant environment.

We'll already have hired a restaurant Manager by that stage, as well as a chef. Scouting out and recruiting staff is also going to be an exciting (and challenging!) process.

It will be at least a year before we open any premises, however, as there's so much to be done.

In the meantime I'm just focusing on making sure that when we review my contract in a couple of months, we still think it's a feasible project! All being well, I look forward to seeing you on the opening night, John.

Noel.

***Most certainly! Give us plenty of notice and we'll all come! JB***

## THREE HECTIC DAYS OF RECORDING

'Tis accepted that life gets busier every day. But how much busier can the cathedral's music department get?

Monday to Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November, saw the cathedral filled with microphones on long stands, the Canons' vestry filled with digital recording equipment and our guest composer-organist, **DAVID BRIGGS** calmly producing, advising and playing alongside our own brilliant musicians, as CDs galore were created.



**MONDAY** saw David Briggs' exquisite *REQUIEM MASS* being recorded by **RICHARD TANNER** conducting the Northern Chamber Orchestra with a small professional choir called Euphony.

"I wish you could have heard it," commented Richard afterwards, "it was so beautiful."

The Requiem will be included on the CD being released in June...

... which will also feature David's new Organ Concerto which was recorded on the **TUESDAY**, featuring our own brilliant **GREG MORRIS**.



Richard conducted the Northern Chamber Orchestra with sensitivity, composure and imagination. *Look, the orchestra's gotta harp AND a glockenspiel! They sound terrific.*







David Briggs listened keenly throughout to all that was going on, and made helpful comments to Richard and also to Greg. The end result was stunning!



This CD will be launched to coincide with the **world première** of David's **ORGAN CONCERTO**, sponsored by **Dr. Charles Magee** from Princeton, NJ, USA, to whom we are so grateful. It celebrates the brilliant rebuild of our cathedral organ in 2002 which has made it a world class instrument. Concert tickets are already on sale for this major event. **Phone 01254-50-30-90 NOW** to make sure of your seat!

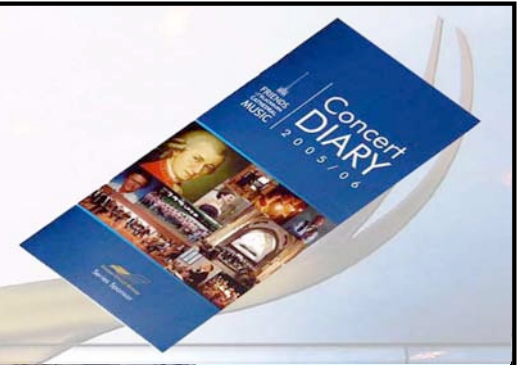


And if that weren't enough, on the **WEDNESDAY** evening David Briggs recorded his transcriptions of **Tchaikovsky's 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony** **and Schubert's Unfinished Symphony** on our splendiferous organ. Now it was Richard Tanner's turn to produce David. i.e. they switched roles!



But also on that **WEDNESDAY** at 7.45 am, the chorister boys and girls arrived to be photographed in front of one of **Fraser Eagle's** superb luxury coaches (which would eventually take them to their schools).

**Fraser Eagle** are most generously sponsoring **THE FRASER EAGLE MOZART FESTIVAL** at the Cathedral. We are so very grateful.



The Group Managing Director, **Mr. Kevin Dean**, (*top right*) said, 'We delight in the Cathedral's young people's education programme. Let's be passionate about giving young people encouragement and opportunity. Mozart was barely eight years old when he started composing. [The Cathedral's concerts] will bring us all light and sustenance.'



**THE FRASER EAGLE MOZART FESTIVAL, 2006**

**February 11, Saturday, 7.00 pm**  
Handel's **MESSIAH** by Candlelight  
orchestrated by Mozart

**May 13<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 7.30 pm**  
A Night at the Opera: Mozart & more!

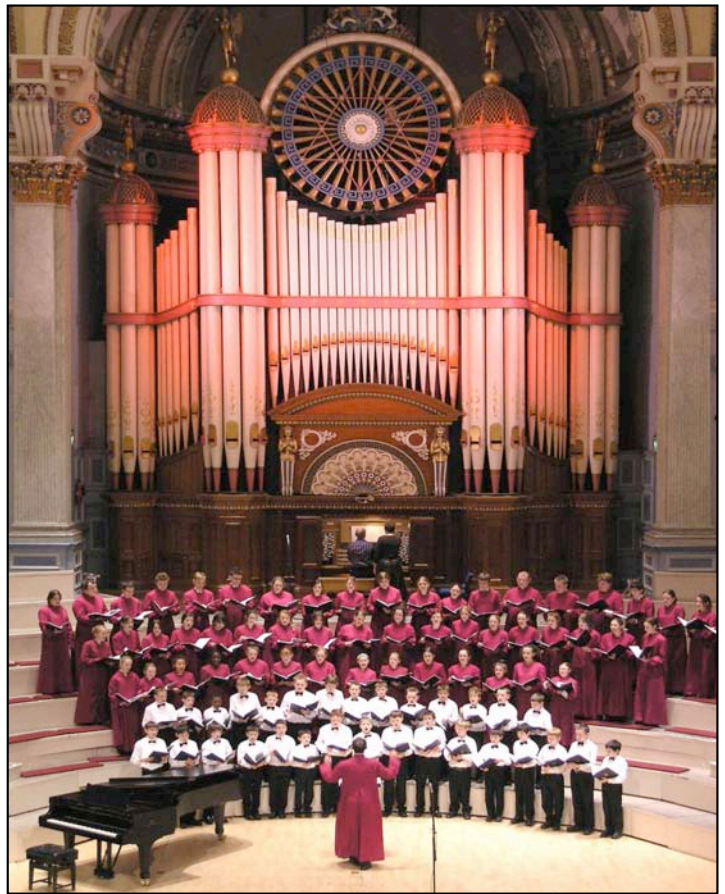
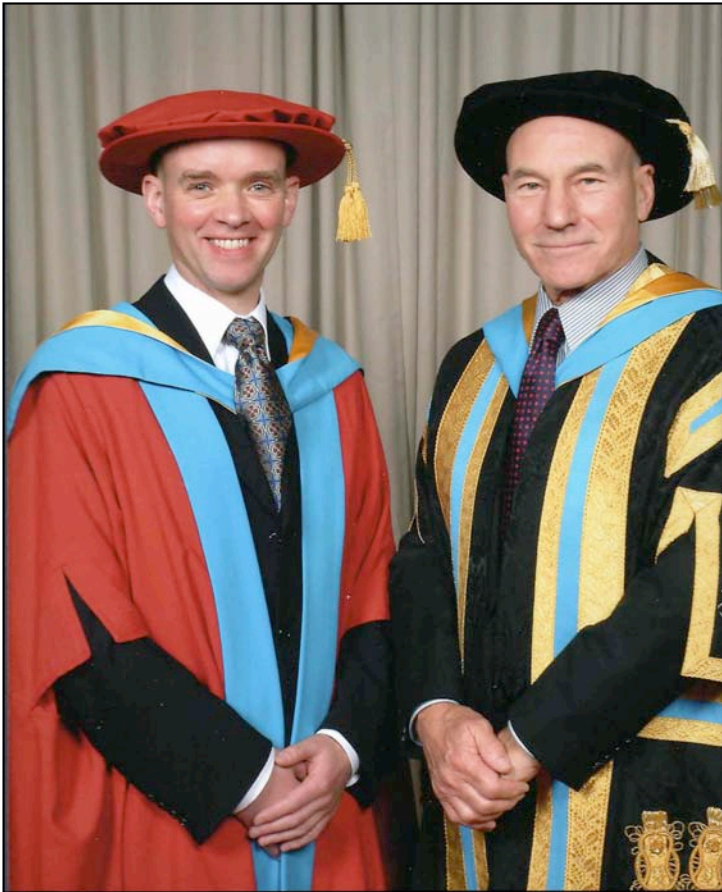
**April 12<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, 6.15 pm**  
Mozart and the music of Salvation.  
Canon Chris Chivers.  
**8.00 pm**  
Mozart Requiem & Piano Concerto  
Martin Roscoe





## Dr. Gordon Stewart 2

Gordon Stewart (see page 7) with Patrick Stewart (no relation!),  
Chancellor of Huddersfield University,  
after the presentation of his well-deserved Hon. Doctorate.



And this is Gordon's magnificent organ in  
**Huddersfield Town Hall**  
where he gives lunchtime recitals every Monday.  
Here he is with five of **Ben Saunders'** choirs from Leeds  
giving a Christmas Concert. Wow – they were superb!

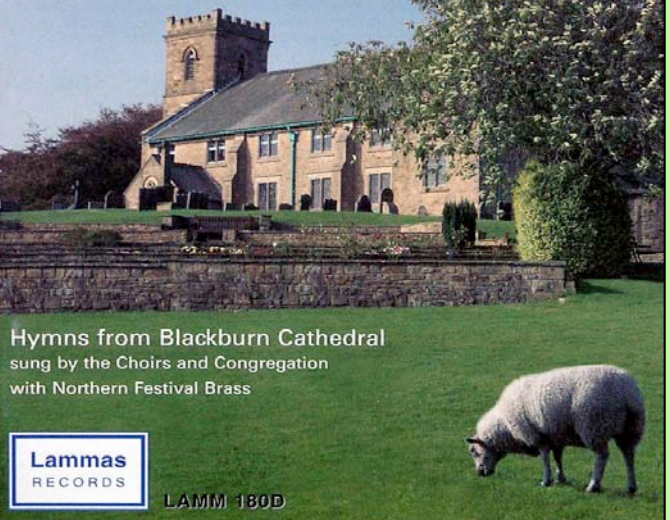
## ANOTHER BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL CD

Do you remember this photograph on the front cover of our  
January 2005 issue? It's of the massed choirs of Blackburn  
Cathedral with singers from Diocesan Churches, who combined  
to record favourite hymns for a new CD.



Well, it's now issued! It's called **LOVING SHEPHERD** and it  
includes 24 popular hymns – many arranged specially by  
**RICHARD TANNER** for massed singers with the Northern  
Festival Brass. **Order your copy now. 01254-50-30-90.**

## Loving Shepherd



Hymns from Blackburn Cathedral  
sung by the Choirs and Congregation  
with Northern Festival Brass

Lammas  
RECORDS

LAMM 180D

Needless to say, our own **GREG MORRIS** presides at  
our cathedral organ, and our own **PHILIPPA HYDE** is the  
delightful Soprano soloist in **JB's Steal Away**.

Hymns include, **Crown him with many crowns**, **Let all  
the World**, **Angel voices** and **JB's Amazing Grace**.

In addition to favourite hymns there's music by **Herbert  
Howells**, **Vaughan Williams**, **Orlando Gibbons** and our  
own **CHRIS CHIVERS**. **It's a MUST HAVE!!**



# Memories from Senior Old Chorister STEWART HOPKINSON

I think it was the philosopher Descartes who described the mind of a newborn as a 'tabula rasa' – that is a 'blank slate' upon which life's experiences are imprinted and by which we make sense of the world.



From a relatively early age, and prompted by a philosophical father, I yearned for a slate that would be full of diverse and rewarding experiences – the drawback was that of 'opportunity'.

Hailing from a large and single parent family opportunities were few but some that presented themselves were to prove significant – not least acceptance into the Blackburn Cathedral choir.

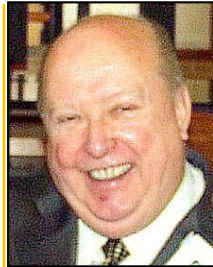
Stew (top) in 1975 with Chris Ryan



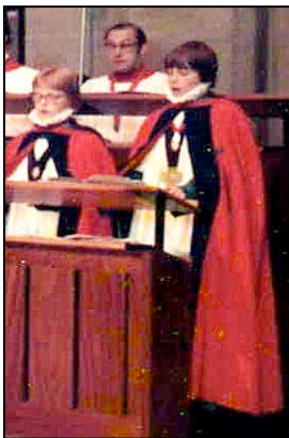
I remember, most vividly, the Advent Carol service in 1974. I had been invited to attend for an audition by John Bertalot. Having attended St. Thomas's church in Blackburn as a 'cub' scout I had had some exposure to 'the church' and to Christianity but this was an experience that was transformational.



The building, the candle-light, the processions and rituals – and not least the magnificent sound of **Frank Hare** in 'Three Kings From Persian Lands Afar...' all combined to profound effect; I wanted to be a part of this!!!



J.B. was very welcoming and, though correcting of my 'Blackbuurrnese' pronunciation whilst singing 'Thur is a grreen hill far away', invited me to join. I remember feeling rather special and privileged and certainly excited. My good friend **Stephen Rickerby** was already a junior chorister and I was paired with him – this clearly strengthened our friendship and helped me to sight-read in remarkably quick time.



**Stephen Rickerby (R)** in 1977 at the final Consecration of the Cathedral in the presence of HRH **Princess Alexandra.**

(L) **Graham Carruthers** and behind, **Bob Keen.**

I had developed another skill and since 'confidence is based upon success', I was feeling positive about myself; so too was my father who would proudly announce to anyone who cared to listen 'My lad's at the Grammar school and sings in't Cathedral choir tha' knows'. (I mention this not in any boastful way but simply to highlight that the choir provided a means of self-esteem and to perhaps remind us that this is so important in any child's development).

The music was, as ever, inspirational and spiritually nourishing. Sometimes it proved too much and the crescendoing build-up to 'Zadok the Priest' during a visit by the Archbishop of York resulted in a rapid diminuendo as I hit the deck having fainted!!!

There were many memorable times, including my confirmation, my first trip abroad on the 1975 recital tour of



Ivor Bolton, Stewart Hopkinson, the Mayor, Provost Jackson & JB about to go on the coach for the Cathedral Choir's tour of Holland and North Germany in 1975

Holland and Germany, leading the choristers at the Three Choirs Festival with Manchester and Liverpool RC, and singing in Durham Cathedral. These events, the camaraderie, the humour (J.B. mostly!), the personalities (I remember such prominent choir men as **Jim Smith, Bob Keen, David Rothwell, Derek Crompton, Peter Eastham** and **Phil Hunwick**) culminated in a profoundly memorable period during my formative years.

Again, and as my wife says when I take the view that 'the kids get too much' - "life is about happy memories." Yet the choir experience also provided ongoing opportunities and happiness. I was befriended by the Chew brothers (Old Choristers **Nigel and Philip**) and was virtually adopted by their mother **Sarah Chew**). To this day we remain friends / almost family.



Philip & Nigel Chew, 1975



Philip & Nigel Chew with Stewart at the BCOCA Reunion 2002!

My voice broke whilst rehearsing 'Beatus Vir' (Monteverdi) and it was time to take the pebble from J.B.'s hand. I was devastated. I was a server for a while before taking off to University, getting a job, marrying and raising a family.

I attended the Old Choristers' Reunion event three years ago and, being at the crossroads age of 40, I found myself reflecting on the positives in my life to that point. **Richard Tanner**, Director of Music, invited me to join the choir again and though I have no doubt that he was being very polite I duly 'strolled back into town' some two weeks later.

I met **Derek Crompton, Peter Eastham** and **Phil Hunwick** again who, whilst not remembering me at all, provided the link from the past and therefore a sense of continuity (thank you Mr. Tanner!). I now sing second bass and am making steady progress (thank you **Mr. Wilson** and my other bass, not base, colleagues!)

I have been married to **Sue** for almost 16 years and she is



the most wonderful person to have suffered me.



Phil Wilson with Stew & Sue Hopkinson at the BCOCA Reunion 2004

I inherited my daughter, **Victoria**, now aged 20. (Incidentally Victoria works happily in the Cathedral offices – nothing to do with me I hasten to add!) I take responsibility for my 15-year-old son, **Nicholas**, who as a member of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth clearly takes after his mother (he's also 'Tight Head' in Blackburn Rugby Union Under 15s - I'd better say he takes after me for that one!)

I remain gainfully employed as the Head of Resettlement and Partnerships at Her Majesty's Prison, Lancaster Castle, following a 17-year period with Lancashire Probation Service as Probation Officer and latterly Team manager.

As choirmen Derek Crompton and Phil Hunwick will testify I am less adept at the more cerebral past-times (impossible cryptic crosswords of the tabloids) and more inclined to the 'physical' past-times of football and weight training. As with us all I am growing in years but forever a child at heart!



Stew with his fellow choir-men at last year's performance of *Messiah*

In recent times I have toured Germany and the Czech Republic with the choir and I have to say that the experience has proved as exhilarating as ever. The Cathedral and its choir run in the veins.

For our young choristers today who might disagree I would say 'we'll talk in 30 years'!! I sincerely hope that we do and that the Old Choristers' Association continues to flourish and to play its part in enriching many, many more 'Tabulae Rasi' **Stewart Hopkinson, SOC, 2005-2006**

## CHRISTMAS!

The Cathedral was also much used, as ever, by many local schools for their own carol services and carol concerts during December. One of the most memorable was the visit by **Westholme Middle School** who not only sang beautifully (you could hear every word) but their sense of self-discipline (see their impeccable straight lines and deep concentration) was outstanding!





Another most happy Christmas occasion was the visit of the choir of St. Gabriel's CE Primary School, who gave a lunchtime concert in the cathedral.



The organist was, of course, our organ scholar, **Jonathan Turner**, and the conductor (whom every child was watching most intently) was his Mum!

## Did H.M. The Queen host a BCOCA Mini Reunion in Buckingham Palace?

When **OC JOHN WILKINSON** went to Buckingham Palace in November to receive his **OBE** from the hand of **Her Majesty** for



services to education, he was surprised and delighted to see **OC STANLEY ROOCROFT** there who was getting his **MBE** for services to the community in North Yorkshire!

John wrote: What a great day it was! I was accompanied by Myra and Olive. Olive was so thrilled and proud of her Dad and we all thoroughly enjoyed the day.

*Heartiest congratulations, John and Stanley!*

*Both were Prefects in our Boys' Choir under **Tom Duerden** – Stanley was Prefect in the year that the Queen was crowned and actually sang at her coronation in Westminster Abbey! Here he is in 1953 wearing his coronation medal*



**1953 Stanley Roocroft**

**1958 John C. Wilkinson**

## Bishop's Christmas Party

**Bishop Nicholas and Mrs. Reade** hosted the choristers' annual party in the palatial surroundings of Bishop's House on the Eve of the Eve of Christmas Eve.

Over 25 boys and some of their parents were ushered in by the Bishop's Secretary, (*'So many people visit us that we're having to increase the size of the Bishop's car park!'*) and by his Chaplain, who has this appropriate notice on his door!

**NO ONE CAN COME TO THE FATHER  
EXCEPT THROUGH ME**

Party games, helped down by lavish doses of jelly babies, kept the choristers happily occupied for an hour. Some of the games needed pencils and paper, and lots of team-work. 'Who wrote this anthem and what's it called?' asked **Greg Morris**, as he played snippets of music they had sung recently.



Then there came a lavish tea which was prepared entirely by Mrs. Reade – she's heroic! Sandwiches, cakes, mince tarts, crisps, tea, and fizzy drinks disappeared in double quick time.

Order was restored briefly for a group photo ...



... after which the Bishop handed round an enormous tin of sweets.

A good time was had by all – they deserved it, because immediately afterwards there was a 3-hour choir practice!

Thank you, Bishop and Mrs. Reade! It was a wonderful afternoon.





# Christmas Spectacular





The Christmas Spectacular more than lived up to its name: every seat was sold, the enlarged risers were filled with our five choirs who sang most beautifully, the Northern Chamber Orchestra played splendidly, the soloists were brilliant, the audience vociferously enthusiastic and Richard Tanner led it all with great skill and good humour.

Before the concert a Wine & Nibbles Reception for the Sponsors and Friends was held in the North Transept, (and there was another Reception in the interval!).



Our super Virgers, **Sean & Mark**, ably assisted by **Brian Newton**, without whose stalwart work at all hours the concert could not have taken place, made sure that the enlarged platform was safe for the 120 singers to stand on. Former music scholar **Emily Crewe's** logistical knowledge of platform construction was most helpful.

The **Bishop** and **Mrs. Reade** were there, enjoying a sausage.



The **Dean**, welcomed His Honour Judge **Brian Duckworth** and Mrs. **Carolyn Duckworth**, whilst our chef-in-chief, **Chris Dobson**, offered them some refreshments.

**Canon Hindley** welcomed **Mr. Paul Taylor** (FoBCM Treasurer), **Mrs. Margaret Savage**, **Mrs. Julie Turner** (Cathedral Education Officer) and **Mr. Peter Turner** (from Forbes Solicitors).



Whilst **Michael Carr** and new YPC member **Mark Molyneux**, (ex Durham Chorister), tempted Mrs. **Pat Wedgeworth** and Canon **Michael Wedgeworth** to yet more delicacies. Canon Michael, by the way, is now our Chapter Clerk. Heartiest congratulations!





A smiling sextet: **Mrs. Bradshaw**, **Mr. Richard Prest**, (Chairman of the Cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee), **Mr. Geoffrey Bradshaw**, **Mrs. Prest** and guest, and (far right) **Mrs. Sheila Walker**.



With F $\sigma$ BCM Council member **Anitra Haythornwhite** (R) were **Mr. & Mrs. James & Andrea Titterington**. (See below)



A photographer from **Lancashire Life** was there for the whole evening capturing who's who and who sang what!



Tempting nibbles were proffered by YPC member **Chris Dawson** to His Honour Judge **Jeremy Duerden**, **Peter Abbott**, Chairman of the F $\sigma$ BCM, **Edward Haythornwhite**, member of F $\sigma$ BCM Council, and **Mrs. Jean Duerden**, member of the Cathedral Chapter.



(L) Another sextet: **Alan Rowntree**, Cathedral Bursar, **Keith Martin** retired Research & Development Director, *Netlon*. **Ms. Barbara Chatburn**, Keith's fiancée. **Mrs. Liz Rowntree**. **Mrs. Lynn Wilson & Mr. Graham Wilson** (partner at Waterworths). (R)  $\rightarrow$  **You know who!**

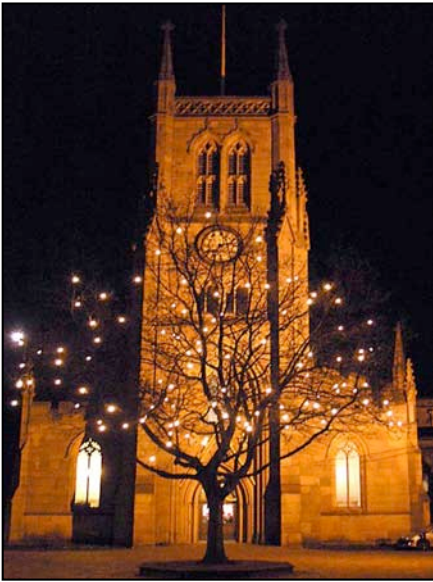


Enjoying the concert on the front row (left) were **Dean Christopher & Geraldine**, and **Bishop Nicholas & Christine**.

On the right were **Mrs Andrea Titterington**, Board Member of the Cathedral Developments and **Mr. James Titterington**, **Mrs. McManus & Mr. Mark McManus**, Cathedral Developments Project Manager, **Mrs. Andrew Sanderson** and **Mr. James Sanderson**, Cathedral Architect.







The floodlit Cathedral, enhanced by Christmas-tree lights, helped to get the audience into the right mood as they arrived, even before they heard a note of music. After a welcome by the **Dean, Richard Tanner** conducted – authentically from the positive organ – a superb performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria*. (Photo p. 20)

After the interval we were treated to a splendid medley of Christmas music starting with the *Hallelujah Chorus*, **Philippa Hyde's** brilliant singing of *Let the bright Seraphim*, and *Good King Wenceslas* sung by us all in bold canon, and finishing with *Chestnuts roasting on an open fire*, and *Have yourself a merry little Christmas*.

The **Children's Choir** (above) led by **Nicola Mills**, delighted us all with three Carols, starting with *Away in a Manger*. They received a well-deserved ovation.



There was a galaxy of soloists: Chorister **Arthur Geldard** sang *The Snowman* with great confidence, accompanied by the orchestra and choirs.



Our three sopranos, **Nicola Mills, Philippa Hyde** and **Alison Swanson**, enchanted us with solos, duets and trios, including *Silent Night* arranged especially for them.



**Peter Turner** (right), former managing partner of Forbes, now a consultant, who is Chairman of Blackburn Cathedral Developments, read a delightful extract from *A Christmas Carol*. And the packed audience relished standing to sing their own Christmas Carols directed by Richard.



Chairman (and long-time Old Chorister) **Philip Wilson**, captivated us with a lengthy Lancastrian Monologue about the Duke of Wellington and a Christmas pudding, which he recited entirely from memory in broad Lancashire! Some feat – some pudding!





But even though the entire evening was packed with delights – musical and recitational – (there's never been so much applause in our Cathedral given by so many for so long!) yet all will probably agree that the item which brought down the house was Richard's realization of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, which was sung by us all.

He divided us into solo groups for each 'day': Those on the right sang one 'day', those on the left another. The Sponsors sang yet another 'day' and we all sang FIVE GOLD RINGS.

The third day of Christmas (*Three French Hens*) was sung most delicately by our 3 Sopranos, **Philippa, Nicola & Alison**, and **Canons Chris Chivers & Andrew Hindley (R)** were '*Two [robust]Turtle Doves*'

But the first 'day' – '*and a Partridge in a pear tree*' – was sung by our youngest chorister, 6-year old **William Fielding**. And he had to sing it twelve times at the end of every chorus. He was superb – the audience burst into prolonged applause even before he'd finished his twelfth solo for they were enraptured. Well done, William, well done ALL! *Wow!*



On January 11<sup>th</sup> 2006, the Lancashire Evening Telegraph printed a long feature article about our youngest ever cathedral chorister, entitled: "*Singer William, 6, is psalm-thing special*" *Wow!*

For the record, **William** comes from a long line of musical Fieldings. William's nephew **Richard** (who is older than he is!) was until recently head chorister of Salisbury Cathedral choir. Richard's father, **Robert**, was one of JB's earliest choristers here way back c. 1967. Robert is now Organist and Master of the Choristers of Romsey Abbey, and Director of Music of Sarum College in Salisbury Cathedral Close where the RSCM is shortly to have its headquarters.

Robert's father is OC **Peter**, who recently gave a superb Mozart piano recital in the cathedral. He has two OC brothers, **Gordon** (BCOCA treasurer), and **Paul – William's father!** Peter's son, **Mark**, is a pianist of distinction. *Are you with me so far?*

William's grandfather, **Harold** Fielding, was a tenor in the cathedral choir during the time of **TLD** and JB's early days, and it was he who constructed the Song School music desks 70 years ago, which have only recently been replaced. Harold was in **TLD's** choir in St. John's Church, Blackburn 25 years before they came to the cathedral (with Peter), and Harold's father, **Tom**, was also a choirman at St. John's.

The Fielding Blackburn family goes way back at least nine generations. William's Great-Great-Great-Great-Great-Great Grandfather, **John**, who was born around 1770, was married in the old parish church in 1795. His son, **Henry**, was also married there in 1825, immediately before it was pulled down to make way for the new church – which is now the cathedral Nave!

William's dynamic mother, **Rachel**, is a leading member of the Renaissance Singers, and his sister, **Elizabeth** will, no doubt, join the children's choir when she is old enough. William is learning the piano from a Mrs. Fielding. No relation! *Wow, again!*