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MUSIC

Blackburn Cathedral

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F of BCM Edition No. 22
BCOCA Edition No. 31

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*Designed and Edited by Dr. John Bertalot,
Cathedral Close, Blackburn, BB1 5AA
E-mail: john@bertalot dot org*

& MORE



BCOCA
Blackburn
Cathedral
Old Choristers
Association



As part of the 'greatest transformation of Blackburn for 40 years'
BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL'S £45M MASTER-PLAN

will include a Deanery, Apartments for Canons and Cathedral staff,
a library, a new cafeteria, secure underground parking facilities,
and also more than 85 Apartments for sale to the public.

*Work is scheduled to begin next year and should take only 18 months!
See pages 10-11*

**WELCOME TO OUR (nearly) NEW CHOIRMAN
Antony Snape**

**who joined the cathedral choir nearly six months ago.
WELCOME!**

Antony writes: I was a member of St. Gabriel's Church Choir from 1969-2004. Past BCOCA Chairman FRED DEWHURST was my choirmaster until 1992, and with his guidance I obtained the Bishop's Chorister Award as a young choirman in 1975, after having been examined by the then Cathedral Director of Music, John Bertalot! I was also a member of the prestigious Northern RSCM Cathedral Singers, which was conducted by John Cooke.

By 2004 the nature of the worship at St. Gabriel's had changed and it was considered that there was no longer a role for a traditional choir. I started to attend the services at the cathedral and was greatly inspired by the standard of the music and the worship.

My son **Christopher** became a probationer in the choir in 2005 and my daughter **Hannah** has recently joined the Girls' Choir.



Christopher, Amanda, Antony, & Hannah at their home in Mellor

Although my singing has become rather rusty, Richard Tanner has been kind enough to let me have a go in the men's choir; the gentlemen of the choir have been patient with me so far!

Most of the music is unfamiliar and I am sight reading most of the time, but I feel I have made progress. My weekends have been transformed and, whilst they're enjoyable, Sundays have become the most stressful part of the week for me!

I'm a Chartered Surveyor by profession, am a keen walker and passionate about railways. And, oh yes, I live in Mellor with my wife, Amanda and family just around the corner from the man who awarded me my Bishop's Chorister all those years ago!

Amanda, who used to be in banking, but is now training to become a teacher, added: I am thrilled that our children are singing at the cathedral and I'm glad to be able to join other choir parents to help the programme along. In the last year our children have met the US Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Princess Alexandra, TV personality Aled Jones, the Prime Minister of Malta and Dr. Barry Rose, and they are singing some of the finest choral music in the world! Where else could they enjoy such amazing privileges?

NIGEL POTTS ON ICE?

Nigel Potts (Blackburn Organ Scholar 1992-93) gave two recitals on the 72-stop Klais organ in *Hallgrimskirkja*, Reykjavik, Iceland last July, as part of their Summer Evening series.



Nigel is now organist of a prestigious church in New York City.

The second Icelandic recital was recorded by, and later broadcast on, *Icelandic National Radio.*



Nigel writes: "It was a most interesting and fun experience playing in Iceland. The *Hallgrimskirkja* is a stunning building and sight (although its design was controversial in its day) and the church is situated on top of a hill overlooking the capital city.



"The organ is splendid and is housed in a fine acoustic. After the concerts, Liese and I spent a week traveling around the country taking in the beautiful and sometime very barren scenery.

"We also went whale watching (just on the Arctic Circle), drove around the Fjords, and took a boat trip on the 'Iceberg Lagoon' at the foot of one of many glaciers. This Lagoon is also the site where several James Bond stunts have been filmed. The photo (above – shot at 1:24am) illustrates the midnight sun! It was a most enjoyable (and also the most expensive) experience!"

Nigel also gave a recital at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, his 100th solo recital. www.nigelpotts.com

**Look at Richard Tanner's
UPDATED CATHEDRAL WEBSITE**

with lots of photos of choirs and choir tours,
and also recent editions of this **CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER** in full colour!
You'll need Broadband to download them – They'll look terrific on your screen.
<http://homepage.mac.com/richardtanner2/Cathedral/Menu25.html>



A BUSY FOUR DAYS (i), 14-17 January

The Choirmen and Girls' Chamber Choir sang the annual Epiphany carol service most expressively and vividly, on Sunday evening, 14th January.

The service began with the choir singing Marenzio's *Tribus Miraculis* in the Ambulatory, followed by the hymn, *O worship the Lord*, during which the choir processed to their stalls.

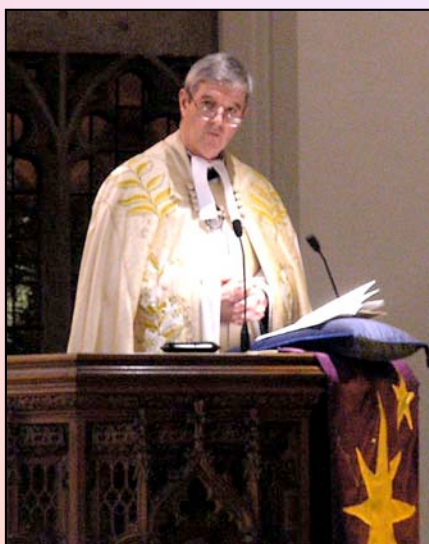


A feature of our annual Epiphany service is the representation by three Canons of the journey of the three Kings. This year (L-R) Canons **Clitherow**, **Wedgeworth** and **Chivers** offered gold, frankincense and myrrh upon the altar as the choir sang *Omnes de Saba venient* (Handl), and *Three Kings from Persian lands* (Cornelius – soloist Derek Crompton).



The **Dean** presided over the service from the pulpit – encouraging the congregation to join in strongly with the many spoken responses.

After the choir had sung *Vinum bonum* in eight parts by Lassus, and Howells' *Like as the hart*, the clergy, headed by Crucifer OC Michael Carr, processed to the South Transept where **Bishop Nicholas** blest the water of baptism at the font.



Full credit must go to **Michael Carr** (son of OC Churchwarden **Philip Carr**) for his military precision in carrying our heavy processional cross so impressively!

The last two anthems were John Gardner's highly rhythmic *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*, and the gentle *Bethlehem Down* by Peter Warlock (which the choir was to broadcast three days' later).



After the obligatory singing of *As with gladness*, the Bishop blest us, and we departed.

A Reception was held, of course, in the crypt, attended by gold-chained Mayors and Mayoresses from all over the diocese, by the High Sheriff, and by the **Lord Lieutenant and Lady Shuttleworth**.

It was the start of a great week!



A BUSY FOUR DAYS (ii), 14-17 January

It was a joy to welcome Dr. BARRY ROSE to Blackburn Cathedral again the next day; he was one of the very finest choir trainers of the 20th Century – and he's still at it!

He was Director of Music, successively, of three Cathedrals – Guildford, St. Paul's and St. Alban's. RICHARD TANNER was a chorister of his at St. Paul's and later became his organ scholar at St. Alban's. No wonder our choirs sing so well!

On Monday and Tuesday evenings, 15 & 16 January, Barry led two inspirational workshops for our cathedral choristers in preparation for the choir's live broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 on the Wednesday.



It was fascinating to watch him, for he offered guidance almost every 15 seconds, and maintained eye contact with the choristers throughout.

They hung on his every word. He and they were a joy to behold, for they looked at him as closely as he looked at them. (That's a great secret for successful choirstraining!)



During a well-earned break on the Tuesday evening he signed chorister **Jonathan Brookes'** plaster, alongside the autograph of the Prime Minister of Malta (see our last edition!). Jonathan had broken his wrist whilst ice-skating, but it certainly didn't affect his singing.

It was a happy coincidence that ROBERT SHARPE, the brilliant Director of Music of Truro Cathedral, gave the lunchtime organ recital on the day of the broadcast, for he, like Richard Tanner, had been Barry Rose's organ scholar at St. Alban's Abbey, and also organ scholar of Exeter College, Oxford.



They posed for a St. Alban's photograph – sharing two St. Alban's red scarves between the three of them.

BBC Radio 3
90.2-92.4 FM

The broadcast on 17th was a great success.

Richard had rehearsed the boys, girls and men meticulously for several weeks, for the music was especially demanding:

Bethlehem Down (Warlock)

Responses & Canticles (Leighton)

Psalm 89 (very long!)

Look up, sweet Babe (Berkeley) and

Hymn: *Songs of thankfulness*. (Descant: Barry Rose)



It was particularly good to welcome back, to sing in the choir for that broadcast, former choirmen **Judge James Prowse** and **Adam Crewe**. Also singing with us was **Simon Vivian**, who produced our last BBC Choral Evensong. Our own dedicated and very fine choirmen were, as ever, superb.

JAMES DAVY played our organ exquisitely, of course, ably assisted by DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS. James' Postlude was unusual in that it was quiet and reflective – Langlais' *Poèmes Evangéliques*, from his *Nativité*. This was unlike so many Postludes at the end of BBC Choral Evensongs when the fuses on most cathedral organs seem to be tested to their uttermost!



B
B
C

And after it was all over the Dean thanked the musicians, who received a well-deserved ovation from the congregation, and then the producer, Philip Billson, thanked everyone – he was pleased. It was a most happy and fulfilling afternoon. Well done, everyone!

See page 6

The ebullient BBC producer was **Philip Billson**, with whom Richard often collaborates for the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4, which comes from a church in Manchester.

(Philip Billson is a most experienced BBC producer. For example, ten years ago he flew to the USA to produce and record two BBC broadcasts sung by two of your editor's choirs in the University town of Princeton, NJ.)

Philip's eagle eye and sharp ear didn't miss a thing that afternoon – but as the choir was so polished he needed to say very little!

Our ever-efficient Virgers had arranged our Song School music desks in the Nave, along with the Dean's and Canons' stalls, so that balance and blend between organ & choir, and clergy & congregation could be achieved more easily.

Just before the broadcast began, the **Dean** (who read the second lesson) and **Canon Wedgeworth** (who read the first) and **Canon Chivers** (who precented, and led the prayers) exchanged a few mutually encouraging words:



There was quite a large congregation for the broadcast – which was unusual. They listened to the music, and the readings and the prayers in rapt silence. We were all aware, as Richard had told the choir, that there would be millions of people listening to the live broadcast, and many more millions all over the world who would listen to it later via the internet.

BBC RADIO LANCASHIRE

The next morning your editor was asked to be at the cathedral at 8.30, to talk on BBC Radio Lancashire, about the history of the organ (for he had been responsible, along with Dr. Francis Jackson, for the design of the original 1969 organ, and had been part of Richard Tanner's committee entrusted with its rebuilding and enlargement in 2000).

It was blowing a gale that morning, and there were problems in transmitting the live broadcast to the BBC studio – which is directly opposite the cathedral!

So what had been planned as a ten-minute interview, turned out to be a two-minute merry blast of John Stanley's *Trumpet Tune* on full organ with octave couplers!



The Dean, who had, mercifully, just finished saying Matins in the Jesus Chapel, joined the interviewer (Rebecca Pukiello) and interviewee at the console for the customary obligatory photograph!

Check these Websites to discover what's on!

The Cathedral's Website:

www.blackburncathedral.com

Richard Tanner's Website:

www.richardtanner.co.uk

The Boy Choristers' Website:

www.bcbchoir.org.uk

Your Editor's Website: www.bertalot.org

PRESTON & DISTRICT ORGANISTS' ASSOCIATION

... (whose membership covers the Diocese of Blackburn, and beyond) held their January meeting in Blackburn Cathedral where they were welcomed, entertained and uplifted by the playing of **Richard Tanner** and **James Davy**. We were treated to an hour's high-class programme of organ music by Messiaen, Buxtehude and Langlais, which held the members spellbound.



Association President Stewart Whillis, James and Richard, and Association Secretary Eric Dunne after the recital

There was a bumper attendance of musicians from the Association, one of whom had come all the way from Cumbria!

In his vote of thanks, the Association's immediate Past President (your editor!) said that he wondered if the folk of Lancashire really knew what a treasure they had in the Blackburn Cathedral organ. He had recordings of it and also recordings of the organ in Notre Dame, Paris, and the two were almost indistinguishable in tone, variety and glory.

Moreover, **David Bednall**, brilliant Assistant Organist of Wells Cathedral who had given a stunning lunchtime recital here that day, and has also given recitals not only at St. Paul's and Westminster Cathedrals but also in equally distinguished cathedrals in the UK and on the continent, has said that the Blackburn organ is his favourite.



In other words, our lunchtime recitals and our other organ concerts deserve far larger audiences, for what is being offered here week after week is music of the very highest calibre.

Email from Dr. ROY MASSEY

Former Director of Music of Hereford Cathedral, and Past President, The Royal College of Organists
THE BLACKBURN BROADCAST

Hi Richard,

Thanks you for an absolutely splendid broadcast which was masterly in every way. I must admit to not knowing the trebles and organ version of *Bethlehem Down* but, having heard it already this week on Monday at the Abbey, it is beginning to grow on me. Similarly, last night **Carleton Etherington** [Organist of Tewkesbury Abbey] played the Langlais, and to hear it again today played similarly beautifully by **James Davy** was a great joy. Your new chap made a lovely job of it so please convey my congratulations. I've always felt that Langlais wrote far too much on the whole, but that little Christmas piece is exquisite and sounded gorgeous on the Blackburn organ. It almost renewed my faith in his stuff!

The Leighton *Magnificat* always works well with a big choir and you made a fine job of it - as did your assistant - but the Lennox Berkeley really bowled me over. It was gorgeous - as was the last verse of the hymn. Well done you! You have obviously got the varied musical life of Blackburn Cathedral well under control and long may it continue.



Dr. Massey in his RCO Presidential robes when he awarded an hon. Fellowship to Dr. Gordon Stewart.

Incidentally, I meant to write after your September Sunday morning broadcast which was outstandingly good. Your effort was very convincing intellectually and wonderfully impressive musically.

Almost forty years ago when I was organist at Birmingham Cathedral I did sometimes wonder in a rare idle moment whether it might be possible to produce a distinctive genre of musical activity for a Parish Church Cathedral. Up to then, PC Cathedrals were usually just shadows of what was happening in the greater places. We did the same things but without the resources and some places were more successful than others.

But it seems to me that you have managed to produce something *sui generis* to Blackburn and a wonderful example for others by developing a musical set-up with its own integrity and excellent standards while embracing a large number of participants - a process very relevant to a ministry in the middle of an Industrial Town. I vaguely sensed some of these possibilities all those years ago in Birmingham but you have really made it happen in a very convincing way in Blackburn.

More power to your elbow and all the best for even more future triumphs - about which I'm sure to read in due course, illustrated in glorious **technicolor** (note the American spelling) and interspersed with numberless 'wows' from you-know-who!

As ever,

Roy
Tewkesbury, Glos.



Dr. Massey was generous enough to make a major donation towards the cost of printing our Newsletter - even though, as a (former) cathedral Director of Music, he is entitled to get his copies free! We are most grateful.

Dr. Massey was an outstanding Director of Music of Hereford Cathedral, and conductor of the Three Choirs' Festival; so much so that, when he was about to retire, the cathedral commissioned a portrait of him in stone - a gargoyle, which sits high outside the cathedral's East window! JB



Raising £1,000 for the St. Matthew Passion!

The Renaissance Singers are so keen about their singing (and so good at it!) that they set about raising funds to enable them, in company with the Manchester Chamber Choir, to present a gala performance of Bach's greatest and most massive work, his St. Matthew Passion (SMP).

It is scored for two choirs, six soloists, two organs and two orchestras, and tells the story of Christ's Passion in the words of St. Matthew, amplified by poetic arias, and also chorales which were designed to be sung by the congregation. It is so dramatic that, at the first performance in Bach's church at Leipzig in the late 1720s, the congregation thought they were listening to an opera!

The Singers' major effort at money raising was to promote a concert by percussionists in January. **STICKS 'N' TONES** are a duo of brilliant musicians: the pianist is **MATTHEW DRURY**, who was, until recently, a member of the Singers; **HELEN DAVIES**, who is a current Renaissance Singer and head of music at St. Christopher's School, Accrington,



plays the xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, tympani and anything else you can hit with sticks! And she does it with such professional dexterity that she can play rapid four-part chords with two sticks in each hand!

(By the way, the piano is technically a percussion instrument, not a string instrument, for the strings are hit!)



After a rip-roaring performance of a piece called *Jovial Jasper* which sounded like Scott Joplin at his most boisterous, Matthew played Chopin's fiendishly difficult Polonaise in F sharp minor, for which he received a tumultuous round of applause from the elated audience which packed the North transept.



The music came to us in so many guises – fast and loud, soft and dreamy, with Helen Davies playing so skillfully almost all the instruments which were displayed before us.

In the interval, former High Sheriff **Rodney Swarbrick** and Mrs. **Diana Swarbrick**, couldn't resist inspecting one of the drums ...



... and the Singers' Chairman, **Eileen Hemingway**, with singers **Graham Moon** and **Helen Williams**, (Robert Mitchell's daughter) inspected one of the substantial xylophones.



Laura and her Dad, Robert Mitchell, are both members of the Renaissance Singers

There was a splendid Reception in the crypt during the interval. Your staff photographer was directed to **Laura Mitchell**, Robert's other daughter, who, with Robert, had recently completed a sponsored run of 10 kilometers (around 7 miles in pre-Blair measurement) which raised £250 for the SMP fund.

They did it in 58 minutes! (That surely deserves a 'Wow!', Dr. Massey?)

The second half of the programme was even more exciting than the first, and it ended with the Duo being joined by three young ladies, who are studying percussion with Helen Davies, in a roof-raising performance of *Those Magnificent Men in the Flying Machines!*



There's never been a concert like it in Blackburn Cathedral. Well done all, and thank you!

The Singers' next fund-raising evening will be on Wednesday, May 9th in the cathedral crypt, 7.30 pm
AN EVENING OF SAMPLING FOOD AND WINE
"TASTING WITH BOOTHS"
Tickets – only £5 – from Linda Bruce 01254-50-30-82

Our Patronal Festival, Sunday 4th February 2007

What Cathedral could possibly match, let alone, exceed, the rich and glorious musical and liturgical fare which was offered at our Patronal Festival? St. Paul's, possibly, but very few others.

And what was offered:

10.30 Eucharist with the Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, and the Girls' Chamber Choir singing Haydn's *Missa Sancti Nicolai* accompanied by the Northern Chamber Orchestra. The musicians, as for last year's Patronal Festival, were at the West end of the Cathedral, and the congregation sat in Collegiate style, so that they could see the central altar as well as the musicians.



The Dean welcomed the musicians for their Sunday morning rehearsal (it looked as though he was conducting – he wasn't!) whilst RICHARD TANNER who conducted the music looked on.

How good it was to welcome back PHILIPPA HYDE as one of our soloists after she had increased the size of the Tanner household by 33.3 per cent last October!



The alto, tenor and bass soloists were our own JAMES TWIGG, DEREK CROMPTON and PHILIP WILSON.

After that glorious service there was a Gala Luncheon in the crypt where clergy, musicians and congregation enjoyed a superb meal prepared by CHRIS DOBSON and his team.

It was especially good to welcome SIMON VIVIAN to the lunch. He has produced several of our BBC broadcasts; his brother, James, is director of music at the Temple Church in London, where our own GREG MORRIS is his associate.



Simon and Chris Chivers are godparents to Ben, Richard and Pippa's new son.



That Sunday happened to be OC (and YPC member) KIT DAWSON'S 18th birthday.

A birthday cake with three candles, presented by Hilary Carr came as a delightful surprise to him! Kit is now Librarian for the choir. *Good luck!*

And then came the glorious Festival Choral Evensong, when the musical offering was even greater, if that were possible, than that offered at the Eucharist.



The orchestra was enormous – four French horns ...

three trombones & tuba ...



a harp, trumpets, two organs, and everything in between. and a huge choir made up of our men, boys, senior girls, YPC, and the Renaissance Singers!

Before the service DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS improvised brilliantly, before JAMES DAVY took his place, and then Richard conducted Elgar's *Chanson de Nuit* most expressively. That made an exquisite Prelude to the service.

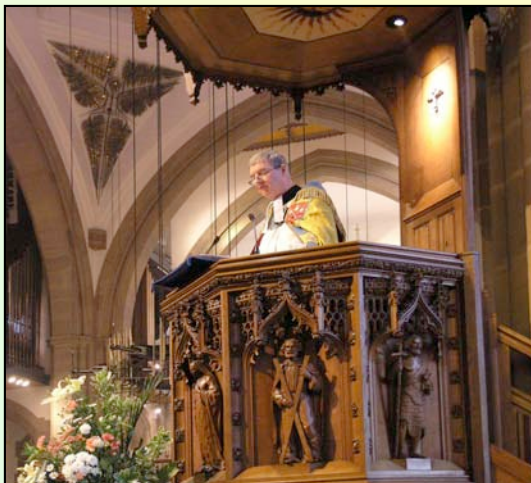


And the music offered included
 Introit: *Ave Maria*: Elgar
 Responses: Bertalot (Precentor: Canon Chivers)
Jubilate in Bb: Stanford (as the psalm)
 Canticles: Stanford in A
 Anthem: *Give unto the Lord* – Elgar
 and to finish, Elgar's glorious *Pomp and Circumstance No. 4*
 Everything, except the Responses, was accompanied by orchestra. It was superb.

In his sermon, the Dean said:

We meet today to give thanks to God for this holy place, of which we are the stewards. We also ask for the continued support of our patron, The Blessed Virgin Mary, as we discharge our duties of worship and service. It is right that we should do so in the most glorious manner that we can afford. As one of my friends said, as a gauche curate in his parish magazine: 'we are high church, giving the highest and best back to God'.

We remember Sir Edward Elgar in this 150th anniversary of his birth. His stirring and patriotic music, written as it was to acknowledge the achievements of the Victorian era, is a very appropriate ingredient for any Patronal Festival, and especially a Cathedral whose consecration took place just 8 years before his death.



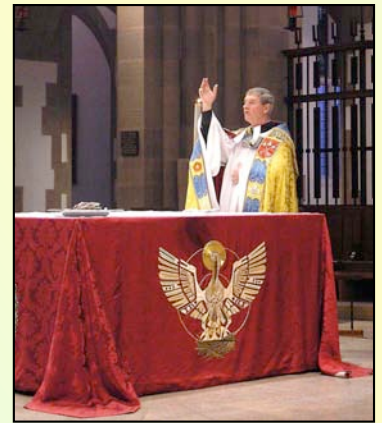
Elgar, born a Roman Catholic, owed much to his involvement with the Anglican Cathedral tradition. The music chosen to conclude this service – the *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4* – is dedicated to the organist of Hereford Cathedral. Elgar's music resounded throughout Britain and the Empire with its rash of new churches, reminding us that Britain was not only great but also Christian...

The goal of the pilgrim is not now the Temple in Jerusalem [of which John spoke in our 2nd lesson] but the hallowed body of the believer and its remembering, its incorporation, as part of the Church, the body of Christ. The location of holiness is no longer to be found in one place but everywhere.

There is a lingering temptation to consider ourselves immune from the fluctuations of the outside world. Those who live in temples do not hear the rattling of the wind in the canvass quite so readily.

One of the values of worship is that it moves the centre of attention away from ourselves. The absence of a Temple tends to cast a shadow of insecurity on both Church and Nation. Yet there is an important difference between insecurity and humility. We stand in the confidence of God.

We stand for and on behalf of the bishop, diocese, region and nation, but we must do so with both purpose and humility. To maintain this temple – indeed to celebrate our Patronal Festival – is to recognise our good fortune under God on the one hand and our responsibilities to him and to the tent-dwellers on the other. Amen.



Our Patronal Festival was most generously sponsored by **Fraser EAGLE Group Limited**. Without their support it could not have taken place on such an ambitious scale. Thank you!



St. Valentine's Day Concert

The cathedral's centre Nave was packed for **Philippa Hyde's** and **Richard Tanner's** lunchtime concert on Feb. 14th. The last time such a large audience attended a lunchtime recital was almost exactly 36 years ago when your editor gave the first lunchtime concert on the cathedral organ when it was brand new!



Philippa sang this concert even though she was feeling unwell. But her dedicated professionalism triumphed. Her singing was a pure joy, as was Richard's playing.

Richard and Pippa gave a delicious programme of love songs and wedding music, with songs by Purcell, Handel, Strauss, Fauré Britten and Jerome Kern's *Can't help lovin' that man of mine!*

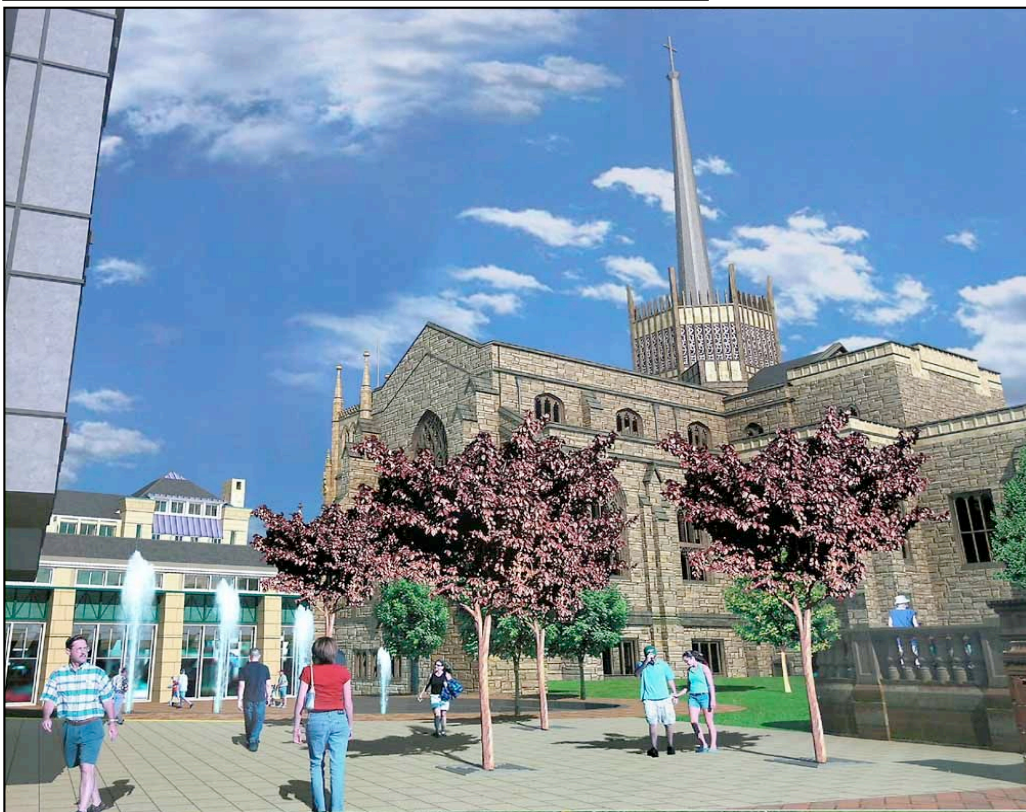
And they ended with a surprise encore: the love duet between Papagano and Papagena from Mozart's *Magic Flute*. The entire concert was a wholly magic experience for us all! **Thank you!**

Major changes are coming in 2008

town centre
Blackburn
renaissance

Cathedral Masterplan

The regeneration of the Cathedral Precinct is part of a £45 million project due to start in the next year. Phase 1, led by Blackburn Cathedral Developments, will contain 95 apartments including a deanery and clergy housing, a new cathedral library and refectory, offices, underground car parking and open space. The development will be in two buildings, Clergy Court and Mitre Court, linked by a major new public square, courtyards, and by the restoration of Dandy Walk.



Supported by:



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with
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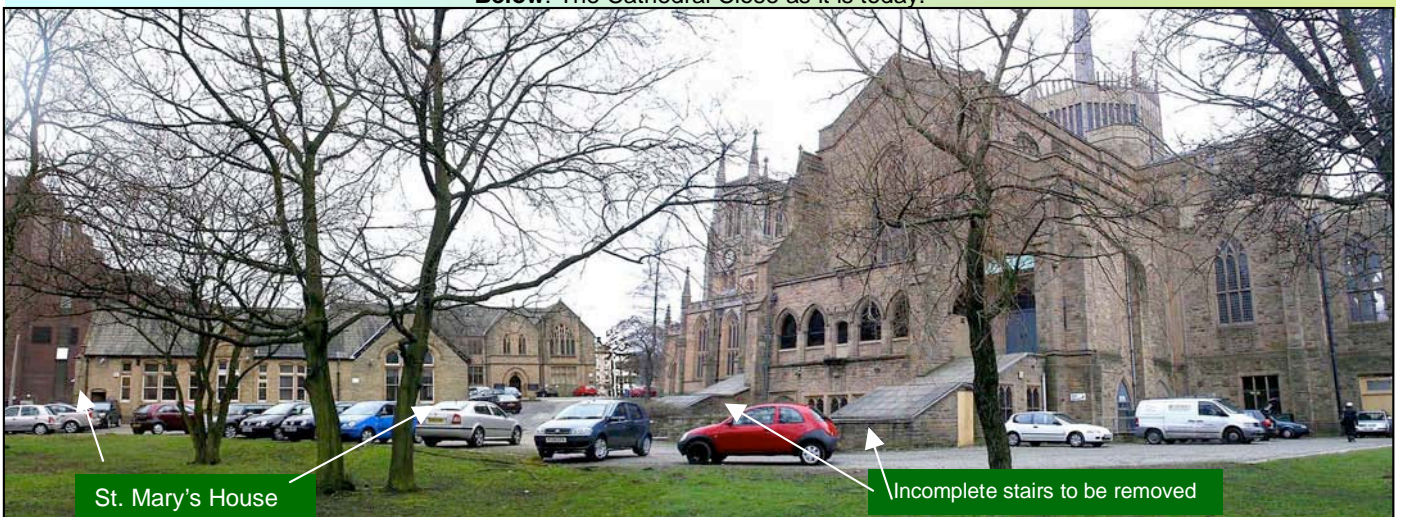


asc Academy for Sustainable Communities

English Partnerships
The National Regeneration Agency

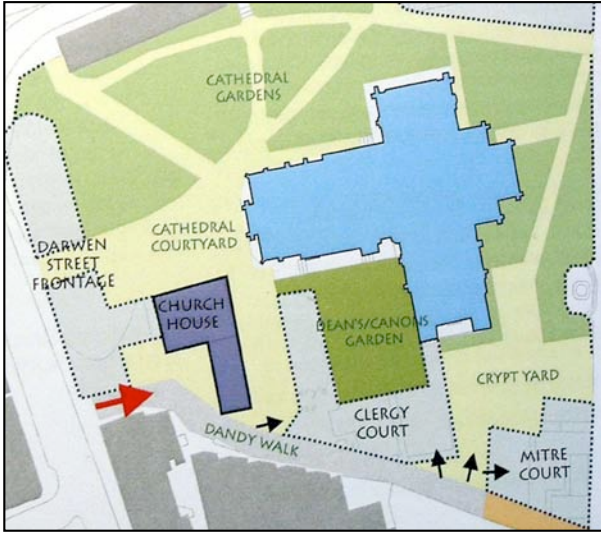
Above: The Cathedral Close as it will become, with St. Mary's House demolished to make way for the Clergy Court.

Below: The Cathedral Close as it is today.



St. Mary's House

Incomplete stairs to be removed



The transformed Boulevard showing the new Apartments



The new Clergy Court can be seen to the left of Church House

But changes are happening right now! The demolition of buildings West of the Cathedral behind Barclay's Bank and Lloyds Bank, is making way for yet more apartments! For more, look up [Master plan Blackburn](#) on the web. *Master-plan realizations courtesy of our Cathedral Architect, James Sanderson.*



**We welcome another new Family to the Cathedral:
NEIL & KATE SHEPHERD
and MATTHEW, LEANNE, EMILY & LUCY.**

Neil wrote to your editor:

Greetings! I hope that you remember me from Keynsham Parish Church when you came to stay with us and do a choral workshop? – Life has moved on. I was “promoted” (!) and spent 5 years as D of M at Cirencester PC which was great. But Kate and I decided to relocate back up North last summer. We’re living in Clitheroe, and I’m now Organist and D of M at Standish where I gather, you were involved in the plans for the new Walker organ around 35 years ago. I thought that I’d make contact and say “hello” again.

The children love it up here and Emily (6) is singing in the Children’s choir at the Cathedral and loving every minute of it – and Leanne has joined the YPC! Lucy (4) can’t wait until she is old enough to join the children’s choir, too!



The family relaxes before Sunday lunch, after which Emily went to a fancy dress party! Matthew was away at college.

Neil continued: Cirencester was an (almost) full time post with three choirs and lot of other things happening – I miss it immensely, but funnily enough, I get just as much out of my post at Standish with a smaller set-up. I’m in the process of extending my “*Schola Cantorum South*” by forming a new choir based here in the North – a choir which mainly exists to do occasional cathedral visits and go out into churches where they have little or no music making. Lots to keep me occupied.

Day job wise, I had a career change recently and I’m now Area manager for a company of travel agents with branches in Langho, Great Harwood and Colne. We also have a call centre specializing in trips to Russia, the Baltics and former eastern bloc countries – now a booming section of the travel industry.

I’m in the process of organizing the Cathedral Choir tour to Paris taking place from 31st May to 4th June, when the choir will be singing Mass at Notre-Dame de Paris (as well as visiting Euro Disney, the Eiffel Tower and sailing on the Seine!!). I’m also seriously considering becoming a member of the Renaissance Singers again!

Kate told your editor, during a delicious Sunday lunch: ‘Blackburn Cathedral is a very friendly place. When I sat in the audience for the *Christmas Spectacular* several choir parents came to welcome me. I am thrilled that our three daughters will become members of the cathedral’s ambitious and rewarding music programme.’

A big welcome from us all to a most talented family.

From OC ANDREW SIMM in Bolton

Hi John

Emma and I have just moved house and I recently changed jobs. I qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 2000 after a 3-year training period. and am currently working for a firm of Chartered Accountants in Manchester City Centre.

I remember singing Evensong with the cathedral choir when we

visited Windsor Castle, which was great. But the coach broke down on the way back which was fun as we boys got to run around for a couple of hours. I’m not sure the adults enjoyed it as much!

I’m doing more singing now and passed my grade 8 exam last summer. Also I started to sing tenor with the New English Orchestra, led by Nigel Swinford. I will also hopefully be going abroad with them later in the year. This has been quite challenging, as we have to sing from memory!

I also still sing tenor with The Bolton Music Service Singers and we have been very busy over Christmas.

We also took part in the Bolton Sing Day which was organised by Sing For Pleasure, where in addition to various smaller pieces, we performed Mozart’s Coronation Mass.

In addition to these I also help to lead the singing at my local church at various services, when asked, which I really enjoy.

Many thanks
Andrew



Chorister 1986-1990. Prefect 1989



**HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS to
former SOC GEOFFREY TAYLOR**

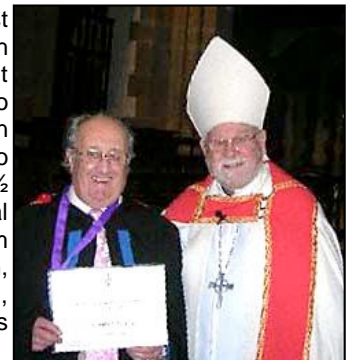
...who, in January, received his long and faithful service Award from the Bishop of Burnley for 60 glorious years of music-making in the Church.

Geoffrey, who is organist emeritus of St. Silas’ Church where he served for almost 20 years, was admitted to the cathedral choir on December 26th, 1943 (so he’s really clocked up 62 ½ years!). He held several organ appointments from 1950-90 in Blackburn, Birmingham and Croydon, and now plays most Sundays on a free-lance basis.

He’s also built up a thriving piano teaching practice over the past 25 years.

In March he made his third trip to Australia to celebrate his 75th birthday in Sydney and Melbourne! (*What energy!*)

Geoffrey’s 60-year Award was made at a special service in the cathedral sponsored by the RSCM when other Awards were made by the Dean and Archdeacon for excellence and ‘stickability’. The choir was conducted by **Neil Shepherd** (see this page) and the organist was our own **Ian Pattinson**, from Lancaster Priory.



Geoffrey told your editor, ‘The Service meant a great deal to me as a “Diamond” Anniversary celebration of a life of service in Church Music.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the great influence T.L.D. (**Thomas Duerden**, organist of Blackburn Cathedral 1939-64) had on me all those distant years ago.’

*Renewed congratulations,
Geoffrey.
We honour you!*





**Old Chorister,
Church Warden,
member of the
Cathedral Council
and Bellringer:
GARY WIGNALL
reflects on 56 years of
dedicated service
to Blackburn
Cathedral**

I was born in 1941 and coming from a musical Methodist family at the age of 10 was anxious to join a boys' choir.

I was admitted to the Cathedral Choir on Trinity Sunday 1951 by the then cathedral organist, **Thomas L. Duerden**, after answering an advertisement in the Northern Daily Telegraph for Singing Boys.

The Song School was then in St. Mary's House, and some of the clergy lived in the Close.

Dress for the boys was an Eton Suit or Morning Suit, long trousers with Eton collar black bow tie, and black shoes. Woe betide you if you came with dirty shoes, you would be sent to the Precentor's House next door to the Song School to ask for shoe cleaning materials. This dress had to be worn on all Sundays and particular occasions.



The Cathedral was then very much as the original Parish Church in size (the nave of the present cathedral). The organ was at the west end, where 'Christ the Worker' is now situated. Although the side galleries had been removed they were still in situ at the back alongside the organ.

The Transepts although built were not complete and open for public worship, but were screened off with a wall, just behind where the pulpit now stands. The Jesus Chapel had not been built. **George Woodhouse** was Head Prefect, and he was



succeeded by **Stanley Roorcroft** who was eventually chosen to sing in the Coronation Service for H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, for which he received his Coronation medal. (Next column)

The choirboys had yearly trips to Southport on the train, where we played cricket and had refreshments in a local café. Also there was an annual trip to the Grand Theatre in Jubilee St, where the Telephone Exchange now stands. Provost Kay insisted that they built the Cathedral side in stone to blend in.



I was promoted to Chorister grade by passing T.L.D.'s examination, **Eric Heald** and I were chosen to be part of a small hand-picked choir to sing when **H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother** opened Addington Palace, Croydon as HQ of the RSCM. in July 1954.

This was a great honour, for the choir was drawn mainly from Metropolitan Cathedrals and Royal foundations. The Archbishop of Canterbury, **Dr. Geoffrey Fisher**, who was president of the R.S.C.M., dedicated the new headquarters.



(L) **Stanley Roorcroft** with his 1953 Coronation medal.

(Centre) **Gary Wignall** & Prefect **Eric Heald** who both sang at the opening of the RSCM HQ in 1954.

The Prefects' copes, with the arms of Canterbury & York, and of the dioceses from which we sprang, Lichfield, Chester and Manchester, are still in use today!

Sir William Harris composed an anthem 'Behold the Tabernacle of God' for the RSCM's opening, and I still have a copy of the order of service and an autographed copy of the anthem.



The fine Harrison organ from the chapel in Addington Palace – for which Sir William Harris wrote his anthem.

Photo taken in the later HQ of the RSCM in Dorking.

My first R.S.C.M course was to Rossall School at Cleveleys, which lasted a week during the school holidays.

Lionel Walmsley and I were later chosen to attend a Cathedral Course at Lincoln Minster in 1955 lead by Dr **Gerald Knight** who was Director of the R.S.C.M. →

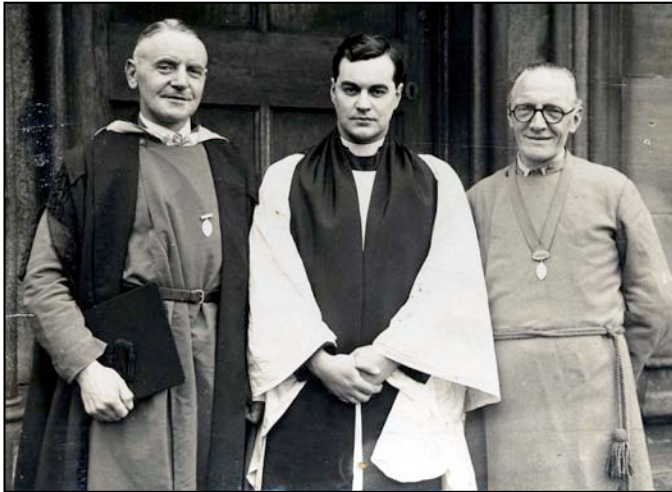


Lionel later became one of the Blackburn pop group **The Four Pennies** who had a number-one hit with 'Juliet'. He later changed his name to Lionel Morten. My progression continued and I became a Prefect and ultimately Head Prefect.

| | George Woodhouse |
|-------------|---|
| 1952 | Gordon Cronshaw Peter Heald John Sutcliffe |
| 1953 | Stanley Roorcroft J. Alec Stuttard |
| 1954 | John K. Harrison Eric Heald Gary Wignall |
| 1955 | David Smalley Lionel Walmsley |

Prefects' Board No. 1, in the Song School, with names of many prefects mentioned in Gary's fascinating article.

My last course was in 1956 at St. Peter's School, York led by **Herbert Crook**, who was Chief Commissioner of the R.S.C.M. I should have attended a Cathedral course at Exeter but my voice was changing, being 15 years old.



(L-R) **T. L. Duerden**, the **Revd. Rennie Simpson** our Precentor – who later became Succentor at Westminster Abbey – and Chief Commissioner of the RSCM, **Hubert Crook**, at Blackburn Cathedral.

I left the Boys' Choir in August 1956 and T.L.D. took me and **Tom Wilkinson**, whose voice had also changed, up to the Belfry, because at that time we did not have any other youth choirs. I learnt to ring a bell and was taught the art of Change Ringing by my mentor Arthur Tomlinson. In 1957 I left St Peter's School, Blackburn, which was the boys' school, (St. Hilda's was the girls' school), which later combined to become the present St. Wilfrid's school, but I could not get a job.

I was looking for a career in Engineering, but apprenticeships were hard to come by. T.L.D. was a great help but one of our Church Wardens, Charles Rimmer, came to my rescue and secured me an apprenticeship at Clayton Goodfellows because he knew the Managing Director, William Harrison. The engineering works were next to Darwen St. Railway Bridge.



In August 1962 at the Cathedral I married my wife **Margery**, a local girl. The Boy Choristers sang and **T.L.D. played the organ**, Canon Glyn Jackson officiated, and the Bells Rang for us. The Transept were opened by this time although there were concrete flag floors and the original wooden pews. The organ had been moved to a position over where the choir stalls are now situated.



T.L.D. retired in April 1964 (to be succeeded by JB) and there was a farewell dinner held at Samlesbury Old Hall.



Guests included **Col. Walter A. Heald**, choir secretary (father of **OCs Peter & Eric**), and the Mayor of Blackburn who made a speech.

Toasts were proposed by **OC Sqdn Ldr. Bryan Lamb**, and the **Rt. Rev. Charles Claxton** the Lord Bishop of Blackburn. The Very Rev. **Norman Robinson**, the Provost of Blackburn, made presentations.

Some days later a commemorative peal was rung for the occasion and details are recorded in the Belfry.

In 1967 I had moved through the ranks in the tower and became Tower Captain. Seven years and three sons later I resigned to spend more time with my family, although I continued to ring.



In March 1980 in conjunction with **Canon Geoffrey Williams**, who was Canon Sacrist, I wrote the booklet '**Blackburn Cathedral Bells**' which included the history of our church bells from 1552, with photographs taken by my eldest son **Stephen** who also had learnt to ring. This is now almost out of print and we are intending to revise and reprint.



I became a Sidesman, and during the following years I served on the Cathedral's Administrative Chapter, the Deanery Synod, and spent 13 years as a Governor of St. Wilfrid's School. In 1996 I became Church Warden following the death of Arthur Bentley.

In 2006 I assumed the role of Senior Churchwarden, having the longest time of service, succeeding choir parent **Jim Farquhar**.

I am currently serving my second term on the Cathedral Council.

My career continued in production engineering and management and I spent 19 happy years in Polymer Engineering in Gt. Harwood. The last 8 years of my career were in Preston at Alstom Transport, formerly known as G.E.C. – this was in a purchasing role.



In the Tower we now have 9 Cathedral Ringers but 10 bells. We are fortunate that Preston and other Blackburn Ringers from St. Silas church help us by ringing for Evensong once a month on the second and third Sundays.

We always welcome visitors, on Sunday mornings or Thursday evenings when we practise. **This year I will have completed 50 years as a Bell Ringer, and no doubt I will be part of a team to mark the occasion.**



Six of our bellringers in January 2007: L-R: **Gary Wignall**, Raymond Hutchins, Graham Barnes, Ian Fowler, Dr. Beate Von Brenen, and Ian Smith - Tower Captain.
Heartiest congratulations and thanks, Gary, for all you have given to the cathedral for the last 56 years. May you enjoy many more years of fruitful service!

Ready, Steady, Cook!
 with **NIGEL HOWARTH**, *Egon Ronay 1995 Chef of the Year*
 in the Cathedral Crypt, Wednesday, 6th June, 7.30 pm



NIGEL HAWORTH, Egon Ronay Chef of the Year
 has been Head Chef at Northcote Manor since 1984, later becoming Joint Managing Director in 1989. He's also **Member of the Master Chefs of Great Britain;** and **Member of the Academy of Culinary Arts.**
 In 2004 he went to Buckingham Palace to receive **The Prince Philip Medal** → (the City & Guilds highest achievement) in recognition of his lifelong commitment to catering.



And he'll be demonstrating of his culinary skills to us in the Cathedral Crypt!
Get your tickets now – only £10-00 – cash or cheques only.
Phone Linda Bruce 01254-50-30-82
Accommodation is limited, so phone NOW!

With **NIGEL HAWORTH**, Michelin Star Chef of Northcote Manor, will be wine expert **CRAIG BANCROFT**.

Craig Bancroft is Joint Managing Director of Northcote Manor. He started his career as a Management Trainee for Trusthouse Forte where he gained broad experience across the industry, including chef duties at the **Grosvenor House Hotel, in London**, and the Two Michelin-Star Plaza Athenee Hotel in **Paris**. At just 23 years of age he became the General Manager at Northcote - **the youngest hotel manager in the Country.**



Senior Old Chorister JOHN MARR
who arranged this spectacular event, writes:

‘*This will be a fascinating evening, for both young and old, and I look forward to welcoming as many guests as we can fit in.*’



The Renaissance Singers are being kept very busy!

On Ash Wednesday evening they sang an exquisite service for the Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes. The setting was the *Missa Bell' amfritri' altera* by Lassus – it was sung so sensitively.



And the anthem was Allegri's *Miserere Mei* sung from the Ambulatory – with top Cs confidently sung by Angela Hicks. It was a most moving experience to be there, for the liturgy and music were wedded together so exquisitely that we felt we had all entered with our Lord into the solemn season of Lent.



But only three days later, on Saturday evening, 25th February, they gave a hilarious concert in the crypt, which attracted a capacity audience – so much so that extra chairs had to be found.

Amongst the earliest arrivals were (L-R) Judith and Ken McNeil, who were guests of Steve Waddington (from our generous sponsors, FRASER EAGLE) and his wife, Barbara.



The concert was a riotous success. **Richard Tanner** conducted the ever-popular *Linden Lea*, by Vaughan Williams, so expressively. Later, the choir sang more Edwardian music by Parry, Elgar, Stanford and Sullivan (all Knights of the Realm!).

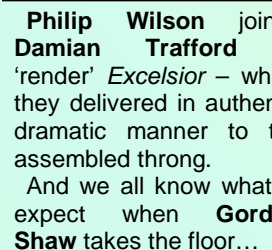


But it was the solo items which nearly brought down the reinforced concrete ceiling. Our Assistant Director of Music showed another side of his character from that which we've already admired (i.e.. a serious musician who can conduct choirs and play finisibly difficult organ music by Langlais).



Dressed as a vicar **James Davy** gave us two monologues, accompanying himself on the piano, which would have done credit to Cyril Fletcher and his *Odd Odes!*

Later he played the part of Ernest Worthing in a uproarious extract from *The Importance of Being Ernest*, staged by the **11th Hour Productions** (!) It was superb!



Philip Wilson joined **Damian Trafford** to 'render' *Excelsior* – which they delivered in authentic dramatic manner to the assembled throng.

And we all know what to expect when **Gordon Shaw** takes the floor...



He didn't disappoint. He spent as long explaining why, after singing tenor for 50 years, Richard had persuaded him to sing baritone. ('It's to save Richard's ears!'). He then rendered (there was an awful lot of rendering that night!) *Come into the Garden, Maud*, which is an aria for high tenor. He only just made it!

Gordon was followed by the eldest of his eight Granddaughters, **Caroline Kenyon**, who recited a witty poem by Pam Ayers. She knows how to hold an audience's attention!

There were violin and flute solos and more recitations by members of this most talented choir.

And if that wasn't enough, there were lavish refreshments in the interval provided by **Peter and Gin Crewe**. What a joyful evening it was! *Thank you, Renaissance Singers!*





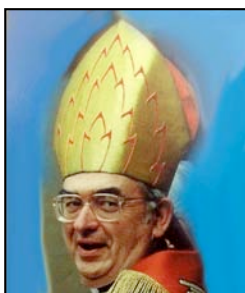
Heartiest congratulations to Canon Chris and Mrs. Mary Chivers!

Jonathan Joseph Chivers was born at 0040 on 27 February, weighing 8lb 8oz. A brother for Dominic and Gregory. Mum and baby are both well.



FROM BISHOP ALAN CHESTERS CBE in Chester

Dear John,
Thank you for your congratulations on the CBE. It is very kind of you to e-mail. I am not sure that I should be honoured for work which has already given me much satisfaction, introduced me to some very dedicated people and, indeed through the contacts I made, smoothed my path into retirement, bringing lots of new opportunities here in Cheshire. It is a lovely bonus !



I have not yet been summoned to the Palace so I do not have a date but if something emerges before your deadline I shall try to send you what you require.

I do hope that things go well with you. They are so lucky to have you in Blackburn. Jennie and I look forward to every edition of the Newsletter which I believe is the envy of many cathedrals

Blessings
+Alan

From OC FRANK HARE in MALVERN

Hail !
I have just had a card from an old Lay Clerk friend of mine at Worcester Cathedral who is a founder singer of **The Sixteen**. He tells me they are coming to Blackburn in April 21st to do a concert in the Cathedral. They are a wonderful group and sing all over the world.



My friend is **Tim Jones** – do give him a nudge when they come. He left Worcester and went to St Paul's where he has been for 20 years he tells me !! Amazing.
He is a mate of **John Scott** (ex St. Paul's Cathedral) and **David Hill** (ex Winchester). John played the organ and David conducted a "special" choir at Tim's wedding in Hampstead - quite a do. He married the administrator of St Martin in the Fields – a lovely girl called Katy. He sang Dec Bass at Worcester with me when I left Blackburn choir and I chimed in when I could. He was VERY kind to me. He then joined The Sixteen.

Keep smiling
Frank

FROM OC STEVE HOLMES in RUSSIA !

PRIVYET COMRADE JB!!!!
Received the latest bumper edition of the super duper newsletter and as per usual it's up to your usual high standards!!!

Just thought i would drop you a quick line as i am currently enjoying a leisure pleasure in the city of a thousand churches (there aren't that many really but it feels like it!!!) ST.PETERSBURG IN RUSSIA!!!!... THERE ARE THREE CATHEDRALS ON THE MAIN STREET ALONE!!! (NEVSKY PROSPECT)... it's a place well worth a visit although i would recommend the summer as last week it was minus 13° C !!...



I have been to a few eastern block countries but this place is a wow on the Richter scale.... anyway enough about that... hope you are well and look forward to the next edition of the cathedral times (newsletter)...

STEVE HOLMES

This deserves a Wow! What a great hat. Thanks Steve. JB

The Dean in Durham with 'Woody'

Dear John,
Last Sunday (11 March) I was preaching at Bede College Chapel in the University of Durham where **OC Edward Seymour** is the Organ Scholar. He produced some stunning music for the mass – *Missa Dixit Maria* (Hassler) and *Greater Love* (Ireland). with a strong choir of 25 undergraduates with 6 choral scholars.

Woody was in very good form; he obviously has a positive and relaxed relationship with the chaplain, **Fr. Jonathan Lawson** and is well respected in the chapel and college.

The night before, many of the singers were performing at the end of term college musical with the obligatory party to the wee small hours, nevertheless their Sunday music was superb.

God bless **C.**



L-R: The Chaplain, 'Woody' Seymour, Dr. Alan Pearson (College Principal), and Dean Christopher.

PS. Woody has found a placement for his PGCE next year at Sedbergh School where his brother is director of Music.

Well done, Woody! Ed

Messiah – with authentic instruments

Having enjoyed the Mozartian realization of Messiah last year (with clarinets and trombones), this year – on Saturday March 10th – we were treated to a Handelian performance with period instruments.

It was yet another triumph for **RICHARD TANNER** and his gifted and hard-working team of instrumentalists, singers and organizers.

Guests included representatives of our generous sponsors, **DH Associates** and **Purcell Miller Triton, Architects**, without whose munificent support this concert would not have been possible.

Among the first to arrive to enjoy the performance (and the customary Wine and Nibbles Reception in the North Transept beforehand) were **Lord and Lady Shuttleworth**, seen here talking with **His Honour Judge Bryan Duckworth** and **Mrs. Carolyn Duckworth**.



James Davy and **David Scott-Thomas**, our own resident organists, played continuo sensitively on chamber organ and harpsichord respectively.

It was a joy to see, and to hear, the large choir made up of choristers (some of whom were very young) and experienced amateur and professional singers, who were drawn from the **Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys**, the **Cathedral Girls' Choir** and the **Renaissance Singers**. As ever, they too gave of their very best.



The soloists, who were photographed immediately before the performance, were outstanding.



The orchestra was **CANZONA**, led by **Theresa Caudle**. They were formed in 1992 and include some of this country's leading players of period instruments.

A baroque oboe



For two years recently, CANZONA was the Resident Ensemble at Magdalen College, Oxford. Their playing in our cathedral that evening was a joy to listen to.

Well done all, and thank you!



L-R: **Richard Tanner** (Conductor – who controlled and inspired his forces with precision and insight,

Nicola Mills (Soprano – who shines ever more brightly every time she sings here),

James Atherton (Former Blackburn Cathedral Choir Alto, our Tenor soloist – who sang many of his agile arias from memory),

Mark Rawlinson (Bass – whose musicianship added so much to the performance),

David Bates (Counter-Tenor – who stood in at short notice and dazzled us all by his altissimo singing), and

Head Chorister **Adam Whittaker** who sang his four short solos with supreme confidence – *There were shepherds ... And suddenly there was with the angel...*

Happiness

“Success is not the key to happiness.

Happiness is the key to success.

If you love what you are doing
you will be successful.”



Albert Schweitzer 1875-1965

'Mystery' Recital! Score da what?

One of the most interesting recitals we've experienced in the cathedral recently was given on Sunday evening, 4th March by a delightful trio: Louise Latham (violin) Ann Bond (organ) and Mary Dainton (cello) who played in the North transept by candlelight.



Their unusual programme comprised several of Hanz Biber's 'Mystery' Sonatas as well as music for organ by Bach.



Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (August 12, 1644 – May 3, 1704) was a Bohemian-Austrian composer. He was known as a violin virtuoso and is best known for his violin works, many of which employ **scordatura** (unconventional tunings of the open strings).

"The Rosary Sonatas" are a set of 15 sonatas, also known as "**The Mystery Sonatas**" for key events in the lives of the Virgin Mary and Christ.

Each sonata employs a different tuning of the violin. This use of **scordatura** transforms the violin from the pleasures of the *Five Joyful Mysteries* (the Annunciation, etc.) to the trauma of the *Five Sorrowful Mysteries* (the Crucifixion, etc.) to ethereal nature of the *Five Glorious Mysteries* (the Resurrection, etc.).

The reconfiguration of the violin is also symbolic. For example, the middle two strings of the violin are crossed over for the "Resurrection" sonata.

Louise Latham showed your editor some of her **scordatura** music – with 'crossed-over' tuning.

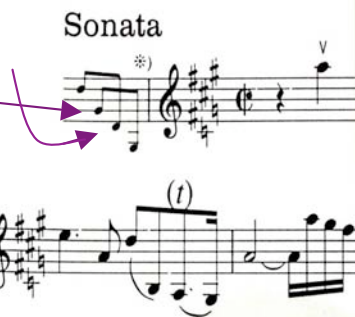
Have you ever seen a key signature with C & G sharps and C & G naturals?

Ms. Latham told JB that she played the notes as they were written but, because the strings were tuned differently, the actual pitches that came out were very different!

'It's like driving a car with everything backwards – turn the steering wheel left, and the car goes right; put your foot on the brake and the car accelerates!'



But there was another Mystery that night. Why hadn't more people made the effort to hear this amazing music. The audience was of 'holy supper' size – the same number as those who attended the Last Supper!
Where were you?



"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." *Albert Schweitzer*

The Choir of Lincoln College, Oxford,

... which has enjoyed an enviable reputation in recent years, (they sang for Pope John II when **OC Chris Hunwick** was a member and have made several stunning CDs), spent a musical weekend with us in March.

This came about, primarily, because our last organ scholar, **Jonathan Turner**, is now junior organ scholar of that college!

Our Cathedral seems to have strong connections, musically, with Lincoln: your editor was organ scholar there over half a century ago, his successor at Blackburn, **David Cooper**, was also organ scholar at Lincoln, & **Richard Tanner's** father, **John Tanner**, was an undergraduate there also.



And so it was a particular delight to welcome them to the cathedral on Saturday evening, 17th March, when they sang a most ambitious concert of Lenten music – including Lotti's 8-part *Crucifixus*. As only 13 members of the choir could be with us (they have twice that number in term time), was each part was sung by 1.625 singers?



It was very good to welcome the **Rector of Lincoln College**, Professor Paul Langford, and Mrs. Langford that evening, for they had made a special journey from Oxford to support their excellent choir.

We were impressed to see the senior organ scholar, **Rebecca Taylor**, conduct so musically and clearly, and to hear our own **Jonathan Turner** (junior organ scholar) accompany so creatively.

The two organ scholars switched roles during that concert, and also when the choir sang Choral Evensong the next day. Their singing of Howells' *Coll. Reg.* was exquisite.



And on the following four days they were heard singing the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4. 'Twas a busy visit!

The choir included not only our own former Music Scholar **Emily Crewe**, but also **Andrew Elliott**, son of Renaissance Singer, Alizon Elliott. The Elliotts threw a superb party for choir and hangers on that Saturday night. How they all managed to sing so well the next day was a mystery!

Asylum Seekers in Blackburn? Cathedral work makes a difference



There are over 300 asylum seeker families in Blackburn and an unknown, but almost certainly larger, number of refugees who have lost all means of support, but fear to return to their homeland.

We forget that these people are human, and have, in the vast majority of cases, fled persecution and torture because of war or oppression.

John East has been appointed Asylum and Refugee Project Worker, and, in conjunction with **Canon Michael Wedgeworth**, is serving the Cathedral and Wesley Hall in sup-

porting and helping these desperate people to regain their dignity and self esteem.

This has begun to make an impact in their lives. We have just received a modest grant from the Home Office to help these needy families and individuals, but more is urgently needed.



L-R: Canon Michael Wedgeworth and (back row) John East and Jean Kennedy, from the Cathedral, with asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, Somalia, Iran and Angola!

Asylum seekers and refugees are greeted each week by members of the worshipping congregation at the Cathedral and given practical support in a variety of ways.

Traumatized men, woman and families are beginning to feel respected again and given lots of opportunities to make a home and made to feel welcome here in Blackburn.

We launched a prayer time for them in the Jesus Chapel in April. At these meetings we pray, read the bible, reflect and worship in our different languages. This demonstrates the Cathedral's willingness to welcome, engage in, and create a Christian response to the strangers amongst us.

**'When I was hungry, you gave me food;
when I was thirsty, you gave me drink;
when I was homeless,
you gave me a welcome.'**

Matthew 25:35



How can **you** help right now?

Cheques please, to **Blackburn Cathedral (Asylum Support)** and mailed to **Asylum Support, Cathedral Close, Blackburn, BB1 5AA.**

To Wesley Hall: Food parcels, and emergency vouchers. Furniture to **Blackburn Churches Furniture Project** based in Chapel Street.

Please pray for this essential work. And if you have some spare time to help us we, and they, would be most grateful.

John East, 07-88-55-95-189

Thank you.

Curlers, Ties and Butterflies

by James Davy, Assistant DoM

The YPC was recently invited to take part in a special recording of Radio 2's *Sunday Half Hour* programme, which was broadcast on Easter Day. The music items comprised two anthems, hymns with descants, and *You'll never walk alone*, backing Tenor soloist and rising star, Alfie Boe.

19 members of the choir arrived at Blackpool Tower for a rehearsal with the organist, Nigel Ogden (turning the famous Wurlitzer into a church organ for the recording), and with Alfie, to get used to the huge space (but rather dry acoustics) of the Ballroom.

After an all-too-short rehearsal, the choir trooped off to Harry Ramsden's for a Fish & Chip supper. The YPC managed to make short work of their tea, although the Assistant Director of Music had a rather large collection of butterflies in his stomach!

The recording went smoothly, the presenter, the **Rev. Canon Roger Royle** keeping up a steady stream of humour between items, ensuring there were no awkward gaps. He complimented the choir more than once on their singing, remarking less enthusiastically on the boys' choices of ties!



The choir were centre stage for a lot of the time, for their own items, and leading the hymns with the massed church choirs. We proved to be the stars of the show!



After what had been a huge amount of hard work in the recording, choir members met **Alfie Boe** backstage and got music autographed, and persuaded him to wish 'Happy Birthday' to **Emma Pearson** who celebrated her 18th birthday the next day!

The Assistant Director of Music and Assistant Organist were more interested than the YPC by the presence of Jean Alexander (**Hilda Ogden** to older readers and watchers of *Coronation Street*), reading scripture and poetry (though without headscarf or curlers).



It was a very demanding, but ultimately enjoyable and rewarding experience for us all, and it makes the YPC the fourth choir from Blackburn Cathedral to broadcast on national radio in the last year. (No requests from Radio 1 yet, though!).

Well done, YPC and James! JB

Two Concerts by Two Old Choristers

1

OC PETER FIELDING and his son **MARK** delighted a large audience at their lunchtime concert in the cathedral on Wednesday 21st March. They've played here many times before – and each time they seem to get better!

Peter (whose age is no secret – coming up to 81) was one of TLD's earliest choristers when TLD moved to the cathedral from St. John's Church, Blackburn in 1939 (see photos p. 14). In fact TLD brought the whole of the then Fielding clan with him!

Some years later Peter and his 12-year old son, Mark, gave their first public piano duet concert in the Cathedral Song School. Mark is now on the staff of the Guildhall School of Music where he has 60 piano pupils!

Their recital in March was *brilliant*. We'd admired Peter's sparkling technique when he gave his solo lunchtime concert in January, but he and Mark excelled themselves this day. Rushing demi-semi-quavers ran up and down the piano with dazzling accuracy and high musicianship.

Their programme?

Warlock's *Capriol Suite* (Full of good tunes!)

Ravel's *Ma Mere L'Oye* (delightful)

Dvorak's *Legenden* (super)

Mendelssohn's *Andante & Variations* (Pyrotechnics everywhere!)

Afterwards as many of the Fielding clan as possible gathered around the piano for a photograph.



L-R: Fieldings all: Elizabeth, Mark, Peter, Rachel & Paul, Andrea, Sheila & Gordon

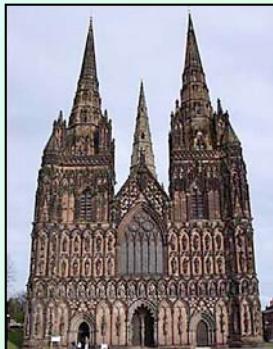
BUT you can hear some of their recital at home for they've just made a CD of piano duets by Mozart, Fauré, Brahms (the Haydn Variations), and the Ravel which they played here.

Copies available from the Cathedral shop – only £8-00 – proceeds to the Cathedral Music Fund. It's a bargain AND it's in aid of a great cause. 01254-50-30-90

2

The second OC's Concert was given on Saturday 24th March by **OC DEREK CROMPTON** with your editor when they gave the first recital (to an almost capacity audience) to celebrate the completion of the new Phoenix digital organ in St. John's Church, Higham.

Phoenix is a fairly new organ company from Preston, but its fame for excellence is quickly spreading. They've built giant 4-manual organs in St. Cuthbert's Church, Lytham, and also in St. John's Church, Broughton. They've recently built an organ for Leeds Cathedral, where our former Asst. DoM **BEN SANDERS** presides. They've completed another 4-manual organ in Sheffield Cathedral, and are building a fabulously enormous 3-manual organ for Lichfield Cathedral.



And they've built a house organ for former DoM of St. Wilfrid's School, **HOWARD SEYMOUR** in Hereford! (Howard is OC

'Woody's' Dad! – see page 17.)

The Higham organ is more modest – but it has two 32s, lots of exquisite soft stops and some pretty loud ones, too! It's a joy to play as well as to listen to.

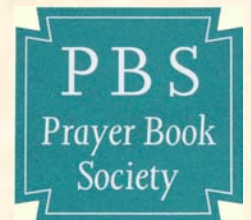
Derek sang songs by Purcell and Handel, accompanied on the organ; Schubert's *Who is Sylvia* and Britten's *Salley Gardens* accompanied on Higham's new digital piano, and *King ever glorious* from Stainer's *Crucifixion* (which has a top G for the soloist and full organ at the end!).



JB's programme was equally popular: *Toccata and Fugue* by you-know-who, *Air on the G-string* by ditto. Some John Stanley (authentic and also blown up), Whitlock, and finally lots of Elgar – with the audience joining in lustily at the end with *Land of Hope and Glory*, which raised a mighty cheer from the assembled throng! And there was food and wine for us all afterwards!



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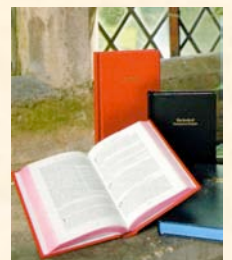
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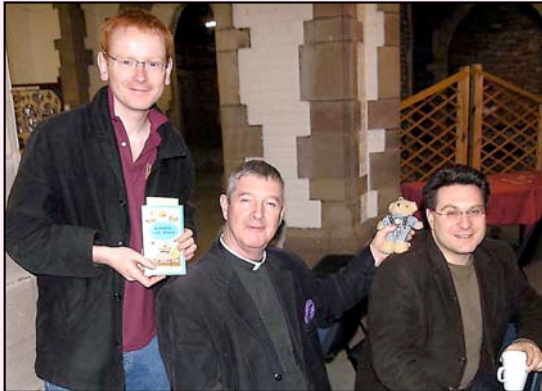
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Teddy Bears' Picnic!

Our wonderful **Joy Fielding** held a celebration Teddy Bears' Picnic in the Cathedral Crypt in March with the members of our children's choir. The children were asked to bring along their own Teddies (or equivalent) so that they could join in the fun.



Even Richard Tanner brought along his Teddy – which attracted the Dean's attention, and James Davy brought his copy of *Winnie the Pooh*, in lieu!

Joy began by having the children sit quietly and then raise their teddies high above their heads.



That got the afternoon to a fine start. But then Joy had them sitting even more quietly in a very neat circle, and they began to sing Teddy Action Songs.



Joy had the children throwing their teddies in the air as they sang their action songs.

The children (and their parents) loved every minute.



That was an amazing sight, for Joy has such gentle control over the children. Afterwards they gave Joy a bunch of flowers as a well-deserved Thank-you! *Well done!*

You can't win!

1. A reader recently commented that our Newsletter didn't include news of some of the many other Cathedral organizations, apart from our incomparable music programmes.

It doesn't claim to be a comprehensive Cathedral Magazine, for its music sponsors are displayed on the cover. (For BCM & BCOCA)

The editor is always happy to receive news of Cathedral events and organisations. But he can only print what he is sent! So please send it!

We do ask for financial support if this news is to be included.



Newsletters cost well over £1,000 per edition to print, plus considerable postage. Our generous Advertisers contribute £50-00 for a quarter page.

(The 'non-musical' news in our last edition and this one was most generously subsidized. See p.28)

2. But another reader commented that there was **too much** 'non-musical' news!

Be it known that ALL news of musical events is included – none is omitted on account of 'other' news! This non-musical news is therefore free to our readers, so enjoy it!

You can't win, can you!



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e mail the editor **now!**
john@bertalot dot org

Your News!



GREG MORRIS

our former Assistant DoM, is doing so well in his new post as **Associate Organist of the Temple Church in London.**

See the following report from the *Daily Telegraph*, 5th March 2007



Soft and sinuous sounds

'An exquisite, eloquently voiced and profoundly touching performance of Fauré's *Requiem* formed the basis of this concert, and it was set in a context that evocatively encapsulated the sophisticated resonances of French church music.

In an early-evening programme lasting just an hour, the Choir of the Temple Church, conducted by James Vivian, also sang Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*, the two choral works interleaved by the organist **Greg Morris's** playing of Jeanne Demessieux's *Attende Domine* and Marcel Dupré's *Cortège et Litanie*.

Hauntingly preceded here by the men of the choir intoning the plainchant on which the piece is based, **Morris's** playing not only illuminated the music's ingenuity and contrapuntal complexity of texture but also expressively wove the web of sinuous, chromatic harmonies that swathes the plainchant melody.

The *Cortège et Litanie* by Dupré, one of Demessieux's teachers, was equally telling and, at the climactic end, thrilling in its choice of colours.'

Heartiest congratulations, Greg!

OC ADRIAN WILSON is keeping himself busy.

He writes:

I am still very much involved in both Blackburn Cathedral, as a member of the congregation, and in choral singing.

I sing with the Rawstone Singers (in Preston) conducted by Michael Sands from Grantham Parish Church (it's a long way to come every week!). Over the last few months we have sung services at Manchester, Ely, Southwark and Chelmsford Cathedrals. And later this year we will be spending a week at Bristol Cathedral, and also



singing at Blackburn in October. Works to be sung include Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass*.

Music-making continues with Blackburn Music Society (I've been a member for over 40 years), and I help out Westholme and QEGS school choirs when needed.

Non-musical highlights include the birth of my first grandchild – Annie Scarlett. My cousin – Canon Roderick Wilson – celebrated his 80th birthday at a special service at his Parish Church of St. Francis Fenisccliffe, where we were surrounded by so many friends and relations.

I owned my own printing and computer supply company for over 25 years, but have retired so music is now my life.

Here's to much more music-making!

Adrian (Blackburn Cathedral Chorister 1947-49)

Congratulations, Granddad! Ed

A Master Organist

DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS, our brilliant Assistant Organist, gave a *stunning* recital for the last of this season's Wednesday Lunchtime Recitals in March.

His programme was devoted entirely to French organ music – Boellmann, Franck, Tournemire, Widor, and

Léonce de Saint-Martin → who succeeded Louis Vierne as Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, in 1924.



The major work was Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique, Suite No 1*, which transported us all in heart and mind to Paris where all these composers had made their home.



David was master of all he played: his technique was impeccable – his finger-work sparkled and his registration fulfilled the most detailed demands of these composers.

Our former organ scholar, Jonathan Turner, said that he really had to concentrate when turning the pages for the Saint-Martin *Toccata* for it was so difficult!

What a spectacular debut!

David, please play many, many more recitals for us. You dazzled and thrilled all who were privileged to hear you.

OC PETER HEALD has offered to begin to put **BCOCA ARCHIVES** in order – ready for our new Cathedral Library.



If you have photos, press cuttings, programmes, articles, recordings or anything else to do with Blackburn Cathedral Choir in times past, please send them to

Peter Heald, 58 The Brook, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, CB6 2QQ. and he will acknowledge them and keep them safe.

Please include as much info as possible: dates, places, names on photos. Thanks.

Another First for Blackburn Cathedral!



On March 29th the Dean announced the appointment of **ANJUM ANWAR MBE** as the **Dialogue Development Officer of Blackburn Cathedral**. It's believed that this is a unique appointment for a Muslim in an Anglican (or any other) Cathedral.

Ms. Anwar, who has been Education Officer of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, will work with **Canon Chris Chivers**, showing how dialogue between faiths, cultures and communities across Lancashire and beyond, can be developed in practice.

The Dean said that this appointment had received the unanimous support of the Cathedral Chapter.



Canon Chris said, 'This is not rocket science, and we're not trying to convert one another to each other's faith. All we're trying to achieve is to talk to one another, respecting the differences in our faiths and cultures, and discovering, in practice, how we can relate more creatively to each other's lives and beliefs.'

He and Ms. Anwar recently addressed 35 MPs in the House of Commons and challenged them to initiate similar schemes in their own constituencies. Bradford Cathedral may soon follow our lead.

Also present at the launching of this new ministry, which was attended by representatives of national and local press, was Superintendent **Andrew Pratt** from the Lancashire Constabulary where he heads the *Police and Communities Together* organization.



Supt. Pratt welcomed this appointment and said that he and his colleagues would do all they could to further this important work in our community.



Also present at this meeting were **Abdul Hamid Quershi**, Chairman of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, and Mgr. **John Devine**, the Churches Officer for the Northwest Development Agency, which will fund this appointment. Mgr. Devine said that the work that Canon Chivers and Ms. Anwar will do will be genuinely groundbreaking.



It was a happy coincidence that, as soon as the meeting ended, a party of Muslims entered the Cathedral, and Canon Chivers immediately took the initiative to give them a brief guided tour, explaining the significance of the altar, Lantern glass and the bishop's *Cathedra*.

Welcome, Anjum!

We were so very sorry

to hear of the sudden death in March of Gill Robinson, wife of OC DAVID ROBINSON.

David and Gill had lived in Cornwall for very many years – David was the chief sub-editor on the Falmouth newspaper and Gill was a wizard with crosswords; her syndicated puzzles appeared in newspapers all over the world.

They lived in an idyllic home (*Dream Cottage*) in Cornwall miles from anywhere – far from the hurly-burly of modern life, and they had a very intelligent dog called Fidget!

David was a chorister during the last few years of Tom Duerden's reign, and the first few years of JB's. (Phil Wilson was a prefect at that time – he's still with us as a super bass!)

David Robinson in 1962 singing for TLD



But only last year David and Gill moved to Northwich, Cheshire. David continued his reporting, and Gill continued with her syndicated crosswords.

David came to our BCOCA Reunion in September – and how glad we were to see him. He and Peter Heald were photographed catching up on all their news since they last met.



That's what the Old Choristers' Association is all about...

... as is our concern for David right now.

We send our deepest sympathy to David in his tragic loss.

But talking of PETER HEALD...

... he's just about to complete his Marathon (literally) swim in aid of Lostock Hall where his OC brother, Eric, received such marvellous care during his losing battle with cancer.

(See Prefect Eric Heald's photo on page 13 – standing next to young chorister Gary Wignall.)

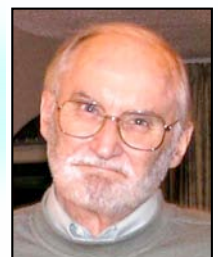
As reported in our last edition, Peter (who is a Founder member of BCOCA and who is in his 70th year and disabled) decided he wanted to raise money for Lostock Hall Hospital and hit upon the idea of swimming exactly 26 miles 385 yds ON HIS BACK (for that's the only way he can do it).

It takes him several hours to complete only a quarter of a mile, (24 lengths of the swimming baths in Ely where he lives) and so he's doing it in easy stages – but he's succeeding.

A number of Old Choristers told me that they didn't see the announcement of Peter's amazing feat which appeared in our last edition, so here it is again.

Cheques please to **Macmillan Cancer Support**, and mailed to Peter Heald, 58 The Brook, Sutton-in-the-Isle, ELY, CB6 2QQ. *Gift Aid forms will be sent to all donors.*

Peter deserves our support. What about it, Old Choristers?



WE ARE SO VERY GRATEFUL AGAIN...

...for more generous Standing Orders from good friends, in addition to those many supporters whose names were listed in our last edition, whose generosity is helping to keep our Newsletter financially healthy.

There's been a little understandable confusion concerning Standing Orders and Annual Subscriptions to BCOCA or FoBCM:

A Standing Order without an accompanying annual subscription to BCOCA or FoBCM is not eligible for Gift Aid, as the donor has the benefit of receiving copies of the Newsletter.

However, a S/O with an annual subscription is eligible, for the annual sub. entitles the member to copies of the Newsletter anyway, so the S/O is an extra gift, without any further benefit to the generous donor. Hope this is helpful!

FRIENDS of BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL MUSIC So, IN ADDITION TO SUBSCRIPTIONS from Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music, and / or Blackburn Cathedral Old Choristers' Association, we have received Donations and Standing Orders from:



Barnes, Mrs. Elaine (former Choir Parent) S/O
 Carr, Philip (former Senior Old Chorister) Donation
 Chamley, Shaun (Old Chorister) S/O
 Cronshaw, David, (former Choriman) Donation
 Daniels, Dr. Simon (Old Chorister) S/O
 EXCHANGE, the NWDA & more (see page 28)
 Fielding, Gordon (BCOCA Treasurer) Donation
 Halsall, Tim (former Secretary BCOCA) S/O
 Harrison, Ian (Old Chorister) Donation
 Hunwick, Chris (Old Chorister) S/O
 Marr, John (Senior Old Chorister, 2006-07) S/O
 Metcalf, David (former Choriman) & Eva S/O
 Newton, Brian (Old Chorister of the YPC) Donation
 Ryan, Chris (OC) Plus a Donation and subs for 2 others!
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 Thompson, Michael (Old Chorister) S/O
 Ward, Stephen, (Old Chorister) S/O
 Wild, Fred (Renaissance Singer) S/O
 Wilson, Adrian (Old Chorister) Donation
 Woodburn, Mrs. Guilaine (Choir Parent) Donation

Thank you!

TO STRETCH OR NOT TO STRETCH?

When the Mayor of Blackpool visited the Cathedral recently he arrived in his stretch Jag. The Dean couldn't help comparing his own eco-friendly vehicle with that of our distinguished visitor.

In the end he and the Mayor's chauffeur called it no contest and shook hands!

Photo by Virger **Jeffrey Robinson**



**Renaissance Singers' Artist
 Joyce Wicks
 Exhibition in the Cathedral
 Saturday afternoon - Sunday 12-13 May**

Joyce lives and works in Blackburn. She is a member of the congregation of Blackburn Cathedral and sings with the Renaissance Singers.

The Friends of Blackburn Cathedral commissioned her to produce the artwork for their 2006 Christmas card and are sponsoring Joyce's first exhibition to be held at the Cathedral on 12th & 13th May 2007.

Largely self-taught, Joyce works mainly in watercolours but is beginning to experiment in oils and pastels.



The opening of Joyce's first exhibition will happily coincide with the Prayer Book Society's day in our cathedral which begins with Eucharist at 11.00 am celebrated by Bishop Nicholas. (See p. 21). So come to the cathedral that day (and Sunday too, of course!) for a feast of music, worship and art!



Not only did our Assistant Director of Music, **James Davy**, play for a live BBC Choral Evensong (p. 5), take the YPC to Blackpool for a BBC recording (p. 20), play continuo for the *Messiah* (p. 16), and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, (p. 26), and more, but he also composed his own musical setting of the St. Mark Passion which the Cathedral Choir sang on Palm Sunday. *Wow!*

James Davy
St Mark Passion
 Full Score

Bach's St. Matthew Passion

The cathedral nave was almost filled to capacity on Wednesday in Holy Week for one of the very finest concerts we have ever had the privilege of enjoying in our cathedral.

Bach's St. Matthew Passion – his greatest work, to be placed alongside his B Minor Mass – was performed by a company of superb musicians: two choirs – our own Renaissance Singers and the Manchester Chamber Choir, plus our Girls' Chamber Choir and a galaxy of superb soloists.

As the cathedral gradually filled up with eager audience, it was very good to see **OC Tom Wilkinson and Joy** sitting very near the front.

Tom was a TLD chorister and sang tenor during JB's early days. His brother, **John**, is also an Old Chorister as is Tom's son, **David**. Tom recently rejoined BCOCA. Welcome back!

Our outstanding soloists looked thoroughly relaxed as they posed for a photograph immediately before the performance.



The first chorus could be described as 'film' music portraying, in a 'pre-flash-back', before the narrative of the Passion began, the walk of Jesus through a noisy crowd to be crucified. How did He get to be there? Half the crowd knows what's happening, but the other half doesn't, So when the first choir sings 'Look! See Him!' the others ask, 'Look where? Who is it?'



It was wonderful to see the singers in the two choirs looking across as they threw question and answer to each other.



Back row L-R: Peter Harvey (Christus), Joshua Ellicott, (Evangelist), Stephen Varcoe (Bass), Matthew Minter (Tenor). Front: Philippa Hyde (Soprano), Richard Tanner (Conductor) and Emily Bauer-Jones (Contralto).

Canon **Chris Chivers** welcomed the large congregation and led us in a prayer, which set the mood for what was to come.



But no sooner had they begun to sing than our Girls' Chamber Choir processed in to sing their important part over the two choirs – the chorale 'O Lamb of God most Holy'. This transformed the hurly-burly of the crowd scene into an eternal theological statement. Bach's genius was amazing to have conceived such an intricate opening chorus.



James Davy played the continuo organ part, ably assisted by Jr. Organ Scholar, Tom Daggett.



The superb orchestra, CANZONA, led by Theresa Caudle, was divided into two parts to accompany the each choir.

They had played for our performance of *Messiah* earlier in the year, and their authentic instruments made exactly the sounds that Bach had in mind.

But our choirs and orchestra did not make the sounds that Bach would have heard from his musicians – for ours were better – very much better!



Bach's choirs and orchestras were made up largely of pupils from the School at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig where he was organist.

It's a matter of record that he once wrote a letter of complaint to the church authorities saying that while 1/3 of his pupils were 'satisfactory', 1/3 were 'not satisfactory' and the remainder were useless!

And unlike the enthusiastic reception that was given to the performance by our audience that night, some of Bach's congregation, after the first performance of this sublime work, complained that it was like being at the opera – so Bach's clergy reduced his salary!

So Bach would have been thrilled by the performance in our cathedral that night. Every credit is due, therefore, to **RICHARD TANNER** and his musicians and staff who has worked so hard to produce such a performance. And unbounded thanks to our sponsor, **BOOTH'S**, who made it financially possible.



It was an evening to savour and to remember with thanksgiving.

The youngest of our choristers **William Fielding** (whose Mother was singing in the concert) certainly seemed to be enjoying it as he sat in the very back row, in the company of choir Mother & Wife **Amanda Snape**. (See p. 2)

E mails to Richard Tanner after the SMP

From Renaissance Singer **Alizon Elliott**:

Just to say congratulations on an absolutely superb evening - it was wonderful. My audience were bowled over.

Josh excelled himself, Christus was amazing and the other soloists matched them. Orchestra too. I hope you were pleased with it, and a huge thank-you to you and to Pippa for all you did to make it such a success.

From **Anne Morris** Singers' Alto, and Vicar of Knuzden.

Just a quick note to say thank-you for the privilege of being able to participate in the St. Matthew Passion yesterday. It was a wonderful experience and I feel the music was of a high standard.

My parents who are both excellent German speakers said they could hear every word, particularly in the chorales where we all sing the same thing at the same time - so please pass on thanks to Pippa who brought so much to the rehearsals and helped us to understand the meaning of it all.

From former Assistant Organist **Ian Pattinson**:

Just a note to say how absolutely fantastic tonight's performance of the St Matthew Passion was! It was so moving, and full of drama, as well as musically beautiful with the sound produced by the soloists, evangelist, Christus, 3 choirs and instrumentalists.

I also liked the effect of the two main choirs facing each other, as well as the occasions when the bass soloist turned to face Christus, if he was pretending to be Pilate addressing Jesus, for instance.

Soloists

German

Fantastic



HOLOCAUST POETRY TO CHALLENGE AND INSPIRE

Acknowledged as one of Ireland's foremost poets, **Micheal O'Siadhail** gave a reading from his collection, *The Gossamer Wall*, which will live long in the memory of the fifty or so people who were there to hear it, on Saturday 27 February 2007,



The space in the Crypt often used for dramatic presentations was the setting for what proved to be a deeply moving exploration of issues which have scarred the emotional landscape of our age.



Micheal, who spent several years studying the Holocaust before putting pen to paper, arrived in Blackburn from Dublin just a few days after celebrating his sixtieth birthday.

Copies of the *festschrift* published to coincide with this were available for purchase as were five of his poetry collections. Judging by the long queue which formed after the event to snap these up, his words – and the sensitive manner with which he delivered them – had clearly made a deep impression. **C. C.**

The new Dean of St. Paul's



As we welcomed the announcement of the new Dean of Westminster in our last edition – **John Hall**, who had been a Residiary Canon at Blackburn – it seems appropriate that we should welcome the appointment of the new Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, who is also well known to so many of us at Blackburn. (He was at school with our Dean!)

GRAEME KNOWLES was Dean of Carlisle for several years, where he welcomed our choirs, especially our YPC, when they gave concerts in Carlisle Cathedral with their own fine Youth Choir.

Jeremy Suter, the present Director of Music of Carlisle Cathedral, wrote: *I'm delighted for him and for St. Paul's.*

Dean Knowles also welcomed the Cathedral Organists' Association for a 2-day conference when your editor was privileged to lead two choral workshops for his fellow cathedral organists.



And because he was such an outstanding personality it gave the Preston and District Organists' Association much pleasure to invite Dean Knowles to be their guest speaker at their Annual Dinner three years ago. (Your editor was in the middle of his 3-year stint as President at that time.)

But just before he came to us he had been consecrated The Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man. (Not just 'the bishop' but 'The Lord Bishop' – for his status is that of an Earl in that island!) He gave us a most inspiring speech, ending with an appeal that organists and clergy should be more considerate of each other – willing to work out their differences instead of harbouring misunderstandings.

And so when Bishop Knowles' appointment to St. Paul's was announced your editor wrote him a brief letter of congratulations, to which Bishop Knowles graciously replied:

Dear John,

Thank you so much for your good wishes! We have been overwhelmed by the flood of greetings. It is fascinating to see what the Manx would call **skeet** found its way around the British Isles so quickly. There were even two friends in St. Paul's Cathedral at a service on the Friday of the announcement!

We are looking to a move in the second part of September with an installation in early October. The summer here has Tynwald Day in July, and the centenary of the TT Races in June, so we won't be kicking our heels.

We will let you know when we have definite dates. We will be living in Amen Court, just north of St. Paul's. There is some work to do on the house, so the six months between now and our move will give time for that, too.

Again, thank you for getting in touch,

Yours, as ever,

This edition of the newsletter is supported financially by

exChange the community cohesion, education, outreach and development agency of Blackburn Cathedral, which receives funding from:

Department for
**Communities and
Local Government**

Northwest
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Prestigious Commonwealth Meeting in Blackburn by Canon Chris Chivers



Soon after arriving at the cathedral to develop the cross-cultural and interfaith aspects of the cathedral's life, I spoke with the **Dean** about the possibility of hosting a Youth Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Blackburn. I expressed the hope that we would be in a position to host such a meeting within two years



It was a pleasure, with the help of **Anjum Anwar**, just before her appointment to the cathedral staff, and with



Val Edge, our under-18s coordinator, and with staff from Blackburn College, to work with a team from the Royal Commonwealth Society (**RCS**) to ensure that Blackburn was the eighth venue for such a meeting.

It was only the third time that the meeting had been held outside of London, and the logistical arrangements involved in staging a conference for 80 young people were considerable, especially as the RCS were using for the first time a two- as opposed to single-day format.

A day of preparation at the Conference Centre (just beyond ASDA) founded by former Blackburn Mayor, Jan Yusif Virmani, saw the students studying the make-up and nature of the Commonwealth, as well as learning skills which would prove essential for the following day when each would represent a Commonwealth country and debate exactly the agenda that Heads of Government discuss. These skills included debating, lobbying, questions of morality in public life and the role of the media.



Day Two was entirely at the cathedral, in the south transept which the virgers had set-up in conference format. A debate on freedom and democracy was followed by one on issues with considerable local resonance: segregation and multi-culturalism.

The standard of debate as acknowledged by both Peter Morgan, the director of child services for Blackburn with Darwen, and Ben Turner, a reporter at the Lancashire Telegraph, was incredibly high, the students having prepared their country profiles with great care.

A visit at this point by South African soccer stars, **Benni McCarthy** →



← and **Aaron Mokoena**, the latter the South African captain, and both of course **Blackburn Rovers** teammates, was a great encouragement.

They very generously gave almost an hour of their time talking to the students about the importance of what they were doing.

A 'crisis' which involved the kidnapping of senior Scottish politicians by a Scottish nationalist group demanding independence within the Commonwealth for Scotland, saw a brief concluding debate.



Most significantly, for the local Blackburn community, the representatives of India and Pakistan negotiated an agreement over the governance of Kashmir, which was brokered by South Africa.

Both days were chaired by students from the college who subsequently appeared in several front-page news stories in *The Citizen*.

The second of these related to the fact that ten of the students were invited to join **Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh** at the Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey.

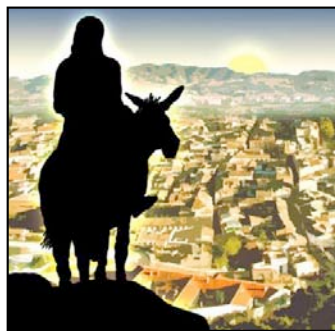
Here they were greeted warmly by **The Very Revd John Hall**, the Abbey's Dean and former Canon Residentiary of Blackburn, following a brief tour of the Abbey and sightseeing trips to the London Eye and Buckingham Palace.



Undoubtedly, the whole project offered a model for future such events, giving an opportunity for a discussion across communities which is all too rare in the town, and giving everyone a glimpse of a more united community at ease with itself.

It was the last significant event in a year utilising the funding stream of the Department for Communities and Local Government. It cemented the deepening partnership between Lancashire Council of Mosques and cathedral, the cathedral and college, all given welcome support by leading officers of the Borough.

The Palm Sunday Evening Service in our cathedral was so moving



It was sung by the Gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir who processed into the cathedral from the choir assembly area outside the Song School singing *Faithful Cross!*

The effect was magical for, at the start, they were almost inaudible. But as they mounted the stairs and processed down the North

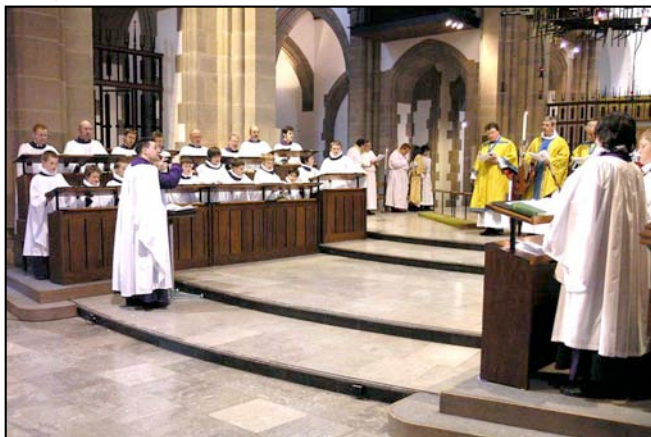
Aisle and then up the Nave the sound swelled magnificently to the triumphant final verse: *To the Trinity be glory...*

During the service they sang two extracts from Tallis's *Lamentations*. This was music, indeed which encouraged meditation.

At the end of the service they sang the *Faithful Cross!* again as they returned to the Song School, which left the congregation standing in awed silence.

The Maundy Thursday Evening Service Sung Eucharist and Washing of the Feet

It was sung by our Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys – some of the men were in the Renaissance Singers who had performed the St Matthew Passion on the previous evening. And, of course, Richard Tanner and James Davy were on duty for pretty well everything that Holy Week – services and many rehearsals!



The setting was Byrd's 4-part *Mass*, with Duruflé's *Ubi Caritas*, and a moving setting of *Tantum ergo* by Déodat de Séveroc (1872-1921). Needless to say, the singing was exquisite.

It was our privilege during that week, to have **Father Harry Wiggett** who is a retired priest of the Diocese of Cape Town to preach to us, and to share many of his most spiritual poems.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said of him "I am so thankful for Harry Wiggett. His extraordinary faithfulness as a priest is reflected in his incredible fruitfulness as a poet. He inspires us with his insights.

Not least, he so often recalls us to the silence from which all action stems. He is above all else a man of prayer and pastoral sensitivity.

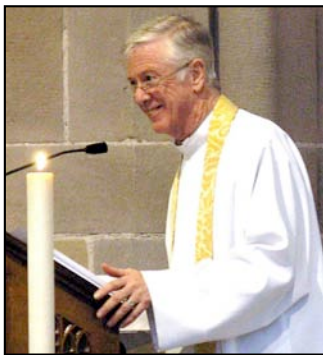
In his sermon that night Fr. Wiggett quoted from a poem he wrote as he was walking along the seashore in Cape Town. It ended:

**This is the night when earth and heaven meet
In broken bread and washing of the feet.**

How very appropriate this was to us all in the Cathedral that night, for the Dean was about to wash feet and we were about to receive the broken bread.

In his sermon Fr. Wiggett told us that he, too, had had an 'upper room' experience. He had been Chaplain to a prison in South Africa and was celebrating Eucharist there in an upper room.

One of the prisoners was **Nelson Mandela**, who was to become President of South Africa, but who, at that time was under tight security. A warder was guarding the prisoners who were attending that service.



At The Peace Father Wiggett

went first to Nelson Mandela, but Mr. Mandela stopped him and, instead, turned to the warder and asked, 'Are you a Christian?' 'Yes,' came the answer. 'Well come and join us!' And the warder, who was a South African who supported Apartheid, came over and shared the Peace and the Sacraments with the prisoners he was guarding.



'That,' said Fr. Wiggett, 'was a real act of reconciliation and it was the most moving moment of my entire ministry of 45 years!'



After that poignant sermon the choir sang *Ubi Caritas* and the Dean removed his chasuble and replaced it with a towel, as Christ had removed his robe and girded himself with a towel to wash his disciples' feet

Then the Dean, attended by Canons Chivers and Wedgeworth, washed the feet of twelve members of the congregation.

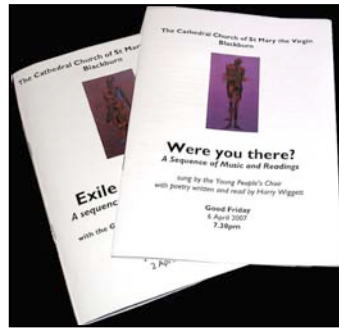
That was a most holy moment.

And after we had received Communion, the altars were stripped as a sign of the isolation of Christ in his passion, during which the choir sang Psalm 22 to plainsong.



The lights were turned off, leaving only a glow from the Jesus Chapel where we were encouraged to Watch with Christ.

The Crucifix over the Jesus Chapel watched over us as some of us watched with Him.



There were many other services in the cathedral that Holy Week and, for the main services, it was impressive that special orders of service were printed for each one – with words of the prayers, the hymns and anthems, and also some of the poetry of Fr. Harry Wiggett.

The **Three Hours service on Good Friday** featured Haydn's *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, played by a professional string quartet. Canon Chivers said that the effect of that music, coupled with Fr. Wiggett's poetry, was stunning.

And on **Good Friday evening** the YPC, conducted by James Davy with David Scott-Thomas at the organ, sang most beautifully including *Ride on* by Grayston Ives, and a lovely arrangement of *Were you there* by former King's Singer Bob Chilcott.



James played *Crucifixion* from Marcel Dupré's *Symphonie-Passion*. The effect of this piece, which began and ended quietly and meditatively, but which also conveyed the pain of the Crucifixion on full organ, was amazing. How fortunate we are to have James's so many talents!

The next day the cathedral was alive with activity – including the arranging of flowers in front of the small altar in the Nave which would be used for the 5.15 am (!) service on Easter Day, which would be led by the Dean and sung by the YPC (how heroic!). That service would be followed by a Champagne breakfast!



Parnell Rothwell
and her granddaughter
Katie

And (below)
the **Dean** with flower
ladies

Ann Robinson, Pam Barrow and (behind)
Rachel McClure, with
two of our valiant Virgers,
Mark Pickering & Brian Newton who'd moved so
much furniture that week!





And, of course, on **Easter Day** there was glorious worship. **Bishop Nicholas** preached and celebrated in the morning and the choir sang Mozart's *Coronation Mass*. At 4.0 pm they sang *Smart in B flat*, (Henry Smart was organist of the then Parish Church – now the Cathedral Nave – 1832-38), and Vaughan Williams' *Rise heart, thy Lord is risen*. (Soloist **Derek Crompton**)

There were many other services during Lent and leading up to Holy Week.

How delightful it was to see and hear our amazing Children's Choir singing at the 9.00 am Eucharist on **Mothering Sunday**, 18 March, directed by our effervescent JOY FIELDING.

They sang a special song: *I'd do anything for you, Mum*, arranged by Joy, which was appreciated not only by the large congregation but also by the members of the YPC whose music enhances this service every week.



From Mrs. Jean Duerden

Dear John

Jeremy and I went to Dorset after the Dawn Eucharist on Easter Day to visit my parents in Dorset. On our return journey we decided to add to my Cathedral collection and visit **Chichester**, hoping to catch **Howard Waddell**, our former Head Virger – now Head Verger at Chichester Cathedral – at work.

He was having a well-earned day off and was in his garden when we called and we ended up spending a few joyful hours with him looking around his beautiful home, the Close, the Bishop's gardens as well as the splendid Cathedral, before being taken out to lunch. Howard's impromptu hospitality was magnificent.

We thought you would like to know that he has taken to cycling and is the proud owner of a **new red bike**. He is growing his hair as well, but we are not sure that the two things are related!

Yours ever, **Jean**



Strangers and Neighbours...

... were the *dramatis personae* of a presentation by **Blackburn College students** and the **Cathedral Young People's Choir** on the Monday of Holy Week.

Scripted by **Canon Michael Wedgeworth**, the stories were told of three real people:

an asylum seeker,
a recovering drug addict, and
an old lady

who lived next to an Asian family.

The actors portrayed scenes from these real lives against a backdrop of moving, mostly rather gloomy images designed to visualise where they had come from. Within them were contemporary and traditional paintings which showed that the on-stage action was a paradigm of the Gospel stories of the Flight into Egypt, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, and especially the suffering of Jesus.



Throughout, there were hints of the good news of Easter, even among the depressed moments of the three lives.

The thirty young people, actors and choir members together, brought the presentation to a climax as they sang together in front of the final image of Penny Worden's picture of the risen Christ.



The audience of over 100 heard from the actual people whose experiences had been portrayed, and many spoke with them afterwards to express their concern for them, and their desire to do what they could to see them as neighbours, not strangers.



What amazing programmes of music and other events are coming up!

Read all about them in our next edition

Tuesday 22nd May 7.30 pm

Dr. Barry Smith with his St. George's Singers from Cape Town, and our own Renaissance Singers



The Sixteen! 21st April

Music of Sir Edward Elgar

Saturday 23rd June, 7.30 pm



including Elgar's
Cello Concerto
Pomp & Circumstance No. 1
Nimrod, Sea Pictures
and much more.

With our own cathedral choirs, professional soloists, and our guest choir from **Trinity Church, Princeton NJ, USA** (Director **Tom Whittemore**)
The Northern Chamber Orchestra
Conducted by **Richard Tanner**



Superb Organ Music by Messiaen

L'ASCENSION

Thursday 17 May 9.15 pm
David Scott-Thomas

MESSE DE LA PENTECOTE

Sunday 27 May 7.00 pm
Tom Bell



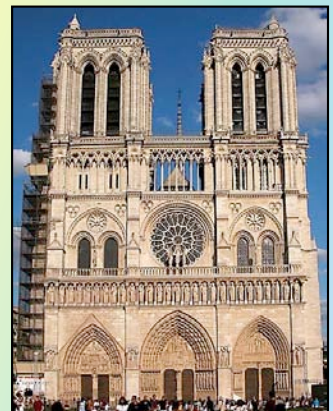
LES CORPS GLORIEUX

Sunday 10 June, 7.00 pm
Christopher Stokes

GALA DINNER

Saturday 7th July 7.00 pm

Plus **WOW** reports on the Cathedral Choir's singing visit to **PARIS** May 31-June 4 **WOW**



And reports on visits to our cathedral by **TWO Archbishops!**

More details & tickets from **Linda Bruce** 01254-50-30-82. And see our website www.blackburncathedral.com

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