

Blackburn Cathedral Newsletter

Music & More - £3
August 2007



Cathedral Choir in Paris. (p. 22)

A man who Gets Things Done

FRANK HARE, former company director, was a whiz choirman during JB's time at the cathedral and later was a volunteer in the choir of Worcester Cathedral. He now lives in an historic cottage near Malvern with his wife, Chris, who suffered a major stroke some years ago but who is fighting back wonderfully.



Frank is a man who Gets Things Done. His latest enormous project is to raise £1.5M for his village Sports Club – which will involve not only children, but also adults and the disabled.



Frank reported: The Cradley Sports Club development will include sport for the disabled in all areas. This is in response to the need to develop sport for the disabled in this area. We anticipate that there are over 200 people who are registered as disabled in East Herefordshire and West Worcestershire in that catchment area.

The floodlit enclosure will be suitable for such activity and will be approached by a new road into the field to achieve access.

Frank wrote to your editor:

Hi John

We have some crucial up dates in the sports club that I have started here.

It started when I was co-opted on to the Parish Council's playing field committee and realised that we have no playing area that could sustain competitive games including soccer.

Look at our super website!

www.cradleysportsclub.co.uk

Also there was no one to get a club moving - so foolishly I opened my mouth once too often and decided I would do it. What started as a kick-about for the kids has developed into a full blown Sports Club.

We have done a deal with the new Primary School here (it cost £1.5m) to develop their 4 acres of ground into a community and school centre for sport. They have ground and we have access to funding. The WE bit is the Committee of a few hardy souls who meet in my kitchen (over a glass or three of wine) every month.

We have done fund raising events and added local sponsors, plus Charities that give to our type of cause. All in all we have received £12,600 just to get things started with a further £4500 awaited. All this in less than 2 years.



We are just finishing our first season with under 9's boys and under 12 girls' soccer. Next season we intend to field under 9's, 10's, 11's boys and under 13 girls. We have over 70 players sessions each week. Plus 18 ladies playing netball.



I would like to build a bowling green and two tennis courts to make an all-round sports' centre.

BUT THAT IS NOT THE BIG PICTURE!

We have plans (literally) to build a facility on this site with floodlit hard-standing enclosure, two soccer pitches - a club house big enough to house 4 teams at once including showers etc., a reception for gatherings with kitchen - Solar powered, possible wind turbine electricity, and so on.

The expansion has been so fast I have started talks with another small-holding family to buy 4 further acres next door to house it all.

We have been granted FA Charter Standard, which gives us a "thumbs up" from the FA that we are an OK club (you have to qualify) despite being only one year into league soccer which gets us freebees etc. We have 6 new FA Coaches in the last year and have gained Charitable Status to help with the VAT etc..

The Football Foundation have earmarked 60% and with Sport England, and a host of others to make it up the £500,000 we need to finish it off.

If I succeed I want it to be called the FRANK HARE MEMORIAL PARK - because by the time I do it, I'll likely expire.

Regards **FRANK**

This deserves our support, Old Choristers !
Please send your cheques (' Cradley Sports Club) to Frank Hare, Homend Cottage, Chapel Lane, Cradley, Malvern, WR13 5HX



From a 'Sixteen' singer, Tim Jones - friend of Frank Hare.

Dear John,

Thank you for the photo of us singing in Blackburn Cathedral. I am glad you enjoyed the concert and would very much appreciate seeing a copy of your August Magazine with a report of our concert.

We hope very much that we shall be able to return to Blackburn in coming Pilgrimages. It is a very rewarding building to sing in and the audience clearly enjoyed it too!

I shall be in touch with Frank Hare shortly, so thank you for his details.

Kind regards,

Tim (See next page)

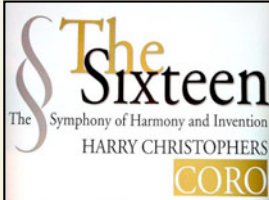


Tim Jones was a chorister in the choir of St. John's College Cambridge when they came to Blackburn in 1965 to give a concert under the direction of Dr. George Guest in our newly restored Nave.

JB remembers their visit well, for one of their solo boys was given too lavish hospitality for tea by a choir parent and was sick! So George had to cancel the performance of Ireland's Many Waters!

JB thought, 'We have several boys who could have sung that solo; George only had to ask!'

A REMARKABLE DAY



The SIXTEEN, an internationally acclaimed choir of professional singers, undertook a Cathedrals' Pilgrimage this Spring. They gave concerts in illustrious cathedrals such as Winchester, Wells, Exeter and many others – and on 21st April they came to Blackburn.

In the afternoon their deputy conductor, **Eamonn Dougan**, led a 3-hour demonstration rehearsal for 60 singers from the diocese and beyond, including members of our own Renaissance Singers and the Manchester Chamber Choir (both choirs had enthralled us by their singing of Bach's St. Matthew Passion only a week before under the direction of **Richard Tanner**).



Fully 45 minutes were spent on vocal production, with a range of fascinating warm-up exercises.

Richard Tanner and **James Davy** watched as the singers' voices filled the cathedral with glorious sounds

Margaret Robinson, founder member of the Renaissance Singers (front row, 2nd from the left, next to **Margot Berry**) fully enjoyed the experience, and wrote:



'Before Eamonn Dougan began his rehearsal with us, Sally Dunkley – one of the founding members of The Sixteen – introduced us to the Papal composers of the 16th Century whose works we would hear that evening: Palestrina, Anerio and Allegri.

'Then he took us through some vigorous breathing and singing exercises before we began to work on the Kyrie, Sanctus and Benedictus from an Allegri Mass they would sing that evening.

'He mixed hard work with good humour and his lively manner soon had us working well as a group. By the end of the session we produced a very pleasing performance!'

The SIXTEEN's concert that evening attracted a packed Nave – even though the seats in the front rows cost £22 !



Their programme was made up exclusively of music composed for the Sistine Chapel in the 16th Century by Palestrina, Anerio and Allegri. In other words, it was all in one style and all in Latin.

BUT the SIXTEEN's commitment to the music as well as their superb tone mesmerized the audience, so much so that they dared not clap for fully 30 minutes – until their dynamic conductor, **Harry Christophers**, indicated that applause was OK! And once we'd started to clap, we wouldn't stop!



The impression of their singing made upon at least one member of the audience was of incredible richness of their tone – an amazing sound which filled every corner of our acoustically responsive cathedral.

Their sense of rhythm was extraordinary: the composers of those days didn't only create music which flowed in unending glory, but they also wrote music which expressed the very spirit of those sacred texts, and this meaning had to be re-created in the 21st Century.

And above all, the SIXTEEN brought to vivid life the meaning of every word they sang.

It was a wonderful experience to follow the texts in the lavishly illustrated programme, and feel the deep faith which produced such immortal music for the Catholic Church in the counter-reformation 500 years ago.

It was a remarkable end to a remarkable day – and they want to come again!



From OC CHRIS HUNWICK – Cathedral Choir Prefect 1990 (see p 32)
Archivist to the Duke of Northumberland, from his new address: Alnwick Castle, Northumberland,
with nearly 2 miles of priceless books and other amazing archives to care for!

WHAT'S a DEODAND ?



Dear John,

In case you didn't follow my explanation of 'deodands' when we were chatting at my parents' home after a particularly delicious Easter Day dinner, here's a summary:

In days gone by, it was the custom that items which had a hand in the killing of a person would be forfeit to God (hence the name 'deodand' from the Latin phrase: *Deo dandum* - 'something which must be given to God').

In practice, this meant that the items would be presented to the Monarch, as God's representative on earth. Often the Crown would grant the right of receiving deodands to the Lord of the Manor. This could be of benefit, as often these forfeits were commuted into money payments. For instance, if a man was run over by a horse and cart, and killed, technically the horse and cart would be forfeited, but instead a payment would be made to the Lord of the Manor.

In cases of suicide, which was a most terrible crime called '*felo de se*', the goods of the suicide would be forfeit, and in particular, the item used to commit suicide.

This led me to a most grizzly discovery in the Archives the other day, when I found a razor amongst the papers, which was a deodand from the suicide of young lady of Alnwick who had cut her own throat in the early nineteenth century.

It was quite unnerving to unwrap this item from its envelope, labelled '*deodand of N*', and to hold an object which was the cause of the death of a person.

This is just one of the many amazing experiences I have been enjoying over the past few weeks as I find my way around Alnwick Castle and familiarise myself with the Archives of the Duke of Northumberland.

Meanwhile, **Geraldine** has just taken up her post as project leader on a Heritage Lottery funded Archives cataloguing and digitisation project, called 'Access to Northumberland's History', at the Northumberland County Record Office. The Archives have just moved to a new, state of the art building on the old Woodhorn Colliery site, near Ashington. The old Colliery buildings are still in existence and the whole site now forms a visitor attraction comprising museum, art gallery, library and the archives. Geraldine feels that it will be a most interesting place to work.

You will have to come and visit and take some photos of your own!

Best regards,
Chris



Former Organ Scholar **JONATHAN CLINCH** has just returned to Lancashire after his 10-month appointment as Assistant Organist of Perth Cathedral, Australia.

'I had a really good time there,' he told your editor. 'The Cathedral was very generous to me financially; I played for many services and gave recitals, and I took the boys of the Anglican and RC Cathedrals for their rehearsals of Britten's *War Requiem*.

'St. George's Cathedral has 3 organs – they're fantastic and two of them can even be played from one console!'



THE SLOWEST MARATHON ON RECORD?

In these days of record marathon performances in the fastest possible times – at 11.00 am on Monday 30th April 2007 one was completed in perhaps the slowest – 42 hours and 58 minutes. – for Old Chorister (and founder member of BCOCA) PETER HEALD had made 72 visits and covered 2,577 lengths of the 55 foot-long Empress Swimming Pool, Chatteris – having covered the marathon distance of 26 miles and 385 yards in the world-beating slowest time!

Peter began this mammoth swim On 26th July 2006. Peter (69) is registered disabled with a permanently stiffened right leg, the result of a cycling accident. And he can only swim on his back! How heroic can you get?



The marathon effort is in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, in memory of his brother Eric's last days in the splendid care of Macmillan nursing before he died of cancer about ten years ago. He had been a great swimmer, so the gesture seemed appropriate, and sponsorship will go to Cambridgeshire's Macmillan Cancer Support.

To witness his triumph, after Peter had completed his Marathon, were his wife,

Constance (who is a founder-member of the Renaissance Singers - originally known as the Blackburn Bach Choir), their daughter

Catherine, and her two children, Benjamin (2) and Jessica (ten weeks).

'I completed the swim at 11.07 am,' said a slightly damp but jubilant Peter.

'I will have raised £2,000 for the Fund.

'One former Ely Cathedral Lay Clerk asked if he could have his money back if I drowned! I've really enjoyed swimming,' he added, 'and my health and fitness have improved dramatically!'

Well done, Peter! We're enormously proud of you.

There's still just time for any Blackburn OC contemporaries of Peter who haven't yet shown their support of Peter, by sending your cheques 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. Thanks!



WE ARE
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

Mini BCOCA Reunion in Singapore Iain Thompson & Chris Ryan



As you were!

Iain Thompson

← and
Stewart
Hopkinson &
Chris Ryan →

Prefects' Board
No. 2

1976 Stephen Rickerby
Christopher Ryan
Stewart Hopkinson

1979 Iain Thompson

Dear J. B.

Happy Greetings ... and a quick up-date from Iain and Carrie-Anne,

We've been out to Singapore on our way to Malaysia, and re-formed, for one night only, the Far-East section of the BCOCA / Blackburn Rovers supporters club with Chris and Bee-Ling Ryan. Magnus is also in the photo ... Chris and Bee-Ling are expecting their second child in May.



L-R Carrie-Anne & Iain Thompson,
Magnus, Chris & Bee-Ling Ryan.

I know you like updates on the Bunbury Singers' exploits from Ellesmere Port so that you can make obscure Oscar Wilde references. We sang Stainer's *Crucifixion* on Good Friday, yet outside the church it was advertised as *The Crucifixion*. Odd to be promoting controversy like this we thought.

The Bunbury singers are an SATB choir, with about 40 voices performing a mixture of secular and non-secular items in the local area. Normally for a local charitable cause. Martin Cook is our director ... I'm not sure if you know of him from your Royal Northern College of Music connections. He's actually the head of music in the Blue Coat School in Liverpool. It's just me performing (Carrie-Anne supports though!). As ever we struggle to get enough men's voices, which restricts our repertoire quite a bit I think, but it keeps me in practice.

Iain and Carrie-Anne.

(More next page!)

From OC CHRIS RYAN in Singapore

Dear John,

It was fantastic to see **Iain & Carrie-Anne Thompson** out in Singapore in February, although our ability to entertain them was a little bit restricted as Bee Ling was with (a lot of) child.

Just to prove that she was not just a bit overweight at the time, we are delighted to report the birth of Jemima Huiting Ryan on 23rd April weighing 3.18kg (around 7lb in old money). She was over 2 weeks early but both Bee Ling and Jemima are fine.



Things are settling down now and the men of the family, Magnus and his Dad, are getting used to our further reduced status in the house pecking order.

The Chinese still tend to adhere to the tradition of "confinement" so Bee Ling is enduring a tough first month after giving birth, but things will relax soon and we are looking forward to a fantastic new family life together.

Best wishes, **Chris**

From OC MIKE RYAN

(Chris's elder brother) at Lancaster Royal Grammar School

Dear John,



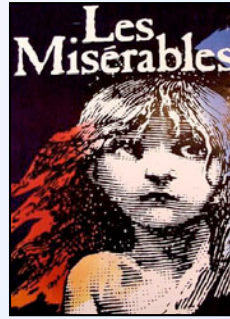
Thanks for the recent BCOCA magazine. It is brimming with events and news. I know from bitter experience just how difficult it can be to put such a publication together and my efforts were never on this scale.

What have I been up to? Well, I am still Head of Chemistry at **Lancaster Royal Grammar School**. My two sons **Jamie** and **Duncan** are now also at the school.

After singing in all sorts of quires and places for many years, including chairing a local Gilbert and Sullivan society for some time, my singing is currently limited to school events. Mind you, we put on some spectacular ones!

In January, we performed David Prescott's "Northern Celebration" to a packed Lancaster Cathedral. David had been given a term's sabbatical to write a "short piece". It grew a bit and became a concert in its own right, taking the story of the school, Lancaster and its environs from the days of the Celts through to modern times. Interestingly, the musical styles followed the history too.

It was really great to welcome **Peter Crowther** as the Baritone soloist. He is such a gentleman and said he was proud to be invited to perform; we were proud to have him! (David's wife Marilyn is Director of Music at Morecambe Parish Church (I remember us performing *Wise in F* there a few hundred years ago!)).



OFSTED happened to land in the week of the cantata but we didn't take much notice of them! Then at the end of the term we performed *Les Miserables* in the lovely old Grand Theatre in Lancaster. The boys, and girls from LGGs, performed magnificently and I was proud to see my scenery ideas come to fruition and work (especially the barricade and the suicide bridge).

My wife, **Lesley**, also helps out with these productions, nominally as Choreographer but in reality as just about everything else too! We actually met on the stage of the Grand and she has been involved in every school musical production since.

Two years ago, we reprised "North and South"...an in-house written musical based on Mrs. Gaskell's epic. It was first performed in 1991, days before Lesley and I married, and we were very touched when the entire cast arrived totally unannounced at our wedding and began to sing songs from the show. There is always something going on and it is as pleasing to see someone with little experience battle to succeed in a small part as it is to see an expert deliver something as good as you expect them to.

My mum, she now lives in Mellor Brook, has taken to going to the Cathedral on Sundays now and also goes to some of the concerts. She made it to the cover of one of your magazines (with around a hundred others) a few issues ago.

The developments for the **Close** look very exciting but it is sad that **St Mary's House** has to go. I remember the orange juice and biscuits before midweek Evensongs. Do you still have the upright piano with the pedal board driven by strings?



By chance, I bumped into **Mark Hodson** last year at a football event in Blackburn. We were both doing the Dad's Taxi bit.

See the names of some Old Choristers featured in this edition!

1973	Shaun Chamley	
→	Mark Hodson	
	Stephen Holmes	
1974	Peter H. Banks	
→	John Marr	
	Stephen Ward	
1975	Nigel Chew	←
→	Philip Chew	
→	Michael Ryan	
1976	Stephen Rickerby	
→	Christopher Ryan	
→	Stewart Hopkinson	

From Prefects' Board No. 2 in the Song School

It was also good to see **Phil Chew** on top of Blackpool Tower on local TV recently. Coincidentally, I had only the day before come across the bright red ties that his Mum provided for the Holland trip.

Keep well, and keep up the good work.

Thanks for all you did and do....*There is a green hill far away* started a lot for me, a long time ago. I am sure it has done the same for many, many more.

Mike

Mike: How very good to hear from you with all your exciting and creative news. I remember you and your brother

Chris so well all those years ago when you both used to walk from your home a couple of miles away to the cathedral, and back, twice every Sunday!

Yes, I used to ask all potential new boys to sing the first verse of There is a green hill, (a) to see if their Lancashire accent was obtrusive ('**Thur** is green hill') – I could cure that! and (b) to see if they could repeat the last line ('Who died to save us all') without a note being given (for they'd have to pitch an augmented 5th to get the first note right!).

I'd forgotten that Mrs. Chew (Mum of OCs Nigel and Revd. Phil) had provided **red ties** for all the boys when we went on our second singing tour of Holland and North Germany. Happily, Sarah Chew is happily still with us and keenly interested in all that goes on at the cathedral. JB



Lambeth Palace!

When the Dean accosted your editor in the cathedral offices in early May he said, 'Congratulations on yet another excellent edition of the Cathedral Newsletter. They were talking about it at Lambeth Palace yesterday!'



From Dr. Dennis Townhill, OBE,
Organist Emeritus,
St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh.

Dear John,

Congratulations on your production of the Blackburn Cathedral magazine. It is fantastic, as I would expect coming from you, and I've greatly enjoyed reading it. It is by far the best production of its kind I've ever seen.

It contains photos and news of many people well known to me, not least that one of you with the Archbishop of Canterbury!

David Goodenough [former Assistant Organist at Blackburn] continues to do great work as a housemaster at Fettes College, and with the Cathedral Chapter House Singers.

Mabel joins me in sending our warmest regards and best wishes,

Dennis.

Thanks so much, Dennis! JB



Whoops!

When we publicized, in our May edition, the Piano Duet CD made by OC PETER FIELDING and his son MARK, your editor inadvertently added 4 years to the ever-youthful Peter's age! Many apologies!



A Big Welcome Back to Canon Andrew Hindley

When the Dean announced on Sunday morning, 1st July, that Canon Hindley had returned to us after a prolonged absence, the congregation applauded for FOUR minutes, so great was their joy.

We've missed him so much – not only his cheerful smile and engaging presence, but also his meticulous powers of organisation as well as his dedication to the cathedral's superb Liturgy and glorious Music.



Canon Hindley said, 'I am delighted to be back here and am currently working to ensure the delivery of the Music Programme for the coming season.'

'We've just topped the £30K mark in sponsorship and expect a further £20K in the very near future.'

'We're delighted that FRASER EAGLE will once again become the series' sponsor for 2007/08.'

Andrew, Welcome back!



But a Sad Farewell to Canons' Virger Suzanne Trudgill



Suzanne, who has been our Canons' Virger for only just over a year (she came to us at Easter 2006), has got a new and exciting job.

'I shall be Blackburn Town Centre's new Marketing Manager', Suzanne told your editor. 'This will involve coordinating events in the Borough, encouraging good public relations between the managers of town businesses and the representatives on the Council, and also helping to raise funds towards the Regeneration of Blackburn!'

That sounds quite a job!

'Yes, it is, but I'm looking forward to it immensely. And my degree in Tourism Management from Manchester Metropolitan University will be a great help.'

We shall miss you here at the cathedral.

'And I shall miss the friendliness of this place where I have been so happy, and where I met my fiancée, Mark. But as my office is in Debenham's, I'll still be quite close to the Cathedral. And,' she added with a smile, 'I shall come here on Sunday mornings and sit in the congregation to make sure that Mark is still doing his job properly as Dean's Virger!'

Suzanne was given a farewell party in the Dean's office – with gifts and flowers as a Thank-you.



Virgers Suzanne, Mark & Jeff, and Mrs. Ann Frankland, Cathedral Housekeeper, with Canon Chivers and Richard Tanner.

Photo by the Dean

WHEN THE FRIENDS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

...held their Annual Meeting, the Virgers created on the altar for Evensong, a magnificent display of some of the cathedral's treasures, including the superb Ramsey Cross and the Saxon Hammer with which a new Bishop knocks on the cathedral door to ask for admittance..



*A well-deserved 'Wow' is called for, I think.
Photo: Jeff Robinson, Virger*

BOOK SATURDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2007
for the Friends' Dinner to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Final Consecration of Blackburn Cathedral!

We are in Awe...

... at the magnificent programme which OC **IAN HARRISON** created for his Annual 3-day Festival of Music at the beginning of May in his glorious Church of St Stephen, Bournemouth.

Luminaries who had accepted his invitation included **The Dean of Winchester**, who preached at the opening service,

Dr. John Birch, former Director of Music of Chichester Cathedral who gave a lecture. (JB and your editor – JB – were students together at the Royal College of Music last Millennium).

Chichester Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Dr. **Alan Thurlow...**

...and of course, Ian's own splendid church and school choirs, with orchestra, plus many other musicians.



The music included Dr. Arthur Wills's *Missa Eliensis*, Mozart's *Sparrow Mass*; *Canticles* by Leighton, Stanford in A and Howells Coll. Reg, Handel's *Zadok and Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, Harris's *Faire is the Heaven*,

and so much more!

And **Dr. & Mrs. Roy Massey** came along to enjoy it all. It was, of course, a great success.

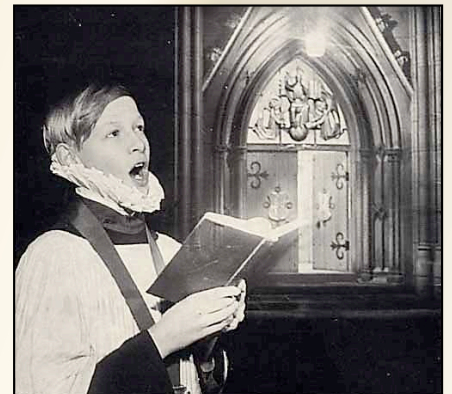
By the way, Ian has launched an Appeal for the rebuilding of the magnificently historic organ in his church (it's the organ at which Percy Whitlock presided for so many years). He's aiming at £145,000 and has already raised over £100,000!

Well done, Ian.

Donations, please, to Ian Harrison, 15 Marabout Close, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3DS. Cheques made out to **St. Stephen's Organ Fund**. *Thanks!*

Ian was a Blackburn Cathedral Chorister at the end of T.L.D.'s time and the beginning of JB's.

He hasn't changed!

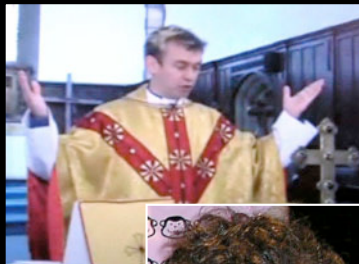


1965 Neil Fellows
Ian F. Harrison
David Robinson

PUNK ROCK VICAR

O C The Revd. Phil Chew

Phil, who was a super chorister during JB's early years at the cathedral, is now Vicar of St. Stephen's Church in Burnley where, on Sundays, he is the very model of a sober Father-in-God.



BUT he's also a Punk Rock fan and has formed his own group which performed on TV recently at the top of Blackpool Tower. They were featured on the BBC's *Look North* news programme.

No band has ever played there before, and Phil said,

'Our Punk Rock doesn't conflict with the Christian faith – it's aggressive music, but it's got a good message.'

The message certainly came through hot and strong that night!
Well done, Phil.



And this is what **Phil** and his elder brother, **Nigel**, looked like in 1974 – just before they became Prefects! They used to sing Palestrina so beautifully!

Their Mother, **Sarah**, (who is a member of our cathedral congregation) was a formidable Headmistress!



**Phil's fearsome brother,
OC NIGEL CHEW**
who is Judo Black Belt, writes:

Hi John!
I was awarded my 1st Dan Black Belt Grading just before Christmas which means that I now get to wave a Samurai Sword around – amongst other assorted weaponry.



My job title is ICT Technician. I work directly for Audley Junior School, who then rent out my time to other schools in the area and beyond. It's a great life as there is always something new to learn or do and I get to meet an amazing range of people.

My Eldest Daughter **Kara**, now 20 years old works for a car sales company in Preston.

My Daughter **Megan** is 18 years old and is currently studying for her A levels – Exams imminent, including Psychology, Technology and Law.

My Eldest Son **Dene** aged 14 (15 in June), has just completed his work experience placement for school as a mechanic and he loved it.

My youngest son **Joe**, 19 months, is just bouncing along and enjoying life – he is so full of energy, running around and climbing onto everything.



Laura, Nigel and Dene Chew
at last year's BCOCA Reunion

My Wife **Laura** is looking forward to starting her PGCE in September.

She plays the Piano and holds a Black Belt in Kung Fu !

Regards
Nigel

What an amazing family!
Don't mess with the Chews! Ed



**From BCOCA Chairman and Cathedral Choirman,
STEWART HOPKINSON**



Dear John,

The Hopkinson family recently downsized and moved to a **1781 cottage** on the hilltop of Belthorn.



Notwithstanding the occasional tornado, life in this small village is perfectly idyllic.

I am now working for the prison service as the North West Regional Business Change Manager, which means I spend most of my time living in my car or in any one of the fourteen prisons in the North West.

This working lifestyle and age have conspired to increase the waistline a little! Consequently, I have returned to the gym where I continue to enjoy weight training but nowadays spend more time cycling and rowing.





Stew and Sue at the BCOCA Reunion in 2004

Canon Clitherow, Richard Tanner, his assistant James Davy, the choir and all staff involved ensured that this was a beautiful day for all - as they used to say "They did her proud".

Finally, our son **Nicholas** is busy taking his G.C.S.E's now that the rugby season has finished and is chomping at the bit to return to The Bethany Orphanage in Tanzania which he visited in July of last year.



He has always been a model young man (Head Boy of both Primary and Secondary schools, member of the Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, plays rugby and loved by all etc!), visited Bethany by chance last year (he picked up a leaflet at his grandma's) and fell in love with the place, the orphans and, not least the Christian group responsible for its management.

He taught English and rugby and will do so again this year. He regularly attends the Hope Centre in Oswaldtwistle now - both Youth and Worship services and has hopes of managing the Bethany project one day. Who knows, one day perhaps? Sue and I are to go with Nick this July to teach English. We hope that this will be a very special experience.

Nigel Chew and I remain very good friends and are thinking of walking the three peaks again this summer. One thing's for sure - if he doesn't kill himself with samurai swords and struggles to complete the walk, I can at least carry him!



Stew Hopkinson being invested with his Sr. Old Chorister Insignia a couple of years ago by outgoing SOC Nigel Chew.

In the meantime we all continue to derive much pleasure from Cathedral life and not least from your splendid Newsletter. Long may it continue!

Cheers,
Stew.

Whatta family, Stew! You must be so proud of them all. JB

OLD CHORISTERS!
Book Saturday & Sunday, 6th & 7th October
for our 42nd ANNUAL REUNION
at the Cathedral and Whalley Abbey!

BLACKBURN'S MAGNIFICENT ORGAN
RECEIVES YET MORE INTERNATIONAL PRAISE
for two new CDs –
both of which were produced by Richard Tanner.

1 Our very own **DAVID BRIGGS** (who gave his very first public recital here when he was only 14 and, after being organ scholar of King's College Cambridge, was Director of Music of Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals), has made yet another superb CD on our organ – for which he was the Consultant when it was rebuilt and enlarged in 2000.



The Art of Organ Transcription has David's own transcriptions of Schubert's tuneful *Unfinished Symphony*, and Tchaikovsky's monumental *Fourth Symphony*.
Reviews from both sides of the Atlantic include:

"Heartiest congratulations on your new Schubert/Tchaikovsky CD - which is stunning. What a terrific sound and what terrific playing. It will be a treasure."

"This is a wonderful CD of two remarkable transcriptions, a veritable treat of classical music played on a marvellous organ... to hear these compositions on the organ is something so different and yet they sound as though they'd been written for the instrument."



David wrote to your editor:

Dear John

Good to hear from you! That's kind of you to include some stuff about the new 'Transcription CD' – Chestnut 003 – in the magazine. In fact it's very easy to order it off my website www.david-briggs.org.uk and go directly to the shopping cart. You just need a Credit Card and **the CDs are £13**. In addition we trying our best to persuade the cathedral shop to take 50!

Hope all is well.

I'm just finishing my new transcription of Mahler 6 – it's been a massive project, but it's such a wonderful piece and I think works extremely well as an organ work. Premiere is in New York on November 6th this year, and then in Germany next June.

All very best wishes from New York

David and Madge



Our equally very own GREG MORRIS

made a CD, with **David Gibbs**, just before he left us to go to the Temple Church in London.

2 It, too, is of two transcriptions of Symphonies Schubert's No. 5 (NOT 'Unfinished!') & Mendelssohn's No. 4 ('The Italian').

WOW!



A review from the USA proclaims:

'I heard part of this recording when I was with the recording company in York last April and fairly shouted, **'Send it to me!'**

'David Gibbs has arranged the Schubert and Mendelssohn Symphonies expertly, and the result is simply great fun to hear. The performance here is nothing short of spectacular, both in execution and in imaginative use of the organ sounds.'

An equally praiseful crit appeared in the May edition of the *Organists' Review* published in the UK:

'Two of the very sunniest orchestral symphonies have a different light shed upon them in organ duet format. Messrs Morris and Gibbs (and Blackburn) make the music shine through. This organ sports many different *fortes* and delicious flutes, so the ear never tires.

There is a thoroughly satisfying faithfulness to the spirit of the orchestral original ... compellingly exciting and invigorating, with at least one performer being driven to virtuoso feats towards the end.

This is a two-man band and therefore at least twice as good. Dare it be said, even more enjoyable than the real thing!

Well done, Greg and David! Ed

From Philip Billson who produced our most recent BBC Choral Evensong

Many thanks for your generous comments about the broadcast in the May edition of the Newsletter, John!

BBC Worship producers know they've 'arrived' when they finally get a photo in the Bertalot extravaganza!!

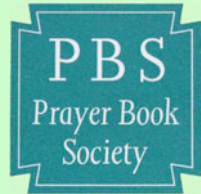
All good wishes, **Philip**

This is your 2nd Newsletter photo, Philip. You're catching up with Simon Vivian! JB



THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY Blackburn Branch

...held its annual gathering in our cathedral on Saturday, 12th May – and many were the distinguished and informed folk who were present for that rewarding time. They support so strongly the continuing use of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.



Choral Eucharist was celebrated most beautifully by **Bishop Nicholas...**



... and sung equally expressively by **Octavius**, a special choir formed by **OC Anthony Tattersall**. (seen here in rehearsal). And right marvellously did they sing Stanford in C & F, and Bairstow's *Let all mortal flesh*. Your editor had the privilege of accompanying them on the cathedral organ.



The riveting sermon on the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) was delivered authoritatively by the **Rev. Canon Professor John Rodwell** from Lancaster University.

A few extracts give the flavour of what he said:

It is difficult to comprehend the radical shift in religious practice and belief that came with the introduction of the first BCP of 1549 ... the first Act of Uniformity represented the drastic transformation of the mass, its abolition of almost every one of the familiar signs and symbols of the sacraments, its sweeping away of the rich medieval calendar, the sudden silencing of cathedral, chapel and church choirs, their Latin repertoires made obsolete at a stroke.

It was nothing less than the obliteration of a deeply embedded sense of identity and belonging, that had shaped individual piety and community life for centuries. Sounds familiar maybe, so not so difficult to comprehend?

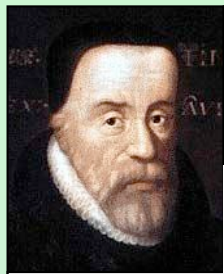


Of course, we see *ourselves* as the beneficiaries of those changes then and in the subsequent revisions of the *Prayer Book* in 1552 and 1662 – the establishment of a single, simple liturgy, in words we could hear and understand, with actions we could comprehend, and in language of startling power and rhythmic beauty.

The Book of Common Prayer was such an extraordinary novelty when it appeared, reducing many books to one,

harmonising diverse regional usage into one national order, written in the vernacular and benefiting enormously from the printing press which could put it cheaply and without hindrance into the hands of one and all, the scrip whereby divine service might be done.

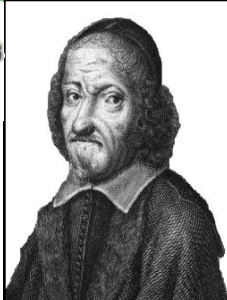
In that language of the *Prayer Book*, we have counted ourselves especially blessed as Anglicans, more so than other Reformed churches of that time of its appearance, to be the beneficiaries of the King James Bible for readings and canticles (a committee job as it happens), the Psalter that **Tyndale** and **Coverdale** crafted for the 1539 Great Bible and, above all, to have the genius of **Thomas Cranmer** in prose and prayer, eclectic in his sourcing, discrete and subtle often in his translations and changes and with a grasp of grammar that, in its very progress and punctuation, seems to mediate our approach, hesitant yet invited, into the presence of God.



William Tyndale, 1494-1536, whose translation of the Bible into English strongly influenced the version we now know as the King James Bible. For this he was burned at the stake.



Myles Coverdale, 1488-1569, Bishop of Exeter, produced the first complete printed version of the Bible in English. It is his translation of the Psalms that is still used in many cathedrals today.



Thomas Cranmer, 1489-1556, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom we owe the immortal language of the BCP.

He, too, was burned at the stake – in Oxford – and the place is marked by a cross on the road below Balliol College.



Professor Rodwell continued: That such a coherent culture, life, language has disintegrated into many voices, some strange, their vocabularies less well-rooted in familiar ground, their meaning often shallow, their grammar casual; that one book was replaced by a multiplicity of booklets or a sheet that varied week by week, their flimsiness a seeming intimation of their weightlessness and likely brief life as liturgy, or as a faithful accompaniment to our own journey from womb to grave...

Fewer people have a single life with a stable thread through which to get the measure of God's constancy and live rather in an extempore, interactive world of text messages, emails and

blogs, where it seems not so necessary to string bytes and digital experiences into one determinative narrative or to maintain any role for grammar and punctuation for communicating starts, stops and pregnant pauses'

For many, worry about the future of the *Prayer Book* in such a transformed world is not in fact primarily to do with liturgy but is a lament for the lost authority of the Church - an authority which reassures us what we should all believe, which tells us all how we should all worship, and which provides a reassurance thereby of that God 'with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning' as today's Epistle has it.

Yet here are we brought together today under such authority, by the grace of such a God to await the gift of the Holy Ghost which blows where it wills and which, St John tells us in the Gospel, will through the Church of which we are part, tell the world of which we are also part, how wrong we can all be about sin, and about who is right, and about who is condemned. Only of his own choosing does God's ghostly presence make itself felt through *The Book of Common Prayer* and inspire us.'



Octavius also gave the first performance of an anthem by your editor, which was commissioned by the Prayer Book Society, 'O Almighty God' the Collect for the day – with words, of course, by Thomas Cranmer.

The composer (seen after the service with 'Tat') was most pleased with their sensitive and expressive singing.

And then there was a delicious lunch in the crypt prepared, of course, by our own café-in-the-crypt staff.



The whole day had been superbly organised by the PBS secretary, **OC Neil Inkley** (Old Chorister of Peterborough), seen here talking with

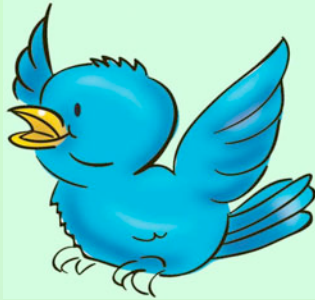
Mrs. Carolyn Duckworth, wife of the PBS President, Judge Brian Duckworth.



Judge Duckworth hosted his predecessor as President, **Lord Clitheroe**, with **Lady Clitheroe**, and **Dean Christopher**.



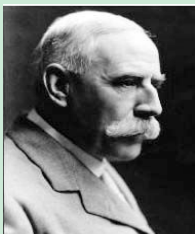
Lord Clitheroe told your editor that he had recently returned from St. Helena: "And I saw there a bird called the *Bertalot Pipit* and thought of you!"



And of course **Bishop Nicholas** was there for the afternoon with **Mrs. Reade**, and our two distinguished guests, **Canon Rodwell**, and (right) **Professor Roger Homan**, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Brighton.



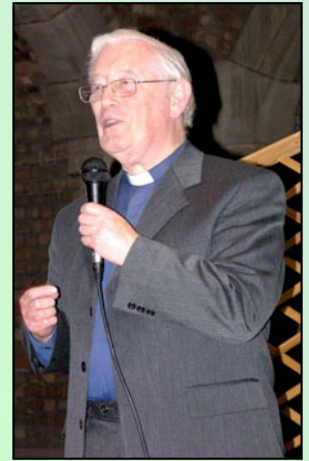
Professor Homan's talk was also riveting, given extempore – but meticulously prepared – on the blessings of the service of Evensong. **'The rising sun coming through the East window of a church for Matins is a metaphor for birth. The setting sun, coming through the West window at Evensong, is a metaphor for death. The service of Evensong is soothing – it prepares us for the next day: 'Lighten our darkness...' It gives us an opportunity to consider our Stewardship of life and therefore to look to the Eternal.'**



JB had decided to play a merry blast after that service but, moved by Professor Homan's words, he substituted *Nimrod*. Would that there had been a copy of his address* available for us all to study afterwards for there was so much more.

(*Copies will be published by the PBS)

By the way, there was a short PBS Annual Meeting, chaired by the irrepressible **Revd. Alan Reid**, who can't resist telling a joke on almost every occasion. He can even make listening to notices in church fun!



He began: 'I've just returned from a gathering of 70 retired clergy in York, hosted by the Archbishop – which demonstrated that there is life after death!'

And then Octavius sang Evensong (Dyson in D) which brought to an end a wonderful day.

At least, not quite the end, for Renaissance Singer **Joyce Wicks's** art exhibition in the South Transept opened immediately after the service, and many were the folk who came to see her amazing watercolours, including the deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn.



And there were lavish refreshments laid on for us all. That made a perfect end to an inspiring day.

BENEDICT TANNER

The next day, Ben Tanner, son of **Richard Tanner** and **Pippa Hyde**, and younger brother of **James**, was baptized.

Richard said, 'I wish I had had a camera with me at the font. It was a very striking sight with choir on the right and a very big congregation on the left and stretching back onto the sanctuary steps.'

Afterwards there was a celebration party in the Tanners' lovely home with grandparents and godparents...



...including our two Residentiary Canons. Your editor fell into conversation with Pippa's father, **David Hyde**, who was holding in his arms the Reason for the party.

David told your editor that he had been a boy at Wandsworth School which had had a superb choir. The choir was so good that **Benjamin Britten** had used it for many of his performances and recordings.

"We recorded Ben's *St. Nicolas Cantata*," he said, "and the soloist was Peter Pears, for whom it was written."

"I sang in the choir for a Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall which Ben conducted. When he walked onto the platform the ovation lasted 5 minutes before we could start!"

"Ben said that he was for ever losing his scores. "I write my name on the cover," he used to say, "and they simply disappear!" "

No wonder! An autographed score of a Britten work is a collector's item!



Peter Pears & Ben. Britten

What other musical memories do you have?

"I last saw Rostropovich – the Russian cellist who has just died – in a fish queue on the beach at Aldeburgh! That was Britten's home, of course, and they often gave concerts together." David Hyde paused for a moment, and added, "I still sing in All Saints' Choir, Northampton – where Richard was Director of Music before he came to Blackburn."

Where do you live?

"In Huntingdon – it's only a 30 minute drive to Northampton, but I do it every week!"

No wonder that Pippa is such an outstanding musician with a background like that! Ed

Archbishops deliver William Temple Lectures by Canon Chris Chivers

As Anglicans across the globe begin to prepare for Lambeth 2008 – when bishops and their spouses will descend by the thousand on Canterbury to pray, study and reflect together – so we've begun our preparations early in Blackburn through the presence of two of the Communion's leading figures.



Coming to the end of his time as the Archbishop of the West Indies – he will retire just after the Lambeth Conference – **The Most Reverend Drexel Gomez** was able to be with us for two immensely significant occasions in the cathedral's life.

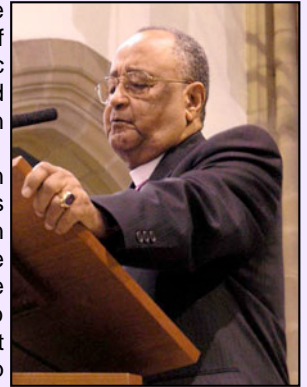
On Sunday 25 March over 600 people packed the building to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade at an ecumenical Evensong during which the Archbishop preached.

Lancashire has deep – but largely unacknowledged – connections with the slave trade, connections which long outlived its UK and Empire abolition in 1807. Cotton, picked by American slaves – who were not freed until much later in 1865 – was the stable fare of Lancashire's mills throughout the nineteenth century. Blackburn's economy was utterly dependent on its importation.

When the cotton famine in the early 1860s brought the Americas to their knees economically it had the same effect in our cotton town, so dependent were we on this trading link.

It was very moving to have Archbishop Gomez remind us of the way in which our historic wealth had been amassed, and of the impact of the trade on people in his Province.

With music specially written by **James Davy** – his responsorial Magnificat in an African style will long be remembered – and also by the Young People's Choir who joined us for the afternoon, it was a service that left a deep impression.



The following day, after a tour of Whalley Abbey, the Archbishop returned to deliver his Temple Lecture which addressed the current 'crisis' in the Communion in relation to the blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of gay priests and bishops.



present

The Third William Temple Lecture

**On being Anglican
in the 21st century**

delivered by

The Most Reverend Drexel Gomez
Archbishop of the West Indies

Steering a middle course between what are often referred to as the liberal and conservative wings, the Archbishop sought to articulate what he saw as the heart of the so-called 'Windsor process'.

As the Chair of the group charged with the task of authoring the proposed Anglican Covenant, and as a member of the group who produced the Windsor Report, he was uniquely placed to do so.

Whilst determinedly seeking to hold the Communion to the line it had taken in 1998 over the issues, his aim was clearly to ensure that the conversation continues within the agreed parameters.

It was particularly rewarding to have his insider-view of the recent Primates' Meeting in Tanzania, and his hope that an Anglican covenant would be a liberating rather than imprisoning reality.

Archbishop Ian Ernest

A few weeks later saw the cathedral host to one of the newest Archbishops in the Communion.



*Dean Christopher, Bishop Nicholas and Canon Chivers
welcome Archbishop Ian Ernest*

The Archbishop of the Indian Ocean, Ian Ernest, who is the diocesan bishop of Mauritius, is emerging as one of the foremost leaders of the new generation. The first French-speaking Primate of his Province, he has a passion for theological education.

After celebrating at the 10.30am Cathedral Eucharist he joined us for a Jacob's Join in the Crypt – a happy and informal occasion – before delivering a wide-ranging lecture which sought to uncover new perspectives on the church's mission in the light of the 'crisis'.

Where Archbishop Drexel was measured and sought to paint more of an historical perspective, **Archbishop Ian was very upbeat**, urging us all to seize the opportunities for service to a world looking to us for leadership. He paid particular attention to the need for lay training and interfaith engagement.

Both primates were inspiring in different ways. What they said was listened to with rapt attention. It was an immense privilege to have them with us and to be reminded that the winds of change are blowing through the Church of England from beyond its shores as much as within them.

Gone are the days when English men (they were mostly men!) went out to proclaim the white man's Gospel to the 'heathen'!

Now it is those from regions like Africa and the Caribbean whose unshakeable conviction and passion for the Gospel is touching and transforming what the Book of the Revelation describes as **faith which has become lukewarm**. There was much here to challenge us out of our lethargy and to set us on fire.



These outstanding Lectures will be available in print form. Details from Canon Chivers 01254-50-30-90 ext. 252

OC MATTHEW OGLESBY

who is studying music at Leeds University wrote a fascinating letter to the editor. He conducts a University choir there and next academic year he'll be conducting opera!

He's been appointed conductor of the University Chamber Choir, which is an auditioned choir, and 'so commands a lot of attention – even from America!' said Matt.

He added, 'This should be a brilliant experience for me anyway, especially because in my years here the quality of talent and repertoires have been outstanding.' He plans to introduce them to the music of **Johannes Ockeghem**, French composer of 15th Century who wrote very difficult bass parts, and who is credited with composing the second complete setting of the Mass after Dufay.

'Leeds Cathedral has 5 main choirs and lots of training choirs throughout the schools in the diocese.

'Starting in September I'll not only be a choral scholar at Leeds RC Cathedral [where the DoM is **Ben Saunders**, former Associate DoM at Blackburn], but also be the scholar conductor, which means that conducting is practically the only thing I'll be doing next year! I don't have time to play the trumpet any more!

'I'll start off directing weekday services at the cathedral but it's not unknown for the scholar to do major services with commissioned music – with the composer in the congregation!



Matt playing at Blackburn Cathedral in 2005



Ben Saunders at Leeds

'Also it will be an invaluable learning experience to be working with Ben.

'I attended the 2nd Annual Catholic DoMs' Conference in Westminster Cathedral a couple of weeks ago where Ben and his full-time Assistant DoM were giving a presentation on developing diocesan choral programmes. They now have five choirs and on top of this they go to primary schools every week to train more choristers!

'Sadly I won't be joining Blackburn Cathedral Choir for their tour of Paris for I'm being sent to Germany for the same weekend for a seminar in choral conducting.

'Please pester **Richard** and **James** to do some of my compositions at Blackburn; it'd be great to think they might some day enter the repertoire at Blackburn – or is that wishful thinking?

'I hope you're well and that life at the cathedral is as hectic as ever.

'My best wishes, as always,

Matthew

Well done, Matt. You showed yourself an outstanding chorister during your time here. Clearly you are going places! JB

From OC LIZ MARLES in Leeds (YPC member with David Goodenough)

Hi John,

Good to hear from you again.

It's been pretty eventful here over



the last few months - the children have all been ill on and off with chickenpox, impetigo and ear infections and I've had glandular fever!



But they are all growing up fast and can't believe **Dan** will be going to school in September.

Rob and I are still singing with the St George's Occasional Singers and had a very successful weekend in Ripon Cathedral in the middle of April.



We're also in the midst of having an extension done at home so we are living with builders and dust at the moment but it will be great when it's done!

I really enjoyed singing at the workshop at The Sixteen weekend in April and it was good to be able to sing in the Cathedral again.

Here are a couple of recent pics of Dan and the Twins,

Abby & Tom – I can never seem to get a good one of them all on the same pic so I'm sending two.

Best wishes

Liz

Thanks, Liz. Great to hear from you. Ed

Cheering remark from Canon Taylor:

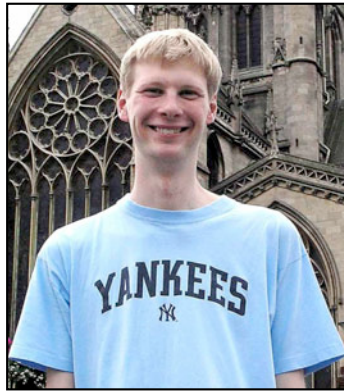
'Don't worry about being 90 years of age – it means that you won't die young!'

From OC Dr. MICHAEL PAYNE in Accrington

Dear John,

I hope this letter may be of some interest to your readers in your splendid Newsletter (one can only talk in superlatives where the Newsletter is concerned!)?

Towards the end of June I am officially getting my Durham PhD so if you have room and it fits in with the timescale I could e-mail you a picture of me prancing around in my doctor's robes!



It is amazing that wherever you go in life Blackburn Cathedral and its choir soon catches up with you. I was overjoyed when I read that **James Davy** was appointed Assistant Director of Music. James and I were in the same year at Durham both reading music. Incidentally, we both went for the same college organ scholarship, but needless to say James beat me to it.

Recently I have been working jointly for light-music composer Ernest Tomlinson and the Light Music Society. One day Ernest was telling that he used to 'fix' orchestras in the 1970s and that he remembers several occasions when he brought orchestras to the Cathedral; JB was one of the few choral conductors who knew how to handle an orchestra, he said!



Towards the end of last year the Light Music Society had a request for the orchestral parts of Eric Coates' *By the Sleepy Lagoon* from **Richard Cock** in South Africa. It transpired that he was a chorister under you when you directed the RSCM 2-week course in Cape Town some years ago. As a result of that course he decided to make music his career, and eventually became Director of Music of Johannesburg Cathedral the South African Broadcasting Corporation! His two children have **Desmond Tutu** as their Godfather! It's a small world!

Ramblings aside, life has been rather hectic as **I have just completed and officially passed my PhD at Durham** on the light-music composer Eric Coates – I am trying to get used to being called Dr Payne, but I dare say I will learn to live with it! Recently, I gave a paper at an academic conference on the Proms and British Musical Life at the British Library.



Nicolas Kenyon (the Director of the Proms) also gave a paper in the same session and it felt rather bizarre to be lecturing to him about the BBC's inadequacy to support light music at these concerts (I was talking about Eric Coates' problems getting his music into the Proms). Lord Briggs (the eminent historian) was also in the audience.

My 'other' career as an organist is also quite frantic, as I am organist of two churches near Accrington, which keeps my Sundays rather full with little time to visit the Cathedral and hear the choir(s).

As to the future, I have a vague idea to turn my Coates' research into a book, but we shall what happens. I am also getting married at the end of July in the Newcastle area (Anne, my wife-to-be, comes from a small mining village there) and our Wedding Reception is to be in Durham Castle where we met over four years ago. I have also been awarded a place to study for a PGCE at the University of Bristol in September so we will drift down South where no doubt many more Blackburn connections will leap upon us.



Michael at the 5-manual console in Doncaster Church, 2005.

Hope all is OK with you – I think the last time we met was at the Organists' outing to Doncaster Parish Church. Hopefully our paths may cross before I disappear down to Bristol. Thanks for all your recent e-mails, hope this answers some of your questions!

Best wishes, **Michael**
Michael: Heartiest congratulations on your Doctorate, on your marriage and on your placement at Bristol.

How much excitement can you stand?! JB

From OC Dr. INDRA HUGHES in NZ

Hello John,

Thanks as ever for the fascinating Newsletter, the latest edition of which arrived today.

I thought you would like to know, as a follow-up to my Blackburn performance of *The Art of Fugue* last year, that I have passed all the requirements for my Doctorate and I graduated last week.



So now I am the first person in NZ to be given the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts!

As you know, your own articles on Bach's numbers were an inspiration to me in my thesis; and the examiners said that they particularly liked my work on Bach's counterpoint, so much of which derived from the rigorous training we received from **Jack Longstaff** at QEGS. If anybody is interested in my thesis about the unfinished ending of *The Art of Fugue*, it can be downloaded from my web site www.indrahughes.com

My choir Musica Sacra (www.musicasacra.org.nz) has had a busy start to the year. We sang Mahler 2 with the NZSO for the opening of the Auckland Festival; we did a joint concert here in Auckland with the very fine Royal Copenhagen Chapel Choir and their conductor Ebbe Munk (this choir is the Danish equivalent of Westminster Abbey's: their boys were superb); we gave our annual Good Friday performance twice because so many people came last year that it was a fire risk, and this time both performances were completely full; and now we are in the midst of preparing a second Christmas CD (the last one was Number One in the classical charts!). It's all been very hectic but also very rewarding.

Warm greetings from down under to everyone at the Cathedral!

Cheers, **Indra**

PS Re your report on the performance of Bach's St.

Matthew Passion in Blackburn Cathedral: Are you sure that Bach's congregation would have joined in the chorales in the Passion??!! I always understood that was a hotly debated question.

Most heartiest congratulations, Indra. A doctorate so fully deserved. We are thrilled for you and remember, with enormous delight, your amazing recital of Bach's Art of Fugue in the cathedral 18 months ago. JB

*To have **one** Old Chorister earn his doctorate in music would be glory enough, but to have **TWO**...! Both were from **David Cooper's** time at the cathedral. Laus Deo!*



The programme featured delicious part-songs by Elgar – whose 150th anniversary we celebrate this year.

The conducting was shared between Dr. Smith and our own **RICHARD TANNER**, and both inspired superb performances from their talented choristers.

PS FROM DR. MICHAEL PAYNE

Dear John,
Please find attached photograph of me in my Doctor's robes (or do I mean Cardinal's!).

By an amazing coincidence **OC Edward 'Woody' Seymour** was graduating (BA) with me – 2 Blackburn Choristers graduating at the same time.

Hope all is well with you,
Best wishes, **Michael**
*Renewed congratulations,
Michael. JB*



JAMES DAVY accompanied the choirs on piano most skillfully (with pages turned by the ubiquitous **Gordon Shaw**) and also on the cathedral organ most delicately. What a treasure he is to us all!

It was interesting to watch the different techniques of the two conductors.

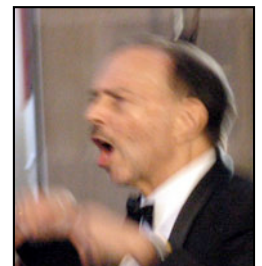
It was a special pleasure

...to welcome to Blackburn Cathedral on May 22nd the St. George's Singers from Cape Town, conducted by their founder, **Dr. BARRY SMITH**. For not only had **Canon CHRIS CHIVERS** worked closely with Dr. Smith when Canon Chris was Precentor of St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town and Barry was the Director of Music, but also your editor had known Dr. Smith for even longer!

Forty years ago Barry had invited JB to direct the RSCM's Summer School in Cape Town. Before their concert that night they met again, and Barry introduced JB to his Singers – one of whom had been a teenager on that very course!

JB reminded Barry that when he met him at Cape Town Airport, way back in 1967, JB had thanked Barry for offering him hospitality in his home before the course began. 'Oh, you're not staying with me,' said Barry, 'you're staying with the archbishop!'

Their concert that night, which they sang with our own Renaissance Singers, was given to a capacity audience in the North Transept. Their combined sound was magnificent – as was their glorious tone when they sang separately, for the two choirs were very similar.



Both conducted so musically, looking at their singers and 'mouthing' the words of the songs they sang.

Barry could look quite fierce sometimes, but at the end of each song he smiled and applauded his singers.



But towards the end of the concert we heard compositions by our three resident composers, **Canon Chris, Richard** and **James**, and also by our distinguished guest, **Barry Smith**.

What a delight that was – especially as Canon Chris took his bow with 3-month old **Jonathan Joseph** in his arms!
(Photo next page)



And after it was all over, James Davy showed Barry Smith what our organ could really do – playing the last couple of pages of Widor's *Toccata* on overdrive.

Richard thanked our series' sponsors: **Fraser Eagle** and **Booths**, without whose munificence such ambitious and rewarding music-making would not be possible.

Special thanks were given to **exChange** who sponsored this particular concert. How fortunate we are to have such generous supporters!



Messe de la Pentecôte

Tom Bell (organ)

Most Blackburn music lovers again missed an exquisite time of inspiration when **TOM BELL** senior organ student at the Royal Northern College of Music, played Olivier Messiaen's *Pentecost Mass* to 14 of us on the evening of Pentecost Sunday.

It took only 35 minutes, but it was an amazing experience for us all, not only for Tom's brilliant playing but also because our Associate Director of Music, **JAMES DAVY**, had chosen readings which he delivered most beautifully between the movements of this French Organ *Messe*. And not only that, but he had chosen the readings himself – from the Bible and from Canon Chivers' extensive library.



This work, in five movements, was demanding not only on the soloist, but also on the listeners; some of it was puzzling – why was the first movement, entitled *Tongues of Fire*, so quiet? One would have expected the organ to make the sounds of a *rushing*

mighty wind! But Messiaen saved that for the very end of the last movement!

Some of it was mysterious – what was Messiaen trying to say? And some of it frightening. (You'd be frightened if tongues of fire settled on your head after supper!) And there were moments of rare beauty and moments of surprise as yet more shimmering colours came forth from our mighty organ.

Tom's playing was authoritative, which was not surprising for, even though he is still a student, he'd already given five other recitals that month – in Coventry, Manchester and Guildford Cathedrals, Wimborne Minster and the Royal Northern College of Music. Clearly he's a young man to watch.

Tom studied with **Kevin Bowyer** at the RNCM who has made several stunning CDs on our organ. No wonder Tom plays so well!

When he graduates this summer he will become Director of Music of Esher Parish Church, from where he led an outreach in Slough and at Eton to interest children in the organ. His organ at Esher has just been rebuilt at a cost of £187,000 – may his Messiaen sound as glorious there as it did here.



This music fitted our cathedral so well for, of course, some of the panels in our Lantern Tower reflect the fire of the Holy Spirit.

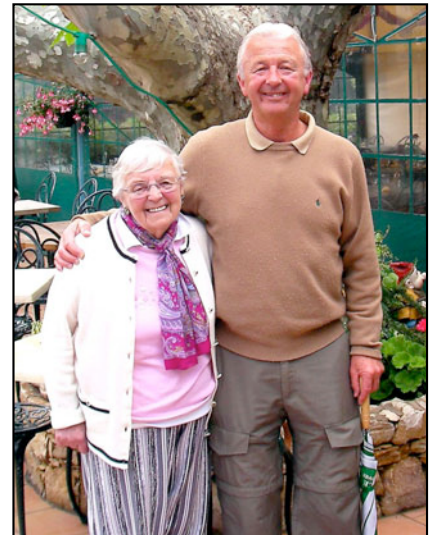
Hallelujah!

From OC **JOHN WILKINSON OBE,** in Winchester

Dear John, Greetings from Winchester. It was wonderful to receive yet another excellent BCOPA/FBCM journal. It is always a fascinating read. What musical feasts the Cathedral produces!

I am attaching a photograph of my mother, **Olive**, and myself celebrating her 90th birthday on the Cote D'Azur at the beginning of May 2007.

She is quite an inspiration when you consider that just four years ago she suffered serious life-threatening injuries in an accident with a car (multiple fractures, including a broken neck!).



She maintains that she was saved by the power of prayer and Christian friendship. Quite a testimony as a witness to God's healing power!



Some will remember Olive for her work with the Mothers Union, 65 years a member, when she was Blackburn Deanery President for two 6-year sessions. Others may remember her for her work as a speech trainer. **Ivor Bolton** [Old Chorister and international conductor] **was one of her pupils.** She is still active in the church, supports a range of charities and is a prolific letter writer.

She requested no presents for her 90th birthday, but suggested that any donations should go to **"Education Uganda"** ✉. She raised over £600 for this charitable trust with which I am involved.

During this summer, I am taking a group of teachers out to Southern Uganda (South Rwenzori Diocese) to work voluntarily in a teacher training college and four schools to help in making universal primary education a reality. We will also twin Hampshire schools with those in South Rwenzori. This will be an exciting and challenging adventure.

This organisation has taken a fair bit of my time, but I am also a governor of one of the Children's Centres that I helped to establish, a member of the Portsmouth & Winchester Diocesan Education Board, and a voluntary assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme.

Myra, my wife, continues with her work at Portsmouth University and is also external examiner to Manchester Metro, Hull and North London Universities, as well as working as an assessor to a range of Uni's for the National Institute of Biomedical Sciences.

Daughter **Catherine** is expecting her second child in November. Son **Christopher**, who now has a daughter to add to his inherited three children, is a successful private client solicitor in Southampton and is also the Assistant Deputy Coroner for mid-Hampshire.

Every good wish to you and all.

John.

You must be so proud of your 3-generation family, John!

✉ Cheques to "Education Uganda" can be sent through John Wilkinson at Esterel, 24 Gillingham Close, Kingsworthy, Winchester, Hants. SO23 7RL. Thanks!

From Mildred Sleight

... in Scunthorpe, who, as *Mildred Whiteside* was a founder-member of the *Blackburn Bach Choir* in 1965 → (now the *Renaissance Singers*).



Dear John,

Once again I have enjoyed reading the May Newsletter, and not least to learn about the regeneration programme around the Cathedral Precinct – it looks most exciting.

Gary Wignall's interesting articles [about his 55 years at the cathedral] made me search out a concert programme which I remembered keeping, because I was so impressed with the singing. The occasion was the Song School's Annual Concert and Presentation of Awards, September 1952, under the direction of **TLD** [Tom Duerden] of course.



At that time I was just 16 and had never heard such wonderful singing by boys. My mother had expressed an interest in attending one of Mr. Duerden's choirs – it was called the Glee & Madrigal Society (although I think the repertoire was more

extensive than the name suggests) – and she often talked to me about her time in the choir.

Looking at the programme now I see that **George Woodhouse** was Head Prefect, **Peter Heald** was one of the other three prefects; **Stanley Rookcroft**, **Norman Eccleston** [founder-member of BCOCA] and **John Sutcliffe** were amongst the choristers, and **Gary Wignall** and **Lionel Walmisley** were amongst the singing boys.

John Sutcliffe was one of my teaching colleagues when I taught at Witton Park Secondary Modern 1963-65 and, of course, he was a Bach Choir member.

The concert comprised a mixture of Choruses, solos, duets and verse speaking, and **Fred Dewhurst** was the accompanist. I remember him as organist of St. Gabriel's. I am wondering if the programme would be something Peter Heald would like for the archives. [YES! Ed.]

Tomorrow I shall be in Epworth helping to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Charles Wesley's birth, accompanying the Scunthorpe Youth Choir.



Epworth, where the Wesleys were born, is quite close to Scunthorpe.

One of our items is a lovely setting of Wesley's hymn *Love Divine* by Howard Goodall; it is one of the pieces I played on the 2-manual Choir organ in Notre Dame, Paris, when we did a concert tour in 2005. (It was a nerve-racking occasion as I couldn't see the conductor!)

With my very best wishes to you,
Mildred.

From OC PETER CROWTHER JP in Lancaster



who attended the concert by *The SIXTEEN* (see p. 3) along with OC **Bob Keen** and **Pauline Keen**, and OC **Iain Thompson's** Mum as well as former organ scholar **Jonathan Clinch**. All of whom looked wonderfully well – which was good news, for Peter and the Keens have been through a hard time recently.

Hi John,

I retired from my work with the Lancashire County Council on December 21st, 2006, aged 60, which was the best Christmas present I could ever have had!

Jean and I decided that, in order to mark my retirement (and hers, which had happened two years earlier) we would go on a cruise around the West Indies. The whole thing was fantastic and we had the time of our lives.

One port of call was the island of Grenada where we purchased a stamp to go on a card to relatives in the USA.

Imagine my surprise when I saw that the stamp was of a local bird called the **BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER!** It could not have been more appropriate in a million tries.



Going to the concert by The Sixteen, I felt that their singing was so perfect that one could only admire the technical and vocal skills on display. The programme was almost too much of one very beautiful genre of choral music. But I'm glad I went and heard this magnificent choir live. Plus – I got to meet up with you again – always a plus, in my view.

Very best wishes from an original Blackburnian Warbler.

Peter.



From BISHOP ALAN CHESTERS, CBE in Chester

Dear John,

I hope that things are well with you and that the Cathedral music continues to go from strength to strength.

You asked for a photograph to mark my investiture with the CBE. You may have thought that I had forgotten but in fact it took place only last Friday when **Prince Charles** made the presentation.



I enclose a snapshot taken by a kind policeman in the Quadrangle of the Palace of Jennie, son David and his wife, and me. I thought that your readers might like to see the family rather than just myself!

It was a very happy day. I found it humbling to hear of the wonderful things so many of the other recipients had done.

There was a wonderful atmosphere and the Prince had a short conversation with each recipient. Afterwards we joined a few friends for lunch, and that proved a great time for a trip down memory lane.

With all good wishes

Yours ever

+ Alan

Renewed congratulations, My Lord, on your well-deserved CBE. Ed



Our warmest THANKS for more generous Donations and Standing Orders for the Newsletter, from

Anonymous from Dorset. Second Donation Carruthers, Mrs. Brenda (former Choirparent), Donation EXCHANGE, Another generous donation. Hopkinson, Stewart, (Choirman & Chairman BCOCA), S/O Pollard, Mrs. Hilary (Barnoldswick) S/O Sully-Rohrer, (Princeton NJ, USA) Donation Williams, Ross (Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex) Donation

Standing Orders (from those who already receive the Newsletter) are eligible for Gift Aid.

Please ask JB for a S/O form. Thanks!

john@bertalot dot org

DELICIOUS COOKERY EVENING

The Cathedral Crypt was filled with expectant chefs from our congregation – mostly ladies, but quite a few men – on



Wednesday evening, 6th June, for a superb cookery demonstration by **Nigel Howarth** (Head Chef & Joint Managing Director, Northcote Manor), ably assisted by **Craig Bancroft** (Wine Expert & Joint Managing Director, Northcote Manor).

The evening had been arranged by Senior Old Chorister JOHN MARR – and it was full of surprises.

The first surprise was that guests were greeted at the door by young men in smart uniforms. They were members of Blackburn Sea Cadets (John has been a Trustee & Treasurer for them for the last 9 years). Their presence got the evening off to a great start.



The next surprise was finding that the configuration of the Crypt had been changed – with lavish equipment from Northcote Manor – cooker, cutlery, bottles and I don't know what. It must have taken ages to set up (and to take down afterwards!) **Nigel & Craig prepare for the evening.**





Video equipment (provided by **Andrew Stringer** from Fence) and a large screen ensured that everyone could see what was going on. Many were the helpful tips we learned during those fascinating two hours as Nigel Howarth created a delicious meal before our very eyes.

For example, to make a delicious champagne cocktail you need a sugar lump at the bottom of the glass, a touch of angostura bitters, a dash of Cointreau and Cognac, and of course the Champagne, carefully chilled.



'You've probably been told that you should twist the cork of a champagne bottle to ensure that it doesn't pop,' said Craig Bancroft. 'That's not the right way. You should hold the cork with one hand and twist the bottle with the other hand!' (It worked!)

'And,' he continued, 'when pouring the champagne, put your thumb into the 'hole' at the bottom of the bottle and with your four fingers balance the bottle for smooth pouring!' (That worked, too!)



Flambé!

As well as fascinating input from Nigel and Craig, we enjoyed guests from the far corners of Lancashire: one who grew Chillis (he has a football-field full of them – and even makes Chilli Beer!),

Another guest shared his vocation for growing Cauliflowers. His father and both grandfathers grew them, but his son will be a schoolteacher.

He was so enthusiastic about them that, after the demonstration was over, a rush was made to snap up the free samples.

Betty Parkinson was one of the lucky ones! Here she is with Old Chorister **Godfrey McGowan** who, as ever, was most helpful.



Needless to say, there was a raffle, organised by John Marr and OC **Heather Starkie** – and as a result of that superb evening, after all expenses had been met, John and his team had made over £900 for Blackburn Old Choristers' Association!

BCOCA supports our cathedral choirs in so many ways, not the least financially, so we shall all benefit from the hard work done to arrange such a successful evening. Thank you, John.

JOHN MARR is a most interesting person.

He was a cathedral chorister in the early 1970s with his younger brother, **David**, and now, as well as being an officer of the Blackburn Sea Cadets and a keen supporter of Blackburn Rovers, he enjoys eating out – which is why he was able to organise such a successful cookery evening for us.

He writes: 'Since 1993 I have been employed as a Local Government Officer for Lancashire County Council.

'For the first 5 years I was based in the Chief Executive/Clerks Department at County Hall Preston. Later, I moved to Social Services Finance and remained there for 4 years. And, for the last 4 years I have been based at East Cliff County Offices (Preston) where I undertake work on behalf of the Social Services Contracts Unit.

'My role as a Contracts Development Officer involves supporting Commissioning Teams (above all Social Workers) by drawing up and monitoring service specifications for children and young people placed in the independent and/or voluntary sector.

'Primarily, the services I am talking about are residential, fostering and day care. From time to time I'm called upon to visit these organisations, in order to evaluate their suitability and value for money for childcare.

'On occasions, I attend strategy meetings (consisting of various reps from Health, Education & Children's Social Care) in order to review a particular service – usually when it has gone a little 'pear shaped'!

'The job has many merits, but I guess the biggest one, for me, is when I've assisted in finding an appropriate, long term residential placement for a young person in care – usually they may have had several short term homes prior to this.'



PS: It comes as no surprise that John's long-time companion, HEATHER STARKIE, has agreed to be next season's Senior Old Chorister. We are delighted!!

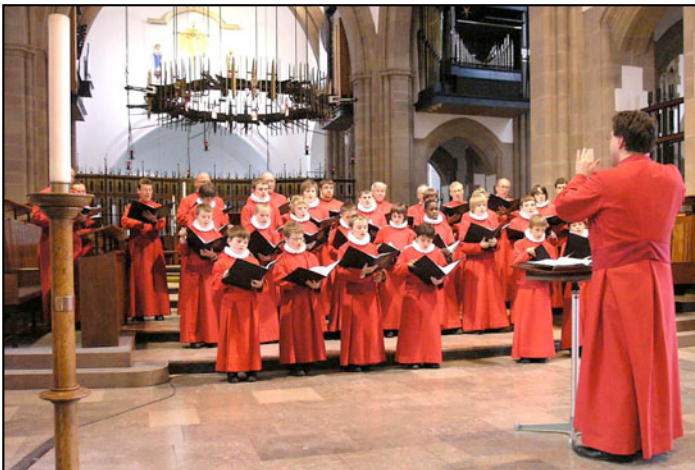


Cathedral Choir in Paris

The Men and Boys' Choir singing visit to Paris at the beginning of June was a mixture of hard work and the greatest fun, but it was also a triumph musically and socially.

The hard work began months before with meticulous planning by many people – the cathedral's musicians, the boys' parents, our ever-efficient Music Administrator **Linda Bruce**, and also by new choir parent **Neil Shepherd** whose tourist office prepared our schedule so efficiently.

The evening before the tour began the choir gave a concert in the cathedral to an enthusiastic audience of some of the music they would be singing. (And also some of the music they wouldn't be singing, including Vienne's *Messe Solonnelle* for choir and two organs. Vienne was organist of Notre Dame, Paris, and his Mass is a classic – but visiting choirs aren't allowed to sing it there!)



At 4.30 the next morning the choir boarded their coach which would take them to our excellent hotel in Paris next to the Gare du Lyon. It took them 11 hours!

Some of us felt that a more leisurely journey would be less taxing. **Andy, Linda and Matt Bruce** flew from Manchester – their journey took only 1½ hours!



Linda Bruce was responsible for so much of the organizing of this tour. Without her dedicated and time-consuming work it would not have happened.

Some other choir members were already in France. But choirman **Alec Stuttard** and **Pat** went by train, which took 2½ hours, and they very soon teamed up with choirman **Gordon Shaw** who showed them some of the sights of Paris.

On **Friday 1st June**, our first full day in Paris, the boys and stalwart guardian parents spent a day in Disneyland. They enjoyed it!



Jonathan Brookes, Barry Hudson Taylor & Charles Forshaw looking piratical!



No words of praise are too high for the parents who looked after us all during those three fully packed days.



L-R: Guilane Woodburn, Amanda Snape, Dawn Forshaw, Steve Geldard & Nesta Shaw

Heroic Choir-Parent Leaders: →

Saturday: Our coach took us near the Isle de Citie and we walked to Notre Dame with attendant parents, and stalwart librarians who lugged the heavy boxes of music. They, too, were heroic!

The boys wore their special Paris Tour T-shirts which were very smart.

We were ushered into the holy of holies, and Richard Tanner led the rehearsal in the Quire with quiet efficiency and musicianship. The choir sounded superb



At the church's entrance there's an altar, smothered in flowers and candles, with a photograph of Saint Therese, where the Faithful may pray.



We had to wait outside the church in the hot sunshine for an hour whilst another service was finishing, but our attentive parents bought snacks and drinks for the boys, and for the rest of us, which were much appreciated.

There are two organs in Notre Dame – an internationally famous organ (where Vierne presided 100 years ago) in the high West gallery below the great Rose window and a smaller one in the Quire, which James Davy enjoyed playing.



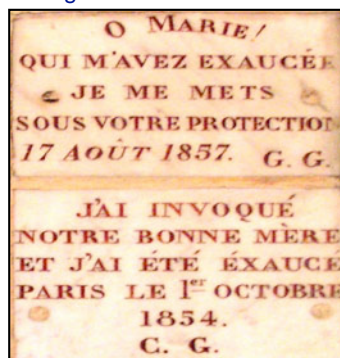
James Davy noticed that the anthem he had composed for this visit was advertised on a poster outside the church. This superb anthem had been sung at our pre-tour concert and was a smash-hit!



Finally we were allowed in and Richard again rehearsed us efficiently and economically for, after a tea break, we were to sing a service AND give a short recital!

But after that rehearsal there was another rehearsal in another 'Notre Dame'. This was *Notre Dame des Victoires* which is famous on account of a visit paid to it by a father with his young daughter 120 years ago.

The girl's name was Therese, and she was so overwhelmed by the devotion paid to the Virgin Mary in that church (the walls are covered with small marble plaques offering thanks to the Virgin Mary for answers to prayers) that she eventually became a Nun and had a vision of the Virgin at a place called Lourdes – and the rest is history,





At the end of the service choir-parent Guillaîne Woodburn, who is French, told the congregation about our cathedral and its choir. Apparently the French know where Manchester is, but not Blackburn! The recital went well and afterwards our coach took us back to our hotel for a well-deserved dinner and early night.

(Tourists were allowed to wander around the side aisles throughout the service, so there was never total silence.) And because we were so far from the congregation, microphones relayed our singing throughout the cathedral. It was a magical hour.



A verger noticed that the boys had to squash into their wooden front pew, so he brought a velvet upholstered gold chair for the end boy – Jr. Chorister **William Fielding!**



Clouds of incense arose around the altar as the priests led the service in French. It was an unforgettable sight.

James Davy's anthem, which he had composed especially for this service, was sung during the Offertory, and it proved to be exactly the right length! How did he know?



Sunday, June 3.

After breakfast in our hotel (for which we had to queue – there were so many tourists staying there for the weekend!) our coach took us to Notre Dame Cathedral where we were to sing the main service at 11.30 am.

Richard warmed us up in the crypt and then we were led upstairs to the Quire where we sang an Introit as the cathedral Nave became packed with worshippers.





The choir and attendant parents were given the unusual privilege at the very end of the service of receiving communion at the hands of one of the priests.

And in the Sacristy afterwards, which was full of jewel-encrusted gold crosses and chalices, the Celebrant congratulated the choir on their singing and invited us back next year (or whenever we can manage it!).

Well done, Richard and James, and all singers and supporters!

We lingered in that vast cathedral to take photographs and to buy souvenirs from the bookshop, before our coach took some of us near the Arc de Triomphe, where there was a handy McDonalds!



And having been strengthened by *Hamburgers de France* and refreshed by *lait* shakes our coach took us to the Seine where we enjoyed a restful boat trip around the City – seeing so many sights – palaces, bridges and churches – including a small model of the Statue of Liberty (the full-size one in New York Harbor was a gift from the people of France).



Monday, June 4th: The choir was up early for their return coach drive to Blackburn – a 10-hour trip – where they were met by parents and friends who wanted to hear all about this amazing musical trip. **Pat Stuttard** wrote: 'It was a 'supa' weekend and one that will be remembered by us all for a very long time.' **Again, well done everyone, and so many thanks.**

FOR THE RECORD, the music sung during this tour was:

Notre Dame des Victoires: Service: Byrd 4-part Mass, *Laus Trinitati* (James Davy)

Recital: *Tantum ergo* (de Seveac) *Ubi Caritas* (Duruflé), *Rise up* (Willan), *The Lamb* (Tavener) and *O Sing Joyfully* (Batten).

Notre Dame Cathedral: Byrd 4-part Mass, *Ave Maria* (Elgar) *Laus Trinitati* (James Davy) and *Tantum ergo* (Vierne).

The **Vierne** was rehearsed in Notre Dame exactly 70 years after his sudden death. He died whilst giving his 1750th organ recital in Notre Dame. We also sang his motet on the Sunday morning, in tribute.

Elgar was born exactly 150 years ago on the Saturday. We sang his *Ave Maria* in rehearsal on the day, and on Sunday.

A town di-vid-ed

BBC Panorama programme debated

Reporter Simon Armstrong senses a vital step on a painful but much-needed path to integration

The Panorama programme shown on BBC 1 on 7 May - which featured Blackburn and focussed attention on the cathedral's pivotal role in the town - succeeded in eliciting strong opinions and reactions from all sections of the community.

The documentary, entitled '**Blackburn: Together but separate – a town divided,**' investigated the sensitive issue of racial division in the town.



The problems the town faces are obvious and undeniable but did the BBC succeed in painting a fair, accurate and constructive picture or might they in some way have contributed to the problem in a portrayal that was sensationalised and distorted?

This was the burning question as over 450 people crammed first into the Crypt and then the nave of the cathedral two weeks later to discuss the impact and implications of the programme.

The entire spectrum of the town's multi-cultural community came together to attend a repeat viewing of the documentary before enjoying the chance to express their opinions and pose questions to a panel of local personalities and individuals featured in the documentary.



After a brief introduction from the hosts, Anjum Anwar and Canon Chivers, local business-woman Margo Grimshaw confronted the issue of ulterior motive. "We have to be very careful because this was a television programme and they all have an agenda," she said.

Media sensationalism was a recurring concern and Dave Bacon, a Blackburn College tutor, who assisted the producers in their research added: "I'm afraid to say it was like watching a very slow train crash: we knew exactly the direction we were headed, it was just a matter of when we got there and how bad it would be."

Many felt that Panorama had failed to portray the town's division accurately but none could deny the division exists.

The debate soon developed into a discussion about the essence of the problem and what should be done to tackle it.



An emotional woman recounted the horrifying story of her daughter's rape at the hands of an Asian taxi driver. She laid blame at the feet of the authorities whom she felt had failed to act for fear of being branded racist.

With regards to the phenomenon of 'White Flight', a young Asian man replied with tangible frustration: "I feel Asian people are being blamed unfairly because we are not the ones taking our kids away and moving out of white areas."

But Mill Hill taxi driver, Ian Cunliffe, who played a prominent role in the documentary, was quick to highlight the dangers of blame, and said: "The overwhelming opinion has been 'it's not us, it's them that won't integrate' – whether I'm talking to a white person or an Asian person."

The programme's only glimmer of hope was offered by the harmonious meeting in the cathedral - at the behest of our own exChanging communities programme - of ten-year-old children from the predominately white, Christian St Francis C of E primary school, and almost exclusively Asian, Muslim St Michael with St John's C of E.



The children, free from pre-conceptions and adult prejudice, interacted with an ease that seems so elusive amongst the adult community.

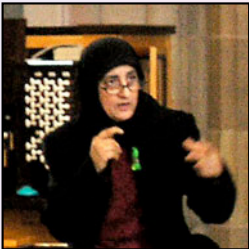
Indeed, racial education from a grass roots level was advocated by a number of speakers during the evening and Joan Sinnett spoke of an urgent need to dispense with faith schools. "If we are going to educate our children in separation, how are they going to live together when they grow up?" she said.

"I've got great grand-children and I want them to grow up in a happy, integrated society not a divided one and to me faith schools are divisive," she added.

The evening was remarkable for the breadth of opinion expressed and the calm, reflective manner in which views were aired. At one end of the spectrum, several members of the British National Party voiced their concerns. One man's political frustration was clear, as he interjected: "You suggest that we understand your country? Well I suggest you understand ours. You have ghettoised this town in your own fashion and have made it impossible for us to live together."



Conflicting opinions were also offered on the 'veil' issue that was brought to the forefront of UK politics by Blackburn's MP, **Jack Straw** last October, and **Anjum Anwar** addressed the issue of cultural difference by asserting: "I am not sure whether we are talking about integration or assimilation because assimilation is about giving up all your values and becoming someone else. Integration is about keeping your values but living elsewhere."



The programme itself labelled Blackburn as a town undergoing an identity crisis and Ms Anwar's comments struck a chord with the audience.

A young Asian student, contributing to this part of the debate, said: "The fear between us comes from what was missing in the programme and that was – on both the parts of the white and Asian communities – any sense of home."

Whether we are comfortable with it or not, the one thing we do share is our home: Blackburn. As one speaker put it, we have an animal instinct to want to live with our own and, extending the analogy he added: "Let elephants be elephants and giraffes be giraffes but we both go to the same watering hole to drink so why can't we live together in the jungle?"

It was an evening which recognised difference, allowed for open and honest debate, and was ultimately a celebration of democracy.

The divisions in the town are there for all to see and an easy target for television producers to make an example of. But for all its faults the documentary certainly succeeded in uniting the town in healthy debate. **As also it showcased the cathedral's superb community cohesion work.**



When the camera crews have disappeared and the media spotlight has died, it is left to the people of Blackburn to confront the problems it faces, and debates like this are another vital step on the long path to integration.

The Dean received this letter following that debate:

Dear Dean,

It was good to see you again last night, after such a long time. As ever, thank you for making us so welcome.

This is just a note to say a thank you to Father Chris and to Anjum for an important and well organised debate last night on the recent Panorama programme.



Whatever the motivations of the programme makers, they focussed only on division. I heard no mention of the fact that Asylum Seekers read poetry in the Cathedral on National Poetry Day 2004, nor of the Peace Concert the following May, in which **Just Poets** felt so privileged to participate.

To see such a turn-out from the public and to hear so much realism and common sense spoken about the perceived problems of a "divided town" was heartening indeed.

A public debate on such issues, at such a venue, could so easily have become confrontational and that it did not provides us with our greatest hope for the future.

As creative writing practitioners, **Just Poets** work both in faith schools and multi-faith schools across the North West, and there is no doubt that the close cross-cultural friendships we witness in primary schools have all but disintegrated by the second and third years of secondary school.

We feel it is important to examine the social attitudes and expectations that weaken the friendships between children of different faiths as they reach teenage years.

As part of that examination we try to employ our skills as writing facilitators to reveal commonality where there is perceived division, and to identify the aspects of humanity which we all share. We shall, of course, be dropping a line to Anjum with further details of courses we hope to deliver free of charge, if and when our current funding application is approved.

Meanwhile, again many thanks for the platform you provided last night and for reminding us that our faith in whatever God, is intended to unite Mankind not to divide.

Norman Warwick & Pam McKee
Just Poets & Write Now!
Darwen Writers' Group



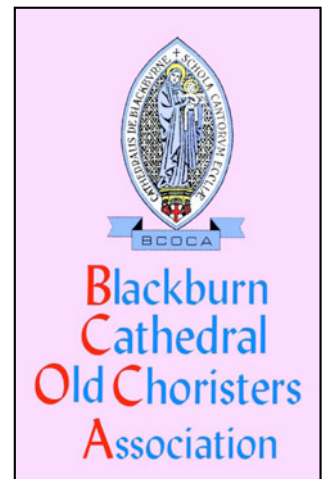
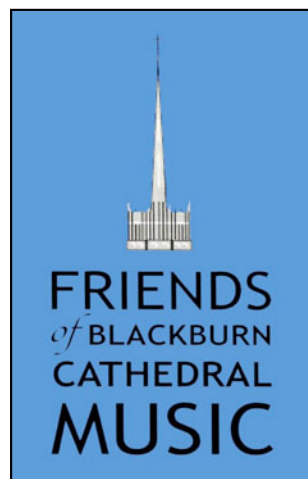
This edition of the newsletter is supported financially by



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




The Newsletter is also generously supported by



Last Night of the Proms!

and a special visit by the choir of Trinity Episcopal Church, Princeton, NJ, USA!

The final concert of the 2006/07 Season on June 23rd broke all records for enthusiasm, audience participation and high musical achievement.

Not only was the programme most ambitious, including a performance of Elgar's cello concerto, but our own cathedral choirs were joined by 60 members of the choir of Trinity Episcopal Church, Princeton, New Jersey (where your editor had the privilege of being Director of Music for 16 years).



The current energetic DoM is TOM WHITTEMORE who is a human dynamo. He initiated a scheme to enable two choral scholars from Eton to come to Princeton for their gap year (the current scholars won scholarships to the choirs of King's and St. John's Cambridge, starting this autumn!), and he was instrumental in getting the headquarters of the Royal School of Church Music in America (RSCM/A) to Westminster Choir College in Princeton ... AND so much more.

The choir arrived on the Friday and enjoyed a superb rehearsal in the cathedral that evening led by our own dynamic DoM, RICHARD TANNER.



The next morning was free, and generous hosts (who had been wonderfully organised by **Linda Bruce**) showed their guests some of the beautiful countryside around Blackburn.

A full rehearsal with all choirs plus a 42-piece orchestra took place in the afternoon, followed by a supper in the crypt, and then THE CONCERT.

There was the usual (and much appreciated) Reception in the North Transept when the Dean welcomed representatives of FRASER EAGLE, our principal sponsors for this season.



The audience was large and expectant. Here we see Philippa Hyde with her parents-in-law, John and Dr. Mary Tanner OBE, and former High Sheriff Mrs. Gail Stanley OBE, and Dr. John Stanley. (Two OBEs together!)



Union Jacks were sold @ £1 to the audience to wave at the appropriate moment when *Land of Hope and Glory* was sung. But that was at the end!



Our two distinguished soloists, were **Jeanette Ager**, who sang Elgar's *Sea Pictures* most movingly, and **Nicholas Trygstad** who played Elgar's Cello Concerto brilliantly from memory.

Richard Tanner conducted the concerto brilliantly, too.

This was a major feat of musicianship on his part, for Elgar demanded subtle changes of speed in almost every phrase, and so Richard had to anticipate what the soloist was about to do and ensure that the orchestra was with him.

Soloist, conductor and orchestra received well-deserved prolonged applause after a thrilling performance.



The massed choirs came into their own with more music by Elgar (who was born 150 years ago). Stirring anthems such as *Give unto the Lord*, *The Spirit of the Lord* and *Great is the Lord* were sung with fervour, accompanied gloriously by James Davy on the organ, and by the full orchestra.



The brass players seemed to enjoy it to the full as well!



It was a particularly happy chance that a violinist in the Northern Chamber Orchestra was Catherine Studman née Bessant, who is a former member of the YPC! Her sister, Rachel, is in the Girls' choir.

And so we came to the final two items: *Jerusalem*, and *Land of Hope and Glory*.



Everyone was on their feet for *Jerusalem* and sang lustily, but that was nothing in comparison with the enthusiasm when *Land of Hope and Glory* was sung.

The Dean and Mrs. Armstrong with representatives from FRASER EAGLE waved their Union Jacks as they sang, and so did almost everyone else. (Lacks of Jacks didn't inhibit Patriotic Passion!)



But we could hardly see the choirs for Union Jacks – at least, for Union Jacks, and the Stars and Stripes which our American guests waved. We did understand!



Of course, this final item was encored, so flags were waved again. And then we went home, full of pride and joy in our two countries, and for the thrill that this stirring music had brought to us all that evening.

At least, almost everyone went home, but the Virgers, as ever, stayed behind to dismantle the staging and move all the chairs to be ready for the Sunday services. They left at 1.00 am!



The next day, Sunday 24th June, Trinity choir, with our own Girls' Chamber choir and choirmen, sang the 10.30 am service. They were warmed up in the Song School by a member of Trinity choir who is a trained singer. That was fun!



Richard Tanner conducted the rehearsal upstairs. A great sight & sound!



Trinity Church has two especially talented organ scholars, Tom Sheehan (L) and Stephen Buzard. Both are only 18. So well did they know the music that they could accompany long passages from memory, so that they could watch the conductor more closely!



Canon Chivers preached a riveting sermon, copies of which were available for the congregation afterwards.

Blackburn's MP, Jack Straw, was a member of the congregation.

It was a glorious morning.



Richard and Tom had most generously invited your editor to conduct Howells' *Coll. Reg. Nunc Dimittis*, which JB appreciated more than he could ever express.

For in those precious five minutes his Trans-Atlantic professional life was expressed by the two major choirs of his career: Blackburn Cathedral and Trinity Church, Princeton. AND to cap it all, the soloist was DEREK CROMPTON, who was one of JB's very first new boys when he came to Blackburn in 1964.

Derek sang exquisitely, as ever, and the choirs responded marvellously – especially after JB had said to the basses: 'Sing the word GLORY as though you were a lion about to attack an antelope!'

They did!



Trinity Choir generously hosted lunch for the cathedral choirs in the crypt café as a thank-you for their hostmanship, and then there was Choral Evensong sung by the three choirs.

Tom conducted *Bairstow's Blessed City* most dynamically.

And so came to an end a most wonderful weekend of Trans-Atlantic music-making which blest not only the singers but also all those who listened to them.

Tom and his choir left the next morning (in the rain) to give a concert in Eton College Chapel with their choir, and then to sing another concert in St. John's College Chapel, Cambridge with the choir of Clare College, AND a service in St. Paul's Cathedral. Thank you all so much for being with us.

Perhaps it may be our turn next to visit you in the USA?

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO JAMES DAVY

our brilliant Associate Director of Music
who has just accepted the position of
Conductor of Blackburn Music Society.



James said: 'I greatly look forward to beginning my work with this fine choir, especially as it reached such high standards under its previous conductor, Dr. James Eastham. The choir was conducted some 80 years ago by the first Organist of Blackburn Cathedral, Dr. Herman Brearley, so I'm glad that the link between the town's largest choir and the cathedral has been re-established.'

James' debut is in King George's Hall on Sat. 10 Nov. Be there!

FAREWELL TO A TALENTED TRIO

On Thursday July 5th, Janet Stockwell (mother of Charlotte) organised a tea party, with the help of some other mothers, to thank the three girls who left this term.



Emma Pearson and Claire Marsden are off to York St John University (where they will join fellow former girl choristers Naomi Crewe and Abigail Northin) and Angela Hicks is off to St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh.

The girls gave the leavers a set of mugs each and the tea party was also an opportunity to thank Mrs Pearson and Mrs Bett who have provided drinks and snacks for the girls each Tuesday and Thursday for the past 8 years!

ALAN ROWNTREE'S FAREWELL

On 28 June the Chapter entertained a number of special guests including Alan Rowntree and his wife Liz

on the occasion of Alan's retirement as Bursar.

In a farewell speech after a hearty supper, the Dean paid tribute to Alan's conscientiousness, humility, self-effacing good humour and loyalty in 27 years of almost unpaid service to the cathedral.



Dean Christopher noted that the first hint of an appointment came in the minutes of the Cathedral's Finance and Property

Committee meeting under the chairmanship of Canon Williams on 26 September 1980. We have all been very fortunate in having the support of Alan Rowntree at the Cathedral.

He continues to function in a critical capacity as Secretary/Adviser to Blackburn Cathedral Developments (BCD) who are responsible to the Chapter for the building of Phase 1 of the Cathedral Masterplan (highlighted in the last edition).

NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FRIENDS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL MUSIC

We are delighted to announce that **RODNEY SWARBRICK**, former High Sheriff of Lancashire, has agreed to become the new Chairman of the FoBCM. He succeeds **Peter Abbott** who did a marvellous job for us, including the introduction of **colour** into the Newsletter, and who enabled our Cathedral's concerts to become known throughout the UK and beyond. We are so very grateful.



Rodney and his wife Diana have been stalwart supporters of our Cathedral Music for many years, and Diana is, of course, a member of the Cathedral Chapter.

WELCOME and THANK YOU!

Refugee Week Party Canon Michael Wedgeworth

The highlight of a host of events during Refugee Week was a party in the Cathedral Crypt for 150 asylum seekers and refugees and their families.

Traditional food was prepared in the Cathedral kitchen with the help of Levi Bibby and Farzaneh Salemi by people from no less than 26 countries. Music from Iran and Zimbabwe and traditional dress from Africa, and the Middle East added spice and colour.



Earlier in the day, **Canon Nick Sagovsky** of Westminster Abbey spoke on *The Asylum System: Fit for Purpose?* to an audience of 50, a mixture of professionals in the field and Cathedral supporters.

He then spent the best part of four hours talking to individuals at the party about their problems, and offering them, and indeed the Cathedral, ideas about what can be done



John East, our Asylum and Refugee Worker, and organiser of the event, said "It was just great to see so many people with huge anxieties relaxing and making new friends. We are grateful for the help given in befriending them by Cathedral people. The Crypt was an ideal venue.

We hope to have another party there soon. And we will certainly follow-up the ideas and contacts that Canon Sagovsky gave us"



Old Chorister, **CHRIS HUNWICK** (see page 4) will be appearing on the BBCTV **Antiques Roadshow** on a Sunday evening towards the **end of September** with **Michael Aspel**,

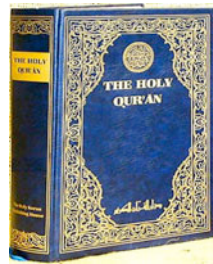
The programme was recorded from Alnwick Castle.

Check the Radio Times!

Chris is, of course, Archivist to the Duke of Northumberland and has countless treasures in his care. He told your editor that he will be showing, amongst other priceless artifacts, gloves belonging to Queen Elizabeth I and a lock of hair cut from the decapitated head of King Charles I.

Blackburn Mosque Open Day Feast

Around 60 members of the cathedral congregation joined hundreds of Christians and Muslims at the Jaame Mosque in Audley on 15 July for an open day and feast, together with a recitation from the Holy Qu'ran by the world's leading Qu'ranic reciter. The musical versatility of the recitation impressed everyone.

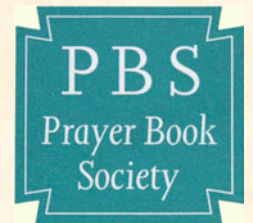


New friendships were made and old ones renewed as part of the ongoing bridge-building between communities in which the cathedral plays such a leading role.



Pictured here – against the backdrop of one of finest mosque domes in the UK – is Gregory Chivers, son of Canon & Mrs. Chris Chivers, with new Muslim friends. On 21 July some 11 mosques held an open day, exChange helping to staff and facilitate this.

Join the Prayer Book Society



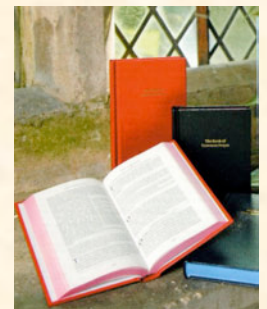
The Prayer Book Society

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Walton-le-Dale,
Preston PR5 4BQ
01772-821-676



Discover what's on at the Cathedral!
www.blackburncathedral.com

CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS!

Accommodation for this year's **Annual Reunion** on **6-7 October** cannot be in Whalley Abbey (although our Dinner will be there!)
Treasurer Gordon Fielding has found accommodation for six OCs at the Petre Arms – please phone him at once:
01565-652-691

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Three Peaks Challenge

The **Dean** will join BCOCA Chairman **Stewart Hopkinson** in a gruelling 26-mile hike up (and down) three Peaks on 18th August.

Some other stalwarts will join them.

They're doing it to raise money, not to stay healthy, and so they thoroughly deserve our financial support.

Please fill in the enclosed form with your promise of **MONEY!! Thanks.**

