

Blackburn Cathedral Newsletter

Music & More

February 2008

£3



ROBERT · BISHOP OF BLACKBURN
CONSECRATED THE COMPLETED
CATHEDRAL IN THE PRESENCE OF
H·R·H PRINCESS ALEXANDRA
ON THE 18th DAY OF NOVEMBER
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1977

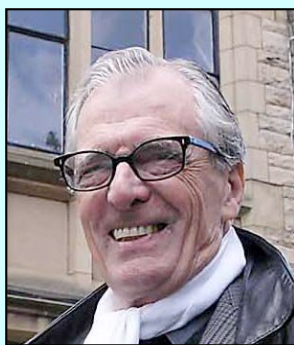
Lawrence Jackson · Provost Laurence King · Architect

30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS!

MADONNA OF THE BOULEVARD

by Canon Michael Taylor

Once upon a time there was a Sculptor whose name was **James Attwood** and he was very talented. When he was 58 he came from Manchester to work in our Cathedral. He was commissioned to restore some of our crumbling stonework.



One day – 15th June 1965 – our Sculptor was inspired by the sight of a young girl on the Boulevard with her friends on their way home from school. 'Surely she is the same age as Mary when the Archangel Gabriel visited her?' he thought. He discovered who her parents were and, after obtaining their permission, he arranged sittings to make preliminary sketches of this young lady.

Mr. Attwood was one of the most sought-after sculptors in Carrara marble, which comes from Tuscany in Italy; and so he chose a block of marble which was just the right size, and began to create his Madonna.

The result is what has come to be called **The Madonna of the Boulevard** – a small statue which is now on the windowsill above the North East choir steps.



It is an enchanting and very attractive statue – a real labour of love which the sculptor gifted to the Cathedral.

But for a time it lay forgotten in the chair store where I found it when I was Canon Sacrist. I cleaned it and placed it in its present position, and there it has remained ever since – a jewel of surpassing beauty for those who have eyes to see.

The Cathedral now has many girl choristers; perhaps our little Madonna could become their own special Patron Saint?

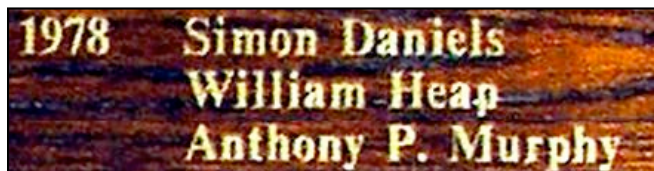
But who was the young girl who inspired this statue, and what was her name? We shall never know.

Research by Mr. Harold Thorber.

From OC Dr Simon Daniels in Newcastle upon Tyne

Simon drove all the way from Newcastle upon Tyne for our Cathedral Old Choristers' Annual Reunion in October, and all the way back the same evening!

I enjoyed my BCOCA visit and, bizarrely, on Tuesday afternoon I saw a patient I happen to know is from Blackburn, so I mentioned that I had been down at the weekend, and why. She asked if I knew **Craig Horrocks** and **Stuart Gibson**!! [Two of Simon's contemporaries in the Cathedral choir we've lost touch with. Ed]



It's a real thrill to revisit the cathedral and see the choir in such good health and in such good hands. I was particularly impressed by our choirmaster, **James Davy**.

I do a bit of undergraduate teaching and have had some training in giving feedback to students. The catch phrase is that feedback should be a 'sandwich' ... i.e. say something positive...then say what you really think & then finish with something positive again. I thought our choirmaster demonstrated this brilliantly.

The downside of visiting the cathedral is that it makes me feel like the footballer who used to play for a Premiership side, but knows that now he wouldn't even make a pub team.



Simon Daniels (R) with contemporary Iain Thompson

Hopefully if the BCOCA Reunion date continues to avoid clashing with the Great North Run, then I can make the trip on a regular basis.

Best wishes,

Simon

Terrific to hear from you, Simon, and to discover what you thought when you returned here. It was so good to see you again.

Our next Reunion is on 25-26 September 2008. Does that coincide with your Run?

JB

A FAREWELL and a WEDDING

On 18 October the staff from the cathedral and the diocese met in the crypt to bid farewell to **Chris Dobson**, our most excellent Catering Manager for the last 2½ years.

Over coffee the Dean expressed the gratitude of the Cathedral community for the transition Chris had accomplished in his time, changing both the menus and the ambience of the café in the crypt. 'Chris is a man of the soil', said the Dean and recounted the occasions when Chris had provided homegrown produce from his allotment for serving in the café.

There was a theological point here about wholeness and continuity, which any cathedral would be remiss to overlook.

We have all enjoyed the superb catering which Chris and his team provide both on the state occasions and more humbly at lunch every day in the crypt. Its reputation in the region is well-deserved and the Dean made the point that such a standard would continue.

The Dean also took the opportunity to wish **Jill Newsome** good luck for her marriage the following Saturday. Jill would be marrying **Neil Young** at the Cathedral. (Another happily home-grown wedding.)





Jill, (centre, with Chris and the Dean) who, with her sister Hillary, provides a wonderful service in the crypt – so welcoming and caring. Not only do they work efficiently but they also seem to have time for a kind word and a joke – so important as part of the hospitality of the Cathedral.

Christopher Armstrong

OC TOM HOLDEN

It is with sadness that we heard of the death of OC Tom Holden, who was a chorister with T. L. Duerden.

Joan Holden wrote: Tom had coped with prostate cancer for 13 years and he was unable to attend the Blackburn Old Choristers' Reunions, although we planned each year to see if he could manage it.'

Tom was a faithful member of our Old Choristers' Association and also attended the National Reunions of the Federation of OCs. The last time was in Canterbury in 2000, when Tom and Joan met up with our own Fred and Margaret Dewhurst.

Margaret said, 'They were a lovely couple, and we had such a good time with them at Canterbury.'

In 2004 Tom wrote to your editor from his home in Gillingham, Kent:

'My wife and I are enjoying your Newsletters so much and there seems to be more to read with each new issue. Even when my contemporaries are not mentioned the stories and information about music and events are so interesting. What exciting times are being provided by the Cathedral.'

Tom continued with his memories as a chorister 60 years ago: I seem to remember certain white mice appearing during Evensong on one occasion. Of course TLD wasn't in charge that night, Mr. Hoskins was! [He was organist of St. Peter's Church and helped out when Mr. Duerden couldn't be there, but he couldn't keep order! Ed]

I always felt that Peter Fielding and his brother Gordon were responsible for the Cathedral starting a Christmas Carol Service.

They went out carol singing door-to-door one year (probably 1942) and finished up knocking on the front door of Provost Kay.

They were invited in and Provost Kay's daughter played the piano, the boys sang carols and a jolly evening was had by all. Mr. Duerden was not too pleased to hear of these exploits and at a choir practice soon afterwards he more or less told us so, but he also told us that a Christmas Carol Service was proposed for future years



Chorister Tom Holden

Read more of Tom's memories of the cathedral choir in the October 2004 edition of this Newsletter: www.bertalot.org/

MoRe ChAnGeS

Do you remember what New Market Street looked like in 2006? It's the road opposite the cathedral by Barclay's flat green spire:–



This is what it looked like in 2007 when the old buildings had been demolished and work had started on the building of new shops and apartments:–



And this is what it will look like when this work is completed!



Suzanne Pickering (née Trudgill) writes:
Margo Grimshaw's Development

Colourful character, Margo Grimshaw brings this exclusive town centre development to Blackburn, comprising 79 superior quality apartments including 5 penthouses, 8 retail units targeted to ladies' fashions, a bar and restaurant, and a beauty spa.

This development, which is spread over 5 phases, is located in the centre of the town opposite the cathedral, with buyers already interested.





Memories of the Cathedral Choir 72 years ago

by former Senior Old Chorister

ALBERT OGDEN

John has asked me to write something about the time when I joined the cathedral choir in 1936 – he says it is part of history (not that I feel part of history) – but certainly 1936 was very different from 2008.

Before I joined the choir I have recollections of spending entire Sundays worshipping at the Cathedral – Matins, Sunday School and Evensong. We attended as a family – with my Mother and my two elder sisters; my Father was a Sidesman. When I got a little older Sung Eucharist replaced Matins and I gave up Sunday School.

For each attendance we walked in both directions from the Queen's Park area of the town, for there was no Sunday transport in those days.

The Parish Church had been made a Cathedral in 1926 and **Canon Sinker** was the Provost, but as far as I remember this made no difference to the services.

The organ was high up in a loft at the West end of the Nave (where the statue of *Christ the Worker* now is), and there were galleries the entire length of the North and South sides.



The noise, too, was far from dulcet; the mill workers wore clogs and the armies of workers thundered to and from their employ three times a day.



The cotton industry had just been through bad times, with a large unemployment problem. Despite this, Blackburn folk were warm and the inside of their homes shone like a new pin. My family had been through this stress but retained high ideals and hopes. *If a thing is worth doing, it was worth doing well. There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it ill begets any of us to talk about the rest of us. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.* Enthusiastic sloth was never an option.

With this background I was presented to **Dr. Herman Brearley** to be auditioned for the cathedral choir.

From what I remember, Dr. Brearley was a tallish man, with pince-nez specs, dark suit, winged collar, very old, a little stooping, but of a kindly disposition.

I had to sing a couple of verses of a hymn; I was questioned on my knowledge of the services – which of course I knew well – another bit of singing of a hymn, and that was that.

This all took place in the crypt (under the present Nave – the present chair store shows its cavernous aspect). This was the Choir Vestry and rehearsal venue.

I suppose the routine of singing Evensong during the week, with rehearsals after two of these weekly services was hard for an eight-year old, but I enjoyed singing and being among boys of like minds.

I think I was a little unsure of wearing a purple cassock as a probationer, and later a surplice when I became a chorister, but thought no more about it later on. My sister tells me that I wasn't keen on wearing a 'Pinny'.

I was small, and so with another small chorister we acted as attendants as the processional cross was carried on Feast Days.

At this time I was still at Junior School. My sisters and I attended St. Matthew's C of E School. My parents had helped to build this school, and so it was right that I should attend there.

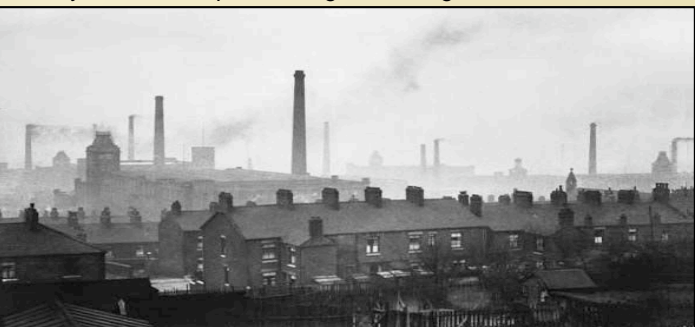
School finished at 4.0 pm, Evensong was at 4.30, and so



The Chancel, which rose up at the East end had a great stained glass window, which is now in the North Transept. The Choirstalls were dark with carved pew ends.

As a family we sat in the North Gallery (the pews had doors) and we looked down on the chancel. The choir seemed to me to be large – probably 24 boys and 16 men. The music soared up to us in the gallery and I remember that at Harvest time there was an enormous flower arrangement suspended above the choir which rotated as the choir sang! It had been made by Mr. Windsor of the Blackburn Parks Department.

This gloriously rich experience of colour, splendour, fragrance and the rich sound of the music was in contrast to the environment surrounding the cathedral. One could count at least 50 mill chimneys from the top of Revidge, belching forth their smoke.



this meant me running all the way from St. Matthew's in order to be on time – Withers Street, down Cicely, over the canal and railway, past **Dutton's Brewery**, across the Boulevard, up Church Street and so into the Cathedral. Why wasn't I out of breath? This happened twice a week – Cantoris alternating with Decani (i.e. there were 4 midweek Evensongs with half the boys at any one time.)



After Evensong there was half an hour's rehearsal. On Fridays the boys rehearsed from 7.00 pm for an hour, and then were joined by the men for another hour. Occasionally there was a rehearsal after a Sunday morning service. Yes, I did get tired, but we didn't have the distraction of television or even radio!

Our hymn book was *Ancient and Modern* and the psalms were sung from *The New Cathedral Psalter*. (What a lovely shock it was when TLD introduced the Oxford Psalter which used speech rhythm!) I seem to remember that we were not very good with psalms under Dr. Brearley – on rare occasions the pointing broke down. But when TLD succeeded him in 1939 he soon put that right.

We sang anthems on most Sunday evenings: *From the rising of the sun*, *How lovely are the Messengers* (Mendelssohn), *Wash me thoroughly* (S. S. Wesley), *Taste and see* (John Goss), *Almighty and everlasting God* (Gibbons). There was one boy, **Alan Donelan**, who frequently sang the solos; I thought he had an amazing voice.



NB Ernest 'Stan' Stancliffe, Peter Fielding and John Highton were with us for our October Reunion. This is living history!

When I joined the choir there was an assistant organist – a Miss Taylor, who taught at the C of E Central School which is where the Cathedral Offices now are. St. Mary's House in the Close (which is about to be knocked down) was where the Sunday School was held, and it was where classes for Science and Handicrafts were held on weekdays as part of the Central School.

Miss Coddington was the Superintendent of the Sunday School. She always brought her **Bedlington Terrier** with her which, when I was very young, I used to think it was a lamb – even the Lamb of God! We used to sing, *Hear the pennies dropping, count them one by one*, as the collection box was passed round. When TLD came to the cathedral, St. Mary's House became the Song School.



Christmas was especially memorable – not so much for the Christmas music (it was not until TLD came that we had the service of Nine Lessons and Carols), but for the Christmas party given by Provost Kay at the Provost's House on East Park Road. This was followed by a trip to the Pantomime at the Grand Theatre, where the whole of the boys' choir occupied the front row of the balcony.

The Grand Theatre was situated on the other side of Dandy Walk – the narrow lane which separated the cathedral grounds from the Grand Theatre and the Palace Cinema.



When the Grand Theatre closed down TLD acquired the grand piano for the Song School. (This has only very recently collapsed after 70 years of faithful hammering!)



Mr. Duerden playing the 'new' grand piano in 1942 in the Song School, which was in St. Mary's House.

Sermons seemed eternally long, and the choirboys occupied their time illuminating hymn books and Psalters. Although I spend my time now drawing and painting professionally, I plead not guilty to this!

I think that Dr. Brearley had musical interests outside the Cathedral Choir. The boys of the choir once sang a selection from *HMS Pinafore* in the Assembly Hall of King George's Hall. *We learned to polish up the handle of the big front door!*



When **Provost Kay** succeeded Provost Sinker the massive undertaking of enlarging the Cathedral began – but that is another story.

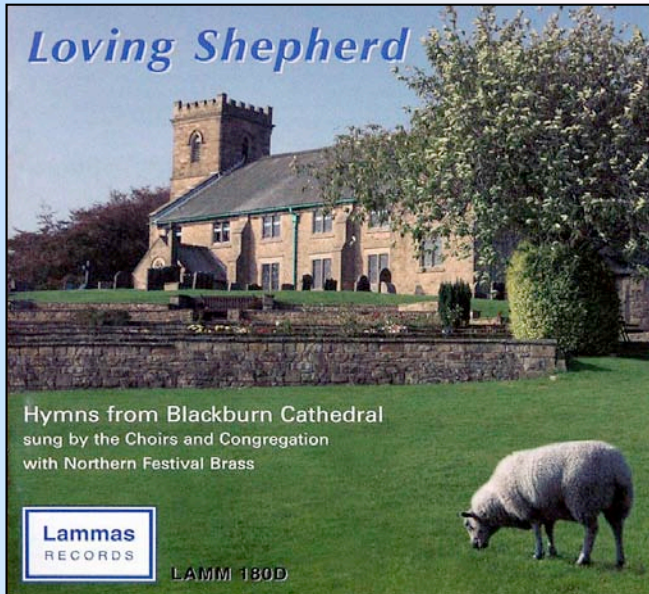
The Parish Church Cathedral was quite enclosed from the rest of the town. Shops stood where there is now open grass on Darwen Street: a Chemist (Timothy White's), a fish shop which also sold tripe – and Yates' Wine Bar whose manager was the Grandfather of **OC Michael Wilkinson** who died only a few years ago.

There was no access from the Cathedral to the Boulevard. Corporation Transport was mainly Electric Tram. There were very few cars, and milk was delivered by horse drawn milk floats. Refuse was collected by horse and cart.

Most people seemed to walk – unless you were a chorister who was singing at a mid-week Evensong, then you ran!

Albert: Thank you for sharing these memories of long ago when Blackburn was so very different. And it is becoming very different yet again right now. Look at all the open spaces near the town centre, which will shortly be filled with sparkling new apartments and shops. (See page 3.) We ourselves are living in historical times! Ed

Super Review
in the RSCM's worldwide magazine
Church Music Quarterly
of our
LOVING SHEPHERD CD



The Choirs and Congregation of Blackburn Cathedral / Northern Festival Brass / Greg Morris (organ) / Richard Tanner. Lammas LAMM 180D

This is a disc that includes repertoire that goes beyond 'standard' congregational hymns to include Vaughan Williams's *Let all the world*; Howells's *Hymn to St Cecilia*; and the same composer's setting of the *Jubilate* from his *Collegium Regale* service.

Many of the hymns are arranged by the Director, **Richard Tanner**, who has made arrangements for the BBC TV programme *Songs of Praise*. These are highly professional, often complex and, in a number of cases, the results might be described as, 'hymn-anthems'.

I found his gentle yet colourful adaptation of *Walking in the Garden* particularly appealing. In addition to **Greg Morris's** dexterous organ playing, several arrangements employ Northern Festival Brass to thrilling effect.

Other featured arrangers include **John Bertalot**, Organist Emeritus of Blackburn Cathedral; and **Ian Tracey** of Liverpool Cathedral. Dr Bertalot's no holds-barred arrangement of '*Amazing Grace*' begins with bluesy harmonies and ends with a fortissimo in which even the organ's Zimbelstern is heard; while Professor Tracey's setting of a well-known tune by Gibbons to the words '*Peace, perfect peace*' ends with an English cadence that will make your eyes water!

The first track on the disc, '*Loving Shepherd*', is **Mr Tanner's** own composition. It is an attractive and well-crafted piece in the 'school of Rutter' vein.

What makes this disc stand out from the other hymn compilations reviewed here is the sheer variety of textures, timbres, styles and moods: this is no mere sing-through of hymns with the occasional varied last verse.

It is not only the varieties of styles of hymn and the colourful arrangements that contribute to this, but also the distinctive characteristics of each of the various vocal ensembles who were involved in the recording and who are integral to the musical life of Blackburn Cathedral: the **Choir of Boys and Men**, the **Girls' Chamber Choir**, the **Girls' Choir**, the **Young People's Choir**, the **Renaissance Singers** and the **Children's Choir**. **Variety & quality – a splendid disc.**

Christopher Maxim

Copies available from our Cathedral Bookshop!

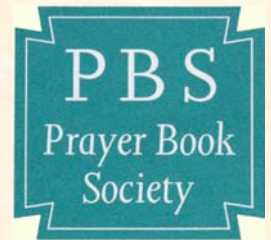
BIRTHRIGHTS . . .

Roast Beef
The Last Night of the Proms
Mother of Parliaments
The Book of Common Prayer

WE KEEP THE LATTER
TO THE FORE!

Will you join us?

Find out more from
Hon. Secretary,
Neil Inkley,
6 Knot Lane,
Walton-le-Dale,
Preston PR5 4BQ
01772-821-676



From former SOC BRYAN LAMB near Ely

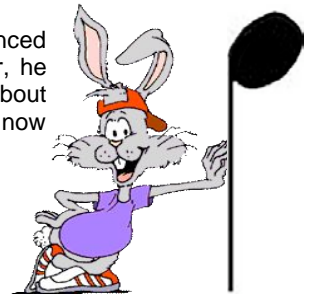
Dear John,

Thanks for the magazine. It goes from strength to strength. I loved the memory-loss story about shirts and ironing boards.

It reminded me of the story of the chap who, upon receiving his first free television licence decided that his name, Gerald (Gerry) Attrick was becoming an embarrassment and needed a deed poll change. Alan Zheimer wouldn't do, being just as bad, and anyway he would always forget to remember how to spell it. Then it dawned.

Being an experienced conversationalist and raconteur, he was always rabbiting on about something or other. He is now known as Mick C. Matosis.

Keep well.
 Yours ever,
Bryan



From CAMBRIDGE UNIVERISTY:

Olny smrat poelpe can raed tihs. I cdnuolt blveieig taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatrnd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtsiy, it deosn't mittaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihg is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rgh it pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot脾eling was ipmorant!! if you can raed tihs psas it on !!

Blackburn Music Society

Blackburn Music Society's new conductor made his stunning debut at a concert in the cathedral on 10th November. He is, of course, our very own **JAMES DAVY**.



James radiated colourful anticipation as the orchestra warmed up in the crypt.

The concert was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn who sat with **Lady Shuttleworth**, who is a strong supporter of our cathedral concerts.



This delightful concert, splendid choir and brilliant conductor should have attracted a capacity audience. Were you there?



Rarely have we seen a young conductor who was so energetically in charge of choir and orchestra. His lithe figure radiated confidence, his winning smile encouraged the Northern Chamber Orchestra and choir alike, and all the musicians sang and played exactly with his beat.

He mouthed the words of the choruses so that the singers knew that he knew every note of the music and willed them to give of their best.

And a very good best it was!

It was an all-Elgar programme – starting with six choral songs from the Bavarian Highlands, and ending with Elgar's moving cantata *The Music Makers*.



Our own **DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS** gave a spirited performance of the first movement of Elgar's Organ Sonata (which is fiendishly difficult) – displaying not only his own scintillating musical technique, but also the many-coloured stops on our world-class organ.



From OC EDDIE HOWORTH in the Isle of Wight

Hi John

Just a congratulatory note on yet another superb Newsletter. I don't know how you do it. So much news and wonderful photographs. Thank you for your continued assurance of your prayerful support. It is very kind, and very much appreciated.

I had another short spell in hospital in May, but since then I seem to be O.K. (Only the good die young!!)

I'm sorry I couldn't attend the Reunion this year, but I've spoken to **Allan Holden** and **Eric Bancroft** who have brought me up to date.

It would be nice to have a directory of Old Choristers, as I have some photographs I would like to send to **Gordon Shaw**, but I don't know his address. Maybe someone would take that task on for you?

Hope you keep well yourself, and I look forward to seeing you sooner rather than later.

Very Best wishes and thanks

Eddie Howorth



1945	Allan D. Holden
1946	Gordon Fielding Ralph N. Robinson
1947	Walter Duxbury Edward J. Howorth

Eddie, how great to hear from you again. We remember with much joy your coming to the 2004 Reunion, and are so happy that your health is improving.

It's good to hear that you have some archive photos. PETER HEALD is compiling our BCOCA archives right now, and he'd be delighted to receive your irreplaceable photos. His address: 58 The Brook, Sutton-on-the-Isle, ELY, CB6 2QQ. Ed

An Unforgettable Day

Wednesday, 7th November was a day your editor will ever remember with the greatest pride and joy. Pride: because the Guild of Church Musicians was to award me an honorary Fellowship at a special service in Westminster Cathedral – and Joy: because **Derek & Marilyn Crompton** were coming to London with me, where we would meet my London and Reigate cousins who would also be coming to the ceremony.



There's nothing like travelling First Class – especially when a free cooked breakfast is available.

Derek and Marilyn are two of my longest-term friends in Blackburn – for Derek joined the cathedral choir as a boy the year after I arrived, way back in 1964!

In the Sacristy of Westminster Cathedral before the service there were many joyful reunions with colleagues – **Dr. Alan**



Thurlow (in his Lambeth doctorate robes) who was my musical host at Chichester Cathedral in the summer, greeted **Dr. Michael Nicholas**, who was my successor at St. Matthew's Northampton in 1964, and who later became Director of Music of Norwich Cathedral.

There were many other Great and Good there, including the **Dean** of Peterborough, Canon **Anthony Caesar** CVO – who is a former Chaplain to The Queen, three **Cathedral Directors of Music** and **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, who were also to receive honorary Fellowships at the hand of the Cardinal.

Needless to say, I took photographs (subtly) during the awards ceremonies and sent copies to my fellow Fellows. One of them, **David Gedge**, who, with his wife **Hazel** has just completed 40 years as DoM of Brecon Cathedral, wrote a thank-you letter to me, in which he said: *"How extraordinarily kind of you to send the*

photograph of Hazel and me with the Cardinal Archbishop.

It was then that I discovered that he and my RC Priest Uncle (brother of my Anglican Priest Father!) had been fellow curates.

It was a truly magical occasion.'



The secretary of the Guild, **John Ewington** OBE, read out our CVs in a loud voice before each person went forward, and suggested that applause would be in order!

JB had the privilege of sitting in the front row of 'Awardees' next to Archbishop Tutu, from where I had a great view of the ceremony.

When **Archbishop Tutu** received his award, the Cardinal didn't shake hands with him, as he had with the rest of us, he *embraced* him! Then the archbishop addressed us:



The Warden of the Guild, the Very Revd. Dr. Richard Fenwick with Dr. Mary Archer, the Guild's President.

He said that he owed so much to former Archbishop of Canterbury **Robert Runcie**, for when the South African government threatened to remove his passport (because he was speaking out so effectively against Apartheid) Dr. Runcie made him his personal emissary to the Pope! So South Africa had second thoughts!

After the service we gathered once more in the large Sacristy and many photos were taken – national press photographers were there in force, and many of our own cameras became red hot.



2008's Awards of hon. Fellowships will be made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Canterbury Cathedral – and one of the new Fellows will be our own **RICHARD TANNER** – so thoroughly well deserved!

From OC GRENVILLE ROBINSON in California

My Dear John,

It is with some rather dreadful mortification that I pen this message to you. I now live in the City of Corona in Southern California, not far away from the site of our recent bout of destructive wildfires.



Teri (my wife) and I have recently embarked upon a new business venture running our own company. We provide doctors with an out-sourcing option for their insurance billing. It is still very early days, but we are both confident that our venture will be a success. As you know, health-care is an enormous business here in the US, and seems set to grow even more as we "baby-boomers" age!!

I have just spent a wonderful hour browsing your website and was delighted to find many familiar names and faces ... some a little more whiskery and craggy, others filled out in the bloom of a successful mid-life.

I have commended each and every one to my thoughts and prayers.



'Unwhiskery' choristers in 1965: Top: Phil Wilson, now a whiskey bass, Bottom: David Robinson & Gren Robinson. (No relation!)

Teri and I have found a wonderful Episcopal Church, and again I find myself attending a weekly choir practice and putting on my robes for a service each Sunday.

I write also with a small request. I have been trying to obtain a copy of the record the old Recital Choir of the Cathedral made in the early 70's. I cannot remember much of its content only the final track, which was Colin Mawby's setting of Psalm 150. Perhaps you can point me to a location or a person who may be able to sell me a copy or copy it to a CD for me. Feel free to share my email address with all or any who can help.

Good wishes to you, and to all.

Gren Robinson

Can anyone help Gren with this? His e mail is GrenRobinson1@aol.com

From Mrs. MARGARET SIMPSON in Hampshire

Margaret's husband, Rennie, was Precentor at Blackburn many years ago – during TLD's time – and later became Succentor at Westminster Abbey before he was Archidiaconised.



Dear John,

I did so enjoy reading the Blackburn Newsletter last week, along with the Prayer Book Society's Advent Quarterly. What an energetic, enterprising group you all are. It makes me feel so lazy – sitting in the Nursing Home where I'm improving after a stroke.

An amendment to your excellent November Newsletter: **Bryan Lamb** refers to friendships formed 50 years ago. It was 58 years since Rennie married Bryan and his wife, Pat, in April 1949.

I have very vivid memories of a snowstorm on Easter Monday in 1950, and drinking coffee from thermos flasks after Rennie and I had been on a walk with the Cathedral Youth Club.

Suddenly **Bryan, Ralph and Tony Robinson, Michael Wilkinson and David Robinson** (later to become Archdeacon of Lancaster) burst into *Brightly dawns our wedding day*, from the *Mikado*. I can hear them even now.

Best wishes
and much gratitude,
Margaret Simpson.



A PS to Margaret's letter from OC PETER HEALD in Ely:

How nice to hear from 'Mrs Simpson', as we knew her as choristers – tea with her, after Catechism with Rennie on Sunday afternoons in St. Mary's House, where eventually you lived for a number of years.

I last met her at Westminster Abbey on the RSCM course in August 1951, with **George Woodhouse, Tony Robinson and John Sutcliffe**, where she read our tea leaves and correctly predicted my less-than-encouraging 'O' Level results. Lovely lady.

From
**ANDREW
SEIVEWRIGHT**

in Keswick
former Director of Music of
Carlisle Cathedral



Dear John,

Steve Holmes (one of your Blackburn Old Choristers) and his fiancée, **Mandy Harper**, came to see me after morning service at Grasmere Parish Church (where I'm organist) about their forthcoming wedding here on May 10th. What a delightful couple they are!



Steve proudly brought your November Newsletter with their picture [page 20]. I was able to say that, as a former Cathedral Organist, I had already seen it!

Steve also pointed out that he was a contemporary chorister at Blackburn with **Ivor Bolton**, which impressed me greatly, as I saw Ivor conducting *Opera 80* some years ago, and thought him superb.

I do congratulate you on the Newsletter, which is a standard-setter, probably impossible to follow.

All good wishes,
Andrew



WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHOIRMAN

KARL BRIDGE, alto, is a music teacher from Blackpool.

His first service with us was the 30th Anniversary Eucharist on Sunday 18th November. He only joined the choir two days before and his singing has already made a difference.

Welcome!

Yet Another Amazing Weekend

On Sunday, 18th November, Blackburn Cathedral celebrated the 30th anniversary of its final Consecration. (See front cover)

There was a Celebration Dinner on the Saturday evening – but that afternoon there was a unique service in the Jesus Chapel:

Canon **Chris** and **Mary Chivers'** youngest son, **Jonathan**, was baptized by his **Grandfather Ernie Chivers**, and then Chris's Parents, **Ernie and Margaret**, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary by renewing their Wedding Vows – before their son!

And after that the **Dean** celebrated communion for us all.

It was an amazing experience to be there.



Chris, Greg, Dominic and Mary Chivers with Jonathan Joseph before the service.



Jonathan's Baptism by his Grandfather in the South Transept

The Renewing of Chris's Parents' Wedding Vows in the Jesus Chapel, with Chris's sister holding Margaret's bouquet. And after the service there was a lavish party in the Chivers' home.



Enjoying coffee with the Dean and James Davy were Jonathan's Godfather, Ashley Grote and his wife Helen. Ashley, who is 'Number 3' Organist at Westminster Abbey,

had just been appointed Assistant Director of Music of Gloucester Cathedral.

However he had to dash back to the Abbey that night, for he would be playing the organ for **The Queen and Prince Philip's** Diamond Wedding Anniversary two days' later.

This gave us yet another link with the Abbey, for the Dean, **John Hall** who took the Diamond Wedding service, was a Residiary Canon of Blackburn Cathedral when **Dean Frayne** was here.



At that Abbey service, which was televised live, there was a great close-up of Blackburn's MP, the Rt. Hon. **Jack Straw**, who is now Lord Chancellor. He sang the National Anthem lustily.

Also among The Queen's distinguished guests were our **Lord Lieutenant** and **Lady Shuttleworth**, who had been with us the day before, AND the day before that.)

And so, back to 'the day before that', Saturday evening, 17th November, when the Cathedral hosted a super 30th Anniversary sit-down dinner in the North Transept.

Guests gathered in the South Transept for the usual compulsory drinks. Among them were several cathedral folk who had been at the 1977 Consecration service:



L-R: your editor (who had conducted the choir 30 years ago and was MC-ing the dinner that night – thus the mike), **Canon Michael Taylor**, **Sheila Walker**, whose husband **John** had been Chapter Clerk, **Ruth Taylor** and **Joan Banks** MBE, whose husband **Keith** was a churchwarden and whose sons sang in the 1977 choir.



1977

*Exactly 30 years ago: Presentations to Princess Alexandra in the Jesus Chapel after the Consecration Service: **John & Sheila Walker**, **Canon Michael Taylor** and **Virger Edward Keen** who later became a Verger at Winchester Cathedral.*



Other distinguished guests, in addition to the **Lord Lieutenant** and **Lady Shuttleworth**, included the **Dean of Canterbury**, the Very Reverend **Robert Willis**, who was to preach at the 10.30 Festival service the next day, and also **Faith Jackson**, widow of Provost Jackson. Faith was, as ever, in sparkling form.



Head Chorister **Sarah Chew** sang the Grace, and after the Dean had welcomed us, we all tucked in to a splendid dinner for which our former chief chef, **Chris Dobson**, had returned to help us.



Bishop Nicholas queued up for the main course with our Guest Speaker, **Canon Glyn Webster**, from York Minster,

The younger generation was represented by some very special guests who were presented with prizes, awarded by **exChange**, for their outstanding courage, example and contribution to the life of our Borough and beyond



Canon Chivers and Ms **Anjum Anwar MBE**, proclaimed the achievements of each prizewinner – all of whom were greeted with appreciative applause as they received their silver salvers from the hands of **Bishop Nicholas**, **Lord Shuttleworth**, **Dean David Frayne** and **Farouk Bokhari** of *Helping Hands Worldwide*, who were co-sponsors of the prizes.

and **Lady Shuttleworth** chatted with **Dean David** and **Liz Frayne**.



A very special guest was **Dorothy Green**, who is in her mid 90s and whose husband, **Fred**, was Churchwarden here for over 20 years.



But the evening was not over yet!



There was much happy conversation, and **Canon David Galilee** was, as ever, the life and soul of the party, with **David Thornton** and **Karen Brooke**.

It was very good to see the entire **Hunwick Family** there, including OC **Chris** from Alnwick and his wife **Geraldine**.

Phil Hunwick took these two photos with his very special camera!



Our guest speaker, **Canon Glyn Webster** (see photo p. 11) who hails from Darwin, regaled us with hilarious incidents from his career. 'Bishop Claxton wrote me a letter to tell me that I had been accepted for ordination training. He wrote "*I hope you will take this news with joy and humility!*"'

But he also inspired us by his message of encouragement for the work that Blackburn Cathedral is doing in the diocese and beyond.

It was a very good evening – but the Virgers, who cleared up afterwards, didn't get home until well after midnight.

There were three special events the next day, Sunday 18th November.

FIRST: A Festal Eucharist celebrating the 30th Anniversary of our Final Consecration. (See front cover)

Before the service began we had to record the unique sight of three Deans in a row: **David Frayne**, former Dean of Blackburn, **Christopher Armstrong**, our present Dean and **Robert Willis**, Dean of Canterbury, who was to be our guest preacher.



Bishop Nicholas also looked very splendid in the gold, blue and scarlet vestments which **John Hayward** had designed for us 42 years ago.



The choir was in top form, conducted by our acting Director of Music, **James Davy**. They sang Mozart's *Missa Brevis* in D, and were accompanied by a fine string quartet, with **David Scott-Thomas** at our two organs. (One at a time!)



Our preacher, the **Very Reverend Robert Willis**, spoke superbly without notes and was listened to with the closest attention by everyone.

He said: *'What a pleasure it is to share the exuberance of your celebrations during this important weekend!*

Canterbury, the Mother Diocese from which Blackburn Diocese sprang, sends its greetings to all in this Cathedral today...

Our gathering around Bishop Nicholas is an expression of the spirit of unity in this Diocese...

The beauty of this place encourages us in our worship this morning. but even if there were no building here, we would still catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven when we look at each other.'

He went on to describe how, when he was Vicar of Sherborne, **John Hayward** had drawn, in front of him and his committee, his design for the new West window which would grace that Abbey. *'I can see now from where John got his inspiration: it is from your own John Hayward window in the South Transept of this Cathedral!'* (See p 22)

*Your Lantern Tower, filled with beautiful stained glass, shines out the message to Borough and Diocese: **You are welcome!***

The Bishop celebrated, the people sang, and for one of the communion anthems James Davy had chosen Dr. Herman Brearley's setting of *God be in my head*. Dr. Brearley was, of course, the Organist of Blackburn Parish Church when it became a Cathedral 81 years ago.

And after that there was a party in the North Transept!



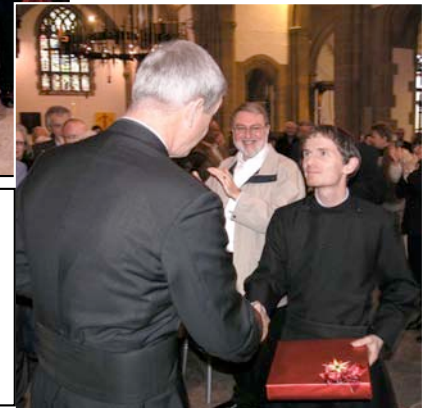
The party, hosted by the *Friends of Blackburn Cathedral*, was chaired by **Judge Jeremy Duerden**, who made a delightful speech before cutting the Celebration Cake.

There was enough for everyone, with '7 baskets left over'!



The **Bishop** thanked the Friends for their hospitality and for all that they do to help the work and mission of the Cathedral. And then the **Dean** thanked the Virgers, without whose dedicated work nothing we attempted here would be possible.

Dean's Virger, **Mark Pickering**, accepting a box of delicious chocolates from the Dean.



And that brought to a most happy conclusion the morning's Celebrations!

The **SECOND** special event that day was seen by few, but heard by many.

Churchwarden, Old Chorister and member of the Cathedral Chapter, **GARY WIGNALL**, celebrated his half century of bell-ringing on that significant Sunday afternoon.

He said, *'We rang a quarter peal, led by our Ringing Master Ian Smith, to celebrate my 50 years of membership of the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers.'*

Heartiest congratulations, Gary, with loads of thanks and admiration from the entire cathedral community.

If this photograph is anything to go by, Gary has certainly made his mark in our cathedral ringing chamber!



And the **THIRD** special event that Sunday was a service to celebrate Marriage, which would also commemorate The Queen's and Prince Philip's Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

It was a glittering occasion not only because of the presence of the **Lord Lieutenant and Lady Shuttleworth**, but also of High Sheriffs and their ladies as well as many other distinguished guests.

But perhaps the most significant guests were couples from the Diocese who had come to celebrate, and give thanks for their own marriages. One couple told me afterwards how much it had meant to them to be there.

But **Mark Pickering** averted a crisis when, before the service, he found someone sitting near the front who seemed drugged and was armed.

Mark called the police, who quickly and quietly resolved the situation.



Few were aware of the drama being enacted near the front of the Nave, for the cathedral was a-buzz with happy conversation as friends and colleagues greeted one another in anticipation of the special service which was to come.



Looking resplendent in his High Sheriff's uniform, in company with his fellow High Sheriffs, was our own **Rodney Swarbrick CBE**, who is the lively and efficient chairman of the *Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music*.

And sitting with him was, of course, **Diana Swarbrick**, who is not only a member of the Cathedral Chapter, but also another strong supporter of all that we do at the cathedral.

Similarly, **Judge Brian Duckworth**, who is Chairman of the Blackburn Branch of the **Prayer Book Society** and also a stalwart supporter of the Cathedral's ministry, was seen chatting to a number of his friends.



It was a particular joy to welcome three young ushers from St. Wilfrid's School who, by their happy demeanor, added much to the grace and friendliness of that afternoon.



L-R: Shona McGinn, James Roxburgh and Ashley Toth

The service began when we all stood for the entrance of the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Shuttleworth, who were led by the Dean.



How fortunate we are to have their active support and encouragement. Lady Shuttleworth is, of course, Chairman of the Cathedral Chapter.

The format of the service was simple, but most effective.

The choir sang as Introit Sir William McKie's *We wait for thy loving kindness, O God*, which he had composed for The Royal Wedding 60 years ago. (Your editor can remember it well – not only listening to it on the radio, but also because one of his professors at the Royal College of Music was to be Dr. Osborne Peasgood, sub-organist of the Abbey, who played the organ for

that service, and also, later, for the Coronation!)

Our own soloist was tenor **Andy Jump**, whose singing added considerably to the beauty of the performance.

Then there followed a quasi triple-decker sandwich of **readings** ...



Geraldine Armstrong, who married the Dean in 1975, reading a poem by *Hermione Roff*, who married Canon John Roff in 1972.

Lord Shuttleworth reading a letter from *The Queen* in response to the greetings he sent to her from us all.



... and **hymns** which the large congregation sang lustily,



...and **interviews** with carefully chosen couples of all ages – engaged, newly married with young children, long-time married, divorced and widowed.

This was done extraordinarily well, thanks to the pastoral leading of **Canon John Roff**, who put couples at their ease in front of such a large congregation, enabling them to share, briefly, some of their personal joys and sorrows.

It was especially moving to hear one member of our congregation tell us courageously about the pain of her divorce – although now she has happily remarried.

At the end of the service Dean blessed us, and we sang two verses of the National Anthem with patriotic fervour.

And afterwards there was yet another party in the North Transept. Whatta Weekend!



An Astonishing Morning



On Saturday morning 24th November our versatile North Transept was filled to overflowing with six choirs and a capacity audience for the first ever public concert of our **MUSIC OUTREACH PROJECT**. There wasn't even standing room!

This exciting scheme, sponsored by the government and supported by the Cathedral and Borough, was launched to improve the teaching of music in schools. Judging by this first concert, it is already a great success.

The singers included three junior school choirs, our own Lantern Voices, our Cathedral choristers and the Blackburn People's Choir. The audience was made up largely of the parents and teachers of the young singers. They clearly enjoyed every minute.



Some of our cathedral choristers awaiting their turn to sing



The programme was MC-ed by our ebullient **Canon Andrew Hindley** who introduced to the enthusiastic audience **Mr. Peter Jelley**, a member of our Cathedral Chapter, who is Managing Coordinator of the project,

And then he introduced **James Davy**, who was to conduct the cathedral choristers.

(James was working very hard indeed as our Acting Director of Music. See next page!)



The conductors of the visiting choirs were ebullience personified: **Jeff Borradaile** and **Joy Fielding** entranced the children with their lively, joyful approach to singing – it was amazing and it was infectious!

What a great start to a great scheme!

We can't wait to see how eagerly the children learn to read music by these fine teachers. As a start, clapping rhythm is the greatest fun.



Cinq Méditations sur L'Apocalypse

Those of us who had the privilege of hearing **JAMES DAVY** play Jean Langlais' *Five Meditations on the Apocalypse* on Sunday evening, 25th November, will never be quite the same again.

The cathedral was darkened for this performance – for it was a dark work, and Langlais was blind. He conceived it in the dark and we heard it in the dark.



The only lights were on the ceiling, some candles, and the light over the organ console. We could not even see the soloist, for he was hidden from our view.

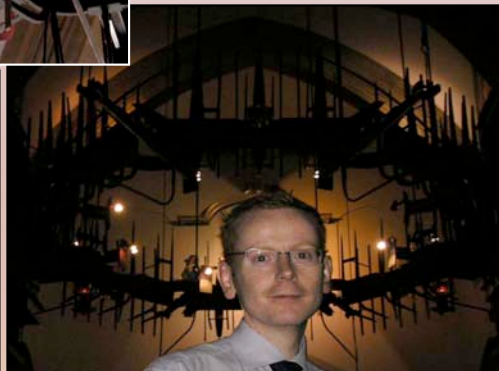
Langlais wrote this work when he was recovering from a heart attack. He read, and re-read the Book of Revelation, which has many dark passages: **The angel blew his trumpet and was given a key to the bottomless pit, and the sun was darkened with the smoke that arose from the pit. Locusts were allowed to torture people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads...**

James brought Langlais' visionary music awesomely to life: it was mysterious, ethereal, unsettling and terrifying. From the very first note we were immediately transported in mind to Langlais' church in Paris, *Ste Clothilde*. Our organ produced sounds which we have never heard before, and yet they were surely exactly what Langlais intended.

The combination of such music in such a setting made even familiar parts of our cathedral seem threatening.

All credit to James for giving us such an experience when he was so extraordinarily busy with his duties as acting Director of Music – taking practices every day from early morning to late at night, plus his many administrative duties.

His deeply committed playing was a spiritual as well as a musical experience for us all. Thank you, James



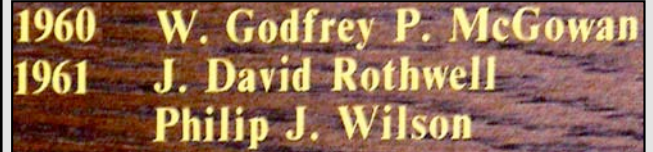
OC GODFREY MCGOWAN

We were distressed by the severe illness which OC Godfrey McGowan had been bearing since the summer – he had bone cancer. His rapid deterioration during his last few months grieved us all.



He was a Chorister and Prefect along with **Phil Wilson** and **David Rothwell** during the last few years of Mr. Duerden's time as Cathedral Organist.

Very faithful he was then, and such faithfulness and dedication were to prove a hallmark of his whole life.



I first met him when I came to Blackburn Cathedral way back in 1964 – he was a loyal and enthusiastic young choirman then, and his enthusiasm for everything at the cathedral continued during the following 43 years.

How often we have seen him as an usher for services – handing out books and generally welcoming everyone with his attractive voice and gentle smile.

In recent years he often helped us to 'envelope' the cathedral Newsletters – sending them to over 100 Old Choristers all over the world.



He looked so well last June when he came to **John Marr's** cookery evening at the cathedral. There again, he made himself so helpful, and he clearly shared **Betty Parkinson's** delight in her prize cauliflower!

He was a gifted linguist and teacher, and the model railway in his home was his pride and joy.

It was a shock, therefore, to see him at the cathedral once more in September when he made the supreme effort to come to Joan Hunwick's funeral, for he had lost so much weight – and yet his indomitable spirit was still strong. He even made the effort to stand up when I talked with him – that was heart-rending. And yet he could still smile.

John Marr said that his passing was peaceful; and for this we must be thankful.

May his sister Mary be comforted by the number of letters she will have received for he was, for all of us, a most special friend whom we shall miss greatly. JB

Bishop Alan Chesters wrote:

Godfrey has been much in our prayers for I was shocked by how ill he looked when I met him at Joan's funeral service. I was therefore not surprised to receive this sad news of his death.

Blackburn Cathedral has lost a faithful member whom it was always a pleasure to meet.

+Alan C.

Old Choristers formed the choir for Godfrey's funeral in the Cathedral on 29 November, and fellow Cathedral ushers and many friends and more Old Choristers, led by SOC Heather Starkie, were in the congregation. David Scott-Thomas played extracts from Elgar's *Gerontius* and Verdi's *Requiem* before the service which was led so graciously by the Dean, with prayers led by Canon Hindley. Several members of the congregation were in tears as Godfrey's body was carried out of the Cathedral for burial at Pleasington.

He was an exceptional person who enriched many lives. The Dean said of him, 'He was an Icon of Christ'. It was a privilege to have known him.

More about Godfrey on pages 17 & 20

The Wedding of Mark Pickering and Suzanne Trudgill was a most joyful occasion

The wedding of Dean's Virger **Mark Pickering** and former Canons' Virger **Suzanne Trudgill** on 27th October, was taken joyfully by the **Dean**. The choir was enthusiastically made up of singers from all our choirs conducted by **James Davy**, with **David Scott-Thomas** at the organ.

The Bride walked in to Charpentier's *Te Deum*, and **Canon Chivers** read a poem written especially for our cathedral couple by the **Rev. Harry Wiggett** from Cape Town, who was our guest preacher last Holy Week.

Suzanne's Mother, **Lynne**, who is not only our Cathedral Secretary but is also a Lay Reader, read the lesson from St. John: *The Wedding at Cana*, and **Canon Hindley** led the prayers.

During the signing of the Register, the choir sang Schubert's *Ave Maria*
Franck's *Panis Angelicus*, and Rutter's *The Lord Bless you*.

The happy couple walked out to the sparkling strains of the Widor *Toccata*, and they honeymooned in the Haythornwhites' flat in Nice. How idyllic can you get?



Photo: Shaun Gregory Photography

We welcome our new Virger **SIBU JOSE**

(Pronounced **See-boo Jose** – rhymes with 'dose')

Sibu came to us from Kerala in South India where he taught mathematics. He only arrived in Blackburn in December 2006 with his wife **Laiby** who is a nurse, but found that his teaching qualifications were not accepted in this country.

So he worked for some time in the Town Hall and did voluntary work for the British Heart Foundation.

He and Laiby have four children – the last two being twins who were born just as he took up his new post at the Cathedral

It is a particular joy to welcome Sibu, for he has already proved himself to be efficient and helpful to all who come into our Cathedral. His gracious demeanor communicates peace to everyone to whom he ministers. **Sibu, WELCOME!**



Godfrey McGowan: a personal tribute

by cathedral choirman

Andrew Orr ➔

I'm sure Godfrey McGowan's many friends and acquaintances will join me in saying how deeply saddened we were to learn of his recent, untimely death.

I got to know Godfrey soon after arriving in Blackburn almost 5 years ago and, although the obvious age difference might have made us seem unlikely companions, our shared Ulster heritage as well as mutual interests in church music and Irish Sea passenger shipping meant that we had much in common and soon became close friends.

Despite being 'semi retired' due to ill health by the time I knew him, Godfrey always seemed to be on the go, discharging duties as one of the cathedral's stewards and welcomers and working in the Café in the Crypt as well as



undertaking work for the probation service, training to be a guard for a local steam railway preservation society and still managing to find the time to teach languages (his first love), part-time.

He loved to spend days off visiting other towns and cities in the region to look at things of interest to him, and I sometimes accompanied him on jaunts to Liverpool or Manchester and even as far afield as Douglas, Isle of Man on one of the last day excursions from Fleetwood, although I drew the line at a proposed day trip by train to Barrow-in-Furness just to see a maritime museum! More often though, we would just meet up for a chat and put the world to rights over a G&T or two.

Those who engaged Godfrey in conversation might not always have known what they were letting themselves in for, for behind the shy and retiring façade lay a razor sharp intellect and shrewd judge of character.

He loved to play the part of the 'old school' school master, rarely crossing the threshold of his house without a jacket and tie, and seldom referring to even some of his closest friends by their first names.

Yet his impish, mischievous sense of humour was always in evidence behind his feigned naivety, often gently mocking but never unkind. He delighted in mimicking the Ulster dialect so successfully that he could pass himself off as a local on his regular trips to that province, and I lost count of the number of times that I answered the phone, only to be bombarded with a string of 6 or 7 questions in fluent French before managing to interrupt him for long enough to attempt an answer to question 1.

Godfrey never liked to be centre-stage, neither wanting to make a fuss or be made a fuss of and it was typical of him that, when faced with his final illness he made light of it – quipping that at least he now had time to read two newspapers per day. His passing has deprived the cathedral community of one of its more colourful characters and his loss will be keenly felt, not least by his surviving sister and her family circle to whom we offer our deepest sympathy.

YET ANOTHER WEEKEND PACKED WITH SINGING!

On Saturday evening, December 1, eleven members of our talented Young People's Choir gave a Christmas concert in Fence Parish Church, near Burnley. They had a two-hour rehearsal at 4.00 pm – although the concert wasn't until 7.30 pm – and then they were at the cathedral the following day for an 8.00 am rehearsal for their 9.00 am Eucharist! How dedicated can one get?

They were led by our two extraordinarily gifted young acting directors of music, JAMES DAVY & DAVID SCOTT-THOMAS. One YPC choir parent said afterwards, 'That's the best concert I've ever heard!'

The good Fence hosts saw to their guests' needs by providing a warm church, Christmas lighting, and hot pizzas with squishy cream cakes for everyone. James and SARAH TURNER (who turned pages for James and David) clearly enjoyed their pizzas!



By the way, it's so good to have Sarah back with us. A few days after having given a most enjoyable evening of instruction to the Dean and friends on how to ride horses (see our last issue, page 18), she was kicked in the throat by a horse and rushed to hospital. She is slowly recovering, but even now she can only speak in a whisper, but she is improving day by day. (See p 26)



The church was packed and the choir sang brilliantly. Your editor (who is organist of that church) was particularly impressed by the soaring high notes of the sopranos, and was amazed, afterwards, to learn that there were only two sopranos there that night, **Laura Slater & Jamie Bett**. The Altos, Tenors and Basses were beautifully balanced and they sang so sensitively. Well done everyone!

James and David took it in turns to conduct the choir and to lead the audience in their carols. They also played organ solos. Their greatest hit was to play a duet on organ and piano – Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*. James made great use of the bells

on the Fence organ (a stop which our cathedral organ doesn't have!). Their lively performance was greeted by cheers from the responsive audience. So they played it again, which earned them an even greater ovation!



Sunday morning was of course a busy time for everyone at the cathedral. But the evening was even busier.

THE FRIENDS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL held a Reception in the crypt before the Advent Procession service. How good it was to see **Philip Johnston** there, former ebullient Headmaster of QEGS, who was enjoying a glass of wine with the Friends' Chairman, **Judge Jeremy Duerden**,



Also there with The Friends were **Kate and Neil Inkley**, who had recently celebrated their Golden Wedding. (Neil is Secretary of the Blackburn Branch of the **Prayer Book Society**, and an Old Chorister of Peterborough Cathedral.)



They were enjoying their wine with **Rosemary Jolly** and the **Revd. Timothy Lipscombe**, Rector of Preston.

It was particularly good to welcome back to the cathedral **Canon Godfrey Hirst**, a former Residentiary Canon and recently retired Vicar of Lytham, whose outgoing personality made him extraordinarily popular with everyone. (And it still does, so he still is.) Godfrey read one of the lessons that night, but he was also singing with the choir, as he happily used to do in former times.



Between the rehearsal and the service he caught up with what's going on right now, with choirmen **Phil Hunwick, Derek Crompton and James Twigg**. 'In the old days we used to be on the choir committee together,' said Derek. Aye me!



Chormums helped the choristers to robe, and the service began in a darkened cathedral as the choir of Men and Boys processed to the West end singing, and carrying lighted candles. It was an inspiring sight.



In previous Newsletters we've extolled the talents of our astonishingly gifted acting Director of Music, **James Davy**. That evening he revealed two more of his outstanding gifts.

Gift No. 1: He was Cantor as well as conductor for the processional plainsong Royal Acclamations, *Christus vincit*. James's singing was worthy of the finest Cantor in the land. It was musical, authoritative, clear and wholly inspiring. Wow!

Gift No. 2: Halfway through the service James improvised for some 7 minutes on the Advent themes of Death, Judgment, Hell and Heaven. That was a tall order for anyone!

For each Advent theme he based his improvisation on an appropriate plainsong melody. For example, for *Heaven* he used the plainsong melody *In Paradisum*. The net result was a work of art worthy of **David Briggs** or **Maurice Duruflé**. Would that it had been recorded.

And there were also two surprises:

Surprise No. 1: Whilst the Men and Boys' choir were at the

West end we heard twelve members of our superb Girls' Chamber Choir singing at the East end. The two choirs' antiphonal 'musical conversations' were entrancing. They added considerably to the magic of that evening – as did



the sight of the entire congregation holding lighted candles. Both choirs eventually reached the choirstalls to sing the rest of the service which, apart from much plainsong, included music by Charles Wood, Richard Lloyd, Byrd, Bach and Britten. And there were hymns, which the packed congregation in Nave and Transepts sang lustily.



Surprise No. 2: Every word of the service, sung and said, was portrayed in British Sign Language from the pulpit. It was a transforming experience to watch **Gail Dixon**, from the Diocesan Signers, express *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill brought low...*

The whole service was choreographed exquisitely to the last second by our **Canon Sacrist, Andrew Hindley**, including processions by choirs and the leading by the Virgers for lesson readers.

The 'aspergerization' of the entire congregation (i.e. sprinkling us with holy water after Confession) by the Bishop



of Burnley was timed to fit the singing of Byrd's four-part *Agnus Dei*. (But towards the end of the anthem the Bishop had to put on a bit of a spurt to get to the lectern in time to give us the Absolution!)

Our organ scholar, **Edward Rugman**, excelled by his playing of a demanding Prelude before the service, which included a Bach Trio Sonata (a challenge for any organist) and music by Buxtehude, Dupré and Brahms.

David Scott-Holland, who had conducted the Girls' Chamber Choir, played us out with an effervescent Postlude on *Veni Emmanuel* by Andrew Carter.

It was a very good evening!

From OC NOEL HUNWICK in London who is opening a New Restaurant in Soho!

Dear John,

First of all I'd just like to say how sorry I was to hear about the death of **Godfrey McGowan**. He'll be remembered very fondly by us all.

When we were kids, Chris and I thought he might have been involved in international espionage - I think it was his erudite dinner table conversation (well above my head) and the fact that he was such a superb linguist.



I remember saying to you ages ago that I would give you an update on all that is going on in my currently rather hectic existence. Well, here it is...

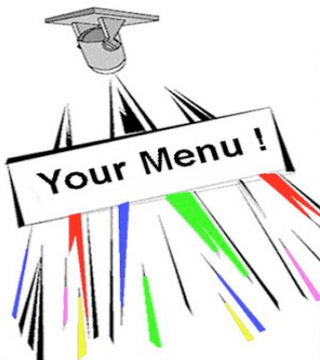
We (my colleague, Danny, who was a fellow student with me at Magdalen Oxford, and I) finally acquired premises for the restaurant business, **134-136 Wardour Street**, slap bang in the middle of Soho, a great location for us in the West End.



I have the keys in my pocket right now!

It used to be an Italian restaurant - to say that one or two changes will need to be made would be something of an understatement. We had several surveys performed last week, and are looking to get the first elements of the strip-out going (that don't require planning permission from Westminster Council - not always readily forthcoming).

We're looking to open at the start of April (for a 'soft' opening - cheaper prices and low publicity while we get our processes in order), before a full launch in mid-May. Delays may yet, of course, set in.



We have rather an interesting and original concept. Each table will have a projection unit housed above it, projecting all sorts of pretty things onto the table surface.

You'll be able to see full size images of what's on offer, and order using our system, ask for the bill, etc, as well as change your personal ambience - colours, table 'cloths', and so on.

We're the first restaurant of this kind in the world I think, so let's hope we get it right.

We should have a very theatrical and charming dining experience. We're using an impressive interior design firm and have spent some

time assembling our fit-out team of quantity surveyor, project manager, structural surveyor, CDM consultant, M&E Engineer, etc, etc.

We've developed the software, graphics, and hardware of the restaurant system ourselves (with a wee bit of help from a team of industrial designers, graphic designers, flash programmers, and the like).

We're currently sourcing a chef and a restaurant manager using agencies and various personal connections that we have.

Getting these two key members of staff right will be a big challenge so we'll be putting together an experienced interview panel for the spoken interviews and a cook-off for the chefs.

We're calling and meeting with lots of industry people to try and learn as much as we can.

We're talking to several good PR and Marketing agencies, one of them is particularly impressive so far. It sounds as though they're very confident of getting us lots of high profile coverage. **I'm rather hoping that you'll use the Old Choristers' Newsletter to get us a few extra customers too!**

It's going to be called **inamo**, by the way, and we'll be serving Asian fusion food. I prepared a long list of potential names, and **inamo** was the only one we both liked. It sounds Oriental, but doesn't mean anything (I checked in case it was a Japanese swear word). It's essentially a contraction of **'in a moment'** a reference to speed of service due to our table ordering system, and also a contraction of **'in amore'** (in love) - I knew my Classics and English degree would come in useful somewhere! I think it sounds nice anyhow - which is the important thing.

And what's going on in the other parts of my life?



I'm helping set up and run a **one-to-one mentoring scheme** in SE London for refugee and asylum-seeker children.

I've been a **voluntary English teacher** with an associated group for some time, and we're looking to extend the services offered. **Up to 150 children** have had access to the after-school club each week, a summer scheme, and twice yearly holidays.

I'm currently looking for further funding which will help ensure necessary CRB checks on volunteers are carried out, and allow mentors a small monthly stipend to spend with their **mentees** on activities like going to the cinema, bowling, and the like.

Many of the kids are pretty amazing, often having seen and been through things which no-one of such tender years should have to.

We've constructed a training scheme for prospective mentors with help from child psychologists, local community nurses, and social workers, and are trying to get this accredited. In the meantime putting together funding proposals is proving very time consuming. If anyone has any ideas they should let me know.

Alongside all of this I'm still playing football, trying a bit of yoga, and listening to a lot of live music (most of which you wouldn't approve of John!). Phew.

As ever
Noel.

**Phew! indeed, and many Wows!
Well done, Noel. JB**



What has RICHARD TANNER been doing during his four-month Sabbatical?



Answer: Practising on his new house organ!

Richard is seen here with **Robert Sharpe**, Director of Music of Truro Cathedral, who is helping young **Ben Tanner** play his father's new instrument in the Tanner dining room!

This organ was built especially for Richard by **Anton Skrabl** from Slovenia. It's the very first organ in the UK by this fine builder. **See pages 35-36 for more news of Richard.**

For more details about this builder, see page 23 of our August 2006 Newsletter on www.Bertalot.org

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN BLACKBURN

From Peter Smith in York

Dear John

Many thanks for the excellent Newsletter. In my role as Secretary for National Gatherings for the [National] **Friends of Cathedral Music**, I am organising the forthcoming National Gathering of FCM at Blackburn on **10 - 12 October 2008**.

I am looking forward to it very much and am also looking forward to meeting you again. I think we last met on an RSCM Course many years ago.

Best wishes

Peter Smith



We all look forward to welcoming you and your distinguished colleagues for an exciting and rewarding weekend in October. Ed

Blackburn Cathedral Newsletter

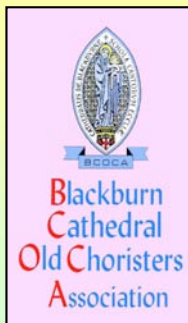
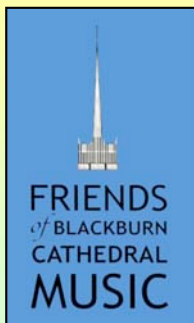
is supported financially not only by the generosity of

F of BCM & BCOCA

but also by more donors including, most recently,

**The Revd. Ann Barber
Mr. Andrew Seivewright
Mrs. Margaret Simpson
and exChange**
Thank you!

The Newsletter is designed & edited by
Dr John Bertalot



Send your news to john@bertalot.org

RUTH DEMACK

wife of our honorary Old Chorister David, recently completed a colourful painting of York Minster in aid of the Restoration Appeal for the Minster, where David is a Steward.



Ruth wrote: Here we are delivering the painting into the hands of the co-chair of the Minster community, Meg Shorland-Ball. The Exhibition and Auction will be in March/April 2008.

David, who married Ruth in the cathedral 38 years ago, is an hon. OC of Blackburn not only because of his close interest and support of our cathedral choirs during JB's time here, but also because he made it financially possible for us to publish the Blackburn Chant Book.

(Another of JB's chants from the Blackburn Chant Book was sung during a superb BBC Choral Evensong from Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, in December!)

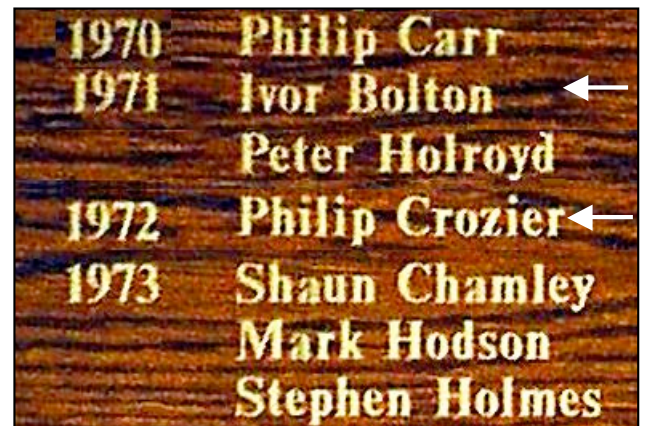
May Ruth's striking painting help appreciably to the £30M which the Minster is seeking to raise!



There's another OC connection with Blackburn, for David, who is Vice President of the VAT Tribunal which sits in Manchester to hear cases, sometimes has **Marilyn Crompton** sitting with him.

Another Blackburn Old Chorister who enjoys an International Musical Career: PHILIP CROZIER

Alan Rowntree, our former Cathedral Bursar, heard OC Philip Crozier play a stunning recital in Iceland recently, and suggested that we contact him. Philip lives in Montreal, Canada, with his French-Canadian wife, Sylvie Poirier, and they enjoy an international career as organ duettists.



Philip, who was a contemporary of our other international celebrity, **Ivor Bolton**, was a chorister of our cathedral 42 years ago (he's just celebrated his 50th birthday!). He also holds the record for being our youngest Old Chorister ever.

over...

For when Philip was still a middle-rank chorister he and his parents moved to Carlisle, where he joined their cathedral choir. So we made him an Old Chorister even though he was still singing treble. However, after a couple of years they moved back to Blackburn, and so he rejoined our choir, still as a treble!

After graduating from the University of Wales, earning himself two organ prizes, he continued his organ studies in Paris with the blind organist André Marchal.

He and his wife have made many CDs and appeared as an organ duo team since 1990 giving concerts in Canada, U.S.A., France, Germany, Italy, U.K., Monaco, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Czech Republic, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Brazil and Estonia, as well as broadcasts for Radio Canada, Polish National Radio and Estonian Classical Radio.

Phew and Wow!



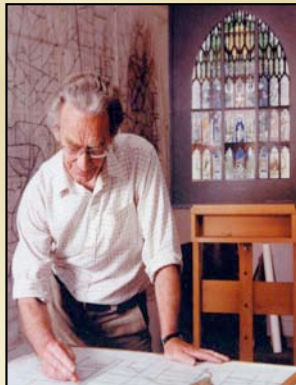
John Hayward 1929-2007

We received a most moving letter from one of John Hayward's colleagues – including a copy of the Thanksgiving Service in Sherborne Abbey for his life – following the tribute to him in our November Newsletter. Also enclosed was the Introduction to an illustrated talk John was to have given in June 2007 about his life and work in which Blackburn Cathedral figured largely. Because he died before he could give it, the talk, which was delivered in London in November, became a Tribute to him and his work.

His colleague wrote to JB:

Canon Eric Woods, Vicar of Sherborne, has given me a copy of your November Newsletter in which you pay tribute to John's creative work in Blackburn Cathedral.

John often spoke of you - usually with a smile! - and I know you both rekindled your friendship in 2004. I have copies of your technicolour letters to him and he loved the energy of Cathedral life expressed so eloquently in the Newsletters.



John's Introduction to his illustrated Lecture included :-

'I spent five years with Laurence King re-designing the whole interior of Blackburn Cathedral from 1966 to 1970 which followed my design for a small Chapel with a central altar at Whalley Abbey nearby.

I created over 230 windows during my career, including the Great West window at Sherborne Abbey, dedicated in 1998. At the time I was recorded as saying, 'This will be my last window'.



The years 2000-2001 were totally unexpected and marvellous. It was a time of many 'Firsts'.

I visited Coventry Cathedral, the great basilicas at Ravenna and Classe, Notre Dame in Paris and **Chartres Cathedral**.

Standing before the works of art within these buildings, as it were 'in the flesh', was a confirmation of what I felt I had always known.

So I went on to make another dozen windows!

Two days after dictating the Introduction to his lecture John died, but his works live on to inspire us. How fortunate we are at Blackburn to enjoy so much of his fertile creativity.

Requiescat in pace

HELEN DAVIES

ebullient member of our Renaissance Singers

**Xylophone, Glockenspiel,
Marimba and Vibraphone**

JAMES DAVY

our amazingly gifted Associate DoM

Piano and Organ



**Saturday 16
February
7.30 pm**

**St. Anne's
Church
Fence**

THIS IS A FUN TIME TO MISS



St. Anne's Church is easy to find:

M65 – Exit 8 (onto the A6068)

5 miles – turn Left into the slip road

immediately before the 2nd speed camera!

Phone for tickets (only £5-00) 01282-614-009

**Without our stalwart Virgers
how could Christmas (or anything else) happen?**



Jeffrey Robinson, Mark Pickering & Siby Jose standing on the platform which they mantled for the **Christmas Spectacular**. They dismantled it immediately after the concert and re-ordered all the Nave chairs in time for our Sunday services, for which they were on duty yet again! **Thank you!**



BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

enjoyed hosting many carol services and Christmas concerts in December: including 9 Primary School lunchtime concerts as well as 13 large scale concerts and services by other guests, all of which were loyally attended by enthusiastic parents and friends.

And there were 9 of our own services and concerts! Our Clergy, Musicians and Virgers never had a dull moment that month!

One of the lunchtime presentations was given by **St. Mary's Primary School, Mellor**. They delighted us by their fervour, which came from meticulous preparation. Not only was the centre Nave almost full of children, with parents sitting in the side aisles ...



... but the school was able to generate a splendid orchestra of nearly 30 players which led the congregational singing so well.



Their attractive service was built around the Nativity scene. Well done, Mellor, and well done all our guests whose worship blessed everyone who heard them.

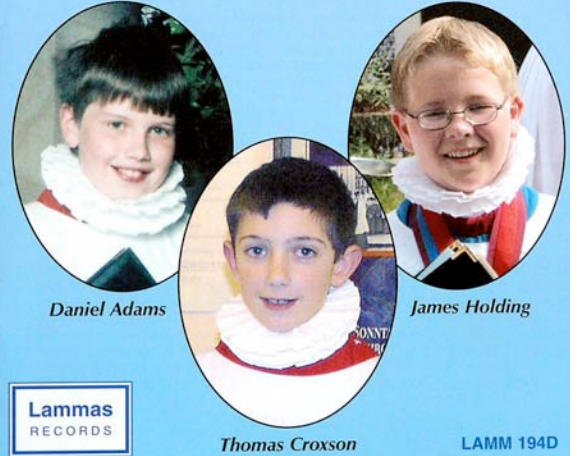


When RICHARD TANNER was in London recently looking through CDs in the HMV store in Oxford Street, what did he see amongst the international best sellers but the Three Blackburn Choristers' CD **Heavenly Harmonies!**



HEAVENLY HARMONIES

Three Trebles from Blackburn Cathedral Choir



What's more, this CD (*now on sale for only £9.99*) was most favourably acclaimed in the Royal School of Church Music's worldwide magazine: the reviewer wrote: **Blackburn's trebles should be proud of their disc.**

It has no fewer than 23 tracks of most tuneful and skilful singing by these three outstanding choristers. **Richard Tanner** accompanies them equally skilfully on our chamber organ, and our former Associate DoM **Greg Morris** plays four dexterously delightful solos.

This is a real winner.

Order your copy from www.lammas.co.uk

The hard-working staff of our Café-in-the-Crypt

were kept extraordinarily busy over the Christmas season – providing not only delicious lunches on most days of the week, and wine and soft drinks for a multitude of Receptions before and after concerts and special services, but they also laid on a 3-course Christmas Lunch (for those who booked far enough ahead) with crackers, mince pies, coffee & mints to round it off.

This Lunch was sold out well in advance, and it was a culinary, organizational and gastronomic triumph.

Here are members of Fence Church Choir enjoying their Christmas lunch! Well done and thank you!



CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR 2007



Before the concert began there was, as ever, a lavish Reception in the North Transept for our generous Sponsors and Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music and their guests.

As well as our own Café-in-the-Crypt caterers, who provided the drinks, there were delicious nibbles provided by **With a Twist** headed by **Martin & Catherine** (centre) 01254-77-82-70, who



have recently bought out Northcote Manor. They had recruited five most cheerful students from Manchester University to serve the nibbles that evening. They were a great success.

Distinguished and most friendly guests were everywhere: —>



Canon Hindley shared a joke with Mr & Mrs Alan Rowntree.

Alan was our Bursar for many years.



Canon Hindley also welcomed representatives of FRASER EAGLE, our generous concerts' Series Sponsor.



This gala concert was sponsored by Forbes Solicitors, Waterworths Accountants and **With a Twist** bespoke catering, as well as by our series sponsors, FRASER EAGLE, without whose generosity this concert would not have been possible.

Kate Hodkinson (R) who is a member of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music Council, welcomed more Friends of Blackburn



Cathedral Music, without whose support such concerts could not be held...

Debbie Northin and Russ Steele. James, our cathedral architect, told your staff photographer that the building of the new Deanery and Canons' Apartments in the Cathedral Close may have to be delayed until next year. Watch this space!



The Dean, as ever, was ebullience personified as he welcomed Julie and Peter Turner, and also the grandparents of one of our cathedral choristers.

The concert was sung by members of our Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, The Cathedral Girls' Chamber Choir, our YPC and our ever-busy Renaissance Singers.

They were accompanied most gloriously by brass from the Northern Chamber Orchestra, led by the gifted Anthony Thompson.

Our delightful soprano soloist was Rachel Little, who added grace and much beauty to the whole evening.

Our own David Scott-Thomas excelled on piano and organ – making our organ sound, at times, like a Mighty Wurlitzer – on purpose. That was hilarious!

...whilst James & Andrea Sanderson enjoyed the company of



But the star of the evening was undoubtedly our Acting Director of Music, JAMES DAVY, whose clear, musical beat was followed precisely at all times by every singer and instrumentalist, and whose youthful high spirits and *joie de vivre* communicated his attractive musicianship to audience and performers alike.

He was a joy to behold and he made every item a precious jewel in our preparations for the Christmas Season.



At one point he even persuaded the audience, including Dean and Mrs. Armstrong, and Bishop and Mrs. Reade, to whistle!

whistle



The music ranged from Rutter's *Gloria* (very exciting!) through well-known carols for audience and choir (some to new tunes which James taught us!) to popular arrangements by Sir David Willcocks and John Rutter and auld favourites such as *Jingle Bells* and *White Christmas*.



Rachel Little, who came at short notice due to the indisposition of Nicola Mills, sang exquisitely. James's arrangement of *The First Nowell* for soloist, choir, orchestra and audience, was magical. Rachel's high soaring soprano blended so beautifully with the voices of the choirs – it was enchanting.

Canon Hindley was our effervescent Master of Ceremonies who not only introduced many of the items, but also our soloists.



The Northern Brass, led by Anthony Thompson, were thrilling. They not only accompanied many of the choral items but they also played some exciting music for brass by Viadana, and by Giovanni Gabrieli which he'd composed in the 16th Century for St. Mark's, Venice.

When the second half was due to begin (after the audience had refreshed themselves with wine or juice in the crypt) we wondered where our conductor was – for there was a silence.



Suddenly there arose the sound of *Silent Night* coming from a distance: James had formed a hand-picked Nonette which sang from behind the staging so exquisitely.

That was yet another magical moment.

Another surprise was sprung upon us when Canon Hindley suddenly took over James's baton to conduct *White Christmas*, whilst James did a 'Tanner' and sang the solo! Both did very well indeed!

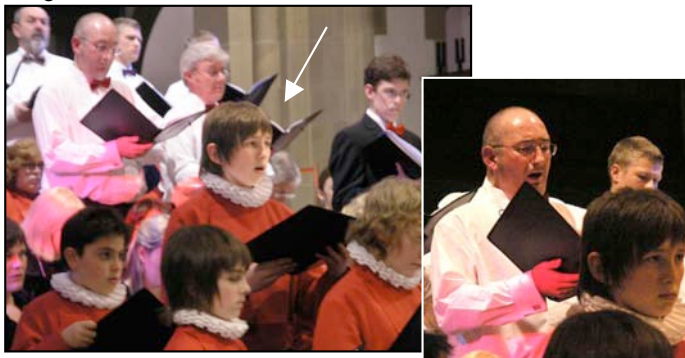


Prefects **Michael Smith** and **Connor Buller** sang *Walking in the air*, which earned them a well deserved ovation, and Head Chorister **Arthur Geldard** and Tenor **Edward McCullough** sang the solos in Harold Darke's *In the Bleak Midwinter*.



David Scott-Thomas's playing was, as ever, brilliant.

At the end of the concert tributes were paid to him by Canon Hindley, James Davy and the choirs, who gave him a



A special soloist was **Sarah Turner**, (see p. 18). She read John Julius Norwich's hilarious *12 days of Christmas*, when 'I' ended up by suing 'my true love' for sending me presents which sent me mad: the house was full of birds, the milkmaids' cows were ruining the lawn and the 10 Lords a-leaping were taking undue advantage of the 9 ladies dancing!



foot-stamping ovation. David would be leaving us after Christmas to pursue his adventurous musical career elsewhere. He has given us so very much both musically and through his ever-engaging personality. Thank you, David.



It was a glorious evening – one of the best ever. Thanks and congratulations were given to everyone, and especially to James Davy. He thanked all the choirs for all the hard work they had given to David and to himself during the last 4 months, and he paid tribute to Richard Tanner for inviting him to lead the cathedral's music during Richard's well-earned Sabbatical. **Laus Deo!**

BOOK THESE CONCERTS IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

February

3 Sun 1030 **PATRONAL FESTIVAL**
1.00 Gala Lunch (Tickets £20)

9 Sat 7.00 **HANDEL'S MESSIAH**



M
E
S
S
I
A
H



13 Wed 1.00 Lunchtime Concert (Free!)
David Scott-Thomas & Ailsa Mainwaring (Sop)

18-22 Mon-Thurs 0945 BBC DAILY SERVICE



20 Wed 1.00 Lunchtime Concert (Free!)
James Davy and
David Scott-Thomas

27 Wed 1.00 Lunchtime Concert (Free!)
To be arranged

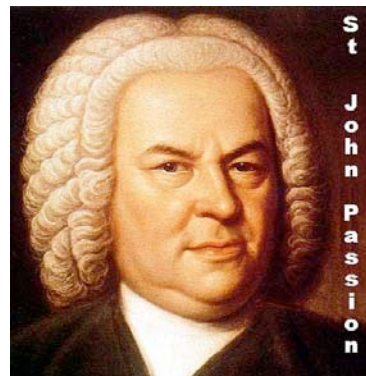
March

5 Wed 1.00 Lunchtime Concert (Free!)
Adrian Gunning (Organ)

8 Sat 1130 Music Outreach Project No 2
See page 15 (Free!) →

12 Wed 1.00 Lunchtime Concert (Free!)
Robert Brown (Flute) & James Davy

19 Wed 7.30 **BACH: ST JOHN PASSION**



S
t
J
o
h
n
P
a
s
s
i
o
n

Tickets for the Gala Lunch, phone Linda Bruce 01254-50-30-82, and for the major concerts, from Blackburn Visitor Centre, Church St., 01254-53277

Not-so-well DCs



OC FRANK HARE in Malvern has recently experienced a 'Tony Blair' heart problem but, like our former Prime Minister, he's OK now – and looking forward to celebrating his three-score-years-and-ten!



Former Cathedral Sub Organist KEITH BOND has now retired as organist of Aldeburgh Parish Church (where Britten and Pears are buried) and also relinquished his conductorship of his Blythburgh Singers.

But he creates scores on his computer keyboard for Ruth's recorder group, and according to OC PETER HEALD, 'Ruth continues to be her lovely self, and they are both very comfortable in their delightful bungalow'.



OC JACK HOLLAND collared your staff photographer during the interval of the **Christmas Spectacular**; it was good to see him again – he was a stalwart and most faithful Alto during JB's years as DoM.

Jack is a much sought-after judge at dog shows. He said that he'd recently been invited to be a judge at CRUFTS (*the* Dog Show) but had to refuse due to an internal problem – not serious, but annoying.



Ruth & Keith photographed at their Golden Wedding 2 years ago

Nine Lessons and Carols

Our Annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was, of course, yet another success the entire Cathedral staff. Every note and movement was beautifully coordinated and rehearsed so that the whole service flowed as on wings.

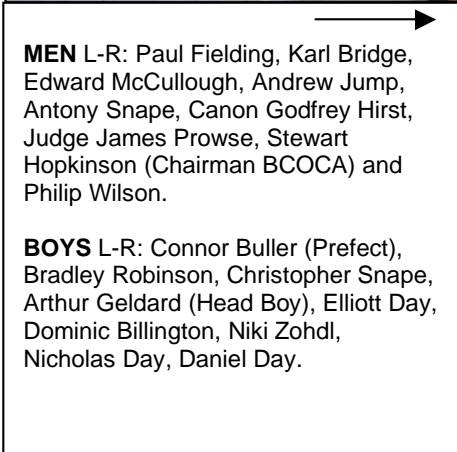
Such is the reputation of the cathedral's liturgy and music, that the large congregation began filling up the seats in the Nave and both Transepts a full hour before the service was due to begin!



Before the service the choir rehearsed in the Song School under the direction of **James Davy**. It was good to be able to take photographs of them all in action:

←
MEN L-R: Alec Stuttard, Joseph Twigg (3rd year student at Durham U), Gordon Shaw, Peter Eastham, Derek Crompton, Philip Hunwick, Andrew Orr & James Twigg.

BOYS L-R: Matthew Adelekan (who read the First Lesson), William Fielding, Robert Mitchell, Barry Hudson-Taylor (Prefect), Dominic Chivers, Joseph Kennedy, Matthieu Woodburn, Michael Smith (Prefect).

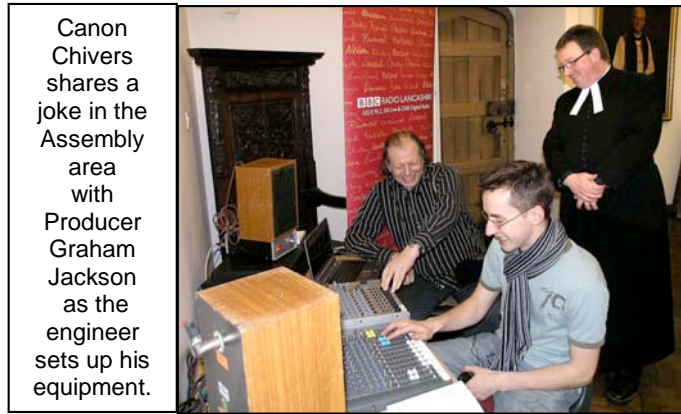


→
MEN L-R: Paul Fielding, Karl Bridge, Edward McCullough, Andrew Jump, Antony Snape, Canon Godfrey Hirst, Judge James Prowse, Stewart Hopkinson (Chairman BCOCA) and Philip Wilson.

BOYS L-R: Connor Buller (Prefect), Bradley Robinson, Christopher Snape, Arthur Geldard (Head Boy), Elliott Day, Dominic Billington, Niki Zohdl, Nicholas Day, Daniel Day.



BBC Radio Lancashire again recorded the whole service for their Christmas Day broadcast. (They've done this for many years!)



Canon Chivers shares a joke in the Assembly area with Producer Graham Jackson as the engineer sets up his equipment.



And then, from the West end of the Cathedral, out of the silence and through the light of flickering candles, came the sound of a solo treble. *Once in Royal David's City* was sung so confidently by Connor Buller after James Davy had hummed his note for him. That was a magical moment which defined **Christmas** for so many of us.

James Davy had chosen an eclectic programme of music for the choir to sing: –

Stainer's *God so loved the world*, (what an unusual but most fitting opening carol!);

Boris Ord's *Adam lay y-bownden*, (your editor heard the first performance of this sung by the choir of King's College Cambridge, when he was a student of Dr. Ord over half a century ago!);

A babe was born, by William Mathias (tricky rhythms, well handled by choir, and by organist **David Scott-Thomas**);

Gustav Holst's *In the bleak mid-winter*, with the solo beautifully sung by Head Boy **Arthur Geldard**.

The boys sang Professor Patrick Hadley's *I sing of a maiden*, with a lovely sense of calmness (JB had also studied with Paddy – he would have approved of our Blackburn performance), and the men sang the mediaeval carol, *There is no rose*, with appropriate robustness and commitment.

And there was music by **Peter Warlock**, **Peter Aston**. **William Walton**, and popular arrangements by **Sir David Willcocks** – both for choir and for congregation. There was something for everyone.

But there was one carol which stood out above all the rest – because it had been composed especially for the choir of Blackburn Cathedral by 8-year old probationer **Dominic Chivers**! ...harmonized for SATB at his Dad's request by your editor. Dominic is, of course, the eldest son of Chris and Mary Chivers.

Verse 1. *Born in a stable of light,
Born in a stable of holiness;
Born in a stable so cold,
Jesus was born that night.*

Dominic had written the words as well as the melody, and the choir did it full justice. So popular was it that they even sang it again on Christmas Day! Well done, Dominic!

It was very good to see two Old Choristers in the congregation that night: **Dr. Benedict Holden** (whose Dad, **Jim**, is a Cathedral Churchwarden) is Consultant at the Hillingden and St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington, specializing in HIV treatment

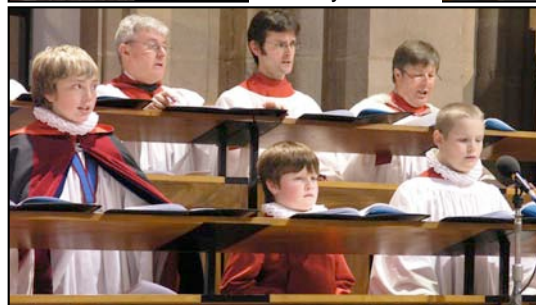


And it was very good to see OC **Stephen Parkinson** again (son of **Stuart and Betty**). Stephen, whose home is in New Zealand, came down to the Song School to see us after the service was over. He took particular delight in seeing his name written in gold on the second Prefects' Board – '**1975 Stephen Parkinson**'.

'What are you doing these days, Stephen?' asked your editor.



Budding composer and budding chorister **Dominic Chivers** stands on the steps of the bishop's cathedra after the carol service, holding a copy of his lovely carol.



Men: Phil Hunwick, Andrew Orr & James Twigg.

Boys: Barry Hudson-Taylor, Dominic Chivers & Joseph Kennedy.

'I'm a counsellor for seriously sick and dying children from the ages of 0 to 18, and their families,' he replied. 'I cry most days, but it's the best job in the world.'

'How many children do you care for at any one time?'

'About 120,' came the reply. The only response to that was an awed silence. Well done, Stephen.

It was also good to meet his partner, **Lyn**, who is a counsellor-therapist in the psychotherapy programme in Hamilton, New Zealand. They were over here for 5 weeks.

It was particularly good, as Stephen left the Song School, for him to bump into contemporary OC (and current choirman) **Stewart Hopkinson**.

Come back soon, Stephen!



What does it mean to be British?

As this newsletter goes to press, the Bishop of Rochester's populist New Year 'rant' against British Muslims has captured front page headlines, and led all sorts of people – who frankly should by now know a lot better – to say some things they will surely come to regret: things which are doing damage to the patient work we are trying to advance across faiths and cultures here in Blackburn.

It's a pity then that the good bishop – does anyone recall that there's actually an Act of Parliament (1511) for the 'boiling of the bishop of Rochester's cook'? – wasn't close enough to attend one of the four conversations held in November and December on the theme that seems to underpin so much current debate: **What does it mean to be British?**



British and to share common values: respect, compassion for the disadvantaged, a desire to see justice for all through the embrace of democratic structures. None shied away from the difficult complexities and realities on the ground, but – over-against the bishop of Rochester's line – they didn't seek to make one group the problem or the scapegoat.

It was encouraging as ever to have the input of young citizens from Beardwood School and students of Blackburn College. CC



What does it mean to be British?
 Tuesday lunchtimes
 1.05 - 1.55pm



Is this in fact a meaningful thing to ask? That, and many other questions formed the basis for four of the liveliest conversations that **exChange**, the cathedral's community cohesion, education, outreach and interfaith development agency, has so far staged.

A range of guests from local business-woman and media personality, **Margo Grimshaw**, (see p. 3), to **Imam Musharaff**



Canon Chris Chivers, Imam Musharaff Hussein, Ms. Anjum Anwar MBE, & Dean Christopher Armstrong

Hussein, the new Chair of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Christian-Muslim Forum addressed the subject. It was particularly good to have a range of young Britons: **Talaat Awan** from BBC Radio Lancashire and the BBC Asian network, **Mark O'Brien**, a BBC Radio 4 producer, and **Shaida Akram**, project worker for the Lancashire Forum of Faiths.

All of them reiterated in their different ways their delight to be

We were greatly saddened and shocked

by the sudden death of **HELEN DAWSON** just before Christmas. Helen was a most faithful usher of our cathedral – always there to help, not only on great occasions, but also for other services.

She was the Mother of **OC KIT DAWSON** of whom she was so rightly proud.

Kit was a most loyal choirboy – and holder of the Dots Bertalot medal as the longest serving chorister – and then he became a leading member of the YPC.

In his last year with us he became choirs' librarian – and very efficient he was. He came to Paris with us last year when we sang at Notre Dame, and his firm organisation of the music helped us to enjoy a wonderful time there. He's now in his first year at Edinburgh University, where he sings in many choirs, including St. Mary's Cathedral choir.

Helen's funeral, in the cathedral which she loved and served so faithfully, was conducted by the Dean and Canon Hindley on Wednesday 9th January; it was attended by a very large congregation, including many of Kit's contemporaries in the choir, and their parents.

Many tears were shed by us all that morning. Our hearts go out to Kit in his immeasurable loss.

OC DAVID KNIGHT



We're delighted to hear that David Knight (who joined the cathedral choir almost immediately after JB left to go to the USA (!) – i.e. he was an early David Cooper chorister – has just been appointed full-time lay-clerk in the prestigious choir of Westminster Cathedral.

David has been living in London for many years – working in management accounting, but always keeping his love of choral music going. He has been singing in a number of semi-professional London choirs, and is currently a part-time lay-clerk in the choir of Southwark Cathedral.

Well done, David. We're proud of you! JB

THIS YEAR, JERUSALEM



Few cities have captured the hearts and imaginations of so many people around the world as the city of Jerusalem. The first *kiblah* – praying direction – for Muslims, was Jerusalem. The Christian *kiblah* is still Jerusalem, the place of Christ's death and resurrection. And the most fervent hope for Jews worldwide, is expressed in their Passover greeting: 'next year in Jerusalem'. But for **Anjum Anwar MBE** and **Canon Chris Chivers** – and through their work, for the rest of us – 2007 was very much 'this year in Jerusalem'.

June saw them two of six pilgrims – two Christians, two Jews and two Muslims – with a BBC Radio team, making five special BBC Daily Service programmes from the Holy City for the Fortieth anniversary of the war lasting six days that changed the physical and emotional landscape of the Middle East.



Preparing the BBC Service overlooking the Kidron Valley

L-R: BBC Executive Producer **Christine Morgan**, Daily Service presenter **Canon Chris Chivers**, **Anjum Anwar**, **Dr Musharraf Hussain**, **Rabbi Dr Alan Unterman**, Daily Service presenter **Becky Harris**, **The Reverend Ernie Rea**, Senior Audio Supervisor **Phil Booth** (obscured) and Series Producer **Philip Billson** (seated).

During this BBC first, in Canon Chivers's capacity as a trustee of USPG: Anglicans in world mission, they met Janina Zang, a USPG mission companion based at St George's Anglican Cathedral. Janina is a very gifted artist and teacher, and had already sent Canon Chivers some art works by Palestinian children, all responding to the reality of life in the shadow of the security barrier/ wall that now divides Palestinian and Israeli territory.

Speaking to Janina and seeing the reality of this barrier-wall was the inspiration to the two of them to stage *A Gap in the Wall?* for three weeks in late Autumn Blackburn. This not showcased the amazing poignancy of the young people's responses – who will

forget twelve year old **Khaled's** Santa Claus, climbing a ladder set against the barrier-wall to drop a teddy bear as one solitary gift for a child on the other side? – it also raised awareness of the complexity of the issues involved.



Khaled and his Rovers shirt together with the brochure from our own cathedral exhibition.

Altogether, seventeen original paintings or drawings were exhibited in the north transept on a barrier-wall made specially by one set of students from Blackburn College. Another set produced their own photographic response to the child-artists, which was also displayed together with a set of photographs, detailing the considerable inconvenience faced by children trying to get to their schools and having to cross the barrier-wall, often several times.

As part of the exhibition the cathedral hosted the first triologue, when David Arnold, former President of the Jewish Community in Manchester, joined Ms Anwar and Canon Chivers to debate the reality of the barrier-wall's presence.

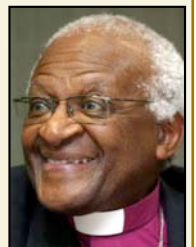


Canon Chivers leaves a message on the Wall

Inevitably this discussion generated much emotion and passion, not least from the Palestinian asylum seekers from our Blackburn community who attended it.

The exhibition also allowed an opportunity for Canon Chivers to launch his most recent book – **Jerusalem haiku** – a set of poems, published by Pretext, and all written in the well-known Japanese, seventeen-syllable, minimalist form. At the time of writing the first print run has almost sold out.

On the same evening, when the Mayor of Blackburn and the Mayoress joined us, a lavish, colour catalogue to accompany the exhibition, with articles by Janina Zang and a foreword by Nobel Peace laureate, **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, was also launched. This was made possible through the huge generosity of local sponsors all of whom advertised in the catalogue.



A few weeks later copies were taken to the child-artists themselves when Canon Chivers and Ms Anwar returned to the Holy Land, as Peace Ambassadors for the Middle East Peace Initiative, selected to represent the UK as a recognition of their work in promoting interfaith and cross-cultural relations here, so that they could try to see ways of enhancing peace work in Israel-Palestine.

They joined another 138 peace ambassadors from a staggering 38 countries, for a programme which saw them receive top-level briefings about the situation and encounter many people at the grass roots working for peace. Not least, with **Blackburn Rovers shirts and shorts** (so generously donated by the education department at the club), with \$500 cash for art materials (much of it raised by our congregation), and exhibition catalogues (also sponsored through their generosity), they were there to see the child-artists.



On the second Sunday of Advent, Canon Chivers preached in St George's Cathedral at the invitation of the Acting Dean, Canon Hossam Naoum, at the end of which Ms Anwar presented the cathedral with a replica of the medieval Blackburn *pax* – which shows the Virgin and Child, and is perhaps our greatest physical treasure – in recognition of the amazing work for peace that the tiny Anglican community, both Palestinian and ex-patriot are doing there.



Then it was on first to Ramallah, across the wall-barrier, to meet a group of young artists before returning to the cathedral to encounter another group and their parents.

To see the joy on the children's faces – not chiefly because of the gifts but because they knew that the story expressed through their art works had been heard and acknowledged – was an experience that the two of them will never forget.

The flowering of peace

Sermon for Advent II preached by **Canon Chris Chivers**, Canon Chancellor, Blackburn Cathedral and Peace Ambassador, Middle East Peace Initiative at the 11.00am Eucharist in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem

We are sitting in a civic hall in Guguletu, a Cape Town township

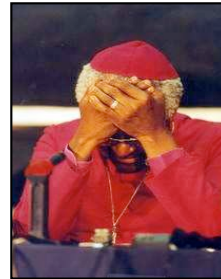


community, in November 1996.

A 70-year-old woman has been called to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (chaired by Archbishop Tutu) concerning the activities of a policeman in her township. It transpires that he had come one night with some others and in front of the woman had shot her son at point-blank range.



Two years later the same officer had returned to arrest her husband, whom she supposed subsequently to have been executed. Some time later the policeman came yet again. This time he took her to a place where he showed her her husband, still alive. But as her spirits lifted, the policeman doused the husband with gasoline, set him on fire and killed him.



As the woman concludes her testimony, **Archbishop Desmond**, trying desperately to keep his own emotions under control, addresses her: "What would you like the outcome to be of this hearing?"

After a long pause, the woman answers, "I would like three things. First, I want to be taken to the place where my husband was burned so I can gather up the dust and give his remains a decent burial.

"Second, my son and my husband were my only family. Therefore, I want this police officer to become my son, to come twice a month to my home and spend a day with me so I can pour out on him whatever love I still have remaining inside me.

"Finally, I want this officer to know that I offer him forgiveness because Jesus Christ died to forgive me. Please would someone lead me across the hall so that I can embrace him and let him know that he is truly forgiven."

As people lead the woman across the room, the police officer, completely overwhelmed, faints. Officials help him, whilst the woman's friends and neighbours, most of them victims of the same sort of violence, begin to sing softly, 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me...'



We are now in Pollsmoor Prison, where **Nelson Mandela** and many of his fellow political prisoners have been moved after years of incarceration on Robben Island. We are in a small, white-washed room containing just a table, a fluorescent light and a few metal chairs.



Canon Chivers & Fr Wiggett

On these, a group of political prisoners, including Mandela, sit awaiting their monthly communion service. This is taken by **Fr Harry Wiggett**, a local priest, who they've known for a long time because he also took services for them on Robben Island.

As ever, the service is conducted under the watchful eye of Warder Christo Brandt, the archetypal moustache-wearing Afrikaner and apartheid functionary, who sits next

to the door. Fr Harry reaches the Giving of the Peace and is just about to share it with the six or so prisoners assembled when Nelson Mandela interrupts the service. Calling over to the Warder he says 'Brandt, man, you're a Christian aren't you?' 'Ja, meneer' (Yes, sir), comes the reply. "Well then, you must join us for our service. Come over here."



We are now in the gardens of this cathedral church of St.



George, Jerusalem, in June, earlier this year, as a group of interfaith pilgrims – Christian, Jewish and Muslim – gather to interview a local priest. They're working for the BBC, making a series of programmes to mark the anniversary of the 6 days in 1967 which forever changed the physical and emotional landscape of the Middle East. They've already interviewed several other locals from different communities – all of whom have exposed for them both the diversity and the divisions which are the glory and the challenge of this great city.

All the pilgrims in fact agree that whilst everyone has expressed considerable and heart-rending pain in respect to their own story, no-one so far seems to have been able to put themselves in someone else's shoes and to see pain from a different perspective.

But as this priest, who describes himself as an Arab Israeli begins to tell his story the whole pilgrimage shifts gear. For whilst there's much pain in what he says – he's, in the past, spent time here in Jerusalem separated from his wife because she had different papers from his – all the pilgrims, Christian, Jewish and Muslim realize that they are now in the presence of someone who's so emptied himself of his own pain that he's made a god-shaped space in his heart within which both to listen to the pain of others and to begin to transform it.

Today, as we continue our journey through Advent, the striking figure of **John the Baptist** is set before us, calling everyone to a Gospel of repentance. The Greek word used for repentance is *metanoia* – one of the most important words in the New Testament – which literally means 'to make a turning'.



This is perhaps why the authors of our lectionary turn our attention in the passages we heard from Isaiah and from Paul's Letter to the Romans, to the product of all real repentance, which is peace, both for individuals and, crucially of course, for communities; peace, a goal constantly to be sought, not least on this the twentieth anniversary of the commencement of the first *intifada* in 1987.

How memorably Isaiah expresses what that turning will look like, as the new shoot – the flower of peace – springs from the roots of the community, and causes all sorts of improbable things

to happen: a wolf to lie with a lamb, a leopard with a kid goat, a calf and a lion, a cow and a bear, an infant and an adder: all to be at peace with one another.

It's so improbable isn't it? I mean, whoever heard of any of that stuff happening? Surely it's just all pious fantasy? But no, St Paul says, all of you, in your great diversity – Jew and Gentile – are called into harmony, into the divine network of peace That, he says, is actually your highest human calling.



But are these simply more stirring words to add to the prophet's strident demand that we get on with peace-making or the visionary's poetic fantasy picture of peace? Camp David, Madrid, Oslo, now Annapolis. We've heard the call time and again. We know the promises and the rhetoric. But we never seem to get that close to the reality. Isn't genuine peace, in the end, just so elusive as to be unattainable, certainly something to which the likes of you and me cannot contribute?

It's understandable, of course, at a human level to succumb to an underlying feeling of helplessness and the despair that can go with it. But as people of faith of course we must never do so.

Which is why I shared with you by way of encouragement and – who knows – inspiration perhaps as well, a remarkable moment that I witnessed in South Africa's TRC when a single woman, who'd every reason to be bitter, both experienced and became the channel for divine grace as she turned to the way of forgiveness and love.



But perhaps that embrace of an enemy who's caused such pain seems way beyond our capacity as human beings.



Which is why I related that wonderful story of a first step taken by Nelson Mandela as he saw a gap, assumed the priest's role that was needed to fill it, and ensured that a supposed enemy is the very person with whom you begin your ministry of turning and transformation, especially so, when the priest himself hadn't made this connection or seen this possibility.

This is why I also told you a story that many of you know already about a priest who stands before you week by

week, your own Hosam Naoum, who's an example to all of us in and beyond this cathedral and city, indeed, right across the world, of the truth that peace is always more than just a possibility.

John the Baptist calls us to that *metanoia*, that turning of heart and spirit which is the precondition for the flowering of peace.

But Jesus reminds us, as we turn, that peace is always cross-shaped.

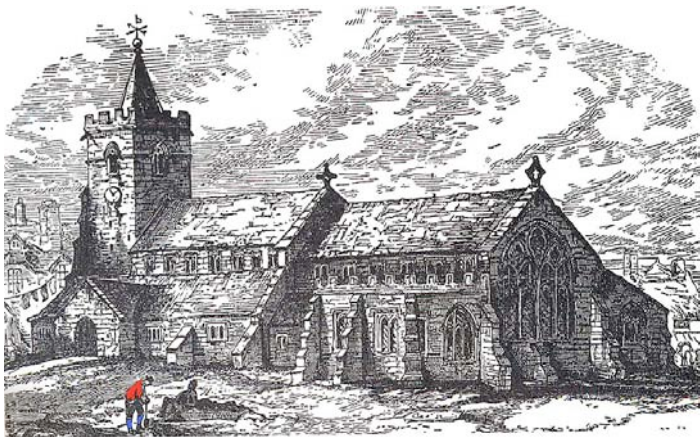


It involves *kenosis*, that other great New Testament word which literally means 'self-emptying'. A self-emptying which so completely frees ourselves of our own pain that we are able to take on someone else's – even, indeed, perhaps most often, the pain of a person from whom we feel most distant or estranged – so that all may turn to the path of peace.

This is the loving peace that comes down at Christmas, when we get there at the end of Advent, the love that's cross-shaped and costly because it challenges and changes everything. But it's the loving peace that's actually within each one of us, if only we will allow God to unlock its presence and potential.

We're now standing in the graveyard of a northern English parish church in 1820. Many of the grave stones have collapsed.

All have to be moved to ensure people's safety. As one grave stone is lifted and put onto a cart to be taken elsewhere, the old grave digger who's doing the work spots some rags in the earth.



As he lifts them something golden briefly glints in the sunlight before it tumbles out of his hands to the ground. He stoops down to pick it up and realises that he's holding a beautiful, miniature golden image of the Madonna and Child.

A century before Blackburn Parish Church became the cathedral where I now minister that old grave digger had discovered its greatest physical treasure. You received a postcard of it on your way in to this cathedral. It's called a *pax*, the Latin word for *peace*.

On it, as that grave digger discovered, is a picture of the flower of Jesse, the Christ-child in his mother's arms, because instead of shaking hands at the sign of the peace in the Eucharist, as we tend to do nowadays, worshippers used to kiss the pax and pass it on. There are very few originals in the world. And at the time of the

Reformation in England when Christians, catholic and protestant, were tearing each other apart over the issue of such images – whether they could be used in church or not – someone must have hid it in the ground for safe-keeping.

That person understood the great truth that peace may be elusive but it can never be killed.

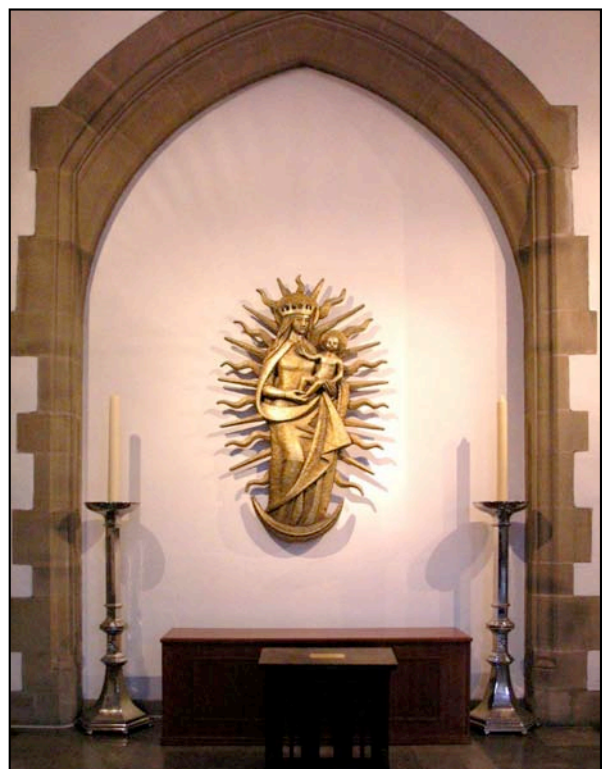
Centuries later, what was a secret long-hidden, as the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, was born again in a grave, a place where peace always has – as the Christian story reminds us – its moments of resurrection.

I'd like, with Canon Naoum's permission, to invite my Muslim colleague and friend, **Anjum Anwar**, whose with me here this morning, and who's the only Muslim working on the staff of a cathedral anywhere in the world – a woman who's helped Christians so much in the north of England to rediscover what it means to be peace-makers – I'd like to ask her to present this cathedral with a reproduction of the pax.



Not, I emphasize, because we're in any lingering colonial fashion somehow bringing peace to you – peace can never be brought that way, a lesson some nations, not least my own, have struggled to learn – no, not to bring peace but because we give thanks daily for the peace that's here already, the pax you've uncovered in this community, the pax that you're struggling to bring to birth here amid the empty tomb of shattered lives and hopes, the pax, the peace, which only comes through the resurrection life you are already living in the world. Thanks be to God.

This edition of the Newsletter is supported financially by the community cohesion, education, outreach and development agency of Blackburn Cathedral, which receive funding from



The Cathedral Friends' Pax in the South Transept

NEW YEAR'S EVE CONCERT BY CANDLELIGHT 2007 by Phil Hunwick

The by-now-familiar trio of **Philippa Hyde, Richard Tanner** and **Tim Barber** were once more united for a most entertaining concert to precede the New Year's Eve revelries. The fact that the North Transept was packed bore witness to the growing popularity of this event and the reputation of its performers.

The concert, lasting just an hour, was easy on the ear but certainly exhausting for the performers. The balance between voice, trumpet and organ was, on the whole, well maintained with Pippa's soaring soprano voice providing a perfect counterbalance to Tim Barber's virtuosity on the trumpet.

The programme included Handel favourites such as *Where'er you walk* and *Let the bright seraphim* but there was also more than a little J.S.B. Richard explained that this had something to do with the theme of his sabbatical term. (In a brief disclosure of *Life with the Tanners* Pippa revealed that in the preceding weeks she had become accustomed to doing her housework to the accompaniment of Bach, as Richard rehearsed on his recently acquired pipe organ.) [See page 21](#)

Soprano, trumpet and organ combined in two of Bach's Chorale Preludes and in Kantate Number 51: *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. One of the Chorale Preludes: *Nun Danket Alle Gott* gave the audience both the opportunity to learn a bit of German pronunciation, courtesy of Pippa, and also to participate in the singing of the Chorale itself.

Richard performed the familiar Bach *d minor Toccata and Fugue* at breakneck speed, revealing afterwards that he hadn't practised it! There was, however, an even more shocking revelation when Mr. Tanner took his bow in full evening dress ... and stocking feet.

(Members of the Cathedral Choir have been known to suggest to organists that they put a sock in it – but putting two socks **on** it is novel to say the least!) RT explained that he had got into the habit of rehearsing on the organ at home first thing in the morning before being fully dressed and that he now found it difficult to manage the pedals while wearing shoes!

Jeremiah Clarke's *Prince of Denmark's March* enabled Tim Barber to delight once more with his virtuosity and the audience were given a further opportunity to participate as the concert ended with the singing of all four verses of *Auld lang syne*.

Most of us, it must be admitted, struggled with some of the words but managed a fair bit of gusto nonetheless. (One hopes that the gist of "We twa hae paidl't i' the burn" is that a couple of us had been known to take shoes and socks off for a paddle rather than to contribute to the stream's waters in some other way!)

The evening was brought to a convivial close with a glass of champagne in the crypt and many Happy New Year wishes.



Richard Tanner's Sabbatical

"Have you enjoyed your holiday?" has been the most frequent question that I've heard recently!

Having had the great privilege of running a succession of boys' choirs continually for eighteen years (Exeter College Oxford, the Bromley Boys Singers and All Saints' Northampton prior to arrival in Blackburn) and having greatly enjoyed the past nine years leading a busy music department with its wide variety of choirs at Blackburn Cathedral, I was very grateful to the Chapter when they agreed that I could have a sabbatical during the Michaelmas Term 2007 in order to focus on my organ playing (specifically to spend time learning music by Bach) as well as using the time creatively to embark on a journey which would include, amongst other things, visits to other Cathedrals and travel to our link Cathedral in Braunschweig, Germany, to find out more about their music programme.

In terms of spending hours at the organ, the timing could not have been better.

Earlier in the year I had commissioned a pipe organ for my house from the Slovenian organ builder, Anton Škrabl, which arrived in July. Happily the organ is absolutely perfect for learning Bach. ([See p. 21](#))



The mechanical action is very sensitive and the 5 stops (built to increase to 8) are beautifully balanced and scaled for learning a whole range of musical styles. It is not an overpowering sound, so the neighbours have nothing to fear! This seems to be the first question that everybody asks when they learn that I have an organ at home.



During the sabbatical I spent many hours at the organ and kept a diary of all my work. As well as spending time re-learning all the Bach that I already played, I also worked on 75 new pieces. Many of these are ready to perform in public, and I have programmed them into the music schedule at the Cathedral between January and Easter this year.

I'm still working on some of the other pieces and I am determined to keep up the momentum of work at the organ, even if I don't have quite so many hours to spare as I did last term. As well as learning Bach's music, I also set about writing a computer database of his chorale preludes, so that an organist can search very quickly for such pieces by title, appropriate liturgical season or BWV number and speedily locate its whereabouts in the Bärenreiter publications of Bach's music.

I was keen to use my time to visit other Cathedrals, to hear various choirs and spend some time talking to colleagues working in a similar field to mine. I am particularly grateful to **James O'Donnell** who welcomed me to **Westminster Abbey** for a few days in December, to attend rehearsals of his stunning choir and spend time talking to him and his assistant, Robert Quinney.



I managed to attend four Advent Carol Services: at **Winchester Cathedral, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and King's College London**. During the term I also visited **Chester, Guildford, Peterborough, St John's Cambridge, Magdalen College Oxford, The Queen's College Oxford, York Minster, Truro Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, St Bartholomew the Great Smithfield and The Temple Church**.



My visit to **Braunschweig** in October was extremely enriching and came just two days after I had the privilege of hearing **Colin Williams**, formerly Archdeacon of Lancaster and now General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, speak at Lambeth Palace about his ecumenical work. Colin had been the facilitator and interpreter during Blackburn Cathedral Choir's visit to Braunschweig in 2004, so it was a happy co-incidence that my trip to Germany in 2007 was preceded with some time with him, which put me in a truly ecumenical frame of mind.

Whilst in Braunschweig, I spent many hours talking to their Director of Music, **Gerd-Peter Münden**, about the amazing vocal work that he is doing with a wide range of age groups, including a recent project in a sports arena which involved him working with **24,000 primary school children**.



I also attended services (playing the organ at two of them) and an extremely moving late night presentation of music, readings and reflection on the anniversary of the bombing of the City (by us) during WW2. In addition there was time for me to spend several rewarding hours playing Bach on the Cathedral's wonderful Schuke/Späth organ. (**Bottom p. 35**)

A week in **Oxford** in November also gave me the opportunity to play Bach on fantastic instruments at **Jesus College, The Queen's College** and **Pembroke College**. It was also an opportunity to experience the wonderful work that our former organ scholar, **Jonathan Turner**, is doing as organ scholar at Lincoln College.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to take rehearsals and conduct two Evensongs with the college Chapel Choir and I was extremely well looked after by Jonathan, **Emily Crewe**, the Chaplain, the choir, and the College which provided me with a lovely flat for the week and a stunning dinner on High Table at the invitation of the Rector.



Emily Crewe & Jonathan Turner

I was delighted to be involved in a very exciting musical project in **Manchester in December, conducting a CD recording** and the first performance at the Royal Northern College of Music of "**The Manchester Carols**" by the eminent poet Carol Ann Duffy and inspirational musician Sasha Johnson Manning. As I started rehearsing singers from three Manchester schools, I realised how much I had missed working with children and I was delighted with the results that they achieved, along with the Northern Chamber Orchestra and a professional group of singers named "The Manchester Carollers". The project has attracted excellent reviews in the national press and I hope that we shall be able to find a way of bringing it to Blackburn one Christmas.

December also saw two foreign trips for me. The first was a return to Germany, to **Leipzig**, where Bach had worked between 1723 and 1750. It was an extremely special opportunity to soak up the environment in which he had worked and to hear part of a rehearsal of the **Christmas Oratorio** in **St Thomas's Church**, where the great composer is buried.

Sadly, it was not possible to stay for the performance itself, but I hope to go back to experience this in the future. My second foreign trip of the month was to **Paris with my family for Christmas**.

On leaving Blackburn on the journey to France, I realised that it was the tenth anniversary of my appointment at the Cathedral and it did feel a little strange to be going away for Christmas, even though it turned out to be a very special time. As a family we based ourselves at Disneyland, but I was able to sneak off to Notre Dame for Midnight Mass, celebrated by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. The Cathedral was absolutely packed full of worshippers and I managed to find a spot in a transept where I could see

the High Altar and choir beyond – but I was standing for three and a half hours! I was very impressed with the singing.



James outside Notre Dame

The Mass featured Mozart's Coronation Mass and "**For unto us a child is born**" by Handel, sung in impeccable English and it was preceded by a recital of choral and organ music for Christmas. Hearing **Poulenc's Christmas motets** sung so beautifully was particularly inspirational.

I finally got to bed at 3.30am, but was determined to go back to Paris for a Christmas morning service at Saint-Louis-en-Île where there is a fabulous new Aubertin organ which I wanted to hear. This turned out to be an excellent place for the family to go to, as it wasn't so crowded as Notre Dame and it had a family atmosphere.

James enjoyed joining in with *Il est né*, which he knows off by heart in French and I was very impressed with the fact that we were provided with a plainsong setting of the Mass, which the congregation sang heartily. It was quite refreshing to have a slightly different diet of carols this year, but I was very glad to hear the Willcocks descant to "**O come all ye faithful**" sung by the choir at Notre Dame!

It was wonderful to return to the Blackburn Cathedral, to play the organ and see so many friends at the New Year's Eve concert that Pippa and I gave with the trumpeter, Tim Barber. (**See p. 35**)

I am writing this report having been back at the Cathedral for just over a week. I am very glad to be back, working once again with the choirs and colleagues that I have missed. However, I am extremely grateful to the Chapter for allowing me this time to develop creatively my own musicianship and also to have space to reflect, gain new enriching experiences and spend some time at home, watching my children develop (something that is difficult to do normally, given the 'out of office hours' nature of our musical work at Blackburn Cathedral).

I am particularly grateful to **James Davy** and **David Scott-Thomas** who have covered so brilliantly for me in my absence and to **Linda Bruce** and **Canon Hindley** for their valuable support to the department, as ever. My colleagues were extremely sensitive at creating the right balance between giving me the necessary space to put the Cathedral as far to the back of my mind as was appropriate, whilst keeping me informed of developments and being in touch with future planning so that returning to work has been smooth, productive, rewarding and enjoyable.

I know that the Cathedral has benefited from their skill and devotion during this time and I very much hope that further benefits will be brought to the Cathedral as a result of the experience that I have gained since September.

So, have I enjoyed my holiday? Hopefully, I have demonstrated that I have not had a holiday, but have spent my time productively in a different way. It has been extremely enjoyable and rewarding and I feel greatly refreshed and re-invigorated for the challenges ahead.

Richard – Welcome back, and well done! Ed

Richard with Bach's statue outside St. Thomas's Church



There's Nothing Like a DAME!

Heartiest congratulations to Richard Tanner's Mother, **DR. MARY TANNER, OBE** President of the World Council of Churches, who will be created a **DAME Commander of the British Empire** at Buckingham Palace on **13th February**.



Printed by the **DELMAR PRESS Ltd.**, Nantwich, CW5 5LS