

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

*Friends of
Blackburn Cathedral
Music*

Newsletter No. 4

and

Blackburn Cathedral Old Choristers Association

Newsletter No. 13

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July, 2003

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CHOIRS' RE-ORGANIZATION by RICHARD TANNER

NB Richard's new e mail address is
rtanner@fairdial.co.uk

I am in the middle of a rethink in the music department, which will enable girls and boys from aged 5 to old age to sing at the Cathedral.



We have started a children's choir. About 25 boys and girls aged 5 - 8 attend a rehearsal in the Song School each

Friday from 4.30 to 5.10. **Pippa** and **Greg** share the leading of rehearsals..



The repertoire is fun, and incorporates musical games. We are aiming to teach basic vocal production, aural skills and an introduction to reading music.

So far this has been really successful; it's a learning process for us all, but it should prove valuable for the future of our Cathedral music.

The Girls Choir currently runs from 11 to 18, with an overlap with YPC. However, we have decided to change this so that the girls' choir will, in future, be a bridge between the children's choir to the YPC, rather like the boys' choir. ie from 8 to 14, then girls will move on to YPC. The Chapter have agreed to this,

Some recent YPC highlights from GREG MORRIS

Palm Sunday

Performance of **Fauré's Requiem** at St Thomas, Barrowford

Tuesday in Holy Week

Dramatic Presentation 'One Friday in Eternity' in conjunction with Blackburn College - they did the acting, we provided most of the music! Despite a rehearsal less than auspicious in places, the final product was excellent, and much praised by the audience. An excellent collaboration. Music included *God so loved the world* and the *Reproaches* by John Sanders.

Easter Day

5-0 am Vigil! Choir in at **4-0 am** practising! Service started with the new fire outside the Cathedral with Dawn breaking. Moved in for Vigil of readings and music, followed by renewal of baptism promises and first Eucharist of Easter. Congregation of about 50 very much enjoyed the experience.

Easter Monday

Joint Evensong at **Durham Cathedral** with Carlisle Cathedral Youth Choir. Included a new introit written for the occasion by local-born composer Andrew Simpson: *Sing unto the Lord*. Also *Blessed be the God and Father* by S. S. Wesley.

Many of the YPC also took part in the recent recording of our highly successful TV *Songs of Praise*.

Forthcoming YPC engagements: (Please support us!)

11th October: Performance of Mozart Vespers at Blackburn Cathedral, with Carlisle Cathedral Youth Choir. 7.30 pm.

25th-26th October: Singing weekend services at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

There's a lot going on with our Cathedral choirs these days! Ed.

GREG MORRIS played a recital at St Paul's Cathedral on Low Sunday, 27th April. His programme included Bach's G major and Franck's 3rd Choral. He also played at Norwich Cathedral (26th May), and Carlisle Cathedral (10th June) and Messiaen's *Messe de la Pentecote* at Blackburn Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday, 8th June. *Well done, Greg!*

Old Choristers' LETTERS to the Editor

From **OC CHARLIE HOPWOOD** in Blackburn

Thanks for the newsletter it was quite interesting although I didn't recognise many of the names mentioned. Of course I recognised **DEREK CROMPTON'S** name although I wouldn't have known him by the photo. I also recognised **GEORGE NICHOLSON** who didn't look any different and **PHIL WILSON** whom I bump into from time to time in the pubs around Revidge. As you will no doubt be aware Phil likes the odd pint of Guinness and participating in pub quizzes which he tends to win on his own. I also occasionally bump into **COLIN HOPWOOD** whilst shopping in Morrison's, and strangely enough only yesterday I saw **IAN HARGREAVES**.

A few details about me!! I am now 49 and don't feel too worried yet about turning 50. As I think I mentioned I work for a local fire safety Co. I have 2 children Stephen is 24 and lives in Accrington with his girlfriend and their baby son, yes I'm a granddad, and my daughter Emma is 21. As you may remember from my demise from the choir I was terribly keen on cricket, and that interest is still very strong, and I still play at Cherry Tree, where I was the steward for 4 years.

I had occasion to go into the old choir room when I was at the Cathedral the other week and found it very nostalgic, particularly seeing the lists of old prefects with my name there in 1966.. I do remember being 1 of the early recipients of the Bishop's chorister medal and also the St. Nicholas award, which if memory serves was received at Westminster Abbey. I remember periods spent at places like Coventry & Ely Cathedrals and the RSCM at Addington. All good memories!!!

Well that's it for now, I now wish I had done a course in typing at school and my typing finger is getting sore

Bye for now take care CHARLIE

From **OC PETER HEALD** in Ely

Dear John:

Many thanks for another splendid-as-ever newsletter. It is always a 'good read' - stimulating the memory and injecting enthusiasm into those who are away from the hub of things

We are definitely planning to be at the Reunion, travelling up on the Friday and staying for two nights at the Millstone *chez votre village*, where **GORDON FIELDING** and **RALPH**

ROBINSON and possibly others usually lodge. All being well, our change of holiday arrangements this year should leave us free to offer the **LAMB** a lift, if he is free and able. I have asked **GORDON** for his 'phone number.

My years as a boy in the choir were (I think) 1945-52/53 - can't remember exactly when I was kicked out, but I'll bet **FRED DEWHURST** has it in his little notebook.

I am being flooded with missives from **GEOFF TAYLOR** about this and that and a BCOCA Directory. My offer to produce one every two years or so still stands, by the way - with the proviso that the up-to-date information is supplied by someone more central.

We trust you are as well as always (apart from last September, that is).

Ever, **PETER & Constance**.

From **OC FRANK HARE** near Malvern

Hello John

Greetings from the Herefordshire/Worcester border. Actually it's raining - first time for weeks.

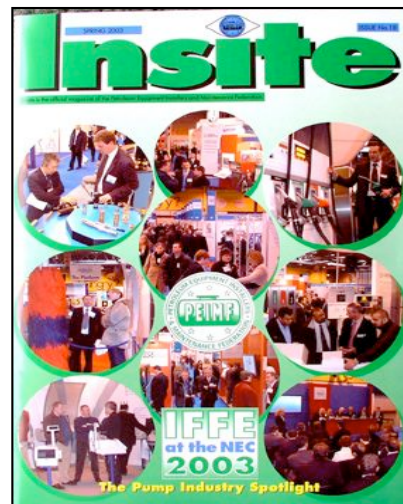
Am still pondering the AGM and Reunion due to my peculiar domestic situation and work. Yes I am still working and likely to be for the rest of my natural time the way the pensions are at the moment - need a stroke of luck - lotto ?

Chris, my wife, says I would die if I wasn't working at least some of the time. She may be right.

Diet still holding well steady at 29 - 31 lbs reduction after 15 months.

Chris still painting (LH of course) - hasn't won any more awards recently - only a matter of time. Always good to read your excellent news letter. It must be very gratifying for you to read just how much the Cathedral experience means to so many boys. They are right to say so .

My magazine, **Insite**, now up to issue 19 i.e. four and half years into the project. I have over thirty advertisers now with a 48 page issue as regular size. I was so lucky to get this opportunity at my exalted age (bus pass in Nov.) which I will do as long as they want me .



As General Secretary of the Petroleum Equipment Installers and Maintenance Federation (PEIMF for short) I was asked to start a high quality magazine to serve the downstream petroleum industry ie retail and other outlets that store and distribute petroleum of all kinds (ie not refineries and exploration). So I did, in 1998 from a standing start - no funds - and no ideas.

I send out 1000 copies read by 4500 - 5000 including 17 overseas companies and orgs. (last

enquiry was from the UKRAINE !!) . As I do this alone I do everything inc. labels, stamps and post plus all the clever bits such a text – articles - getting advertisers, billing, chasing cash etc.

My IT skills have had to improve (didn't exist before), but at my time of life it has come as a great boost to my brain cells . I work from home which is great.

(Frank's magazine is fabulous – full colour, glossy paper, immensely professional – a real winner!. Ed.)

Did another stint as advisor to NEC exhibition we stage every two years which paid for my drains to be connected to the sewerage system !!!!!!! How lovely !! It's taken over 350 years to get this far . Ah that's ow we work round eer - ooh arrrh.

I celebrate 25 years in the petroleum industry next year which is when I left the NW and of course Blackburn. I was in the industrial gas market for 12 years before that so that makes 37 years in the hazardous substances business. Sounds boring but it pays the bills.

Time to fly - but regard to all readers and especially my old mates *Crompers* (**DEREK CROMPTON**), **BERNARD WEST**, **PHIL HUNWICK**, *Keeno*, (**BOB KEEN**) - doesn't he play for Man. Utd ? - **DAVID ROTHWELL**, et al .

Great days - oh and not forgetting those who have gone before us: **Barry Hughes**, **Jack Smethurst**, **Norman Eccleston**, **Jim Smith**, **Billy Bradley** and **Bob Anderson**, They're never far from my mind - all of them . Also the inspiring clergy **Tom Rockley**, **Lawrence Jackson** and **Geoffrey Williams** - we were very lucky to be there.

Also you to old friend - thanks a lot.

Love and best wishes from us both

Frank and Chris

From **OC TIM HALSALL** in Bristol

Dear John

Many thanks for the newsletter: it was very full and a brilliant read!

This is just a quick message (I get married in three days!): I don't know if I can make the reunion as those of us who teach in boarding schools (Clifton College, Bristol) have to work Saturday mornings, which makes driving the 200 miles plus to Blackburn a bit of a nightmare in time for evensong at any rate!!!

I hope all goes well in preparing it though!

Tim Halsall (Choir, 1985 - 92)

Heartiest congrats. Tim, from all of us!

Heartiest congratulations, too, to FRED & Margaret DEWHURST who celebrated their Golden Wedding on the day that **TIM HALSALL** was married. Your roving reporter bumped into them (literally) at Booths in Clitheroe when they were filling up their trolley with mounds of provender for the family party.

From **OC JOHN KEEN** in Nottingham, (son of next year's Senior Old Chorister!)

Thanks for the (as always) impressively lengthy newsletter and the re-union invite. I intend to be there for at least part if not all of the Saturday. Travel and family commitments will prevent a Sunday appearance I'm afraid. Intrigued to know what's on the music list. Maybe you can let me know so that I

can start panicking now about any excessively high alto notes.

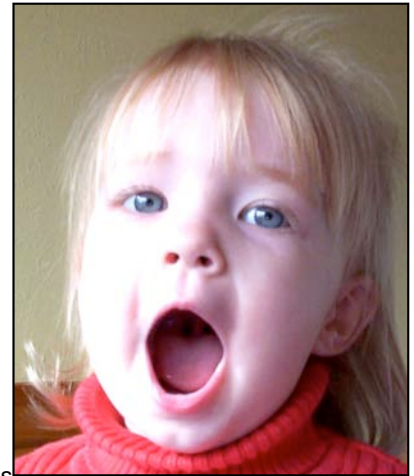
Looking forward to it. May all your hard work and encouragement in rallying the troops lead to a record turn out.

PS I have sent 2 years' worth of subs to **GORDON FIELDING**. . . *(Thanks! Ed.)*

PPS Our daughter '**Emily Kirsten Keen**'

was 2 in May and already she sings her little heart out.

I know I never opened my mouth that wide when singing, she must have picked it up when I showed her the cathedral choir on Songs of Praise in December, either that or her grandfather's been giving her secret singing lessons.



From **JOHN's Dad**, **SOC-Elect**, **BOB KEEN** in Wilmslow

Returned from Paris a week last Monday (11:00 pm) and haven't stopped since with ongoing 60th birthday celebrations. We went to a Bach organ recital at St Eustache Church. Not so much a recital as a pre-mass half hour play. The church was packed and we intended to creep out before the mass. No need to have worried, nearly everybody else did the same thing! There was a mobile nave console with five manuals in a large glass case but he played from high above the west door on the original console.

We also attended the Palm Sunday High Mass at the Madeleine Church. Choir like a typical London professional mixed choir to which I am not partial. Singing was OK, but no hymns at all. Most peculiar. Fine organ playing Bach Chorale Preludes before and after the service. British Airways did their best to give me SARS on the plane home. We sat on board for over an hour breathing in recirculated air and disease while they tried to get their world-wide computer system back up. I'm suffering now with a nasty cough and cold. Such is life.

From **OC Dr. IAN BANKS** in OZ

Before you ask, yes, I have sent my subs off, and paid in advance too... I think. *(Thanks! Ed.)*

Apologies for the time taken to put fingers to keyboard, but spare moments alone with the computer are not common. As well as my and **Ruth's** work, our children take advantage of everything that is presented before them, and in Australia, that means a lot - at the moment there is an overlap between summer and winter sports, and so we have cricket (2 children), soccer (2), swimming (3), football i.e. Australian Rules, (1), basketball (2), dancing (1), chess (2) and choir (more later). There's one child who isn't old enough for

sports. They are all growing up very quickly - physically that is; Australian children don't seem to grow as quickly in other ways, fortunately, as UK children. **Ciarán** is now 10, **Fergal** 7, **Ronan** 5 and **Aidan** 2. Ronan's accent is almost completely Australian, and the older two sound local when they are talking to their mates.

Ruth is well, (*She's a doctor, too. Ed*) and working half-time as an editor at the Australian Medicines Handbook, which collates and evaluates evidence about medicines used in the treatment of diseases, and publishes recommendations. She is hard at work as one of the companion books, with which she has been heavily involved, is due for publication in the next few weeks.

As I think brother **PETER** told you, Ciarán is in his second year in the Australian Youth Choir, and after an introductory year, now sings in the recital choir. In his first year, he sang in three concerts, one with the Vienna Boys' Choir on their Australian tour, and made his first CD (Mum and Dad have a copy). He loves it - he's at one of his twice weekly practices at the moment. Despite all those radio, and a couple of TV broadcasts, I never made a record, so he's already one up on me!

As you have probably gathered, we are very settled here in Adelaide - it's a lovely place to live. We go and watch one of the local Aussie Rules teams (the Adelaide Crows) – it's a fast and skillful game, and there is a great atmosphere at the matches. We went to see England play cricket at the Adelaide Oval test match in November, with Ciarán and Fergal, with one supporting Australia and one supporting England. I am diplomatically saying that I went for the cricket. I have taken on a teaching and training role as part of my work at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. However, I still "do" as well as "teach". Hopefully the teaching bit will help me keep ahead of the game. Still when you teach and examine, you get to ask the questions to which you already know the answers!

Of course we get all the news about the Cathedral from Mum and Dad. (*"Dad" is Churchwarden, Keith Banks. Ed*). I do appreciate getting the OC news, (how do you manage to get photographs of **DEREK CROMPTON** ?) and note with interest that OCs get all over the place. It doesn't necessarily mean that getting to the reunions is feasible though!

We hope that you are keeping well,
Best wishes,
Ian, Ruth, Ciarán, Fergal, Ronan and Aidan

From **OC IAIN THOMPSON** in Cheshire
JB:

Please add me to the list of those who will be there for the Reunion Even-song on Saturday. I think we will probably visit my mum in the evening, but will be around for the other parts of the Saturday agenda. Here's an old picture for you! (*taken when you & I visited Niagara Falls*)



FROM Dean Emeritus DAVID FRAYNE in Dorset:
Our recently recruited **Clerical Network Correspondent**

John

Very many thanks for yet another splendid and news-filled publication. You deserve (and hopefully have received) the grateful thanks of very many of us "old boys" as well as those who are still "on the spot"! The photos of **Liz** and me have come out well and would, I suspect, have intrigued one or two!

Last week I went to London for a (retired) Clergy Widows Officers' conference. I came across The Revd **JOHN SHORROCK** who was in the Cathedral choir with (Archdeacon) **DAVID ROBINSON**. He lived as a kid in Sunny Bower, Blackburn (or Darwen?), went to QEGS and went on to be curate of Fleetwood and Mereside (Blackpool) before being Vicar of St George's Chorley from 1971-78. He then went to Canterbury Diocese where he is now in retirement (so my 2001 Crockford tells me!) he might be worth following up for BCOCA purposes. We had a very animated conversation about Blackburn life in the days of **TLD** and Provost **WK**!

We're glad to know about the New Lancashire Bach Choir - good luck with this venture. We are off to the Festival Hall this coming (Palm) Sunday for the St Matthew Passion. The last time we went to this was just before I was ordained in 1960. I've had to "work" on every Palm Sunday ever since!

Thank you again - love from us both
DAVID

MEMORIES OF 'TLD'

Mr. Thomas L. Duerden, Mus. Bac.,
Organist and Master of the Choristers
of Blackburn Cathedral, 1939-64
*from a booklet published by BCOCA
and available from the cathedral office*

Episode 3

HALF A CENTURY AGO

by **OC Squadron Leader BRYAN LAMB**
who joined the cathedral choir as a boy in 1942
and served in the RAF

In September 1945 I had my appendix out and my voice broke; simultaneous occurrences, but probably not connected. I was suddenly out of the choir.

TLD decided that my voice should be rested, so I was promoted (or relegated, depending on how you look at it) to the ranks of the servers. The Cathedral servers in those days were a decidedly holy bunch, inclined to be "High Church" and always glad of a whiff of incense wherever it could be sniffed. Some were quite odd. For a time, thankfully short, I also became "holy" in outlook too and even contemplated eventual ordination. Whew! Much to my later relief, I soon discovered that my "vocation" was spurious and subsequently, that driving aeroplanes was a far more appropriate occupation for a person of my disposition.

Whilst trapped in the servers' group, one Sunday morning, I had a dramatic altercation with Provost Kay. It was the purple temper again. After the 9.15 am Eucharist, it was customary to unroll a heavy blue cloth to cover the white linen one, on the very large wooden high altar before the beginning of Matins. It was the servers' job to do this and the cloth had to hang symmetrically over each end. I got it about two inches up at one end and ditto down at the other.

A passing-by and eagle-eyed Provost Kay noticed this incompetence and I was duly berated. I think my response was probably moderately flippant. Up rose the purple rage and I was summarily ordered off "my" altar. When I intimated that I didn't know it was his, that did it! The fellow went ballistic.

I was ordered out of "his" Cathedral and pointed to the direction of the west door with an outstretched arm and forefinger reminiscent of Moses dividing the Red Sea. I retreated in haste, cast out into outer darkness, even though it was Sunday morning.

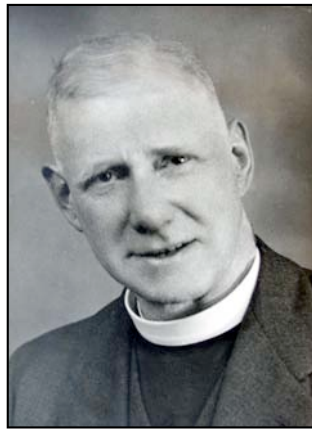
The Sacrist, **JOHN MULLINEAUX** (another marvellous personality) comforted the weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. But after these rather over-the-top clerical fireworks, the Provost and I got on very well. I last saw him in 1970 when I visited him with my wife and daughter (then two) at his retirement home in Brockenhurst.

TLD had me back in the choir as a tenor when I was seventeen. I would usually stand next to **HAROLD FIELDING**, the father of my good friends **PETER** and **GORDON**, to learn the ropes. Looking back over these teenage years, I think I probably regarded TLD as something of a surrogate father figure, my biological one being a permanent absentee. When I was appointed Head Boy at QEGS in 1950, my first reaction was to ring him up and tell him. He was astonished. That made two of us!

I continued to sing as a tenor until I left QEGS to go to Leeds University. Prior to my going there, TLD put in an immense effort to train me up for an attempt at a choral scholarship at King's College, Cambridge. In the event I let him down, but with fifty or so blokes competing for two tenor places, I was thoroughly out-classed. Really I was never sufficiently musical or clever enough to go there.

During the vacations from Leeds and in later years when on leave from the RAF, I would be allowed to sing in the choir, provided I could get to the Friday rehearsal. It was a great joy to be able to do this and an equal sorrow when it no longer became possible.

My last deep immersion in the life of the Cathedral was during my time as a Leeds undergraduate. During one of the summer vacations, I landed a job as a labourer with the Liverpool-based organ-building firm, Willis & Co. They had been contracted to dismantle the organ of those days, then situated above the main west door, to clean it and then re-assemble all the bits between the two transept arches over the choir. This was 1953. It was moved yet again in the late 1960s. The innards of the old organ were covered with black



oily cotton-industrial Blackburnian soot, accumulated over many decades. Taking it to pieces was a desperately filthy job. Although descended from the great unwashed, I had never been so dirty. Every day I emerged from the Cathedral looking like something from the Black and White Minstrel Show, but without the white gloves. It was interesting work although my most important function was to act as bookie's runner for Charlie, the organ craftsman and foreman. I was also the unofficial intelligence agent for the Provost who found it useful to have one of his own men on the team.

Over the subsequent years and until his death, TLD and I remained in contact, although much of the time I was serving overseas. Even when based in the UK, I was always flying my four-engined monsters all over Europe, the Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa. I was seldom in Blackburn. With one letter sent to me in 1963 when I was commanding RAF Salalah, a large staging-post airfield on the Indian Ocean coast of Oman, TLD enclosed a photograph of himself ranged behind a row of flower



pots, with the inscription on the back: "*I call to remembrance my song*". It remains a treasured possession.

TLD will live in my memory for ever, and not just mine. His enormous personality had the most profound effect on all my generation of Cathedral boys. It is a tribute to his memory that so many of us are still linked.

Bryan Lamb 2003

PS to BRYAN's wonderful memories, from OC MICHAEL HAMM in West Kirby. (See pp. 6, & 10)

Here's a photo which was taken by one of the local papers in about 1945-6 I would think [from **OC PAUL FIELDING**]. You'll notice the stage the building had reached when work was stopped due to the war - and also the snow on the ground!!

It is also interesting to see who the four choir prefects were at the time, **ALAN HOLDEN, DAVID ROBINSON, LESLIE STONE & PETER FIELDING** on either side of **TLD**. Incidentally I was interested to see my name on the prefects' board (1948) in the Song School when my choir came to sing evensong last year. through our Old Choristers' Association, resurrected for us by his most worthy successor, John Bertalot. We have all gone our separate ways, but still return regularly to renew the warmth of friendship forged under the influence of our old mentor. We owe him a great deal. Best wishes **Michael Hamm**



Blackburn Cathedral Choir, 1946 (*Notice the incomplete transepts and snow on the ground.*)

Back row: Peter Nixon, **Michael Wilkinson**, (RIP), **John Highton**, Alan Hodgson, Arthur Howarth, Harold Fielding, George Armistead

3rd row **Bryan Lamb** (with banner) Archdeacon Newman, George Ferrier, Stanley Hitchen, **Prefect Allan Holden**, Mr. Jenkins, **Prefect David Robinson** (RIP, Archdeacon), TLD, Prefect Leslie Stone, Mr. Hallows, **Prefect Peter Fielding**, Tom Robinson, Tom Hitchen, Revd. Leslie Ward, Precentor A. C. F. Davies, Crucifer John Shorrocks

2nd Row: Donald Jose, Walter Duxbury, ? Terence Oddie, **Gordon Fielding**, John Fowler, **Geoffrey Taylor**, Leslie Cunningham, ?, ?, ?, Chris Kingston, Robert Gradwell, **Michael Hamm**.

Front Row: **Ralph Robinson**, **Eddie Howarth**, ? (Red hair), John Bancroft, **Tony Robinson**, ? Trevor Monk,Duxbury, Peter Gradwell, Kenneth Ormerod, Eric Bancroft,Porter

The two Hitchen brothers ran a wholesale grocery firm in Accrington. They supported the cathedral cricket club and when choristers watched their matches, they were invited back for tea – which was lavish, and greatly appreciated in this post-war period of food rationing.

Current OCs in bold italics.

**Archdeacon Emeritus
OC DAVID ROBINSON
R.I.P.**

DAVID sent a long hand-written letter to the editor in April, which we print below, about some of his contemporaries who were in the choir in 1946. But two months after sending it he died. This news came as a great shock to us all for we had enjoyed his company at **PROVOST JACKSON'S** Memorial Service in the Cathedral in January. David was in terrific form on that occasion – so full of life and joy.

His lovely voice always added grace to what he said – and he was such a wise counsellor and very good friend to us all. He was a past SOC and cared deeply for BCOCA, as the following letter shows. We send our deepest condolences and love to **Carol**. May the many messages of sympathy and support which she has received enable her to bear the loss of such a wonderful man.

Here's his letter in its entirety – it shows how much he cared for BCOCA and what a tremendous influence the cathedral choir had on his life.

How time can affect the memory! But I can fill in a few of the gaps in this photograph – a copy of which hangs in my home.

Back row: **Peter Nixon** went to Balliol, Oxford and then Mirfield before ordination. He spent most of his ministry in the South West of England. His family were Plymouth Brethren.

Michael Wilkinson: [RIP – see page 10] we met up in the RAF for a short time. He was a Flying Officer, I was one rank below him. After a career with ICI he became Diocesan Secretary of Portsmouth.

John Highton is a current and active member of BCOCA – living in Blackburn and a staunch Rotarian. He was a stalwart member of St. James', Blackburn when I was Vicar there.

Alan Hodgson – after Cambridge he went into banking and became a very senior executive – was it Barclay's?

Arthur Howarth – a fine alto (he was still a member in JB's early days). He had a stall in Blackburn market.

Harold Fielding – founder of the present Fielding clan and a superb tenor! In my student days I got a vacation job as a labourer in a building firm where Harold worked as a joiner.

George Armistead was a headmaster – Longshaw Primary School, I think. He lived in Mellor. A superb gentle disciplinarian.

Third row: **Archdeacon Newman** has a room named after him in Whalley Abbey.

George Ferrier was uncle to the great Kathleen Ferrier. (TLD's wife was also a Ferrier). George was headmaster of Christchurch, C of E School.

Tom Hitchen, brother of **Stanley**, was a fine tenor.

The two clergy: I used to serve for **Leslie Ward** at the 7.30 am communion on Tuesdays (fasting, of course!) I took sandwiches in my satchel and Mrs. Ward brewed me a cup of tea in their kitchen in St. Mary's House.

A. C. F. Davies used to go slightly off key when intoning the Versicles. This caused Provost Kay to show agony on his face. I will recount to you privately the story of another of their many spats.

John Shorrocks (with the cross) was ordained. Curacies at Fleetwood and Lancaster. Vicar of Mereside, then Minor Canon of Canterbury. Back here to be Vicar of St. George's, Chorley, and then back to be an incumbent in Kent.

Chris Kingston ordained, various posts in this Diocese and then to Exeter. His father, Norman Kingston, was my organist and choirmaster at St. James, Blackburn for 10 years. Norman had a habit of wandering into my vestry before a wedding or a funeral and looking at the names of the people concerned. He would then try to weave something appropriate into his pre-service voluntaries. The highlight for me was when the bride was a Miss MacNamara. Did anyone, other than myself, detect that whilst the fingers were playing a Bach Fugue, the feet were playing "*MacNamara's Band*"!

I had left the choir before the extensions were opened and so only remember singing in the nave. TLD had to be very skilful as there was a time lag of about 2 seconds between organ at the West and choir at the East.,

How did I come to be in the choir? I attended St. Silas School. The top class was taught by Miss Middleton. She didn't like me and I didn't like her. She was in charge of the choir at St. Silas church which, in those days, sang 2 anthems per Sunday and settings of the canticles. Being a teacher at the school gave her the opportunity to recruit choirboys. I clearly did not impress. Her opinion was that I had "a mouth like a letterbox and a voice like a corn-crake." Such was her unchallenged authority that she was surely right.

With this opinion of my ability I went on to QEGS. **TLD** was recruiting and our first music lesson with him consisted of each boy in the form singing a verse of a song. At the end of the lesson he kept me behind as he wrote a note which he sealed and gave to me saying, "Give this to your Father."

I dreaded taking it home as it probably contained an even worse version of Miss Middleton's opinion of my singing. It was solemnly opened and contained the opinion that I had a good singing voice, and would Father consider allowing me to join the choir at the Cathedral as a probationer.

The rest, as they say, is history. One of the things we learned was to keep singing and keep a straight face whatever the circumstances.

There is a hymn containing the words "Wolves devour thy fold." Imagine singing this the morning after the Rovers had been comprehensively beaten by the Wolves!

If I continue I shall write a book and there isn't time. I hope my corrections and gap-filling serve your purpose.

With best wishes,

DAVID

**David – Every memory of you is beautiful.
May angels sing thee to thy rest.**

It's so good to hear that **PETER CROWTHER** has now fully recovered from his heart problem of last year. **GORDON FIELDING** tells us that Peter's mother, **Edna**, who died in February as a dedicated choir mum even brought the children, i.e. **PETER** and **MIKE**, back from holiday early so as not to miss the Sunday services. To the rest of us in the choir at that time, they were known as 'big crow' and 'little crow'.

Peter intends to join with us at the reunion this year. He recently attended morning service at BC, with the memories flooding back. He was there for the interment of his mother's ashes in the Columbarium. It will be good to have Peter with us again.

Have you wondered what **RICHARD TANNER** does when he's not conducting our choirs? These extracts from his diary will help you unwonder:

April 2003

24 - 26 Tutor on a Guild of Church Musicians course in Winchester Cathedral
26 Briggs/Marshall concert at Cathedral
27 Renaissance Singers Dinner at, Ribchester

May

1 Direct Daily Service on BBC live Radio
2 Accompany Pippa for Songs of Praise (SOP) sound recording
4 Write an arrangement for SOP
5 Conduct Songs of Praise. Ren.Singers/Girls Choirs at Cathedral
8 Play Daily Service on BBC live Radio and produce Organ CD for Chris Stokes in Manchester Cathedral. *A view of Richard :producing :-*



- 9 Children's Choir starts
- 13 Audition and appoint new organ scholar (**Alex Davies** – see page 12)
- 13 Take rehearsal for Manchester Chamber Choir
- 14 Play Daily Service, on BBC live Radio
- 15 Address Chapter about Girls' Choir, Boys sing Evensong and give short concert at St Paul's Brookhouse Give a talk to NSMs and OLMs for Bishop of Lancaster. (*Bizzee day – Ed.*)
- 17 Conduct Poulenc/Faure Concert
- 18 Party for boys' parents at the Deanery
- 19 Take rehearsal for Manchester Chamber Choir
- 20 Meeting of Cathedrals' Liturgy and Music Group at Southwark Cathedral
- 21 Direct Daily Service on BBC live Radio
- 24 Music Advisor for SOP at Selby Abbey
- 27 Play Daily Service (then to London)
- 28 Filming Songs of Praise in London
- 29 Ascension Day service
- 31 Music Advisor for SOP in Ilkley

June

- 3 Lunch meeting with local primary school heads
- Music dept meeting, Manchester Chamber Choir Rehearsal
- 4 Manchester Chamber Choir Rehearsal
- 7 Manchester Chamber Choir Concert at Blackburn
- 11 Direct Daily Service on BBC live Radio
- 14 Recital at Cathedral
- 16-18 Produce Record for Ch Ch, Cathedral, Oxford
- 17 Recital with Pippa in Hertfordshire
- 19 Direct Daily Service on BBC live Radio
- 20/21 Produce Briggs organ record at Blackburn
- 21 Renaissance Singers' summer concert
- 23-25 Produce Record of Manchester Cathedral Choir
- 26 Direct Daily Service on BBC live Radio. Ordination
- 29 Present an hour's programme on BBC Radio Lancashire
- 29 BCOCA Committee meeting after Evensong
- 30 Play daily service on BBC live Radio

July

- 1 Recital at Sheffield Cathedral
- 2 Play Daily Service on BBC live Radio
- Recital at St Asaph Cathedral
- 3 Play Daily Service on BBC live Radio
- Recital with Pippa in Oxford
- 8 Lunch meeting with local primary school heads
- 9 Manchester Chamber Choir Rehearsal
- 13 Manchester Chamber Choir Concert at the Buxton Festival
- 19 Bishop's Farewell service
- 20 Boys' trip to Alton Towers
- 21-27 Renaissance Singers in Dublin
- 31-August 19 Holiday in Spain with Pippa and James.

How does he find time (and energy!) to do all this? Ed

MORE LETTERS FROM OCs

From **OC NIGEL POTTS** in the USA
Dear Friends,

You may be interested to hear that I played an all Percy Whitlock Program on American's National Public Radio 'Pipedreams' on Sunday 25 May 2003, just one week before Whitlock's 100th Birthday. This included the First movement of the Sonata which was recorded at my Degree Recital in Woolsey Hall at Yale in 2001. See

<http://www.pipedreams.org>

With best wishes, Nigel P

From **OC GRENVILLE ROBINSON** in Los Angeles:

My, my ... it must have been a very long time since we last saw each other. How do you explain what must be 20 years!!!!

[It's more! Ed]

Gren Robinson as a boy (bottom right) singing with **David Robinson** (left, no relation, and not our OC Archdeacon), with Head Chorister **Phil Wilson** towering above them, during **JB's** early days at the cathedral, thirty-nine years ago!



I sort of fell out with BCOCA when the issue of the Girls NOT being included came up. I don't seriously think, "When their voices break" was really a suitable response, so I lost touch. (*This has now been rectified, Ed.*)

In October 1997 I moved out here, initially staying with friends, and re-married in 2000. I have not set foot out of the US since. I joined the Wells Fargo Company as a mortgage processor, and moved fairly quickly into Sales Support and Administration. I have only recently joined Wells Fargo Private Mortgage Banking, but the move, although lateral, shows infinite possibilities for promotion.

I find it quite amazing to think that you probably know the area in which we live quite well. The Crystal Cathedral in Orange County is roughly half way between home and work. (*Yes, I do! I led a week's choral workshop for them and also conducted their choir on worldwide TV – to over 100 countries! JB.*)

Teri, my new wife, has two grown sons of her own, and upon our marriage I became a grandfather!!. **Lee** the older of the two works for US Customs, and **Logan**, the younger is in Junior College, and has just started part-time with Wells Fargo Bank! As Teri works for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage as well, it is quite a family business.

Since Mum's passing I have had virtually no contact with Blackburn. My only true contact with UK remains my finest friend **OC GRAHAM BEAUMONT**. He and his wife **Lynne** celebrated their silver wedding just before last Christmas. Graham continues to work in the

realm of 'virtual' education systems and does a marvelous job! His wife works for the City of Birmingham as a consultant of the Gifted-child education program.

All-in-all, life is treating us all reasonably well. the old "craggy" face now sports a small goatee, and a very bald pate!

Should you see any of the old faces, do give them my best.

Good wishes to you from the "flesh-pots" of Southern California!

Gren

PS my regular email address is EdinBD@aol.com

From Mrs. **MARGARET SIMPSON** in Ripon.

Many thanks for the Old Choristers' Newsletter. I appreciated the photo of **BRYAN LAMB**, and **PETER & GORDON FIELDING**. They really haven't changed since I met them in 1949!

I will be there in spirit for Broadcast Choral Evensong this week from Blackburn, although knitting and sewing at the same time!

THE FIELDING CLAN . . .

. . . gave a concert in St. Michael's Church, Highgate, on Saturday, 28th June. Fielding participants included: **ROBERT**, **MARK**, **HILARY**, **SACHA** (Hilary's daughter) and **PETER**. Proceeds were given to the North London Hospice where **Ruth Fielding** was cared for so tenderly. Reports on the concert are still awaited – but, knowing how talented the Fieldings are, it must have been a great occasion and a Wow of a success!

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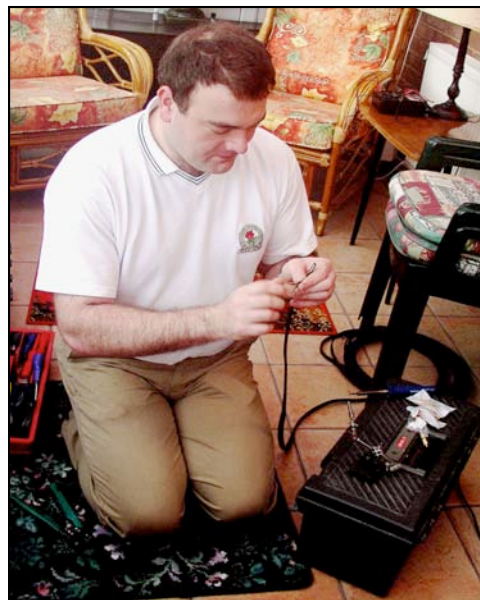
OC ANTHONY TATTERSALL paid a visit to your Editor recently – to get JB's computer whizzing along even more efficiently – not least to record CDs. He's a wizz himself at this ('No, I'm not!' he said). 'Tatt' not only sings a splendid alto in the cathedral choir ('I wish I could stand next to **DEREK CROMPTON** again – he's hilarious!) and makes CDs

– 'I made some for **OC NIGEL SPEAK** and also do lighting for shows', but in his spare time he works for a living.

'Tatt' studied paper science – the manufacture of paper – and getting himself a B.Sc. in the process, is now Utilities manager for a paper mill in Burnley – which entails not only looking after the utilities budget but also leading research projects.

When he's not working, or caring for his garden ('I've got a great crop of carrots, spinach and parsnips right now') or being a family man – **Kerry** is a personnel manager in Burnley and young **Matthew** is now 2.5 – he conducts his own small, hand-picked choir called Octavius – which had, of course, eight singers, now has nine, and soon will have ten!

'We sing anywhere – for services in the cathedral, or for parties in hotels. We recently gave a 70s' Evening in Whitehall Country Club, Darwen – with music by Abba, Queen and Elton John. Choirman **ED McCULLOUGH** sings with us, and so does **Marilyn Crompton**.'



'Tatt' joined the cathedral choir in JB's time – 1979 – along with his brother **PETER**, and also **JOHN SHAW**. 'Peter's now living in your former neck of the woods, in Princeton, New Jersey,' he said as he soldered some leads for JB, 'He's a Ph.D. and so is his wife, Lindsay. They're both research chemists for pharmaceutical companies, and they have a baby, Joanne, born in February.'

'Tatt' is a great guy with a great heart.

STUNNING DUO BATTLE

DAVID BRIGGS – the brilliant consultant for the rebuilding of our cathedral organ (and former organist of Gloucester Cathedral, who gave his very first recital, at the age of 14, in Blackburn Cathedral!) and **WAYNE MARSHALL** – former chorister of Manchester Cathedral and now organist of the Bridgewater Hall, gave a stunning recital in Blackburn Cathedral in April.

Our Walker-Wood organ was paired with an equally loud *Viscount* digital organ – to hear them played together *fortissimo* was almost more than flesh and blood could stand! It's surprising that no glass fell from the Lantern Tower!

Their programme began with Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor* – which went along happily, turn and turn about, until the last page, when each recitalist, in turn, improvised cadenzas – which lasted for well over five minutes each. Bach would have been proud to have composed such music – but he would have had to have widened his technique by knowing the music of Mendelssohn, Wagner, Widor, Vierne and Messiaen! Our cathedral hasn't heard anything like it before! The large audience just wouldn't stop clapping afterwards!



Our organists even cajoled the audience to sing three Easter hymns – accompanied, again *fortissimo*, by two organs. *‘It was just like a normal Sunday morning!’*, commented **PHIL HUNWICK**, hoarsely afterwards.

The programme continued in this breath-taking way for over 2 hours – we thought that their dazzling brilliance couldn't be exceeded – but we were wrong. The duo finished with an improvised duet on organ and piano (each taking turns at the two instruments – quasi musical benches - without a break), which was so stunning that no words can describe the effect it had on us. It was a privilege to have been there. If you missed it you don't know what you missed!

Afterwards **DAVID BRIGGS** commented, *‘Yes, it was an amazing evening, wasn't it? The Blackburn Organ just seems to be improving all the time - you particularly notice it when you haven't heard it for a few months!’*

SOC's FLOWER POWER

That same morning, Saturday 28th April, Senior Old Chorister **PHIL CARR** held a successful plant sale in the Cathedral Close helped by his chorister son, **MICHAEL**, and sister **Christina**, and his wife **Sue**.

DEAN CHRISTOPHER stopped by to lend his support and the sun shone on us all. The sale was in aid of the Song School renovation (a long-term plan!)

PHIL told your editor that he is now into driving a 40-ton truck – which he owns. *‘I carry anything from porridge in bulk to tractors,’* he said. *‘The hours are long,’* he added; *‘Friday was a 15 hour day, and I travel all over the North of England.’* But he seems to thrive on it – being, in his spare time, an

efficient usher at the cathedral. (Photo: Michael, Phil & the Dean)



MICHAEL WILKINSON R. I. P.

We were so very saddened to learn of the sudden death of **OC MICHAEL WILKINSON** in May. He had just been on a visit to York and returned home seemingly hale and hearty . . . but it was not to be.

Michael was a great supporter of BCOCA – he was Senior Old Chorister for our 25th Anniversary year – and gave us his cap badge (TLD's choristers always wore caps – with the colour of the badge denoting whether they were Dec or Can!). Michael joined the choir in the late 1930s and was promoted to Prefect in 1943. He carried on when his voice broke to sing in the men's choir. He can be seen in the 1946 photo on page 6. He became an executive of I.C.I. and was Diocesan Secretary for the Diocese of Portsmouth. He will be greatly missed.

We send our deepest sympathy to **Anne** – OCs who knew him may care to write to her at Beacon House, MEONSTOKE, Hants, SO32 3NS

Here's part of one of the Cathedral Prefects' Boards in the Song School with MICHAEL's and DAVID ROBINSON's names, and other well-known OCs.

CATHEDRAL 1923 - 1959	
1940	Ernest Stancliffe Harold Stancliffe John G. Wood
1941	L. Alan Donelan
1942	John G. Harwood Alan Hodgson J. Michael Wilkinson
1943	Peter Fielding John P. Highton John M. Shorrocks
1944	David Robinson Leslie Stone
1945	Gilbert Hindle Alan D. Holden
1946	Gordon Fielding Ralph N. Robinson
1947	Walter Duxbury Edward J. Haworth
1948	Michael E. Hamm

Another letter from OC PETER HEALD in Ely

Dear John: (*Re Michael Wilkinson*)

You know - this is just what old boys' associations are really all about - keeping people in touch - and so many thanks for your enthusiasm in achieving it. I was a bit too young to have known Michael, joining about three years after his head prefect-ship, but his reputation was strong in the days of my youth and I have met him occasionally since.

Bad news is that I have been finally told that my stiff leg is permanent, but the good news is that I qualify for adaptations to a vehicle, so I'm ordering one tomorrow - with left-foot drive for me and right-foot drive for Constance - so 'I' will be driving up in September. Makes a nice change. And I've recently signed up my second publishing consultancy, so the transport will be useful.

Trust you are as well as we are - and enjoying this weather! Almost too good to believe. Never seen so much sun in March, April and May.

All good wishes.

Ever,

Peter & Constance.

From **OC STEPHEN RICKERBY** en route to Cypress.

Dear John:

I'm aware that I have been a difficult one to track down, for which many apologies. I have been meaning to write for a long time now, but in common with many other people my life has been extremely busy, and I am not much in the UK these days...

So, where to begin?

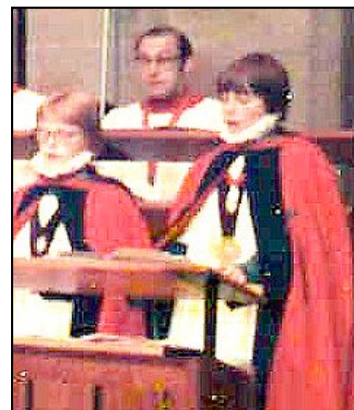
I am now very happy with my long-time partner, **Lisa**. We are based in London, and are very fortunate in also working together as partners in our rather odd profession: as wall painting conservators. We have our own business, working throughout the country in medieval churches and historic buildings, but mostly we work abroad. We are currently involved in long-term projects in China, Malta, Cyprus, India and Egypt, and have also worked in Georgia (ex-USSR), the US, Mexico, Spain, and elsewhere. We should be in China right now - we have been working on a project for the last four years to conserve some Tang Dynasty wall paintings at the Buddhist cave temples in Mogao in NW China at the edge of the Gobi Desert - but because of the SARS virus our campaign was postponed. On Monday, we leave to work in Cyprus for six weeks on another project, in a Byzantine church up in the mountains.

It's an exciting life, and we love it, even though in the last five years it means we have spent, on average, about nine months of each year abroad. So, it's been important also to establish a home, even if we see little of it!

We've just finished completely overhauling our London apartment, which becomes a restful bolt-hole after all our travels. Over the past few years we've also spent a lot of time working in Malta, and to our surprise out of all the places we've worked it has become to feel like a second home. So, last year we bought a property there (in beautiful Valletta, overlooking the Mediterranean). It's currently little more than a building site, but we have high hopes of next Christmas in Malta! When it's finished you're welcome to

come and stay, and get a personal tour around the cultural sites of Valletta.

[Photo of Head Chorister Stephen Rickerby in November 1977, when he sang at the final consecration of the Cathedral in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. Next to Stephen is Prefect Neil Carruthers, who is also a world traveller (Neil's son,



Callum, is a current cathedral chorister). Behind them is alto, Bob Keen, soon to be our new SOC.]

In a very significant way, I know the choirboy training I received under you has greatly shaped and disciplined my life. My work now is very much a passion, in a way not too dissimilar to the passion that music was to me as a choirboy. I bring to my work a passion and discipline that I certainly acquired as a choirboy, and I owe you a huge debt of thanks for that.

Unfortunately, I've not been able to attend any of the recent BCOCA reunions as we're always in China at that time of the year, making travel to Blackburn a little difficult... But I'm always delighted to read the news of Old Choristers, and your editorship of the newsletter is a breath of fresh air and much appreciated! Keep it up! I'll try my utmost to make future reunions.

As ever, Stephen

Dr (?) Indra Hughes in NZ

Hello John

I thought it was time I dropped you a line - it's been a while. I do enjoy receiving your newsletters. As you can imagine it's been a hectic time here over Easter with various performances with my choir Musica Sacra here in Auckland, including the first performance of a large new Passion, "The Servant", written specially for us by David Griffiths, a New Zealand composer. It's for choir, soloists and 2 string quartets (no organ) - so quite an unusual but effective scoring, and instead of setting one of the Gospels it sets Isaiah 53 - quite a clever idea. We're off on tour around the North Island later this month.

Check out my website

<http://www.musicasacra.org.nz>

Anyway the real reason I am writing is to tell you that (assuming I pass everything) I am to be a Doctor of Music! - or strictly speaking a "*Doctor of Musical Arts*". It's a brand new degree at the University of Auckland and I will be the first person to do it. Half of it is a thesis (which I'll do on Bach, of course!), and the other half is a series of performances over three years ranging from solo recitals, chamber recitals and concerto work with orchestra.



The first of these assessed recitals is coming up in less than a month at the Auckland Town Hall - Bach's Passacaglia and the whole of Widor V - so as you can imagine the pressure is on. I don't know if the doctoral robes will be as glamorous as yours, but I think it will be well worth doing. Please do pass on my greetings to all at the Cathedral. I'd love to be able to come to play the new organ some time soon. And I'd be glad to hear from any OCs on conductor@musicasacra.org.nz. All best as ever – Indra

Indra was a member of the cathedral choir from 1985 - 1987 when he went up to Oriel College, Oxford, as Organ Scholar having studied the organ with DAVID COOPER. He was back at BB in 1992. During that time he conducted the Renaissance Singers as well as doing quite a lot for the cathedral in conjunction with DAVID GOODENOUGH towards the end of DC's reign. Indra left for Auckland in 1995 to become organist of their new cathedral.

GORDON STEWART and his RSCM Millennium Youth choir were featured in a superb TV Songs of Praise in March. It was filmed at St Michael and All Angels, Croydon (where Michael Fleming is organist).



Also that Sunday morning Gordon was accompanying a live broadcast service from Catterick camp – which he found very moving because so many of the congregation had relations who were, at that moment, fighting in Iraq.

From **OC LAURA MITCHELL** – ex Girls' Choir & YPC

I am now at Leeds university doing a music degree. I'm currently working on a project about ceremonial music and have chosen to feature your composition '*Thy Word is a Lantern*', as I heard it at the ceremony when I was singing with the Girls' Choir, and I really enjoyed it! I would be extremely grateful if you could email me with any background information about this piece.

e.g., inspirations, musical structure etc, and how you came about composing such a successful piece? My email address is jha2lm@leeds.ac.uk.

Many thanks, **Laura Mitchell**.

Our brilliant Organ Scholars

As we bid farewell and give our thanks to **JONATHAN CLINCH** our present organ scholar, who will be taking up his organ scholarship at Keble College, Oxford in September, we greet our new organ scholar, **ALEX DAVIES**, who will succeed him.

Alex went to Blundell's School, in Devon, (his home is in Dorset), he then spent a year at Southampton University, and is now completing his post-graduate diploma at Trinity College, London, where he has already earned himself a laudable Bachelor of Music degree!

Throughout his brief, but already brilliant career he has earned himself a fistful of prizes and organ scholarships, and has given many recitals in London.

Among the organist fraternity he is unique, perhaps, in the variety and number of his interests: He was Garden Party Manager at Westminster Abbey where his duties included liaising with caterers, drinks suppliers, music bands and garden staff. He played Rugby and Cricket for his school, and Hockey for school and university and he holds a Welsh Hockey Union coaching certificate. He enjoys water sports – wind surfing, sailing and water skiing, and when he's in pensive mood he fishes for salmon and sea trout.

Blackburn, watch out!



Your Editor was honoured last month when he was made an honorary **Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music** at an RSCM Festival Service in Coventry Cathedral

He was especially thrilled to receive this Award as past Fellows include his predecessors at St. Matthew's Northampton (Dr. **Alec Wyton** who became Organist of St.

John the Divine Cathedral, New York), **T. L. DUERDEN** (Blackburn, of course) and Dr. **James Litton** (Princeton). Not forgetting his equally distinguished successor-but-one at Blackburn, **GORDON STEWART!** It has a stunning hood!

A SUPA HEAP* OF OLD CHORISTERS will be coming to our fun-filled and nostalgia-filled Annual Reunion on September 13-14th. Lunch, then singing together for Choral Evensong and Dinner on the Saturday, and singing with the Cathedral Choir on the Sunday. Fill in your form **TODAY** to ensure your place! **Do it NOW!!** Thanks. JB (***WILLIAM** – you just made it again!)