

JOHN BERTALOT'S CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 1990

Happy Christmas!

Well, I don't know how I'm going to fit it all in! Every year it's the same - I've just made 15 pages of one-line notes on the last twelve months (not even beginning to include an account of the most amazing month I've ever experienced ... in South Africa) - so let's get going and hope you've got half an hour spare in which to wade thru' all this!

OCTOBER 1989

The Fall began in a flurry of creative activity. One of my greatest delights is to compose music, and as I had received a number of commissions for anthems and arrangements I set to with a will - despite the grand piano in my home being wildly out of tune. It also had several strings missing - a result of my efforts to rectify its pitch problems; clearly I don't have the touch for that sort of thing!

And so my living room was gradually covered by endless sheets of manuscript paper as I set I WAS GLAD (as I imagined Mathias might conceive it if he lived in the USA) and arranged AMAZING GRACE and LIFT THINE EYES. This latter ("Lift") came as a result of a suggestion made by Jason West, a choirmaster from Los Angeles, who wanted his choir to sing it - but not in the version which Mendelssohn had originally composed (...unaccompanied high voices). He wanted a version for small mixed choir (SAB) with accompaniment. After I'd wrestled with it for a couple of hours I felt that dear Felix M. had clearly made an error of judgement - I much preferred my version! I wondered how one of my publishers (... a good throw-away line!) would feel about it - and mailed it, along with "I was G" and "Amazing G", with high hopes.

Two days later I went to Westminster Choir College, here in Princeton (one of the country's leading music colleges where I glory in the title 'Adjunct Assoc. Prof' [just call me 'Adj']) to attend a workshop for choirmasters led by Sir David Willcocks. It was, of course, glorious as well as entertaining (he always begins his practices by saying "Do you mind if I take my coat off"... I've tried that tack - it's a sure-fire way of breaking down barriers!) One of the choral works we sang - there were 200 of us there - was his son Jonathan Willcocks' setting of GOD BE IN MY HEAD. I was in raptures about it and told David afterwards "That was the best thing we sang all night!" - hoping he'd be pleased (which he was). It wasn't until I was driving home that I suddenly remembered that we'd also sung one of David's compositions. WHOOPS!

Friday is supposed to be my day off - but this year a great many so-called free days have been spent in endless committee meetings; six of us have been arranging the

national annual conference of the Association of Diocesan Liturgy and Music Commissions (ADLMC). It sounds incredibly stuffy - but, actually, the ADLMC conferences are the best of all the conferences I attend each year: the delegates are 50/50 clergy/choirmasters, and as everyone dresses informally you can't tell who's who. The clergy attend music lectures and the musicians attend theological lectures, the food is good, the drink is better and the fellowship is super. However, being on the organisational end was both a pain and a joy: a pain, because of the endless hours of discussion; and a joy when things went right - a potential guest speaker said yes, and didn't ask for a \$2,000 fee!

One Friday the six of us went to New Brunswick (20 miles away) to inspect the very swish hotel where the 1990 conference would be held. I began wandering around with my video camera, taking shots for a publicity film I was making to be shown at the 1989 conference. In the middle of one shot I was accosted by two members of the staff who said, in effect, "What do you think you're doing!" I was livid (for I was working at advertizing their hotel as well as the conference). We nearly cancelled the whole thing - but decided not to after the management said that there'd been a mistake and, OF COURSE it was OK to take photographs! How easily can goodwill be restored!

Johnny Crocker, our recently retired rector, blew into Trinity to say "hi". He let slip a bon mot: "There's no responsibility without pain." He'd said a similar thing on another occasion: "Our vocation is so fulfilling that we'd do it for free; what we get paid for is doing the difficult things."

As readers of last year's NEWSLETTER will know, I welcomed three distinguished guests to my home in the Fall: Barry Rose, and Donald and Jo Hunt. It's so good to have guests - for that's the only time the house is really tidy. I found myself not only polishing all the furniture but actually hiring a carpet scrubber. Golly!

Barry came first: I collected him at midnight from Newark airport and we stayed up until 3.0 am. chatting. That man has endless energy and infuses all who meet him with all that's left over. I watched him take a rehearsal of the American Boychoir School, here in Princeton. His message was clear and concise: "Sing with your eyes!

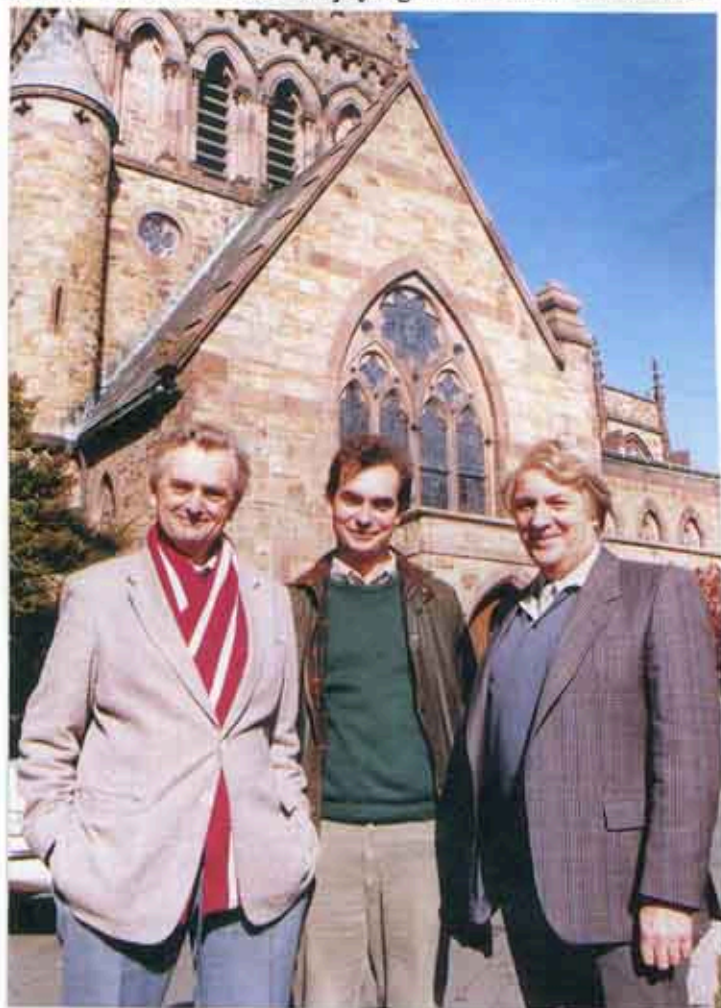
"Know the meaning of the words you sing;
Mean the words you sing;
Show you mean them. (I.e., it's no good singing anything unless you BELIEVE IT. Sing out, make an EFFORT.)"

I also noticed that when he had to reprove someone for inattention, he did it with a good humour. A valuable lesson!

BARRY ROSE with a cuppa coffee in my home.



JB, ADRIAN PARTINGTON (Worcester Sub. Org) and DONALD HUNT enjoying Trinitarian sunshine.



NOVEMBER

Barry stayed on and off for a week; he was dotting around to Philadelphia and elsewhere taking rehearsals, but took two for me: as a result of conducting my PRINCETON SINGERS for an evening he invited them to broadcast for the B.B.C. The only trouble was that he was leaving the B.B.C. in a couple of months... consequently we got ourselves all geared up to make a recording of Choral Evensong, only to be told that the B.B.C. was running short of cash and couldn't make it this time. The letter informing me of this took three months to get here, for they sent it surface. They must be hard up!

Barry also conducted my men, boys' and girls' choir for Choral Evensong at Trinity: clearly he wasn't in full control for he let slip half a dozen compliments... "Absolutely scintillating", and "The basses here are much better than mine!" (Barry never pays compliments... so I wrote those down!)

It was a particular joy to welcome Donald and Jo Hunt to my home for Donald brought with him his superb Worcester Cathedral choir, which gave a concert in Trinity. The singers stayed in homes of our choir members and a right good time was had by all. After the concert one of our choir families, Aristides and Pat Georgantas threw a party for some of us which was a riot. (Their son, William, sings in Trinity choir as well as in the Princeton Singers; their daughter, Susan, now at Vale, was Head Girl) We finally broke up at midnight, full of good food and bon-homie, and I drove Donald and Jo back to my home; on the way I hit a deer (which bounded in front of my car without warning). The car didn't do the deer any good, alas, and I later had to have the car straightened out at a cost of \$800. I also invested in ten dollars' worth of deer whistles, which, when fixed to the car blow an ultrasonic scream which warns deer that you're coming; why ln't I done that sooner?

6th.Mon The travel ban between East and West Germany was lifted. Saw, on TV, 300 per hour streaming across the border, and crowds of young people celebrating on top of the Wall. Two of my choirls were spending a year in Berlin (where their father was lecturing). They returned to us in September, bringing with them a section of the Wall. What a memento!

12th.Sun It's pretty startling when one receives an Immediate Answer To Prayer (IATOP). This has happened a number of times in my life. It happened again today: I prayed, in the morning, that Christ may be revealed, today, through music. My Princeton Singers gave a concert that afternoon, and, at the reception afterwards, a member of the audience came up to me with tears in her eyes and said, "Your concert was a religious experience for me!" Uw!

17th.Fri. Yet another ADLMC committee meeting - I was put in charge of the hospitality arrangements: "Make people feel GOOD about being there," I was told. Ideas began to burgeon: what about making anagrams for delegates to solve - using names of well-known Episcopalians (and others - such as the Archbishop of Canterbury... what can one make of his name?)

18/19 To Washington D.C., with my men, boys' and girls' choir from Trinity to sing weekend services including Choral Evensong at the National Cathedral, where we'd received an invitation, from Doug Major their director of music, to combine with the cathedral's very fine men and boys' choir. That was a rare privilege, and I rejoiced at being asked to conduct the combined forces of nearly 100 voices in Stanford's *Mag & Nunc in A*. A glorious row!

Before the service began Trinity choir gave a short con-



cert in the nave. The cathedral, which had been a-building for 86 years, was about to be completed; everything was shiny new and of superb workmanship. I commend visitors from England, and elsewhere, to see this fine building, for its newness glows, and one can get an impression, for the first time perhaps, of what Lincoln or Chartres must have looked like when they had just been completed.

23. Th Was invited to spend Thanksgiving at the home of two dear friends, Kathy Rohrer & John Sully (they ARE married!) who were founder members of my Princeton Singers and two most wonderful supporters. John was currently senior warden at Trinity and also leading alto in the MEG choir. They've been enlarging their house (in the country) ever since I've known them - the kitchen is now complete

KATHY ROHRER with guests SALLY & DON EDWARDS salivating at the Thanksgiving turkey!



but the new walls in the dining room were decorated with tasteful splashes of paint as they experimented to find exactly the right shade. That was a gracious as well as a fun time!

Barbara Harris, the first-ever woman bishop, paid a brief visit to Trinity to marry a former member of our clerical staff, Sarah Motley. In her sermon, delivered in a resoundingly low voice, Bishop Harris made the memorable statement, applicable to all married couples, as well as to everyone else: "It's more important to be loving than it is to be right!"

27th.Mon. AMAZING GRACE accepted by AUGSBURG. Hooray!

DECEMBER

Began mailing the first of 1,200 CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTERS to friends all over the world. Former Blackburn Cathedral chorister, John Marx, generously offered to print the edition for English friends at his office in London: he added a dash of colour ("English" color) to them and said that he could have printed the photographs in full colour, too. What about next time?

7th.Thurs. Prayed that God would reveal Himself to me again and that my heart might be open to receive him. That day I received the first copies of my arrangement of IF WITH ALL YOUR HEARTS from Flammer. It took me five minutes to realize that that was another Immediate Answer To Prayer, (IATOP # 2) for the words are: "If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever surely find Me, thus saith our God." Wow, again!

10th.Sun Given the go-ahead by Trinity to make a tour of South Africa in July/August for the Royal School of Church Music. I was thrilled, for this had been in the works for about 3 years and it was finally Going to Happen!

13th.Wed. IATOP #3. Prayed that 'my life, today, may glorify God's Name.' My reading, immediately afterwards was psalm 86: "Give me an undivided heart that I may glorify your Name... I will glorify your Name for ever!"

18th.Mon. The enthusiasm of all members of Trinity's choir is incredible - this is true not only for those who sing but also for their families. The mother of one of my athletic, all-American choirboys called me to say that he was giving up hockey in favor of the choir. She was pleased and I was thrilled!

20th.Wed. The USA invaded Panama. That evening a Vestry member told me that a young choirgirl had said earlier that day, "This is the happiest day of my life; I've passed all my tests to become a full member of the girls' choir!"

23rd.Sat Pinned up the first of 241 Christmas cards that friends and relations from all over the world had sent me - THANK YOU! It's so lovely when you include, as so many of you do, a note or a letter telling me how you are doing...that makes you seem very near to me. But, please, if you sign just your first name, please put your address, too. I had a card from 'Matthew' - postmarked 'London'. Which Matthew of some 20 Matthews are you - I'd love to know!

Spent a happy few days with a good friend in Ohio; he was a generous host who invited many old friends to 'visit' (as the Americans say) with me. He is also generous in the use of his house - which he shares with 15 cats. That was a memorable visit!

JANUARY 1990

2nd. The Princeton Singers, after much debate, agreed to change their uniform to tuxes for men and glorious full-length dresses for the women - each in a different color. What a difference that would make to us! That day, also, LORENZ accepted my I AM THE VINE for publication.

Ten days later I began another commissioned anthem, WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF THE LORD; it 'came', almost ready-written. The following day I heard that FLAMMER had accepted my arrangement of LIFT THINE EYES.

14th.Sun Dr. Robert Schullen, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles (which televises an hour's service every Sunday) said, in his sermon, "Love is deciding to make your problem my problem." That's good! That morning, after church, I auditioned a 6½ year-old boy for Trinity's choir. "Do you play an instrument?" I asked. "Yes," he answered, "I've been learning the cello for 1½ years!" My mind boggled. (I accepted him).

19th. Fri - a day off! The piano tuner came to tune my Ibach grand piano which has been in a bad way ever since it crossed the Atlantic 7 years ago. He took one look at it and said, "I can't do anything with it - it's got to be overhauled!" So he arranged for The Men to come to take it away - they arrived that afternoon. That's American efficiency for you!



The next day I led a workshop at Westminster Choir College (WCC) for 39 choirmasters who had come from 7 States! I used my 6½ year-old cello player as a guinea pig; he enjoyed it and so did they! (My 'specialty' in leading such courses is to show how easy it is to teach children to sight-sing. Very few choirmasters do this in the USA, or elsewhere, for that matter. I can't think why for it repays ENORMOUS dividends and gives a child a gift which s/he will have for life).

The next day I conducted 200 instrumentalists and singers in a DIY performance of Handels' Israel in Egypt here in Princeton. We enjoyed a great afternoon, but we were all exhausted at the end of it for we did it 'straight-off' without any rehearsal. Two of the performers came up to me afterwards to tell me how much they'd enjoyed it; one said that I reminded her of Groucho Marx, the other said it was like being in a Monty Python movie!

29th Mon A contract arrived from KEN ROBERTSON (music publisher in England) for two versions of a carol I had written for John Sully and Kathy Rohrer (see Nov), called SEE THE BABY JESUS. I started writing it at 4.0 am one day when I couldn't sleep - the music came first, the words afterwards. That's the WRONG way round - but it works!

FEBRUARY

3rd. Sat Started to write a book, at the request of Don Hinshaw called IT'S SO EASY TO TEACH CHILDREN TO SIGHT-SING...if you have Five Wheels! A succinct title, you will agree!

Two days later FLAMMER accepted my arrangement for small choir of I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH (...this had also come about as a result of a suggestion from a friend who thought that this well-known solo from Handel's MESSIAH might be a popular choice if it could be sung by a choir instead of just a soloist. This publisher, happily, seemed to agree!)

That same day Jason ("Lift Thine Eyes") West (see October), called from Los Angeles to discuss some of his ideas for helping the Royal School of Church Music to expand its work in the USA; he suggested that I come over sometime to talk about it face to face. What about immediately after Easter? Sounds good!

10th Sat. Threw a party for the parents of my choirboys - not everyone could come but we ended up with 35 people in my house, which they enjoyed. (The walls are FILLED with photographs - all neatly labelled as to who's who. I wondered if I could throw a similar party in September for my birthday - if so, how many friends could I invite? How many would the house hold?)

13th. Tues. Saw Nelson Mandela, live on TV after he had been released from 27 years jail. A moving moment. Also saw Archbishop Tutu doing an uninhibited dance of joy in his house. That was an inspiring sight!

21st. Wed. Letter from Trevor Webb, dear friend and choir-master of the church in the village where I was born (Bearsted, Kent). His fine choir had just sung a Choral Evensong for the Kent Organists' Association - and all the music was by me! I was thrilled. He hoped to give a repeat performance in St. Paul's Cathedral. Wow!

23rd. Fri. Flew to Atlanta, Georgia, to lead a two-day workshop for the fine choir of Holy Innocents' Church (David Brensinger, choirmaster). I arrived to find warm sunshine and blooming daffodils. I returned to Princeton the following day to freezing snow. Such is the American experience.

MARCH

3rd. Sat. Letter from Richard Hare, bishop of Pontefract in Yorkshire: he'd just attended a conference where he'd seen a blind man receive his sight. (That sort of thing is fairly normal for Richard. The last time I'd seen him - we were having an informal lunch in his kitchen - I'd asked him what the latest miracle was. He replied, "My young niece was deaf; we laid hands on her a couple of weeks ago, and now she can hear. Have some more cheese!")

5th. Mon. My re-strung, re-stored and glow-ing piano was returned, as good as new. It cost \$3,000, but it was well worth it!

9th. Fri. My Princeton Singers gave a very special concert in Princeton University Chapel (which is comparable in size to that of King's Cambridge). It was special for

three reasons: (i) The place was almost packed to the doors, (ii) the concert was recorded for the classical radio program of Philadelphia (WHYY) and (iii) we wore our new uniforms for the very first time - we GLOWED! The audience gave us a standing ovation at the end; dunno if it was because we sounded good or looked good; probably a bit of both. Two days later we gave a repeat performance for WHYY in Philadelphia. The church was so full that not



only were people standing but we had them sitting on the floor around us! The following week John Rutter's Cambridge Singers gave a concert in Princeton - they weren't bad, either!

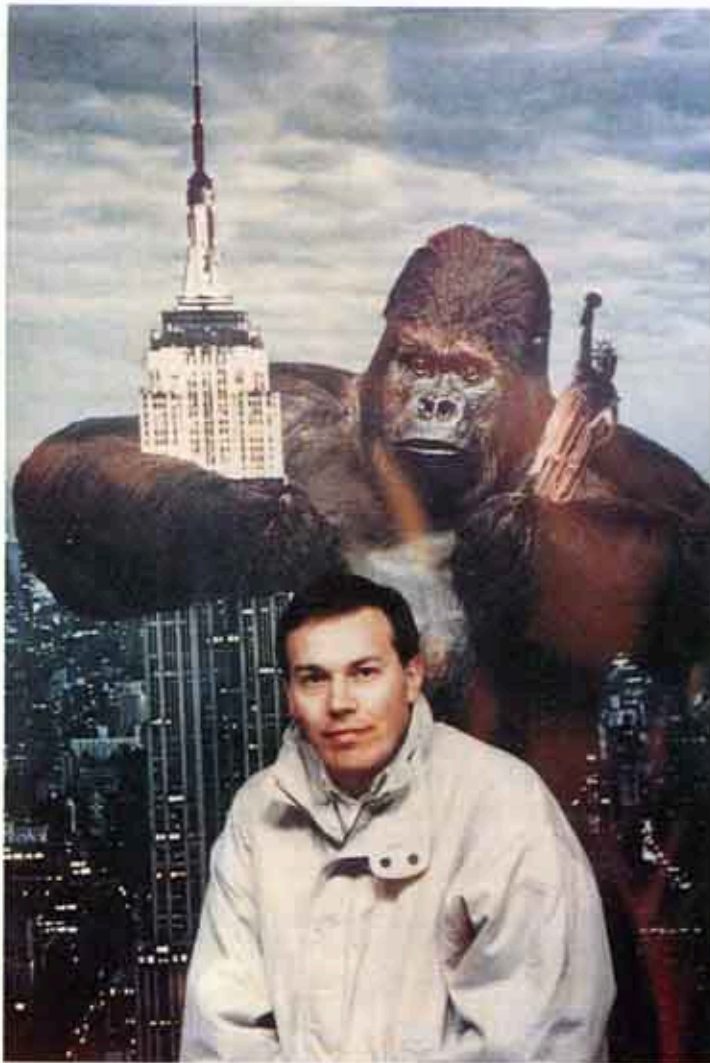
Good Friday was coming up; I needed a simple setting for choir of WERE YOU THERE. Couldn't find one I liked so did one myself. Sent it to FLAMMER to see if they liked it.

A lot of big things go on at Trinity - one of the biggest is the annual RUMMAGE SALE which keeps some dedicated people busy for the whole year. The choir personnel and supporters also get involved - we bake and sell food on The Day, keeping the crowds contented as they wait in line to be admitted to the Bargain Hall. This year the choir raised over \$800.00 from its food department; the entire takings for the day were \$31,000.00 - a record!

APRIL

John Marr (see December) arrived from England for a few days' stay with a friend: they visited nearby New York whilst they were here and had a good time! John said that he'd be happy to print this year's NEWSLETTER for me - in glowing colour - how do you like it? THANK YOU, JOHN!

Saw Alec McCowen give his one-man performance of ST. MARK'S GOSPEL in Princeton's McCarter Theatre: it was stunning - a packed house (lots of Trinity folk there), a bare stage, apart from a plain table and a couple of chairs, and the actor. What that man can do is terrific... he re-creates the 400-year old translation of St. Mark (the Authorised,



or 'King James' version), using minimum movement but maximum interpretation. In his introduction he said that this idea of presenting such a performance came to him when he realized that this translation of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare were more or less contemporary, and both use similarly imaginative English; and as Shakespeare has to be 'interpreted' by actors, so St. Mark would respond to similar treatment. He brought out the humour, the drama and the glory of the Gospel in the most amazing way. If the Bible could be read in churches with similar imagination and understanding week by week, the Good News of the Gospel would spread like fire - it's so THRILLING!

15 Sun After glorious Easter Day services at Trinity - with congregations at both choral services overflowing, I flew to California for a week (see early Feb), and stayed with a number of good friends: I experienced an amazing few days when I stayed with Bill & Pat Eichorn in San Diego: first, the train journey from Los Angeles to San Diego was breathtakingly beautiful - for much of the way

the train went alongside the Pacific Ocean - the sea was only a few yards away and it sparkled gloriously in the Spring sunshine. Bill and his children used to sing in Trinity choirs until they moved to CA a few years ago. Bill is now choirmaster of an Episcopal Church and he has a strong evangelistic ministry in that region. He took me to the monthly meeting of the Guild of St. Luke, held at his church. This is a healing ministry with groups all over the country (Trinity hopes to begin one). Bill's group was special. "We experience healings regularly," he told me. "My hip was healed recently, and someone else, who was about to be operated on for an eye problem had hands laid upon her; the next day she went to the hospital for her operation - the doctors examined her and asked her why she'd come, for the problem had disappeared!" "I felt a strong presence of the Spirit there that night - Things certainly Happen in that group!"

Another joy of staying with Bill and Pat was to indulge in their out-door Jacuzzi: what an experience it was to bask in the bubbling warm waters of that Big Tub at night and to look up and see the heavens full of stars. That's Living!

Two days later I stayed a night with Jim Gilliam, choir-master of the boys' choir at the Crystal Cathedral. He told me that, after my directing his choir course the previous year, he'd increased the number of practices for his boys from one per week to four! "I can't begin to tell you how excited they all are at the improvement they are experiencing," he said. I was shattered by the incredible tidiness of Jim's beautiful apartment - all his clothes, for example, were hung immaculately in plastic hanger-bags oozing an aura of self-discipline and pride. "Ho hum," thought I, "I'd better do something about my closets when I get home!" Jim let slip that he'd love to visit England sometime - well, well, - let's see what we can do about that.

Jason West (remember him?) took me to stay with a friend of his in Palm Springs - (visions of movie stars and high living). The address of the friend's apartment lived up to my expectation: it was just off Dinah Shore Drive and Bob Hope Boulevard! The friend also had an outdoor Jacuzzi in which we basked late at night. That sort of thing can easily become a Habit! Jason and I also talked a great deal about the R.S.C.M. (for that was the purpose of my visit) and we covered a lot of ground, resulting in a lengthy report being sent to Harry Brama, the RSCM's director. Let's see what transpires.

23rd. Mon: St. George's Day: Today is the 40th anniversary of the wedding of cousins Dick and Sheila Charge in England. They threw an enormous party for friends and relations and it was so lovely to talk with them on the 'phone - I wish I could have been there. It was also the wedding anniversary of cousins Llewellyn and Joan Williams and so the celebrations were doubly happy. They are the four dearest people in my life - and it gives me untold happiness to see them when I visit England every August.

But also on that day, four guests arrived in Princeton: Richard and Susan Cock, from Johannesburg, South Africa, and Keith and Ruth Bond from Aldeburgh, Suffolk (where Benjy Brit. used to live). Richard had brought his superb Chanticleer Singers to give a concert in Trinity that night, and Keith (who used to be my sub organist at Blackburn Cathedral) was on a short organ recital tour. Both couples arrived at my office door at the same time - we had quite a re-union in the glorious Spring sunshine!



RICHARD & SUSAN COCK, KEITH & RUTH BOND.

The Chanticleer recital was terrific: I'll never forget one part-song by a South African composer, which gave a sound picture of the Kalahari Desert - you could almost feel the heat and hear the rain - Wow! They ended the concert with a performance of my arrangement of the Calypso Carol. Richard told the audience that whenever he conducted it in South Africa it was ALWAYS encored!

25th.Wed Don Hinshaw called me: he wants the manuscript of my sight-singing book by the end of June - WHOOPS, I'd better get on with it!

27th.Fri. To Washington to direct a 2-day workshop for the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). The first session was devoted to a talk on "Communicating the Gospel to Children" (something about which I feel strongly). I was amazed by the response of the AGO members who seemed to share my enthusiasm for this primal part of our privileged vocation.

The next day, after sharing my enthusiasm for teaching children how to sight-sing (which also went down well), I asked my host, Jim Kreyer (who has a fine church choir in that beautiful city) to take me to the train station via the National Cathedral - for I wanted to see its glorious

near-completeness on that sunny day. We stopped in the car park to gaze at its majestic lines: another car was there with a boy and mother therein. The lady leaned out of her car window and said, "Mr Bertalot?" "Yes," said I. She beamed and added, "My son sang in a course you directed in South Carolina 4 years ago - he's never forgotten singing your Jesus Christ is Lord." Wow - we had a happy brief reunion on that spot as the cathedral shone over us in all its glory.

29th.Sun The Princeton Singers gave a supa concert in a lovely stone-built church in Bronxville, NY, some two hours' drive away. Afterwards we loosened up with a party in a hostelry situated, conveniently, opposite the church. Somehow I was inveigled to try a drink which rejoiced in the name 'Fuzzy Navel'. I ended up by downing three of them and slept most of the way home!

MAY

We had enjoyed, for two years at Trinity, the talents of a superb assistant organist - Rodney Ayers, who appeared in last year's NEWSLETTER (I'd taken him for a month's vacation to England). He was a student at WCC and had just been accepted for a course at Yale, after graduating gloriously from WCC Summa cum Laude. To replace him was a crunch time in the life of Trinity, and I spent three days auditioning WCC students for the posts of asst.Org and org. scholar. We ended up by appointing (or 'hiring' as the Americans say) two brilliant young men - Greg Vick and Terry Simpkins - both of whom (at the time of writing) are doing wonderfully.

I had another guest from England staying with me (in addition to Keith and Ruth Bond who kept popping in and out as they gallivanted around this part of the country). Marcus Green had been an Oxford organ scholar and was enjoying seeing a bit of the USA before he changed horses and returned to Oxon to prepare for ordination. He and Ruth Bond spent a fruitful evening with me working out anagrams for the ADLMC conference: both tried their hands at the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert A.K. Runcie. Marcus came up with "R.R.: Curate on Bike". Ruth suggested "A Routine R.C.Berk"!

7th.Mon. FLAMMER published Lift thine eyes and Carol Alleluia (an arrangement of Bach's "Sheep may safely graze, with Christmas words). But because they now publish so many of my 'opera' they'd designed a special cover - which did nothing for my sense of modesty!

The John Bertalot Choral Series I

 Harold Flammer, Inc.

11.Fri. To Oxford, Maryland (three hours' drive south) to direct yet another AGO workshop. Oxford is an exquisite lake-side village with winding lanes that curve around the shoreline, large houses and many boats. My host, Arthur Thea, told me how many of his choir families enjoyed 'messing about in boats'. "Oh, we had a retired admiral at Trinity," said I, trying to keep my end up. "We've got four!" replied Arthur. End of conversation!

American churches are well financed; it's a totally different ball-game from the situation in England. This was brought home to me pretty forcibly this month when a choirmaster friend told me that one of his choir parents had decided to set up a foundation for his choirboys; she gave him \$750,000.00! "That's a good start," said my friend, "but I'm really aiming for \$3 million." Ho hum!

20th.Sun. My Princeton Singers gave their last concert of the season in St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia - a most lovely Colonial building with white box pews, galleries (where the slaves used to sit) and lit by candles. We sang at our very best and after singing Havells' most beautiful Requiem few of us had dry eyes. The critic of the Philly Inquirer was there; he wrote: "[The Singers have] perfected a sound and manner...like singing from Eden before the snake's entrance. ..To hear this group was to glimpse an ideal of English vocal style." Nice!

But the particular joy for me during that afternoon concert was to know that at exactly the same time my former Blackburn Singers were giving a concert (in the late evening in England) to celebrate that choir's 25th anniversary. We'd held our first practice on 20th April, 1964 - how well I remember that evening! Bernard West, a founder-member and the choir's secretary, sent me a programme of that concert. I discovered that both my Princeton Singers and my former Blackburn Singers performed the Stanford Three Motets that day - we might well have sung them at the same moment!

JUNE

4th.Mon A few days earlier I'd received a call from England; it was from the mother of Ian Haydock, a former chorister of Blackburn Cathedral. Ian was getting married in August and would I write an anthem to be sung at his wedding? Most certainly! So today I sat down at my piano, looked at the words that Ian's Mum, Margery, had sent me ("My beloved is mine and I am his") and started. It just rolled off the end of the pen - it's amazing what an in-tune piano can do!

11th.Mon A pretty amazing day: Sent My beloved is mine to BARRY BRUNTON, music publisher in England, asking if he'd like to publish it. If so, why didn't he print a photograph of Ian and his bride on the front cover - I'd asked Ian's mum to send Barry one in case he thought it a good idea. I also received a proof of Abide with me and a contract for Amazing Grace from AUGSBURG. By the same post FLAMMER sent a draft proof of I know that my Redeemer liveth, and also some encouraging comments on my arrangement of Were you there (which they eventually accepted)!

Ten days later (after having attended a conference in South Carolina where I shared a room with Alec Wyton and delighted to renew a warm friendship with Simon Lindley, organist of Leeds Parish Church in England - Simon was a guest lecturer at the conference. How I rejoiced to hear his English accompaniments to some of the services that week... an "English accompaniment" occurs when the organist plays anything except the written notes - I do this a lot at Trinity, and Simon is a past master at it! (Where was I? Oh, yes!) After the conference was over I returned to Princeton and found, in my in-tray at church, 100 copies of My beloved is mine from Barry Brunton, beautifully printed and complete with photo of Ian and his bride on the front cover. There's English efficiency for you!

By the same post was a letter from AUGSBURG accepting my setting of Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord. It was All Happening!

The Princeton Singers are an amazing group: not only do they sing superbly but they excel in so many other ways - not least in organisational abilities. This month the Forward Planning Committee set to work to organise the Singers' schedule up to 1996 (when I retire!) The idea being that, in that summer I take them for another tour of England and then they leave me there! Meanwhile all sorts of other plans were discussed for the intervening years - stand by for future announcements.

29th. Fri. Popped up to Boston for 24 hours to conduct the music for the wedding of a former Princeton Singer, Brad Findell, who was marrying his Mary. Brad had arranged for a most supa choir - half Princeton Singers and half members of the elite choir with which he now sings in Boston. The wedding was a glorious concert as well as a beautiful service, and Brad and Mary treated their guests to superb hospitality which included a magnificent dinner at the top of Boston's highest skyscraper as well as a lavish Wedding Breakfast in the swishest hotel. That was a wedding to remember...

...as was the journey home: two friends from Los Angeles accompanied me on the train - which broke down in Penn Station, New York - we ended the journey by bus and expensive taxi (past midnight) - but it was worth it!

JULY

At the end of this month I would be in South Africa: I hardly dared to think about what was in store for me, for I was scheduled to visit 10 major cities (one of them twice), lead workshops, conduct choirs, give university lectures, make broadcasts and also try to fit in some sight-seeing. It took me two days to type out the involved schedule which Richard Cock (see April) had set up during the past two or three years - that alone exhausted me, so I tried not to think of what lay in store for me 12,000 miles away. There was quite enough going on at home.

2nd. Mon. Kenneth Robertson, music publisher in England, sent me the first copies of my arrangement of Alouette which he'd just published. It looked supa!

8th. Sun. Read in my Barclay Bible study notes that it's the Christian's belief that we live in a

God created,
God controlled
God sustained and
God filled world. Uww!

9th. Mon. Led a five-day workshop at UCC for choirmasters. They'd come not only from all over the USA (11 States), but also from Canada, Korea and Australia. I used 20 of my choristers from Trinity to demonstrate just what young and older children can do - and they did very well; I was enormously proud of them as they were able to sight-sing and respond to almost anything at the drop of a hat. There was a lot of positive feed-back from everyone, and the choir-parents who came to see their off-spring perform shared my enormous pride in their high achievements.

On the first evening I led an hour's hymn-sing for all the summer students (over 100 of them): we ended with my arrangement of Abide with me which, as last year, got a standing ovation. Even I was moved! Rodney Ayers played for me - his last appearance before going off to Yale - what a lovely swan song.

The next day I received from Ken Robertson the first copies of my arrangement of Go, tell it on the mountains. I was getting somewhat overwhelmed by all the music that was being published. I was even more overwhelmed when I discovered that there were four misprints in the second bar which, somehow, I'd overlooked when I'd read the proofs!

Life had been so busy during the last few months that I'd not had time to get a haircut; but visibility was now at crisis point so I popped into the Lawrenceville Village Barber's Shop to be shorn. The barber, Joe, knows all his customers by name; however this day he called me Bob - not surprising, for I hadn't seen him for four months!

21st. Sat. Enjoyed a God-speed lunch with the Georgantas family (see November). One of the guests was a very lively 98-year old lady who had known Albert Einstein. She told of an incident when she and the good doctor had gone boating together; somehow the boat capsized and the doctor emerged through the waves with his hair streaming down to his shoulders, still with his pipe in his mouth!

22nd. Sun. SOUTH AFRICA DAY! (via England, to recover from jet lag). Needless to say I prayed about it that morning and read in my Bible - Ephesians ch. 4 - "God gave some to be .. teachers... that God's consecrated people should be fully equipped." That was a pretty clear commission for my teaching tour! (IATOP # 4).

IATOP #5 occurred a couple of hours later when we sang a hymn at Trinity which included the words: "Children of the heavenly king may speak their joys abroad!" (I realize that some friends may have problems with these IATOPS - that's OK. But if God doesn't answer prayer, what's the point of praying?)

As ever, when trying to recount my summer jaunts, there's NO WAY I can even begin to list the number of generous hosts and good friends who made me feel so very much at home in South Africa... so please forgive if your name doesn't occur in the next few paragraphs... you know how much I loved being with you and value so highly your warm and overflowing hospitality which blessed me beyond measure.

During those action-packed 33 days I conducted twelve choirs, ranging from beautifully dressed 8-year old children to a 50-strong adult black African choir; I led six workshops for choirmasters, adult singers and school teachers: I conducted three massed choirs' festivals, lectured or conducted at three major universities and made half a dozen nationwide broadcasts, including a televised rehearsal! A few highlights:

I spent six idyllic days at the Drakensberg Boychoir School (the South African equivalent of the Vienna Boys' Choir) as guests of Bunny & Bettie Ashley-Botha. He is a dear friend from 20 years ago who is now director of music of the boychoir school. The school is situated in some of the loveliest mountain country I have ever seen - a cross between the Swiss Alps and the Grand Canyon. There are 95 boys at the school, and Bunny generously let



me loose on them; every day I conducted one or more of the choirs and worked with individual singers. This was such an incredible privilege that I could hardly stand it! The boys, apart from singing so professionally and giving me such close attention during every rehearsal, were also wonderfully courteous: at the end of every rehearsal I was given a formal vote of thanks by one of the boys (a different boy on each occasion) and, from the second day they called me "Uncle John" which, I gather, is a high honour!

It was a particular joy to renew my warm friendship with Brian & Enid Judge when I visited the university and cathedral city of Grahamstown. Brian and I were contemporaries at Cambridge, and he has enjoyed a distinguished career directing music at several English Public Schools. He is now choirmaster of two major schools in G'town and had just returned from a recital tour of the Cape given by his girls' choir. Both Brian and Enid find that Christian living to be exciting and powerful, and they share this life with many of the young people of that city - renewed through attending bible studies led by former Cape Town Archbishop Bill Bennett who has retired just around the corner from them. If being a Christian doesn't make a difference to your life there's something missing: that's a challenge to all of us!

I was privileged to give three lectures at the fine University there, at the kind invitation of Christopher Cockburn, a brilliant young organist who had played for a



BRIAN & ENID JUDGE, CHRIS COCKBURN (organist of G'town cathedral) and JB at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

massed choirs' festival I had led a few days before in East London. Chris drove me from there to G'town at night through barren South African country; it was pitch dark and I asked Chris to stop the car so that I could see the Milky Way: never have I seen a more beautiful sight - it was so luminous that it looked like a trail of phosphorescent clouds. The sight of that enormous star-filled sky and the silence of the South African countryside, broken only by far-off barking of the occasional dog, remains for me one of the most moving moments of my life.

In Port Elizabeth I experienced how Prince Charles must feel when he makes an official visit: I had been invited to conduct the P.E. choral society for a rehearsal. The moment I entered the hall where the 80-strong choir was sitting, together with some 30 choirmaster observers, I felt such a strong aura of anticipation and excitement amongst the singers gathered there that I could almost touch it! That taught me a valuable lesson: if you want someone to do their very best, then WELCOME THEM WHOLE-HEARTEDLY!

Cape Town had a unique experience in store: after conducting a massed choirs' festival in Archbishop Tutu's cathedral, and enjoying a delightful dinner with Bishop Fred & Mary Moore (dear friends who go back to Blackburn days - Fred was bishop of Bloemfontein - his diocese was twinned with B'bn; they have stayed with me a number of times). Anyway, after that glorious day at the cathedral and that most happy evening spent with friends I returned to my host's home in the city for the night. At 3.0 am we were burgled! Thieves broke into the house and came into our bedrooms whilst we were asleep. My watch, on the table a foot from my head, was taken, and I didn't hear a thing. Fortunately something disturbed them and they made off - but it was a hairy experience!

Each time I've been in the Southern Hemisphere (this was the fourth occasion) I've forgotten to notice which way the water runs out of the bath. This time I approached this momentous scientific observation with determination and a clear head. In my first host's home (in Johannesburg) I observed that the water ran out clockwise. I checked it both in the bath and the wash basin: yes, there's no doubt, water runs out clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. I felt that I had made a significant contribution to the corpus of scientific knowledge. I checked it again in Drakensberg - it ran out ANTI-clockwise! Science, I felt, is a much over-rated past-time!

And so, eventually, I returned to Johannesburg for five of the busiest days of my life:

Having caught the 6.15 am plane from Kimberley (where I had been staying with dear friend Dean Roy Snyman) Richard Cock whisked me off to the headquarters of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (where he is a senior music producer) to record a couple of interviews for the SABC religious programmes. His assistant, John Sham then whisked me, with equal purpose and efficiency, to conduct 3 hours of rehearsals with the choir of Witwatersrand

University - which was a gruelling experience, as not too many of them read music! However everyone seemed to enjoy it - but I returned home pretty exhausted and went to bed early to prepare for the next full day...

... which began at 9.0 am at the SABC when I took part in an hour's live chat show, led by a dynamic interviewer from Ireland, Paddy O'Byrne. It was a riot from beginning to end and, as Paddy left the door of his studio open, there was a constant stream of people popping in to say "Hi" whilst he put the next record on. Even the cleaning woman came in to clear the waste-paper baskets!

The next two hours were spent in the SABC's superb record library as John Sham helped me choose recordings with which to illustrate a talk I was going to give a couple of days later on NUMBER SYMBOLISM IN THE MUSIC OF BACH. (I'd been so busy during the tour that the only time I was able to write the script for this talk was on plane journeys. I'd finished it only the previous day en route from Kimberley.)

JB, PADDY O'BYRNE, JOHN SHAM & RICHARD COCK scintillating outside the SABC headquarters.



That evening Richard took me to Pretoria to attend a concert his SABC choral society was giving. At the end of their rehearsal (Rossini's Stabat Mater - with orchestra

- superb!) Richard introduced me to his 150 singers as: "the arranger of the Calypso Carol." Imagine my feelings when 150 people who had been strangers instantly recognised me - for it was this choir which had sung the Calypso so frequently at concerts and found that it had to be encored! That was a "WOW" moment indeed!

On the Saturday and Sunday I rehearsed a special choir for nine hours: Richard, through his amazing kindness, had arranged a concert to be given in a lovely church in Johannesburg which was to be made up entirely of my own music! I was moved beyond measure by such generosity of spirit and found the response of the singers equally amazing. Four hours of the rehearsals on the Friday were tele-recorded by the SABC; it was yet another novel experience to take a rehearsal with a microphone cable running down my trouser-leg. Somewhat inhibiting!

The concert on the Sunday evening will remain for me one of the most precious moments of my life, not only because of how well the choir sang (they had been augmented by Richard's CHANTICLEER SINGERS - 18 fully professional musicians who were scintillatingly wonderful), but also by the response of the large audience which Richard had attracted. We finished the programme with Abide with me which, yet again, received a standing ovation. It went on for so long that I asked Richard to tell the audience to go home!

And so Monday 27th August dawned - the day when I would be flying back to England... but not before recording a talk for the SABC on Bach Number Symbolism. It went very well indeed and Richard has subsequently told me that when the talk was broadcast it provoked so much response from around the country that the SABC intends to repeat it!

The flight back to England was incredibly long - not least because we were delayed for four hours at J'burg before taking off. However it meant that we flew into London in broad daylight - what a glorious sight it was, as we taxied into Heathrow, to have supa views of the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and the Royal Albert Hall; my camera got slightly warm during those five minutes!

I relaxed for four days with cousins Dick & Sheila Charge again, whose house in Reigate is framed with the most beautiful garden. How do they do it? I also enjoyed a most happy evening with cousins Joan & Llewellyn Williams in their lovely flat in Sloane Street, London. Joan, like Sheila, is a superb chef, and Dinner with My Cousins is always very special.

I enjoyed a riotous lunch with Jonathan Rennert. JR is organist of St. Michael's Church, in the City of London (where Harold Danke, who taught me organ, was organist for 50 years). To be in Jonathan's presence is to be in a constant state of partying: we ate at a Dickensian Establishment just around the corner from St. Michael's - it's so historic that they still have racks for patrons' top



hats! Jonathan and I visited a tie shop afterwards where he bought me a ripe sample for my collection. I increased my tie collection by 25 ties during this overseas jaunt; when I added them to my impeccably neat and well-ordered ties' rack at home I found that I had 296!... and I can remember where I bought most of them!

And so, on Friday, 31st August, I flew back to Princeton just in time to miss a rehearsal for the wedding of two Princeton Singers: Eric Swartzentruber & Johanna Froehlich.

But the wedding the next day was amazing: the P. Singers provided the choir, of course, AND there were instrumentalists. Brad Findell (see June) was best man and Astrid Caruso



(first President of the P. Singers ... succeeded by Eric S and now succeeded by her sister Buffy Gray...) was matron of honor. The Reception was held in the palatial grounds of the American Boychoir School here in Princeton... it was an American Wedding at its best! [Buffy is co-chair of the ADLNC Conference; her name 'Elisabeth Gray' makes a great anagram: "SHIRLEY TEA-BAG"!]

A very few of my friends complain because I don't include any bad news in my NEWSLETTER. Well, that's not what this LETTER is about. However I must record that in one week we had three funerals in Princeton: two were for choir parents and the third was for the Mayor. We were hit very hard by all this, and although all three were wonderful Christians who, we know, are in God's nearer Presence, it did not make their loss any easier for those who are left behind. Also, in the same week, I heard that a very dear friend in Blackburn had died suddenly: Jack Smethurst had been in the cathedral choir for 50 years, and was the greatest friend to all of us in that place. Fifteen years ago he had had an after-death experience: he'd seen God, talked with him and been sent back with the commission to tell those who fear death that there is nothing to fear. Those of us who heard Jack tell of this know where he is right now.

On Sat. 15th Sept., I celebrated a nearly-a-milestone birthday by inviting to my home as many guests as I was years old. Nearly everyone was able to be there and the place was bursting at the seams! I told, in a short (short!) speech to the assembled throng how I remembered my ninth birthday which took place on Battle of Britain day half a century before; each time the air raid warning went my guests were sent home, to return when the all-clear sounded. We had half a dozen raids that afternoon and everyone got a lot of exercise running between their homes and mine. Fortunately there were no such interruptions this September - everyone stayed and enjoyed the mountain of food that each had brought. Conviviality and nostalgia, not sirens and the sound of battling planes, filled the air that happy evening.

And so, the new season has started at Trinity: the choirs are burgeoning: 50 girls in the Girls' Choir, over 50 in the Adult Choir and nearly 60 in the Men, Boys' and Girls' Choir. May Papastephanou (a dedicated choir parent) has taken over the chair of the choirs' steering committee from Pegi Stengel (who held it with such honor for 5 years). Ann McGoldrick, another choir parent, is enabling the Princeton Singers to flourish in all sorts of positive ways as she wrestles with the multi-faceted tasks of being our Chief Executive. The Singers gave a concert in Trinity (their "best first-concert-of-the-season-yet") and raised \$6,000.00 for charity. I have workshops booked around the country for as far as I can plan ahead, going from Atlanta, Georgia to Portland, Oregon... read orl abaht it in the next NEWSLETTER.

Thank you for wading through all this... may 1991 be a year when each one of you is blessed in a specific way, and may you know, as Jack knows, that there is nothing to fear. "All is well, and all manner of things shall be well."


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