

Blackburn Cathedral Music & More online Supplement No. 9

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RSCM Lancashire Area Festival and Presentation of Awards

100 choristers from choirs throughout Lancashire overflowed our choirstalls to sing an ambitious Choral Evensong during which many of them, old and young, would receive awards in recognition of their faithful and skilled devotion to singing the praises of God, some of whom had been choristers for 50 or more years.



The singers and clergy were led by crucifer and cathedral Head Chorister **William Fielding**, in an impressive procession as we all sang *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*, with a descant by former director of the RSCM, **Lindsay Gray**.



The awards were displayed upon a table for all to see: The Archdeacon's award: **black** ribbon. The Dean's award: **green** ribbon, and Bishop's award, **purple** ribbon, and the RSCM Gold award, **red** ribbon.

The massed choirs were conducted by **Samuel Hudson** who had spent the entire day rehearsing them in an ambitious programme of music:
Remember not, Lord – Henry Purcell
Jubilate in F – John Ireland
Magnificat – Philip Moore (former Director of Music of York Minster)
Sanctus: Collegium Regale – Herbert Howells
plus a psalm for the choir and hymns for us all to sing.

When the **Archdeacon of Blackburn** presented his awards for faithful service he said, 'It is a tremendous joy to present these awards. Singers have to combine words and music with skill so that we gain an insight of what humanity can achieve as we gain a glimpse of heaven.'

Deputy Head Chorister **Harvey Finney** was the first of the cathedral choristers to receive this award followed by **Hannah Bode** and **Esther Worrall**.



Canon Andrew Hindley presented the awards on behalf of the Dean, who was away, to choristers who had passed an examination. Canon Hindley said, 'I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for church music, for I sang in a choir when I was a boy. We congratulate these singers who have passed the exam, for music is central to the worship of God.'

Callum Briggs was the first of our choristers to receive this award, followed by **Leo Fulwell**, **Madeline Noblett**, **Annabelle Parkinson** and **Louisa Stirland**.

When **Louisa** received her award, Canon Hindley told the congregation that she was the BBC's young chorister of the year for 2012 and, of course, everyone clapped!



The singers in the choir were not only choristers, but we saw **Ian Pattinson** in good voice. (*Centre.*) Ian is organist of Lancaster Priory where he has **two** magnificent organs which have recently been installed.

(See the published edition of *M&M*, February 2013)



And then it was the turn of the **Bishop of Lancaster** to present the Bishop's award. As he spends much of his life visiting churches in the diocese he said that the choral tradition of the church is maintained and strengthened in many churches, but one misses it when it is not there. 'And so we appreciate it here this afternoon so very much.'

Assistant Director of Music **Shaun Turnbull**, with organ scholar **James Kealey** to turn pages, played us out with Vierne's joyful *Carillon de Westminster*.



Cathedral choristers who received this coveted award were **Harvey Finney, Oliver Fulwell, Aidan Halsall, Adam Kennedy, Emily Kennedy, Jessica Studholme, and Esther Worrall** (pictured above).

Awards were given to choristers from many diocesan churches, including St. John's Church, Broughton, which presented 16 choristers! St. John's choir has enjoyed a long tradition of excellence in our diocese – currently with 40 boys (and a waiting list) and 20 men! Their choirmaster is **John Catterall** MBE who has, for very many years, been a member of the Diocesan RSCM Committee and, until recently, its long-time chairman



It was a most glorious day not only for those who received awards, but also for those of us who were uplifted by the splendid music sung and played at that service.



Our final chorister to receive an award was **William Fielding** who had earned the RSCM's **Gold Award.**

Bishop Geoff said, 'This is an exceptional award

through a searching examination for an exceptional chorister.'

See the July 2013 edition of *Music & More* (yet to be published!) for a photograph of William with his five medallions!



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