

# Blackburn Cathedral Music & More online Supplement No. 23a

## Blackburn Cathedral Choirs' Association 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion and the dedication of the superbly transformed Song School 14-15 September 2013

Former choristers of Blackburn Cathedral came from far and wide to rejoice in each other's company at the start of the new choir year: from Yorkshire, from North Wales, From Cheshire, from Cambridgeshire and even from New Jersey, USA! We were thrilled to welcome each and every one.

The weekend began with a buffet lunch (generous and most delicious) provided by our new Café-in-the Crypt chef, David Riley.



L-R: **Iain Thompson** from Cheshire, **Ralph Robinson** from Yorkshire, **Neil Inkley** (Peterborough OC), **David Smalley** and **John Highton**, all from nearer home.



SOC and BCCA Chaplain the **Revd Ian Hollin**, **Peter Fielding** and **Ralph Robinson** (again) gathered around the tea counter...

... as did **Paul Fielding**, father of Head Chorister **William** and choirgirl **Elizabeth**. His wife, **Rachel**, is a strong member of the **Renaissance Singers**.



A gathering of former choristers in the crypt spanned the age-range from high teens to low 80s:



L-R BCCA Vice Chairman **Eric Bancroft**, **Callum Shaw**, **Alec Stuttard** (Publicity Officer for the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music) and **Allan Holden** – a strong BCCA Committee member.

Callum is a busy young man who is going places! He has just completed three years at Stonyhurst College, studying for his A levels. He writes:

In the summer between my lower and upper sixth I worked with the River Ribble Conservation Trust and whilst I really enjoyed myself it made me realise that I no longer wanted to study Marine Biology. So I took a third year at Stonyhurst and read Business Studies and Philosophy A levels in a year.

I have secured a place at **The Royal Agricultural University** to study Business, but would prefer to study International Business on the continent. I am therefore applying this term and hope to be offered a place at either Rouen Business School, France, or Fontys Business School in the Netherlands near Düsseldorf. Both places have good choirs that I hope to join!

This year I had a placement planned with SSASCO International in Dhaka Bangladesh but I have had to put this on hold because of the political climate in the country. I have also just had to put my second work placement on hold. This was to work with a company called Hyerquip in Kenya to oversee the import of heavy machinery that they will use to make fertiliser out of the water hyacinth plant that is clogging up Lake Victoria. Unfortunately The CEO's close relative was one of the casualties in the shopping centre massacre and as yet everything is on hold.

In the meantime I am spending time helping out where I can, singing in the YPC and working for Cuckoobag. I have another possibility of going to the Cameroon to work with a cooperative called LISAP whose MD is a seventh day Adventist

called Paster NaNa. They work to sell the local farm produce in large amounts and seek to buy good quality seed for the next sowing. I am sure something will work out but it's just a bit frustrating at the moment.



This calls for a hearty **WOW!** And in addition to all this Callum is often seen serving at our main services. Here he is holding the Ramsey Cross immediately before the Installation of Bishop Julian.

(see M&M Supplement online No 25)



Assistant director of Music **Shaun Turnbull** (L) and Director of Music **Samuel Hudson**, clearly enjoyed the BCCA buffet lunch.

As did **Adrian Wilson**



from Blackburn – who admired the decorative flowers on his luncheon table



The Dean hosted **Bob and Pauline Keen** from Cheshire, before he took the chair for BCCA's Annual General Meeting.



The Dean is very good at chairing meetings – speedy efficiency is mixed with gentle humour – so that we were well informed about the Cathedral Close transformation plans (which will begin in January – see M&M No 2, 2013).

Our treasurer, **John Marr** (L) told us that we were solvent, thanks to faithful payment of subscriptions and most generous PATRONS & GRAND PATRONS.

The Dean also paid tribute to **Music & More** which, he said, was the best publicity that Blackburn Cathedral had. And **M&M Supplement online** is also advertised online!

It was very good to see **Emily Crewe** at our AGM. Emily is Concerts and Tours Manager for **THE SIXTEEN**, who had given a concert the previous evening in Southwell Minster. Thanks for coming all the way to Blackburn after the concert, Emily!

It was also good to welcome **Tim Ferguson**, former Blackburn Cathedral choral scholar, who is now studying music at York University.

His cheerful presence always raises our spirits.



Before the rehearsal for Choral Evensong, **Canon Andrew Hindley** showed your editor the transformed Song School, which would be dedicated the next day.

How good it was to see that three plaques were so prominently displayed which tell the history of the

Song School, from its foundation by the second **Earl of Derby** in 1514 (that's why our choristers wear the three-tiered Derby ruffs), to its re-founding in 1940 in **T L Duerden's** first year as Organist and Master of the Choristers, by **Sir Sydney Nicholson** founder the RSCM – in St. Mary's House – to its rededication in its present position under the North transept in 1957 by **Provost Kay** and **Dr Gerald H. Knight**, Director of the RSCM.

And finally to its last major face-lift in 1974 by choirmen **David Rothwell** and **Derek Crompton**, to designs by JB, when it was re-opened by the international organ virtuoso, **Daniel Chorzempa**.



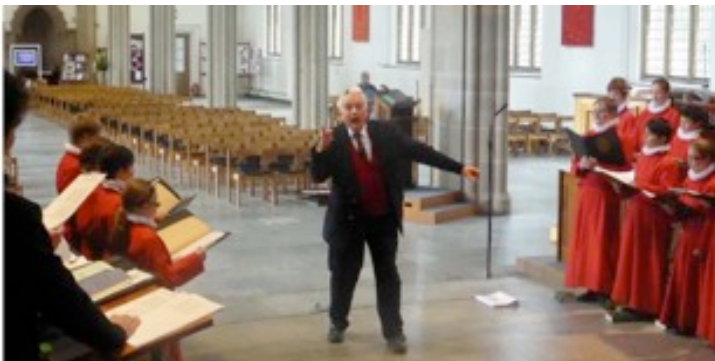


Samuel Hudson led the rehearsal for Choral Evensong, sung by our boys and girls and former choristers.



The music, chosen by SOC The Revd. **Ian Hollin** in consultation with **Samuel Hudson**, was:

Introit: *View me, Lord a Work of Thine* (Richard Lloyd)  
 Canticles: *Samsion in A*  
 Anthem: *Te Deum in B flat, Stanford*.



Samuel Hudson generously invited JB to rehearse and conduct his own Responses, which JB had composed for Blackburn Cathedral Choir many years ago: today was the eve of JB's 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday!

That rehearsal took more energy than JB expected – but the troops eventually rallied round with a will!

It was a very special delight to welcome again **Tony Murphy** to our Reunion.

Tony's plane from New Jersey had arrived at Heathrow that morning and so he just managed to arrive in time for most of the rehearsal.

Tony's commitment to Blackburn Cathedral and its choirs and its Choirs' Association can surely never be matched, for he flew from his home in the USA especially to be with us this year – and he did the same last year, bringing his wife, Liz ... and he's done that several more times in recent years.

**Thank you, Tony!**



Senior Old Chorister, **The Revd. Ian Hollin**, read the first lesson ...



...and later in the service the Dean thanked **Emily Kennedy** for her years of service in the Girls' choir, and Ian welcomed her into fellowship of former choristers.



It was very good indeed, immediately after the service, to see former chorister **Steve Holmes** with his grandson.

My word – how time flies, for JB can remember Steve vividly as a treble in 1974, when the choir had just sung Gibbons' setting of 'O Lord increase my faith'



which includes the line, *endue me with wisdom, charity, chastity and patience...* Steve asked JB what 'chastity' was. So he told him!

And so came the BCCA Annual Dinner.



How very good it was to see so many former choristers with us that evening:

**James & Robert Mitchell** (seated) with **Chris Snape**.

James is at Edgehill University studying Physical Geography – volcanoes and earthquakes – and Robert is at Morland School.

Chris is at Clitheroe Grammar School where he plays a nifty trumpet in their fabulous Swing Band. He's also a creative member of the BCCA committee where he encourages the younger former choristers to rally round for reunions. And he sings in the YPC.



It was good to see **Graham and Bev Chapelhow** – readers of *M&M* will remember Graham's moving account of his years in the choir during JB's time.

Centre is **Philip Carr** – a contemporary of Graham – Philip is one of the cathedral's distinguished churchwardens,



And here he is again (R) with his twin brother, **Alan** and his wife **Mandy**, and Philip's wife, **Sue** who is a very lively member of the cathedral congregation.

*Alan & Philip sang on several of the RSCM 2-week Cathedral courses which JB directed in the early 1970s – including Westminster Abbey. Behind the Carrs are **David Rothwell & Ian Harrison**. David is a grandfather and Ian is DoM of St. Stephen's Church, Bournemouth, where he directs a superb annual music festival.*



**Nigel & Laura Chew** (who are both black belts! Don't mess with the Chews!), and **Edward and Anitra Haythornwhite** whose energetic and dedicated voluntary activities for the cathedral could fill a book.

The dinner was delicious – thanks to our new Café-in-the-Crypt chef, David Riley and his colleagues.



It was very good to see at a number of first-timers there:



**The Revd. Dr. Mike Kirby**, (sitting next to Philip Carr). Mike is the cathedral's assistant curate – but he is also a distinguished medical professor – formerly at Guy's and now lecturing at Liverpool University. And he also conducts a choir which he founded in Manchester. So he is a very welcome new member of BCCA.

And it was so good to welcome our newest 'former chorister', **Emily Kennedy**, seen here with organ scholar **Karen Au**, and Assistant DoM **Shaun Turnbull**, with choral scholar **Philip Almond** pouring coffee.



Our two new choral scholars were there, too: **Christopher Davies** and **Nic Walker**, but for some reason your itinerant photographer failed to capture them on film. Ditto with **Constance Heald** (from Ely) and **Dorothy Wade** (from Preston), who were founder-members of the Renaissance Singers. Apologies all round!



BCCA Chairman **Stewart Hopkinson** had welcomed us all – including JB who founded the Association 48 years ago. (Next year JB celebrates the 50th anniversary of his coming to Blackburn Cathedral!)

Senior Old Chorister, the Revd. **Ian Hollin** made his farewell speech, before handing his SOC medallion (with the names of past SOC's on gold bars) to his successor, the Revd **Philip Chew**.

Ian told stories of wayward choristers in times past – including the tale of one cathedral where the Dean insisted that the choirmen call him 'Sir'. So, when they recited the Lord's Prayer they added 'Sir' to every phrase: *Our Father which art in heaven, Sir. Hallowed be Thy Name, Sir...*

Philip Chew's speech of acceptance was made mostly in Welsh – for he is Rural Dean in North Wales and has to communicate with his faithful parishioners.



But the part of his brief speech in English was full of good humour, so we can expect another lively speech from him at next year's Reunion – our 49th!

**AT THE SUNDAY MORNING EUCHARIST NEXT DAY ...**

... former choristers were sitting in the front rows of the Nave.

*Front row: Adrian Wilson, Callum Shaw, Chris Snape, new 'Old Chorister' Emily Kennedy & Alan Carr.*



*Centre: The Revd. Ian Hollin & friend Mrs. Margaret Payne, Ralph Robinson, Eric Bancroft, John Marr & Nigel Chew.*

*Back: Tony Murphy, Allan Holden, David Smalley, Alec Stuttard and the Revd. Philip Chew.*

The choirs sang Vierne's *Messe Solennele*, SOC Philip Chew read the first lesson, and the offertory was made by John Marr & Nigel Chew.



The former choristers joined with the cathedral choir to sing the communion motet, *A Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester* by L. J. White.



**And after the service came THE DEDICATION OF THE NEWLY REFURBISHED SONG SCHOOL.**

**See M&M Supplement online 23b**