

# BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

FBCM Newsletter No. 13  
BCOCA Newsletter No. 22

**January, 2005**

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Blackburn  
Cathedral  
Old Choristers  
Association

The Cathedral Choirs, with singers from Diocesan Church Choirs, began to make a CD of 'Songs of Praise Hymns' in November, accompanied by a brass quintet, percussion and organ. They made a thrilling sound. (See page 7 for more photos)



FRIENDS  
of BLACKBURN  
CATHEDRAL  
MUSIC

**Favourite hymns include arrangements by Blackburn Cathedral musicians:**

*Crown him with many crowns, Ye Watchers and ye Holy Ones, & Angel Voices (arranged for brass & organ by **Richard Tanner**), **JB's** Amazing Grace, Abide with me, and Steal Away (with **Pippa's** exquisite solo). **Indra Hughes'** Be still for the presence, **Dr. Herman Brearley's** God be in my head, and many more!*

***Stand by for more information about this exciting recording!***



## CHORISTER AWARDS

When the Dean upgraded **Charles Forshaw** to Senior Chorister in October he said, "Charles Forshaw is clearly one of the up and coming characters of the choir. Though still young – not yet thirteen – he and others will be carrying a huge weight of responsibility in the near future for the average age of the



choristers is so young. However, we are confident that Charles and his fellow senior choristers are up to the job – and it is a great delight to raise him tonight to the dignity of senior chorister."

And to **Emma Pearson**, who received the prestigious **Dean Frayne Award**, he said, "Emma Pearson has been singing in the Gils' Choir for over five years now, and is also singing with the YPC and the Chamber Choir. Emma is one of those lovely people to have around for she is always cheerful



positive and generously shares her 'sunny disposition' with us all. She is a great help with the younger children and earlier in the year, when the Girls' choir attended an outdoor pursuits school, she gave invaluable help to a very old dean during a night rope-walking exercise! Thus it is particularly appropriate that she be the recipient of the most prestigious of our musical awards this year, The Dean Frayne Award."

## Chorister of the week

Richard Tanner has recently introduced the idea of recognizing outstanding work amongst the boys. Therefore he's instituted a **Chorister of the Week Award**. The first boy to receive his certificate from Richard was **Connor Buller**. Well done, Connor!



## THE RIGHT REVEREND ACTION MAN

### Part 2

### Bishop Walter Baddeley

by OC BRYAN LAMB

*In the first part of the account of our hero-bishop, **Walter Baddeley, Bishop of Blackburn from 1954-1960, OC BRYAN LAMB** told how WB had won medals for heroism in WW1 and risen to the rank of acting Lieutenant Colonel, at the age of only 25, before returning as a student to Oxford.*

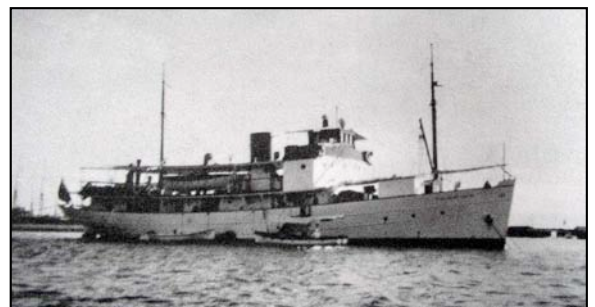
*A few years after he was ordained he became Bishop of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands, ten years before the Japanese invaded them in WW2.*



War actually came to the diocese of Melanesia on 21 January 1942 when the Japanese landed at Rabaul (New Britain) and Kieta (Bougainville) the next day. The very existence of the Melanesian Mission was now under threat. Bombs were dropped on Tulaghi and Gavatu, villages on the west coast of **Nggela Island**. The Mission's headquarters, the Cathedral and Bishop Walter's house were then at Siota on the east coast. He was there at the time and reports having a grandstand view of the bombing over to the west.



It was decided to evacuate Mission women and children from there before any enemy landing that might take place. They were taken by the Bishop to Fauabu on Malaita Island where the Mission had a hospital, but not without some excitement. The "**Southern Cross**" [below] narrowly escaped a bombing attack and there was considerable apprehension about the possibility of meeting Japanese warships during the seven hour crossing.





There followed much discussion with the British colonial administrators (with whom the Bishop had a close working relationship) about the evacuation of Mission "white" people who was assumed would have a hard time if rounded up by the Japs. A few left of their own volition, some of the perhaps more vulnerable were urged by Bishop Walter to go, but he himself refused to quit. He and one of his doctors, together with some other helpers including nurses and teachers, stayed on. Most of the government administrators also stayed to act as coast watchers reporting Japanese military and naval movements. Some of the Bishop's own people also joined in this perilous role.



**Bishop Baddeley (dressed as Bishops did in those days) in his early years in Melanesia, with some Melanesian brothers from his Mission.**

At the beginning of February, the Japs were still around 400 miles away from the diocesan centres on Nggela and Malaita, although enemy aircraft often flew over the area, dropping bombs. It seemed possible for a time that nothing more serious might happen, so Bishop Walter got on with his job, setting sail to spend Holy Week at Pawa, on Uki Island, where the Mission had an important school for boys, (described as the "Eton of the Pacific"), then on to San Cristobal Island before returning to Malaita. An assistant was sent over to Guadalcanal with supplies for the Mission school and printing shop at Maravovo.



**The Bishop in more informal dress with some of his Melanesian brothers in the days before the war.**

But the Japs were still on the move. In July, Guadalcanal was invaded and the Christian settlements were forced to disperse as their facilities were destroyed.

**The Bishop's Cathedral of St. Luke which was destroyed by the Japanese during their invasion.**



A few days later, Japanese troops arrived in north Malaita, right on the Bishop's temporary doorstep. Mission properties at Fauabu and Auki were looted and wrecked. Bishop Walter and his people retreated into the hills above Auki and spent several weeks lying low in the village of Tantalau, living in native huts. The villagers hid his vestments and staff in a cave there to prevent them being found by Japanese patrols.

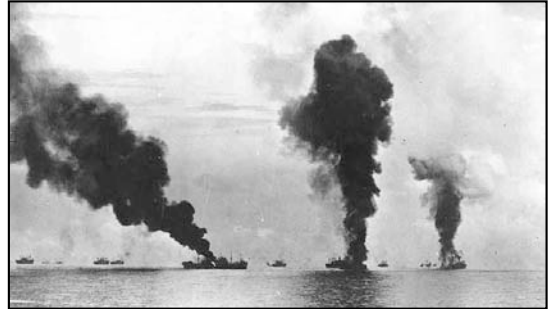
In the event, the Japanese occupation was mostly concentrated in the north of the island and the Bishop was eventually able to visit villages further south, albeit in constant fear of discovery and arrest, and always on foot.

As the months went by, native Christian men and boys became invaluable allies and friends to American servicemen, not just on Malaita, but also on Guadalcanal and other islands.

They rescued flyers shot down or forced down in the bush, assisted sailors from sinking ships making for the shore on rafts and acted as guides through tortuous jungle paths towards safety and medical treatment.



**American ships burning, having been attacked by the Japanese**



In August the American marines arrived to turn the tide of the enemy invasion. Most of the Solomon Islands were quickly cleared of Japanese, but on Guadalcanal a furious battle continued until November when the Japs were finally beaten and withdrew. It was the turning point of the war in the Pacific.

**Japanese prisoners of war at Guadalcanal**



Meanwhile back on Malaita, there was no lack of excitement, but also considerable hardship and increasing physical privation. Even though the battle on Guadalcanal was by now going badly for the Japs, Bishop Walter in his own words was "not a little amazed, on Sunday 25th October, to see from our hillside lookout above Auki, a Jap squadron sailing down Indispensable Strait at 25 to 30 knots, just as if they owned the place.





"But after three great air attacks (for two of which some of us had dress circle seats), what was left slithered out of sight towards Isabel Island and was lost to sight round the corner.



"But all of this meant that no "ordinary" ship could come to the Solomons with supplies and none of us had stores from the South since the previous December. It was wonderful how things did last out...but most of us were reduced to the barest minimum." The Mission's diet at this time appears to have consisted mostly of taro, kumara (sweet potato) and cabbage.



**Doctor of Sacred Theology.** (The photograph shows him in uniform receiving his scroll). In conferring the degree, the University President spoke of him as...."now leading the thought and guiding the public action of the population in those islands," and of his being "honoured by leaders of the Allied armed forces in the task of winning this war for the defence of human liberty."



By early 1943, after much fierce fighting the Americans were again in control of the Solomon Islands and Bishop Walter was able to begin the work of reconstruction.

The next four years were probably the busiest of his time in the Pacific islands.

The Melanesian Mission had suffered considerable damage to its churches, schools and hospitals throughout the diocese. The Bishop was asked to estimate the value of the losses and the total came to £17,185, a large sum of money in those days. It was a time for energy and leadership. Our Bishop had plenty.

In travelling around to bring comfort and get recovery underway, he found an expanded flock with the new presence of thousands of American and other Allied servicemen. Earlier, in 1942, he had been appointed an honorary chaplain in the New Zealand armed forces and now donned his old uniform as a lieutenant colonel (with a clerical collar up top) to make it easier to minister to military units when asked to do so.

He soon generated enormous influence with the American military leaders and with the British government officials working to restore normality to this war-ravaged region. His contribution is perhaps best summed up in a paragraph from a letter received in July this year from the Melanesian Mission UK:

"It was the courage and faithfulness of Bishop Baddeley that preserved and indeed expanded the Church in the Solomon Islands during the Japanese occupation in the 2WW. His amazing exploits and powerful leadership are the stuff of which legends are made. It is said, and truly, that it was Bishop Baddeley's determination and example which ensured that the British Administration was able to return after the war and continue the job of the Protectorate in guiding the people towards independence."

They should know!

Again, Bishop Walter was constantly on the move, not only within the diocese, but further afield to New Zealand, Australia and the USA, seeking aid and funds for reconstruction. In November 1944 whilst in America, he was honoured by Columbia University which conferred on him the **honorary degree of**

After the war ended, Bishop Walter was again honoured by the Americans who, "for exceptionally meritorious conduct" awarded him the **United States Medal of Freedom with Palm**, the highest honour that could be bestowed by them upon a civilian. Indeed a very well deserved and most fitting tribute.



In 1947, after fifteen eventful years in the Pacific islands, Bishop and Mrs. Baddeley, now with a young family, returned to England, where he became Suffragan Bishop of Whitby in the Archdiocese of York. **In 1954, he came to us in Blackburn as our third diocesan Bishop.**



**Walter Baddeley's Enthronement in the incomplete Blackburn Cathedral on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1954. You can work out, from the archway on the right, that his throne would now be in the middle of the ambulatory directly behind the Bishop's present throne. Photo taken from the then organ loft (directly above where our choirs now sing).**

**Sadly, he died in his post on 11th February 1960, at the age of only 65.**

*BRYAN LAMB continues with his own memories:*



Whilst doing this research, it has become a matter of regret that I never had the opportunity to meet this remarkable man.

During the years of his Blackburn episcopate I was seldom at home, instead messing about in aeroplanes and perspiring in the Arabian Peninsula. [Bryan was a Squadron Leader in the RAF after the war. Ed.] I returned to England just a month after he died.

As a little lad in 1942, I had sung in the choir at the enthronement of his predecessor, **Bishop Asquith**. Strange to reflect that whilst I was doing my stuff that day, the next incumbent as bishop was also doing his, but on the other side of the World. He was hungry, shoes falling apart, dodging Japanese patrols, but unbowed, in charge and an inspiration to those around him.

Later on in 1960, **TLD** allowed me to sing at the enthronement of our fourth **Bishop, Robert Claxton**. But I missed out on Bishop Walter. However, other OCs were luckier.

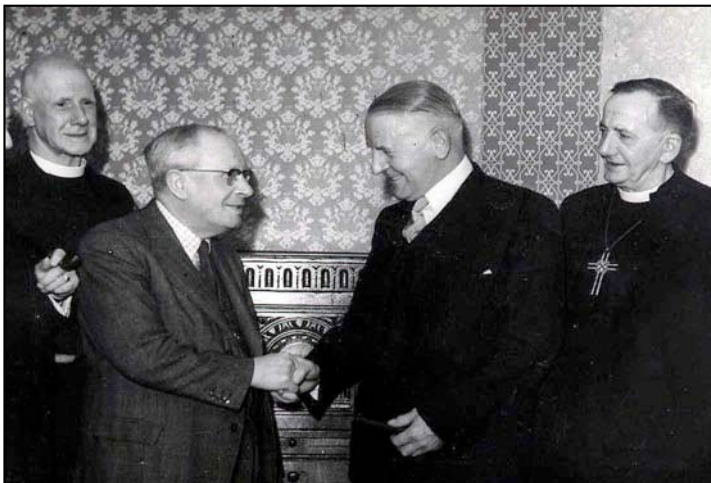
**PETER HEALD** writes: "**TONY ROBINSON, JOHN BUTCLIFFE, HARRY TURNER** and I attended the RSCM course at York Minster in August 1950, when Bishop Walter was Suffragan Bishop of Whitby. He singled out the Blackburn boys, showed us the birth register of **Guy Fawkes**, offered to look up the word "binge" in the largest dictionary in Britain, which was in the Minster library, and to take us out for one. But he didn't have the time, so he gave us all the money he had with him - 3s 7d. I think we had orange juice!"

What a privilege it would have been to know such a dedicated, faithful, energetic, humorous, but above all, supremely courageous Bishop. My five-year-old grandson's current role model is the fictional character Action Man, inspiring the title for his article. But our hero was a real one and is for ever part of our Cathedral heritage. Bishop Baddeley truly was a Man of Action.

***Some Man, some Action, some Soldier, some Bishop!***

In concluding the Bishop Baddeley story, I wish to acknowledge with thanks, the contributions made by the Rev Brian Macdonald-Milne, formerly of the Melanesian Mission, and Father Caulton Medobu, currently serving with the Mission, who provided valuable additional source material. **BRYAN LAMB**

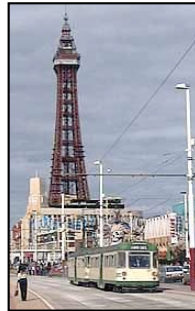
***Our warmest congratulations and admiration to Bryan and to Peter for undertaking such detailed research which has brought our heroic Bishop to life for us all. Thank you! Ed***



**PETER HEALD & BRYAN LAMB** have written fascinating articles about our two War heroes who were Provost and Bishop of our Cathedral in the 1950s. Here they are with legendary **TLD**:

L-R **Provost WILLIAM KAY, Chairman TOM ROBINSON, Choirmaster THOMAS L. DUERDEN** (who had served on HMS Leviathan in WW1) and **Bishop WALTER BADDELEY**.

**The YPC..... FUN  
JUNE 2004  
by  
Jenny Hodkinson !!  
Kate's Mother**



Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June dawned brightly and I tried to persuade myself that I was doing the right thing. 'The right thing' being accompanying a coachload of teenagers to Blackpool Pleasure Beach via Fleetwood. 'Oh, lucky you' chorused my colleagues as I informed them of my weekend plans. They couldn't quite understand why a woman who spends every working day with children should willingly offer her services for more of the same.

Neither could I. Thinking of the volumes of reports needing my attention I began to have second thoughts. However, a day in the bracing Blackpool air would be far healthier. Wouldn't it?

Putting on my bravest face and trendiest clothes (teenagers notice what you are wearing!) I steered the car towards the Cathedral with my very own teenager tapping away on her mobile phone beside me. I had been given clear advice on what to wear and how to look 'cool.' Not sure I was totally achieving this (My trainers were so cool they could be spotted from high altitudes e.g. Big Wheel, Big Dipper.) I took comfort in the thought that my First Aid knowledge would comfortably meet requirements!

At 9.50 a.m. we boarded the coach. **Greg Morris, Alex Davies and myself** were the named, responsible adults. All the rest being totally irresponsible! (Only joking YPC!) A high-spirited journey ensued.



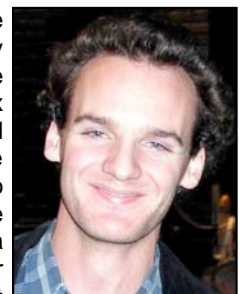
We arrived in Fleetwood for a rehearsal of Sunday's concert and then on to the Pleasure Beach.



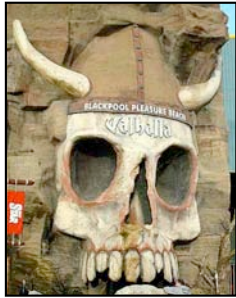
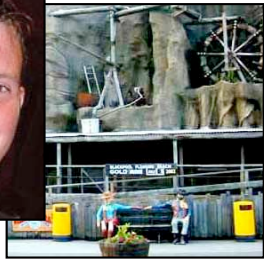
After Greg had sorted out the exorbitant admission costs, (I have paid less for a car) the **YPC, myself and Alex** donned our wristbands and traversed the airport-style security scanner determined to get our money's worth.

Meanwhile, Greg returned to Blackburn to rehearse for an evening concert and to no doubt make emergency phone-calls to his Bank Manager!

At this point the YPC fled en-masse like a pack of hounds. Any fears I may have had regarding the welfare of these youngsters were swiftly allayed. **Alex** assured me that this was quite normal behaviour, for them. Deciding that we were hungry, we ate lunch and it is to this delightful young man's credit that he was prepared to hang around with me (a 'well-past the first flush of youth' choir parent) until the YPC reappeared at 5.00pm.



I was more than happy to be the 'Bag Lady' promising to catch up with Alex later. I eventually managed to do this, not easy in a complex the size of the Pleasure Beach. I hastily joined Alex and few of the party in a queue for 'The Goldmine' just in time to be swept on a sedate journey into the bowels of the 'Pleasure Beach', which 'Parky' described as 'The most thrilling ride of my life' or words to that effect. I admit, it was rather tame, but I can do any amount of tame.



'Valhalla'

It was agreed by all that the best ride of the day was the 'Valhalla' which most had queued up for time and time again. Thankfully the Pepsi Max was out of action as the weather was too windy.



The Dodgems beckoned. Ah! At last, a good old-fashioned ride where we could all vent our feelings. I was glad of all those years of practice as I swerved, dodged and yes, deliberately smashed into **Parky, James, Simon and Kate**. Great fun was had by all.



We caught up with **Emma, Carly** and **mini Crewe** (alias **Naomi**) and tried to cram as much as we could into the remaining 30 minutes of our day. Just time to pop into the nearest confectionery shop to satisfy our cravings for something sweet. **Kit** gulped when his bag was weighed. He obviously hasn't heard Peter Kay's views on the old Pik 'n Mix. Perhaps he just doesn't like 'Flying Saucers'.

At 4.55pm, **Alex and I** moved towards the main entrance anticipating a long wait. No chance! This is the Blackburn Cathedral YPC we are talking about. **Mat** and **Francis** were already waiting, closely followed by **Carly, Emma and Naomi** all drenched to the skin and wearing grins of blissful relief.

You haven't done a proper YPC outing unless you have met the challenge, and today's challenge was to get soaked through, and I mean totally soaked through on the 'Valhalla' ride. These three girls had certainly met the challenge. One by one everyone dribbled back to the coach wearing the same self-satisfied grin.

Last but not least came my own darling daughter with **Sandy, Johnny** (Brad Pitt lookalike) **Simon, Parky and Kit**, all completely sodden and giggling uncontrollably. Not one young person was late.

We were all seated on the coach by 5.00pm. and after a quick headcount we were off. My First Aid Kit remained untouched in my bag. Phew! The fact that they all nearly caught pneumonia on 'The Valhalla' never occurred to me.

As I leaned back in my seat it did occur to me what a good idea coming to Blackpool had been after all. What a memorable day. Not only can these lovely young people sing beautifully but they also know how to enjoy themselves. To quote **Canon Hindley** 'No matter how late or how much they have revelled on a Saturday night, they always roll in on a Sunday morning.' They

are at once funny, excitable, polite, committed, and totally loveable.

We have seen them grow from as far back as the days when **Woody (Edward Seymour)** was barely visible above the pew, his cherubic face framed by a sparkling white ruff.



As my own daughter **Kate** leaves for university, I look back on some wonderful experiences she has had with first the Girls' Choir and then YPC. She has travelled to many places both in this country and abroad, singing in many churches and cathedrals and she joins me in saying that these have been

amongst her happiest experiences with people she holds very dear. Whenever she can, I know that Kate will do her utmost to continue to sing with the choir.

In the meantime, a huge 'Thankyou' to **Richard, Greg, Pippa and Nicola** and all those who provide the opportunity to make wonderful music at the Cathedral. Long may it continue. **Jenny Hodkinson**



## Letters to the Editor

From **OC DAVID KNIGHT** (1983-95) in London

Dear John,

Just received the latest Newsletter (No.21). A most enjoyable read. I am sorry I was not able to be with you all this year for the reunion. I have had quite a busy summer with work (Finance position with a large international city law firm called "Lovells") and with the singing.

In September 2004 I was installed as a Lay clerk in the Cathedral Choir of Southwark Cathedral London. So far it has been great to work with **Peter Wright** (DOM) and **Stephen Disley** (Assistant). The Clerks sing with both the Boys and the Girls choirs for Evensong and Mass 4 times a week. It was Southwark's reunion the same weekend as Blackburn's and having just been installed found it difficult to be absent.

It was great to meet up with **DUNCAN ASPDEN** at the end of the summer break when we were both booked to take part in a performance of the F major Requiem by H Biber for the Utrecht Early Music Festival. I see Duncan had beat me to it! Life in London is great and busy. As a Tenor there are lots of opportunities to sing.

I owe a lot to Blackburn Cathedral (**DAVID COOPER, COLIN EDMONDSON, JUSTIN WATERS, JAMES THOMAS, DAVID GOODENOUGH**) for the most excellent tuition over the years of 1983 to 1995. **TIM HALSALL** and I left (retired) the same day having both sang in the back rows for a couple of years after our voices broke.

On 20 November 2004 I will be singing with the Holst Singers in a performance of the B minor Mass by JS Bach under the direction of **Stephen Layton** (Temple Church) at St. John's Smith Square. It will be a great performance. If you have not heard this choir before they are outstanding and the soloist line up it not bad either **Kirkby, Gilchrist** just to mention two.

I hope all is well and hope to be in Blackburn just after Christmas.

**David Knight**



**From OC CHRIS RYAN in Singapore**

Just a quick note to enclose my BCOCA subscription. Thanks! Ed!)

Thanks for all you are doing to consolidate and develop BCOCA, I truly appreciate getting back in touch over these last couple of years. I have been promising for a LONG time now to make a contribution to the Newsletter, and will try to do something about it before too much longer.

All the very best, **Chris**.

*Chris: special thanks for putting us in touch with former verger Edward Keen again. We look forward to your own 'story' asap JB*

From immediate past **SOC BOB KEEN** in Wilmslow.

Dear John,

Many thanks for your very kind letter. It was my pleasure to do what I could last year as SOC to repay just a little for all the joy and pleasure we all had over our 7 years at Blackburn Cathedral.

Memories came flooding back this afternoon with the broadcast Evensong from **Chichester Cathedral** who gave a beautiful rendition of your Responses. Did you hear them? There was a short annoying break in transmission but fortunately it didn't affect your Responses. I assume you already know that if you missed them, you can hear the broadcast again for up to a week by listening on the Internet to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3>

I enjoyed the latest Newsletter. As usual, there was a good mix of stuff from all age groups in it. I enjoyed **BRYAN LAMB'S** much-heralded piece on **Bishop Baddeley**. I think our Rector in Wilmslow may be interested in that because he came to us from Melanesia. Can you let me have another copy please, and also a photo of the Group on the front page. Many thanks once again.

**Bob**

PS. I never met Harold Ranson because he was gone before my time, but I remember hearing of him. Hopefully he is now well settled in his career in God's Own Country - the North-east!!!

From Cathedral choirman and **OC ED MCCULLOUGH**

John,

I can help in the location of the said lost **OC Richard Ferguson**, as he happens to be a great personal and family friend of me and my clan! Both he and my brother, Alex, live in Chamber Bridge,

Fergy was at St Wilfrid's, and I think he, like me, was crowbarred into the Cathedral Choir by [choir parent and music director] **Howard Seymour**. I have much to thank Howard for, and he also remains a great personal friend, unlike virtually all my other teachers at school!

Hope this helps, **Ed**

*Yes it does! Thanks for Richard's full address. Ed.*

*From the incoming Diocesan Representative Coordinator of the Friends of Cathedral Music, Mr. Geoff Shaw, in St. Davids, South Wales.*

I am much impressed with your Newsletter and read it with interest as I am a life member of the Friends of the Cathedral. At one time I was a very regular visitor to Blackburn, as my work took me there and my God-daughter lives there. She has married and moved away: I, therefore, do not come so often, but I have always enjoyed your Services.

Kind regards, **Geoff Shaw**

*From the outgoing Diocesan Representative Coordinator of the Friends of Cathedral Music, Mr John E. Craddock, in Stamford:*

I write to thank you for sending me over several years copies of your lively and entertaining Old Choristers' Newsletter. Although not directly involved with Blackburn Cathedral, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading this excellent publication which does such fine work in keeping members in touch with headquarters and with each other.

With all good wishes for the continuing success of your publication, Yours sincerely

**John Craddock.**

*Thank you so much, Ed.*

## St. John, Chapter 2 (Updated!)



In our last edition of this Newsletter, we rejoiced that **Debbie Heyes**, our cathedral receptionist, had just gotten herself married to the Revd. **Stephen Johnson**, Vicar of Emmanuel Church, Preston.

One of Debbie's unenviable Cathedral responsibilities is to open the barrier before 4.00 pm (when choir parents chauffeured their choristers are allowed in for services) to admit selected cars to the Cathedral Close, and to refuse entry to those who aren't allowed within these hallowed precincts. At Debbie's Reception at Emmanuel Church, her author-husband read the following updated version of **The Wedding at Cana**:

On the third day there was a wedding in the cathedral of Blackburn. When the car parking spaces gave out the Dean said to Debbie, 'They have no more car parking spaces!' And Debbie said to him, 'Mr. Dean, what concern is that to me? The hour is not yet 4 o'clock.' The Dean said to the drivers, 'Do whatever she tells you.'

Now at the top of the car park there were six big parking spaces for the Anglican rights of cathedral canons. Debbie said to them, 'Fill these spaces with your cars.' And they filled them up to the brim. She said to them, 'Now get out of your cars and go about your business.'

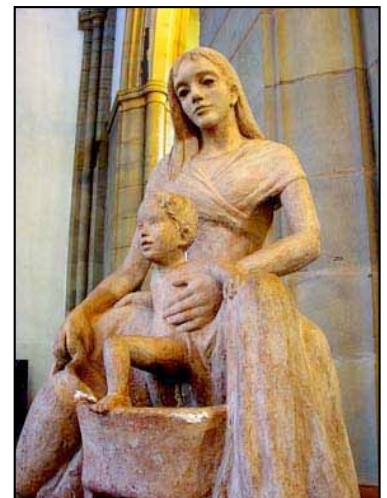
When the other choir parents realised what had happened, but did not know where the spaces had come from (although the Dean knew) the choir parents called the Organist and said to him, 'Everyone first parks down at the bottom - to the left-behind the cathedral, and then parks at the top after those spaces are full. But you have kept the best spaces until now.'

Debbie did this, the first of her road signs, and revealed her glory. And the choir parents believed in her.

## 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

Who sculpted the exquisite **Madonna and Child** in our cathedral? **Ms. Josephina da Vasconcellos!** She celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the end of October.

This sculpture, which has graced our cathedral for well over 30 years, was created to honour the life and work of **Mrs. Helen Dex**, wife of the then Vicar of St. Andrew's Church Ashton on Ribble, who had been the long-time President of the Diocesan Mothers' Union.



Another sculpture by this delightful artist can be seen in Liverpool & Manchester Cathedrals – *The Holy Family* – which was inspired by the view of the hills from her studio in Cumbria.

Those of us who sang in (or conducted!) the Blackburn Bach Choir 30 years ago will remember that Josephina composed a carol for us to sing at our annual carol concert in King George's Hall to a capacity audience of 2,000. She is a lady of many talents!

Ms. Vasconcellos is still hard at work in her studio near Grasmere, and we send her belated but heartfelt greetings and congratulations on achieving this wonderful milestone.

## RSCM CHOIR FESTIVAL

**RICHARD TANNER** conducted the RSCM Massed Choirs Festival in the Cathedral on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Well over 100 singers arrived punctually from choirs all over our diocese and worked hard under Richard's encouraging direction



They began their rehearsal in the South Transept (their standard of singing was much better than our photograph suggests!) and then they processed to the Nave for the remainder of the afternoon.



They sang music by Brewer, Haydn (*The heavens are telling*) and JB (*Let us with a gladsome mind*) and were accompanied most expertly on our cathedral organ (with the console wheeled halfway down the Nave!) by **Andy Plowman**, from Lancaster. He dazzled us all by his playing of Bach's Sinfonia from Cantata 29 *from memory* as the choirs recessed at the end of the service. A 'Wow' ending to a most happy afternoon.

## Former DoM GORDON STEWART has again been on his travels

In October he was in Australia giving organ recitals in the most prestigious places – including Melbourne City Hall, which has the largest organ in the Southern hemisphere, and Sydney

Town Hall (which is the only organ in the world to have a full length 64ft pedal reed, which sounds an octave below our half-length Serpent. The lowest note is four times longer than the longest pipe on our organ!



## Gordon at Sydney Town Hall's MONSTER organ.

But two days later he was back in England, presiding over a large gathering of distinguished musicians in Huddersfield as President of the Huddersfield Organists' Association. He presented a programme of the organ works by the Yorkshire musician **Andrew Carter**.

Your editor has never heard Gordon play so brilliantly. Clearly Jet Lag is conducive to scintillating playing!

**Andrew Carter** was there and also **David Wood** who restored our organ, and so were **Dr. Simon Lindley**, Organist of Leeds City Hall and Parish Church (where S. S. Wesley – 'Blessed be the God' – was organist) and also **Dr. Francis Jackson**, former organist of York Minster.

Your Editor was honoured to be the guest speaker at the excellent luncheon following, and it was so good to see former chairman **NIGEL SPOONER** there who had come to enjoy the brilliant music, delicious meal and stimulating fellowship.



Back: JB, Dr. Lindley  
Front: Dr. Jackson, Nigel Spooner

The following week we heard that Gordon was in the USA conducting *Messiah* at Shenandoah University – four days' rehearsal with their orchestra and choral society and a fabulous performance that left them asking for more. How does he do it? (See page 11 for more news of Gordon!)

By the way, in October **Nigel Spooner** gave one of the most brilliant lunchtime recitals in the cathedral that we have ever heard. Clearly he's a young man to watch!

## More Choir Awards

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November, the Dean presented two sets of Awards. First, the **FRED GREEN AWARDS** to four choristers (*L-R see next page*): **Daniel Hallows, Edward Sanderson, Matthew Bruce and Charles Forshaw**, for their excellence.

These Awards are for boys who live outside the Borough of Blackburn. (Fred had been concerned that the Livesey Award was only for boys who lived within the Borough.)

It was a particularly happy occasion as Fred's widow, **DOROTHY GREEN** was there to present Fred's Awards to the four boys. Dorothy is a very youthful 94!

The Awards, worth £50 each, are sponsored by the Rotary Club of Blackburn of which Fred was the longest serving



member and very senior in the worldwide fellowship of Rotary. He was an Old Chorister of the Cathedral (he sang at the laying of the foundation stone of the extension of the cathedral in 1937 when the then Princess Royal attended (it was raining, so he told us!) and also Senior Church Warden for over 20 years. We miss him so much



Before presenting the Awards the Dean said, "This award is in memory of an outstanding pillar of Cathedral life **Fred Green**, who served this choir and Cathedral well for many years. I am delighted that **Mrs. Green** is here tonight to present the awards to these four candidates and also that representatives from the Rotary Club of Blackburn are here too, or they administer the awards on behalf of Mrs. Green.

It is worth mentioning to the congregation that the choir who produced this glorious sound that we have heard tonight are all voluntary. That will explain why the gentlemen of the choir have that 'lean and hungry look' about them, but it also makes these acts of generosity from our benefactors so much more important.

The boys in front of you today – though they may look small from where you sit – have to walk tall in the choir, for the choristers are a very young bunch, so an extra weight of responsibility falls upon the shoulders of our senior choristers, some of whom are recognised tonight for their work. It is a great delight to invite Mrs. Green to present these awards".



**Dorothy Green** presents **Daniel Hallows** with his Award

Head Chorister **Tom Croxson** receiving his **Chadwick Memorial Prize** for being the outstanding chorister of the year! *Congratulations!*



What do the choir men do when the Dean presents Awards to choristers? They look on with rapt attention and some with no little nostalgia, for some of them had received Awards when they were boys.



L-R: **James Twigg, Derek Crompton, Andrew Jump, Daniel Adams, Daniel Prowse & Peter Eastham.**

## Welcome back, DAVID LEIGH

**DAVID LEIGH**, former Organ Scholar of Blackburn, but now Assistant Director of Music at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, gave a brilliant lunchtime recital in November (all our recitalists seem to be brilliant!). He played an all-French programme – Tournemire, Langlais and Dupré (2<sup>nd</sup> Symphony), which left us all gasping for breath.

He told us afterwards, during a convivial lunch in the crypt, that his choir sings services 6 times a week, and the boys also sing a service on most mornings. St. Pat's is probably the only cathedral now which can present such a programme. Wow!



Before his recital David cast an eye at the work Richard Tanner was doing to orchestrate hymns for our forthcoming CD Songs of Praise!

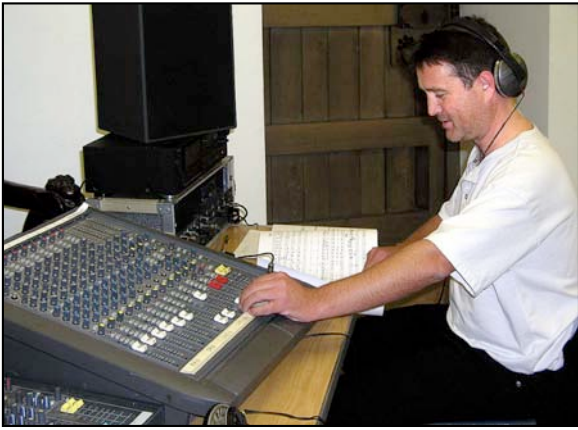
*(See below!)*

## MORE PHOTOS OF OUR SONGS OF PRAISE RECORDING



**Simon Lole**, the producer discusses a point with **Richard** before the recording. Simon is Director of Music of Salisbury Cathedral and was a chorister at St. Paul's with Richard





Then Simon closeted himself in the assembly area and was surrounded by wires and machines, so that the music made by our choirs and organ and brass could faithfully be captured in all its excellence.



The Tuba player made himself felt, as did all the excellent brass players.



## OUR NEW VIRGER

We welcome Mr. **Gareth Willcocks-Wood** as our new Virger who will assist Head Virger **Howard Waddell**, and Canons' Virger, **Mark Pickering** in their heterogeneous duties which are both ceremonial and labour intensive. (Without them the Cathedral would grind to a halt!)

Gareth lives with his parents at Edenfield; he attended Woodhay School at Ramsbottom and studied science at Bury College. His father works near the Cathedral – he's manager of Blackburn Shopping Centre!



Gareth's first ceremonial duty was to Virge **Canon Michael Wedgworth** to and from the Jesus Chapel for a mid-week Eucharist.

Canon Wedgworth told your editor afterwards that Gareth had done very well.

**WELCOME!**

## POETRY-THON

Senior Old Chorister **NIGEL CHEW** organised a wholly splendid and very different evening for us all to enjoy in November. Well over 20 folk recited their favourite poems (some recited two, and one recited three!) to a large and very appreciative audience in the cathedral crypt.

Six Old Choristers offered their own highly varied poems for us to enjoy:



L-R: Stewart Hopkinson, Nigel Chew, Ernie Gorner, Philip Chew, Philip Wilson & John Bertalot

**THE DEAN** opened the proceedings with Sir John Betjeman's *Miss Joan Hunter Dunn* which, he told us, was semi-autobiographical – for he first met **Geraldine** at a tennis match!



Richard was perched precariously on a chair which was on a platform so that everyone could see him. And he didn't fall off!

Richard was surrounded by singers. And all the choirs – cathedral choirs and church choirs from the diocese – watched him closely. Everyone enjoyed themselves hugely.







*“Miss J. Hunter Dunn,  
Miss J. Hunter Dunn,  
Furnish'd and burnish'd by  
Aldershot sun,  
What strenuous singles we  
played after tea,  
We in the tournament –  
you against me!...”*

**Stewart Hopkinson** (left) and Chairman **Nigel Chew** enjoyed every moment of the Dean's entertaining performance (which he recited from memory!)



and **OC PHIL WILSON** brought down the house with his MonOlogue (accent on the second syllable!) which told the story of Noah's Flood – in Lancashire!

The evening came to a rousing end when everyone sang *Jerusalem* at the tops of their voices whilst waving fifty Union Jacks, almost rhythmically.



It was a great evening, recreationally, socially, gastronomically and financially. **£700 was donated to BCOCA funds** – fabulous! Well done everyone and thanks – especially to **NIGEL!**

Letter from **OC MICHAEL HAMM** in West Kirby.

Dear John

Regret I can't be with you on Wednesday for the Poetrython. I'm involved in a rehearsal for Hoylake Choral Society's concert on Saturday when we shall sing Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Tippett's *Five Spirituals* from *A Child of our Time* and Haydn's *Mass in Time of War*.

Many thanks for keeping in touch. The Newsletter is splendid!

**Michael**

Unofficially adopted son, **Stewart Hopkinson**, hung on every word **Sarah Chew** declaimed (we all do – for she was, after all, a Headmistress!) as she recited *'The Eve of the Battle of Waterloo;*



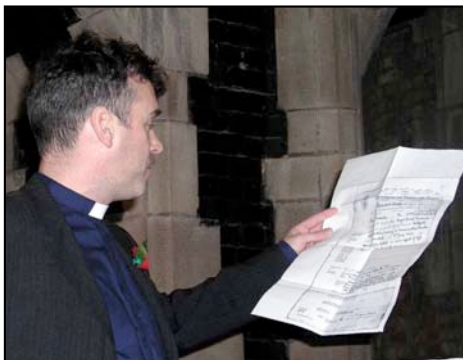
**Muriel Holden**, who is often to be seen 'manning' the Welcome Desk in the Cathedral, thrilled us all by her commanding performance of *The Listeners*.



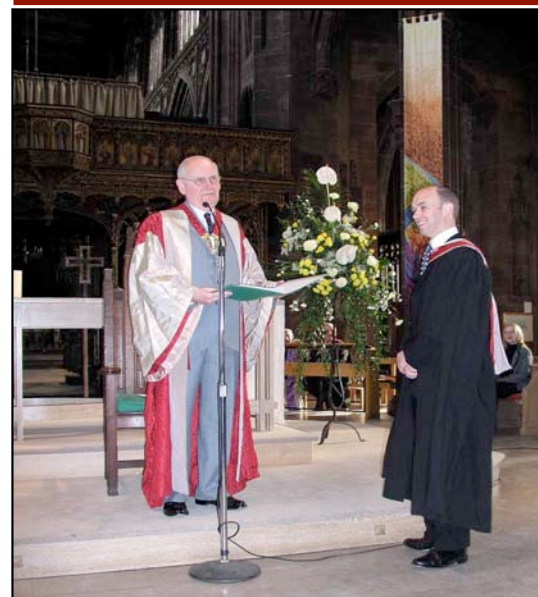
Nigel's Vicar-brother **PHILIP CHEW** gave a riveting reading of

*Flanders Field*.

He told us that his grandfather had fought in the first World War, and he brought along the certificate listing his grandfather's wounds, which added tremendous immediacy to his own dynamic presence.



## GORDON STEWART, Hon. FRCO



Our former director of Music was awarded a long overdue and thoroughly well-deserved honorary **Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists** at a most impressive ceremony in Manchester Cathedral in November.

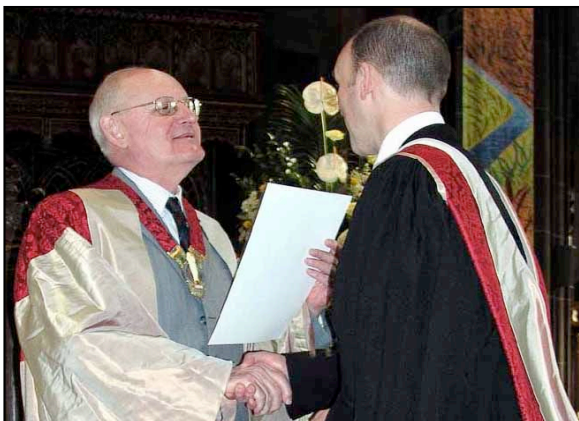
Choir parent **Jenny Hodkinson** (see page 5) stepped in at the last minute to recite a poem





The occasion was the annual Awards of Diplomas of the RCO to young organists who had earned their Associateships and Fellowships through rigorous examination and much hard work. But the first to receive his Award was Gordon.

The President of the RCO, **Dr. Roy Massey**, (former organist of Hereford Cathedral) read out a summary of Gordon's most impressive CV – his work as organist of Manchester Cathedral and then as Director of Music at Blackburn (succeeding **David Cooper**), his continuing work for the BBC – *TV Songs of Praise* and *Daily Services*, his dazzling career as a recitalist of world-wide stature and his conducting of the RSCM's Millennium Youth Choir to such a fabulous standard for three years.



When Roy gave Gordon his certificate the large and distinguished audience gave him a rousing ovation.

It was thrilling to be there with so many illustrious musicians who included **Dr. Francis Jackson** (formerly of York Minster) **Dr. Simon Lindley** from Leeds, and the organists of Southwark and Lincoln Cathedrals, as well as members of Gordon's own family who had come from Scotland for the occasion, and some of his close friends from this part of the world. It was a joy and honour to share that occasion with him.

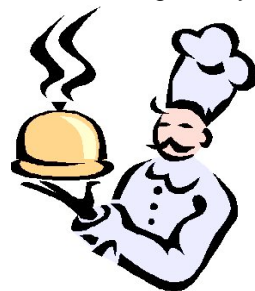
### RICHARD TANNER & PIPPA HYDE . . .

...attracted a large and most appreciative audience when they gave the last of the Autumn series of Wednesday lunchtime concerts in the cathedral at the end of November.



Not only did **Philippa** thrill us with her exquisite voice which filled every corner of the cathedral, but **Richard** also excelled himself by playing not one, but four instruments: our great cathedral organ, our delightful chamber organ, his own superb harpsichord and our cathedral grand piano. (The piano was too large to fit into the photo!)

We know that many of our readers are gainfully employed during the daytime, but those who are free really should attend these lunchtime concerts, for the variety of the programmes and the brilliance of the soloists thrill so many of us every week. **And** a delicious lunch is served in the cathedral crypt before and after every recital!



### WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIMES

Make every effort to come to the New Year Wednesday recitals which begin at 1.00 pm, and last 45 minutes.

- Jan 12 Professor Wim Viljoen
- Jan 19 Greg Abrahams
- Jan 26 **GREG MORRIS** & David Gibbs (organ duets)
- Feb 2 Mike Leeson (Trumpet) & **NIGEL SPOONER**
- Feb 9 **GREG MORRIS**
- Feb 16 Charles Edmondson
- Feb 23 Sarah Cox (mezzo Soprano)  
& **RICHARD TANNER** (piano)
- March 2 Simon Lloyd
- March 9 Dr Elizabeth Holland, (Soprano)  
& Mark Batten.

You can't miss seeing & hearing  
one of the most entertaining organists  
in the world:

## CARLO CURLEY



He will be giving a concert in the cathedral  
with the cathedral choir on  
**Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 7.30 pm.**  
Tickets from **Debbie in the Cathedral Office**  
**01254-51491**



## MORE HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS !

**Richard Tanner** and your editor are both members of the Council of the Guild of Church Musicians – a worldwide organization which seeks to promote excellence in church music.

On December 1<sup>st</sup> in the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy, the Guild awarded honorary Fellowships to five outstanding church musicians from the hand of the Bishop of London.



L-R: **Alan Thurlow**, who was celebrating his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Director of Music of Chichester Cathedral,

**Dr. Barry Rose**, former DoM of Guildford, St. Paul's and St. Alban's, (**Richard Tanner** was one of his choristers at St. Paul's and his organ scholar at St. Alban's!)

**The Bishop of London, The Rt. Hon. Richard Chartres**, who presented the Fellowships – note his proprietorial hand on Barry's shoulder!

**Jonathan Bielby**, who has been DoM of Wakefield Cathedral for 34 years,

**The Very Revd. Dr. Richard Fenwick**, Dean of Newport Cathedral and Warden (Chairman) of the Guild.

and **Professor John Morehen** – a most distinguished musician and scholar of international stature.

It was a glorious occasion when the Great and the Good was their shoulders rubbed. The Bishop said all the right things and cracked several jokes – including the story of a bishop whose housekeeper was singing 'Amazing Grace' in the kitchen one morning. The bishop said how pleased he was to hear her singing hymns whilst she was preparing his breakfast. "Yes," she replied, "two verses for a soft boiled egg and four for hard one!"

## DAVID & LIZ FRAYNE

**JEAN DAVID** has written to your editor again. He and **LIZ** were in Vienna in October to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and met here **OC KATIE ROWBOTTOM** who was the first head girl of the Cathedral Girls' Choir during Dean David's time. Katie has completed her degree at Oxford and is now doing a teaching year in Vienna! *Nice!*



Dean David wrote: The plan to meet up with Katie in Vienna was devised when Liz and I went to Balliol College

in April when I preached in the College Chapel. You may guess that Katie put my name forward to the Chaplain for this! It was also a chance to ask after my old Oxford Commoner's gown that I had given her when she went up to Oxford from Westholme School. Happily it served her well!



We visited the Schonbrunn Palace with Katie and then went to a typical Austrian Tavern in the foothills of the Vienna Woods for an evening meal complete with weinerschnitzel and saurkraut!

**Gordon and Sheila Shaw** stayed a couple of nights with us in Dorset in November. We enjoyed their company and all the catching up that went with it, so we are fairly up to date!

Thanks to your marvellous Newsletters we are thrilled that the Cathedral music goes from strength to strength.

Our love and all good wishes, **David & Liz.**

## COLOUR



Our very warmest thanks to **Peter Abbott**, father of Junior Organ Scholar, **Joshua**, and a strong member of the Council of the **Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music**, through whose good offices our Newsletters are now printed **in colour.**

Our special thanks to **IMAGE WORKS** for so generously agreeing to do this for us. We are most grateful.



## FELLOWSHIP CLINCHED!



Heartiest congratulations to former Organ Scholar **JONATHAN CLINCH** who has just passed the examination for the **Fellowship of Trinity College, London (FTCL)**. Jonathan is in his second year as organ scholar of Keble College, Oxford,

Jonathan is much in demand in Oxford both as an organist and also as a singer!



He played the organ for his college chapel choir when they went to Texas in the summer. He's also accompanied several Oxford college choirs when they sang at Norwich, Canterbury and St. Paul's Cathedrals recently. He is a member of the choir of Exeter College (where **Richard Tanner** was organ scholar) and is also the official accompanist of the 50-voice Oxford University Students' Chorus

He is now the conductor of his chapel choir (being senior organ scholar) and this Easter he will be taking them to sing in Durham and Ripon Cathedrals.. *Aye me – what talent, what energy. Well done!*

Letter from former Assistant DoM  
**BEN SAUNDERS**  
Now DoM Leeds of RC Cathedral

Dear John, It's very good to hear from you.

I'm enjoying things greatly at Leeds Cathedral. The clergy are great, and it's so much more satisfying for choirs to sing to big catholic congregations rather than beautiful empty Anglican cathedrals. We've started mid-week Vespers and enjoy a congregation of 30-60.



The choir has been invited to join the Radio 3 Choral Evensong (Vespers) broadcast list. The next one is on 20th April. I'm seeing **Gordon Stewart** next week as my choir will be accompanied by him in a concert at Huddersfield Town Hall.

I was in Paris earlier in the year. Have you ever been to La Madeleine? What an earthy, almost pagan temple! With very best wishes, **Ben**

*Ben: heartiest congratulations on all you are achieving at Leeds. And in answer to your question and comment – Yes, Yes! Ed.*

*PS: Ben has ordered a brand new organ for his cathedral – digital – which promises to be very special! It should be installed by February.*

**A hearty Lancastrian welcome** awaits **Canon Chris Chivers** and his family when he is inducted as a Residentiary Canon of our Cathedral on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, (succeeding **Canon David Galilee**).

Currently Canon Chris is Precentor (i.e. in charge of the music) at Westminster Abbey. Canon Chris was a choral scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford (as was **OC NOEL HUNWICK** more recently) and before going to Westminster Abbey he was Canon Precentor of Cape Town Cathedral. As he is a seasoned traveller, the journey North to Lancashire should hold no fears for him!



**The Chivers Family: Mary, Dominic, Gregory & Chris**

**Canon Chris wrote to your editor:**

Dear John,

Thank you very much indeed for your very kind letter. We have already experienced a very warm welcome from so many people. It will be so good to be with everyone attached to the cathedral. Thank you for your kindness in sending me the Newsletter.

I fear, with the rigours of an Abbey Christmas upon me as Precentor, that I would only let you down if I offered to write something at this stage! But I would of course be delighted to do so in the future. I am attaching some recent photos which I hope may be of use to you.

Thanks so much again for your kind letter.

Yours, With every good wish, **Chris**

**Come to enjoy**

**Mozart's Requiem**

Sung by singers chosen from the Cathedral Choir and from the Renaissance Singers (by kind permission of Richard Tanner) with **Nigel Spooner**, organ conducted by **John Bertalot**

in

**FENCE PARISH CHURCH**

**The church is opposite the Bay Horse Inn** (5½ miles from the M62 – A6068 – sharp left at the second speed camera!)

**Saturday, 5th March, 7.30 pm**

Tickets at the door, £5-00

*But come early for the church will be full!*

**A BIG welcome to our new Residentiary Canon, CANON CHRIS CHIVERS**





# Christmas Spectacular

A capacity audience thrilled to the music of Christmas on Saturday evening, 18<sup>th</sup> December. **RICHARD FANNER & GREG MORRIS** had prepared a wonderful programme of Christmas favourites which flooded our cathedral with Christmas favourites ranging from a full performance of Britten's *St. Nicolas* cantata sung by the massed voices of our cathedral choirs, accompanied by the Northern Chamber Orchestra (led by Nicholas Ward), to everyone singing *White Christmas!*

There wasn't an empty seat, in fact extra chairs had to be put in at the back of the Nave to cater for the bumper-sized audience.

A terrific team of behind-the-scenes organisers, headed by **Canon Hindley**, and choir parents **Peter Abbott** and **Clare Hallows**, ensured that everything went smoothly—from the booking of the tickets, to the ordering of the processions, the supplying of drinks for singers and audience alike, the care of children in between rehearsal and performance – the recruitment of choir parents and other helpers as ushers. Everything that could be done had been done.

**And it was done WELL!**



An hour before the concert began a wine reception was held in the North Transept for the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music and for our principal sponsors, **Forbes Solicitors**, to whom we are so grateful.

**Peter & Sue Abbott** were there to welcome everyone while **Clare** supervised the ushers and singers downstairs.



Next came (L-R) **Nicola Harding** who will be Guest Speaker at next year's Cathedral Dinner, **Archdeacon Colin Williams**, Chapter member **Val Edge** and, of course, **Gerry Armstrong**

Early arrivals included **Kate Hodkinson**, who is a strong member of the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music Council – Head Virger **Howard Waddell** had been there since early morning and stayed till late at night – and **Krvstina & Derek Adams**.

Derek is also a leading member of the Friends Council (Derek & Krystina are parents of young choirman **Daniel**) – and Krystina was one of **JB's** students at the RNCM many years ago! It was through Derek's good offices that the cathedral was able to purchase our splendid grand piano. We are greatly blest to have so many wonderful friends and supporters.





Hosting the Reception was **Dean Christopher Armstrong** (centre) with members of the **Wynne** family: L-R: **Robert, Heather and Patrick**. The Dean, **Janet Prowse**, wife of chairman **Judge Jim Prowse** and mother of young choirmen **Daniel & David**, and (extreme right) **Derek Wynne**.

**The Prowse Choirmen** looked resplendent in their coloured bow ties (real ones, not clip-on!) **Judge James, Daniel** – who is following in his father's footsteps in the legal profession, and **David**.



Joyful guests included the recently married cathedral receptionist **Debbie** with her husband, **Stephen Johnson**, Vicar of Emmanuel Church, Preston. (See page 7.)

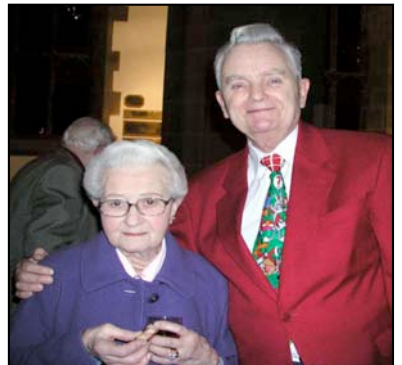


A team of efficient young waiters ensured that everyone was supplied with delicious *hors d'oeuvres*: supplied by cathedral chef **Sara Swinburne**  
  
**Jonathan Swales, Daniel Grimashw & Simon Holding**.

It was very good to welcome so many **Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music**, through whose generosity our cathedral music is enabled to go from strength to strength.



**Amy Moore** with your Newsletter Editor, Photographer and Cathedral Organist Emeritus, **John Bertalot**.



Distinguished guests of our principal sponsors, **Forbes Solicitors**, received special attention from **Lucy Grundy**, while **Canon Hindley** hosted more Forbes guests, without whose support this Spectacular concert could not have been held.





**Canon Michael Wedgeworth** and Mrs. **Pat Wedgeworth** with **Alison Swanson**, who is the new singing teacher for our choristers, and **Julie Grimshaw**, manager of the Cathedral Shop.

Just before the concert began, Director of Music **Richard Tanner** [R], greeted the Bishop of Blackburn, the **Right Revd. Nicholas Reade**, and the deputy Mayor of Blackburn, **Councilor Jan Virimani**



**Edward Haythornwhite** with **Dr. Rachel Thornton** and her husband, **Greg Morris**, Assistant Director of Music, who played such a large part in the success of the concert. Greg not only played the cathedral organ but also conducted the off-stage choirs in Britten's *St. Nicolas*. At one point, after having conducted the ladies of the Renaissance Singers who were out of sight by the altar, he was seen running to the West end, via the crypt, to play the chamber organ and to conduct the three 'pickled boys'. What it is to be young!



**Brenda Carruthers** was there to support us. Brenda is not only a long-time and most faithful member of our congregation, but is also the mother of former chorister **Neil Carruthers** who was a boy in the choir during JB's time.

**Anitra Haythornwhite** [R] who is an energetic member of the Friends of BCM Council, was there as an usher along with husband, **Edward**, to welcome two more friend of BCM, **Miss Jean Whiteley** and **Mr. Joseph Evans**.

Head Virger, **Howard Waddell**, was attentive to the needs of two more faithful members of our congregation, **Stella Haworth** and **Hilda Sagar**.



In the Nave the parents of former chorister **Rupert** (who is now in Australia) **Carolyn and Judge Brian Duckworth** were about to find their seats.







Old Chorister **Peter Fielding** [R] and his son **Mark**, were the skilful piano duettists for Britten's *St. Nicolas*.



How good it was to welcome former Assistant Organist **Ian Pattinson**, now at Lancaster Priory.



### And what a programme it was!

The first half was Britten's Cantata *St. Nicolas*, with **Richard Tanner** conducting the massed cathedral choirs, (*all their names were printed in the programme!*) the Northern Chamber Orchestra, Piano Duet (**Mark and Gordon Fielding**) two organs (**Greg Morris & Ian Pattinson**) six treble soloists (three who sang the young Nicolas, and three who were the 'pickled boys' whom Nicolas brought back to life after they been 'slaughtered by the butcher's knife!' *see their photo next page*) and tenor soloist **Joshua Ellicott** who sang the part of St. Nicolas most movingly. Plus two hymns for the audience to sing as well. WOW!

And then after more wine receptions in the North Transept and the crypt, we were treated to a movement from Vivaldi's *Gloria*, then the Christmas Sequence from *Messiah*. **Nicola Mills** excelled herself in her pyrotechnical melismas in *Rejoice greatly!* and head chorister **Tom Croxson** sang the recit *There were shepherds in the same country* most confidently, and **Emma Pearson** (YPC) sang *Then shall the eyes of the blind* equally beautifully. Richard led us all in singing *Good King Wenceslas*, followed by the boys singing *The Snowman*. The orchestra's playing of *Sleigh Ride* was the greatest fun thanks to nimble string playing and sparkling percussion. **Nicola & Joshua** led us in singing *White Christmas* and then they were joined by **Daniel Prowse** in singing *Silent Night* which **John Bertalot** had arranged specially for the evening with strings, organ and bells!

**Canon Andrew Hindley** compered the second half, He also gave presents to all the leaders who, through their hard work, had made the evening possible plus a bottle of champagne to the Dean, for it was his birthday! But the evening wasn't over yet!





The seven treble soloists, front row L-R: the boys who sang the young Nicolas ('*God be glorified*') **Daniel Hallows, Alex Whittaker & Anthony Gray**. Back row the three Pickled Boys: **Charles Forshaw, Arthur Geldard, & Head Chorister Tom Crosson** with Prefect **Adam Whittaker** who sang '*White Christmas*'.

**Emma Pearson**, who won the **Dean Frayne Award** (see p. 2) stands in front of the Dean's portrait.



*Good King Wenceslas* was the greatest fun – the Bishop joined in heartily.

Richard had us singing it in canon throughout – much in the manner that the *Blackburn Bach Choir* did almost 40 years ago with JB for their annual carol concerts in King George's Hall.



Our outstanding soloists: **Greg Morris, Joshua Ellicott, Nicola Mills and Daniel Prowse**.  
(Photo taken after the concert – thus Daniel's undress tie!)



**Daniel Hallows, Anthony Gray and Alex Whittaker** helped **Canon Hindley** hand out festive bottles to the soloists and the behind-the-scenes workers, and the Dean's present!



And the evening finished with an encore of *White Christmas*, but with **Richard** singing the solo with **Nicola**, whilst **Joshua** conducted the orchestra and audience to the manner born. It was a riot! Well done, well done, **WELL DONE, EVERYONE!**



## NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS, 22<sup>nd</sup> December

The congregation began pouring into the Cathedral 55 minutes before the service was due to begin; the Nave was full, the Transepts were packed and the Clergy were there in force – see below.

The choir, under the director of **RICHARD TANNER**, sang most expressively with lovely blend and balance, and they were accompanied magnificently by **GREG MORRIS**. (These photos were taken during their rehearsal.)

Head Chorister **Tom Croxson** sang The Solo (*'Once in Royal'*) with great confidence and musicianship.

**David Briggs** had been commissioned to compose a setting of *Ave Maria* for this service. It was staggeringly wonderful. The service was recorded by BBC Radio Lancashire. After the service the producer, **Graham Jackson**, said to **JB**, 'That was brilliant! Does Blackburn realize what it has here at the cathedral?' JB replied, 'No, but I think they are beginning to.'



Richard's choice of music was inspired – there was something for everyone.



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with our thanks