

Goodbye

NOSTALGIA ISSUE!



FINAL EDITION
Epiphany, 1983

BISHOP CHARLES
CLAXTON

looking ever cheerful
when he visited us
at the end of 1982.
(Photo: Roger Gibson)



THE EDITOR
of the NEWSLETTER
makes no apology
for printing a farewell
issue;
so many good friends
have wished him well
that he would like
to take this opportunity
to say THANK YOU
publicly.
He believes that the
future of the cathedral's
music will be even
more glorious than the
past, and wishes his
successor every joy
as he works with the
wonderfully dedicated
people whose centre of
life and worship is
BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL.

BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL
CHOIRS'

Newsletter

WHAT
NEXT?

REAL

A morning with Old Chorister

The Reverend Ian Hollin

by J.B.

"Have another slice of turkey," said Ian, looking mightily relieved as we stood in the Sunday sunshine of his Vicarage back garden after the baptism of his son, David.

"Well, if you insist..." said JB, trying to find room on an already loaded plate. Around us milled the other guests, chatting vigorously, taking photographs and vying with each other to hold the remarkably well behaved baby who was at the centre of everyone's attention.

Dennis, Bishop of Lancaster, looked on at the colourful scene with a glass of wine in one hand whilst he made a point with the other to Canon Neil Pritchard, Ian's recently acquired curate who recently retired from full time active parish work at Salesbury.

"That was a super service this morning," said JB, swallowing a mouthful of salad made of lettuce, nuts, raisins and a certain something which he couldn't define.

"Yes," said Ian, "there wasn't an empty seat."

"Is it always like that at your church?"

"The church is almost full every Sunday, but of course on an occasion like this we had extra seats put out. As well as David's baptism 13 members of our congregation were confirmed by the Bishop," said Ian, who has been vicar of his Blackpool church for several years and whose smile showed how much he was enjoying his calling. "So many of their friends and relations came today - it's a very happy church."

"... and the choir's jolly enthusiastic, too."

"Yes, they did sing well." Ian looked at JB for a moment and then said, "Come inside the Vicarage - I'd love to tell you about some interesting things that have been happening recently."



David, 'Pip', Ian and Ruth Hollin

So we went into the cool front room where, over the fireplace, hangs a large modern oil painting by Ian's sister-in-law ("She's very talented:"), with deep armchairs into which we sank gratefully, putting our loaded plates on to a glass-topped table between us.

"It started some years ago," began Ian. "I've always been a heavy smoker, as you know."

"Yes," agreed JB, "I remember you as a tenor in Blackburn Cathedral choir when I first came 18 years ago (Wow)."

"Well," said Ian, proceeding courteously between mouthfuls of chicken and ham, "a Christian rally was organised by a church in Warrington at which the Revd. Trevor Dearing was going to speak, and someone tried to persuade me to go. I didn't really want to, but because I was curious to see the man, I went."

"Well, towards the end of the service Trevor said that he would pray for anyone who had a need - for healing, or for deeper commitment, or whatever. We all stayed in our places, and as he prayed I had this curious feeling which seemed to flow all over me - I didn't know what it was; and when the service was over I thought no more about it."

"A couple of days later I went to my tobacconist's shop for my usual order. I opened the door and just stood still. After a few moments I said to him, "I don't know why I've come because I've given up smoking." I haven't smoked since - the desire has completely gone."

JB started bouncing up and down in his well-upholstered chair, scattering lemon meringue over the carpet. "That's marvellous," he said, "I've met several people who've received similar healings."

"I was amazed," said Ian as he tucked in to a particularly delicious plate of trifle, "and I'll tell you something else."

"What?" asked JB looking wistfully at his own empty plate.

"An RC acquaintance of mine told me that when he attended a nearby Anglican church for their Eucharist recently he could see a strange ethereal light enveloping the celebrant, and the people as they came up to make their communion."

"That's wonderful," said JB, forgetting all about food. "Tell me more."

"Well," said Ian, warming to his subject, "one of my colleagues who's Vicar of another church in Blackpool has in his congregation a lady who often seems to be watching something during services which others can't see."

After one service he went up to her and asked her what she could see. "I'm looking at all the angels," she replied, "who are weaving a beautiful tapestry with the praises of the people before they ascend to God."

Ian looked at JB - but he couldn't say anything, for there was nothing to say.

After a long moment's silence Ian said "You know that my 3-year old daughter, Ruth, has had a pretty major operation recently?"

"Yes."

"Well Pip and I asked a number of good folk to pray for her, and shortly after the operation her surgeon told me that she had made a remarkable recovery; her plaster-cast was off in only six weeks instead of the more usual five months." Ian went on, "I have no doubt at all that the Lord's healing hand had been laid upon her."

Silence fell again, and the sound of the laughter of guests on the lawn came through the open doorway.

At last JB said, "Do you want to keep this confidential, or may I share it with others?"

"If you feel that it would help to strengthen people's faith in a living, loving and caring God, please do."

So I have.



AULD PHAUTO

Stephen Ward, Nigel Chew and John Marr around 1970 after they received their BISHOP'S Choristers certificates

Ann Bertaw

AT HOME

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

With the active help of the Provost I have been offered the post of Director of Music of Trinity Church, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, U.S.A., starting on 1st January 1983. I therefore submit to the Chapter of Blackburn Cathedral my resignation from the post of Organist and Master of the Choristers.

I would like to take this opportunity to record my deep gratitude to so many loyal and valued friends who have encouraged and sustained me throughout my eighteen years in this post. I recall with pride the many privileges which have been mine during these eventful and happy years:

- Seeing the complete transformation of the Cathedral since 1964, when I was instructed to have the old organ dismantled prior to work commencing on the redecoration of the nave,

- Directing the music for the re-hallowing of the nave in October 1965 in the presence of HRH Princess Margaret with Dr. Francis Jackson at the organ, and also directing the music for the final consecration of the Cathedral in 1977 in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. →



Jim Smith, MPS. Senior Choirman, 1977. (53 years singing)



JB LOOKING FORWARD

... in November 1964 when the old organ was being taken out to allow a dividing wall to be erected between nave and transepts, and thus to get the first stage of the restoration of the cathedral under way.

We worshipped in the transepts for 10 months whilst the nave was transformed into its present beauty.



REHALLOWING THE NAVE, October 1 1965 in the presence of HRH Princess Margaret.

L-R Canons Dixon, Williams, Rockley and Carroll with Provost Robinson.

Princess Margaret directly under Christ the Worker - front row.

JB(R) with Neil Fellows singing hard. This was David Rothwell's last service as head prefect.



- Being the means of raising the money for our new cathedral organ (through the generosity of William and Sarah Thompson) and for being responsible, with Dr. Jackson and Messrs. J.W. Walker and Sons, for its design,

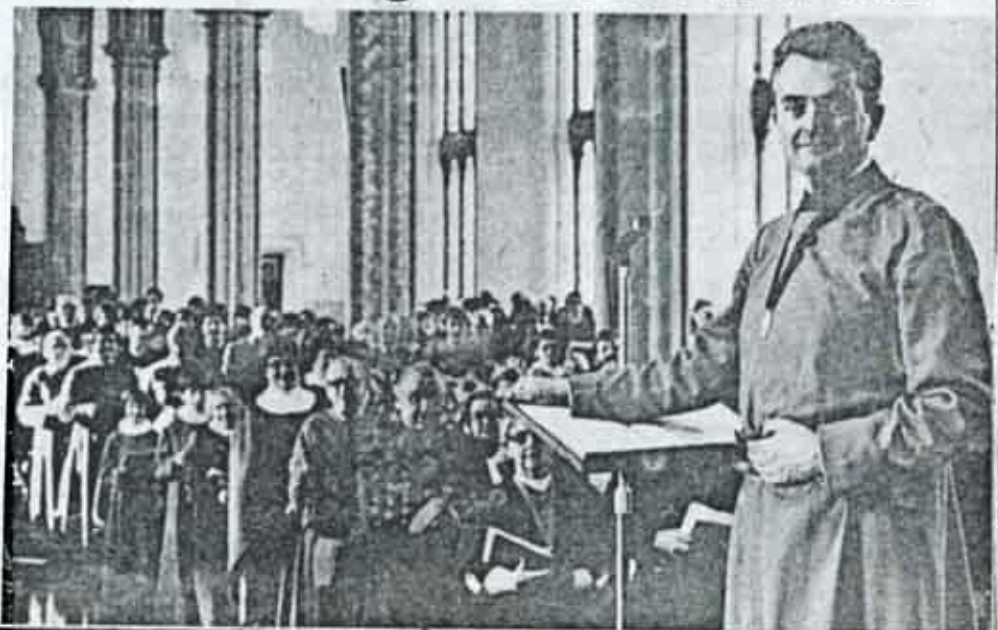
Encouraging the re-formation of Blackburn Cathedral Old Choristers' Association which has proved to be such a blessing to so many people (q.v. our September Reunion which was attended by over 60 Old Choristers - the largest number ever), → to p. 8

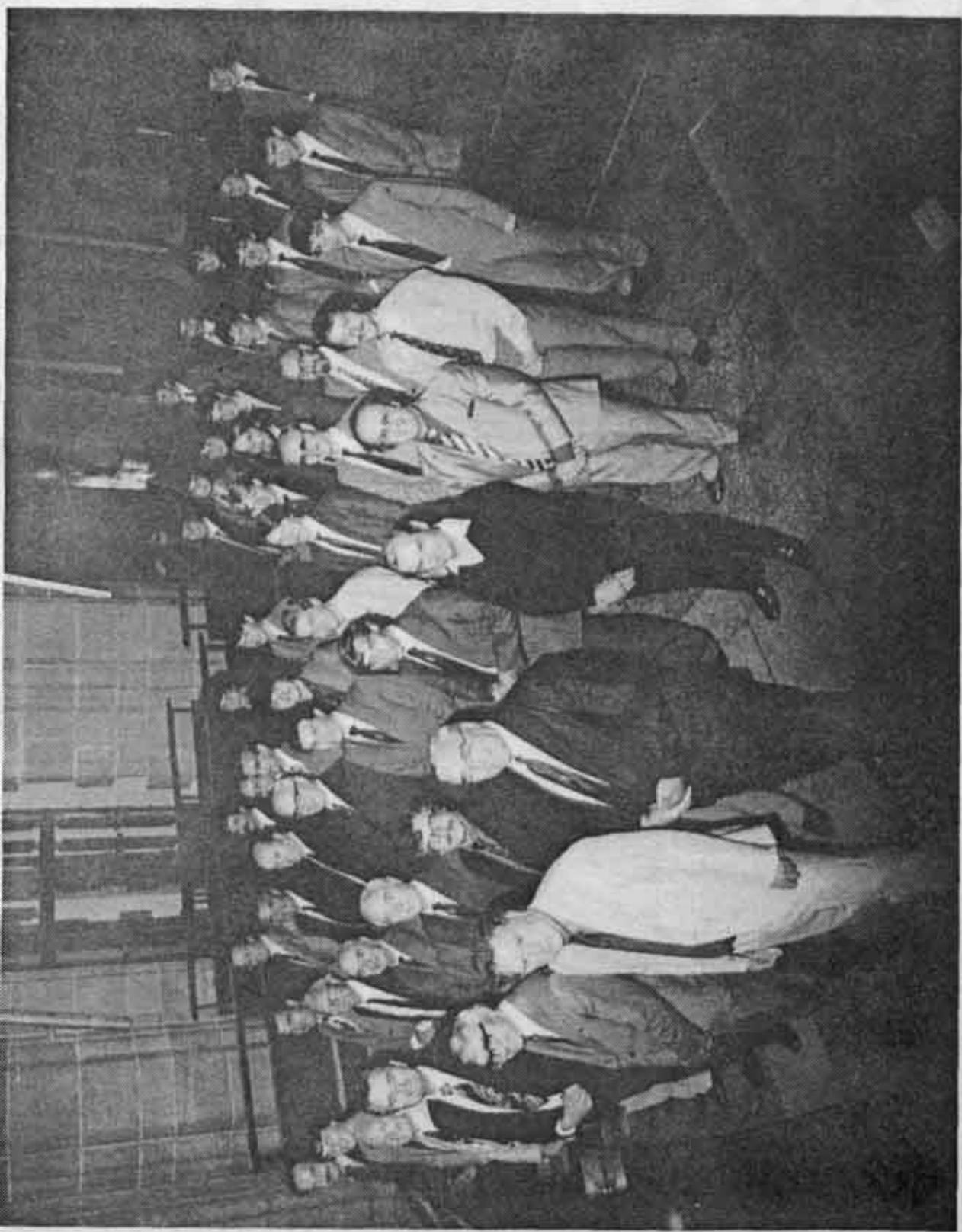
Hundreds sing at choral festival

JB
LOOKING
BACK...

October 1982

when there was a splendid massed choirs' festival.





BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL OLD CHORISTERS' ANNUAL REUNION, Sat Sept. 11th 1982.
(Photograph: Roger Gibson)

Front row:

Peter Crowther, Mark Hodson(secretary), Allan Holden(retiring S.O.C.) JB,
Ralph Robinson (incoming S.O.C.) David Battersby (treasurer).

2nd row:

John Smethurst(former S.O.C.), Fred Green(former S.O.C.), Harry White(former S.O.C.)
Bryan Lamb (former S.O.C.), Bert Brown (former S.O.C.)

3rd row:

Gordon Fielding, David Metcalf, Frank Hare, Bernard West, John Marr, George Nicholson
(one of JB's very first 'new' boys in 1964), Tony Robinson.

4th row:

Robert Fielding, Bob Keen, Trevor Porter, David Tattersall, Edward Denham, Geoff Taylor.

5th row:

Karl Farquhar, Stephen Ward, David Melody, Grenville Robinson, David Robinson.

6th row:

Neil Kinder, Stephen Rickerby(head chorister for Princess Alexandra's visit, Nov 77),
Gordon Shaw, Tony Murphy.

7th row:

Andrew Birchall, Howard Culshaw, ~~Shawn~~ ^{STUART} Gibson, Craig Horrocks, Richard Grimshaw,
Simon Elliott, Philip Chew.

8th row:

Simon Pearson, Chris Birchall, Ian Holmes, John Keen, Richard Sturtivant.

Missing downstairs (because they were putting the music away)

Peter and Ian Banks and Iain Thompson and Walt (alias Simon Daniels).

JB would like to place on record the long and most happy association he has enjoyed with Peter Crowther(front row). They met first when Pete was a boy on an RSCM course at Chichester Cathedral and JB was 1/c the boys on his first cathedral course. Their friendship was renewed when JB was appointed to Blackburn in 1964 and Pete was a teenager. Peter followed Bernard West as choir librarian and was in turn succeeded by David Rothwell. Under Pete's energetic leadership, following Norman Eccleston's wonderful example as secretary, BCOCA flourished exceedingly. Thank you, Peter - I bless you and your Mum and glory in memories of your Dad.



HEAD
CHORISTER
IAN
HARRISON

around
1966

singing
a carol
for the
Lancashire
Evening
Telegraph

(We are
happy to
acknowledge
the number
of photos
in this
issue
taken by
the L.E.T.) 7



Old Chorister IVOR BOLTON with TESS who called in at the Cathedral recently. Ivor is now deputy chorus master of Glyndebourne Opera, chorus master of Glyndebourne Touring Opera and organist of St. James' Church, Picadilly. Tess, whom he met when organ scholar of Clare College, Cambridge, is now on a research fellowship at Oxford. WOW!



THE CHOIR OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE paid two visits to Bbn during JB's time.

(L) Dr. George Guest, and extreme right (behind JB) the organ scholar Jonathan Bielby, now organist of Wakefield Cathedral.

→ (Resignation...)

- Being enabled and encouraged to organise concerts and recitals in the Cathedral which were such a happy feature of our Cathedral's ministry and life,

- Inaugurating the Choir Parents' Association, →



A

CHOIR MUM -
INGRID MURPHY

putting the final touches to her cleaning of the Bishop's old throne, November 1982.

- Maintaining the high standards of Cathedral music, set by my distinguished predecessor, as evidenced by the number of broadcasts we have made throughout my eighteen years here, as well as by our three concert tours of Holland and North Germany when we sang to packed congregations,

- Encouraging so many choristers in their music making, both individually and collectively, to give of their best in the Cathedral's worship and thus being the means of enabling the YPC to be formed under the direction of the two talented Sub-organists, Ronald Frost and Keith Bond; this choir now excels both in numbers and quality.



ONE OF TWO TELEVISION
SONGS OF PRAISE...

this one, around 1967, was made in black and white, and featured Derek Crompton (treble) and Barry Hughes (tenor) singing the solos in Gelineau's 23rd psalm. (Derek is visible, extreme left)



THREE MEMBERS OF THE YPC
whose faces did not appear on the large photo of the YPC published last year:

Claire Fox (sister of Michael, who came to JB's farewell party at the Trafalgar Hotel arranged by O.C. Mark Hodson), Caroline Dunstan and Naomi Fisher, who was awarded her Bishop's Chorister certificate in November.

- Directing, with the active encouragement of Provosts Robinson and Jackson, very many RSCM courses both at home and abroad - including three fortnight courses at Westminster Abbey, half a dozen visits to the USA, three to Canada, two to South Africa and one to Australia. I also recall with much joy the success of my Blackburn Bach Choir when it won, for two years in succession, the national rounds of the BBC's international competition 'Let the Peoples Sing'; we rejoice to have been allowed to give so many concerts in the Cathedral during these years. I also remember the national and diocesan awards which came the way of our Choirs' NEWSLETTER, and am grateful for the many kind things which so many people have said about it. →

But, above all, I would like to thank all those who made my mother and me feel such welcome members of the Cathedral family and who gave us of their love unstintingly. My mother enjoyed many love-filled years among you all after my father's sudden death, and for this I bless you. I am proud that she will be forever commemorated by the handsome silver choir-medallion created by Leslie Durbin through the generosity of her many friends and I shall ever remember with painful joy her magnificent funeral services in the Cathedral which were attended by the entire clerical staff of the Cathedral with Bishop Martineau, both my choirs and so many of her friends. I rejoice that my parents' ashes rest safely in this place, which I shall always think of as home.

I pray that my successor may be welcomed, helped, supported and guided as surely as I have been.

I bless and thank you all.

Omne Berton



'DOTS' BERTALOT (right) talking with Mrs. Doris Pawson in 1977 outside 28 Mellor Lane. JB's Mum was Choirmum for some 10 years, ironing ruffs (15 minutes each!) and cheering sick lads by her cheerful presence. She was succeeded by Betty Parkinson and now by Rowena Gibson. Doris Pawson lent her field to the choir for its annual firework party - which still happily continues.



PETER BANKS, new choir librarian, recently come down from Oxford (Christ Church) with a 'first'; George King, senior lecturer at the University of Pretoria - friend of JB whom he met last year in Kimberley, and Old Chorister Stephen Holmes who is about to be married. Photo taken autumn 1982.

OLD CHORISTERS' NEWS



LETTER from O.C. Peter Heald (Ely)

Constance and I went to the Ely Cathedral Staff Party recently - quite a nostalgic occasion, held in the Deanery, at which the Dean announced his retirement. He's a jolly nice chap and we'll all miss him. The food was good (as always) and we were invited to bring something to perform during the 'happy hour' - very pleasant.

The Dean traditionally performs first and last to get the thing going and to indicate when it is decent for people to leave. Surprise, surprise - on the gorgeous grand piano lay a copy of the Blackburn Cathedral Choirs' NEWSLETTER (Congratulations, once again - on a splendid edition; how does the man do it?)

I asked the Dean what the magazine was doing there and he politely told me to mind my own business because it was for his first 'act'. Apparently Bishop Martineau sent it to be put into the cathedral archives as the first record of the story he told at the '81 Old Choristers' Reunion (about the visitor to Ely Cathedral Evensong who had been so moved by the singing of the choir that he had eventually sought ordination). The Dean read the Bishop's letter and then read the article. I couldn't have been more tickled!

Incidentally, on the business front, I have done a deal with the Dean and Chapter to sing seven services a week in the Cathedral choir in exchange for a small suite of offices in the cathedral close; at present I have the Old Choir School - a 13th century building of immense character - and shortly I shall move into the Chapter Office which is being vacated.

FROM O.C. FRANK HARE, (Worcester).

A very brief note to tell you that following a vacancy in Worcester Cathedral choir I have been successful in auditioning for the position of assistant lay clerk. This is, you can imagine, a great thrill and I thought I must share it with you - who made so much of this possible. I've also accepted the position of Chairman of the 900th anniversary Celebration Appeal - I must be crazy - they want £10,000 in 12 months!

The choirmen and their wives (those who have them) enjoyed a most super visit to the Keens' home near Crewe in the autumn where we were fed, wined and exercised in palatial surroundings - lovely house, immaculate lawn and revolving summerhouse. (Bernard, Jack and Gordon got quite dizzy, when they were ensconced therein, due to the activities of the younger men who delighted in turning it on its well-lubricated axis).

Among the delights of the day were a surprise visit by Frank and Val Hare - all the way from Worcester and a rather super space film on the telebox which kept the exuberant party quiet for a couple of hours.

Bob has recently been promoted (that's twice in under a year) to a bank in Scotland, so he, Pauline, John and Jill will be moving to Edinburgh in December. (We are getting a far-flung lot!) Once they get settled in there's an open invitation (with notice, please) to OCs to visit, way up in the sporrans country.

The Keens' new address:
9, Corbiehill Road,
Davidsons Mains,
EDINBURGH, Scotland.

The Healds now live at:
Vine House,
81 Main Street,
Downham in the Isle,
ELY, Cambs. CB6 2SX
(Phone: 0353-87-429)

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

30th November, 1982

From: M.M. Colborne, Esq.

Dear Mr Bertalot

The Prince of Wales has asked me to write and thank you very much for your letter of 16th November and for sending His Royal Highness the manuscript of the voluntary you played at the Royal Albert Hall, 'Festival of Remembrance'.

The Prince of Wales wishes you every best wish for your new appointment in Princeton.

Yours sincerely

Michael (Thomson)

Secretary

John Bertalot, Esq.