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Christmas 1984

My dearest friends and
relations in USA, England
& all over the world: PEACE!

Wow! Where can I begin to tell you some of
the phantastique things that have happened
to me in the USA and Great Britain this year?

(But first, A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A SUIPA NOO
YEAR to all my friends and relations scattered
around the world. May this Newsletter, begun
on 21st September (!) help you all to share
some of the wonderful joys which have come
my way - many because of YOU who have shared
yourselves with me in such overflowing
measure. Read on, if you want to see how much
my visits to you and letters from you have
meant to me during these most eventful twelve
months):

My last saga stopt at the beginning of Nov.
1983 with the visit of Lionel Dakers,
Director of the Royal School of Church Music,
to Trinity Church, Princeton.

NOVEMBER

Sunday 20th saw the Men, Boys' and Girls' Choir (hereafter called MBGs) spend the day singing in New York. A glorious day in every way (that rhymes) - first, to sing Morning Prayer at St. James', Madison Avenue, where ALEC WYTON presides over the music.

It was such a thrill to collaborate with Alec for the first time - he being a predecessor of mine at St. Matthew's Church, Northampton. His choir was at the East end of the church and mine in the West gallery - taking turn and turn about. The preacher that day was none other than EDWARD PATEY, former Dean of Liverpool; he gave me a very un-British wave of the hand as he processed out after the service.

After lunch we piled into our bus and went to St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Avenue, where my predecessor at Trinity now holds splendid sway. That was a tremendous service - Havells' St. Paul's canticles and "Take him earth" - our choirs combined in the chancel of this enormous church (about half the size of Westminster Cathedral) and a number of us were transported to the gates of heaven thru' the magnificent singing. It was a glorious



experience to share the conducting with JIM LITTON who is held in the very highest esteem and affection by all who know him.

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American feast - I had two Thanksgiving dinners (one on the day before) hosted by choir parents. It is such a joy to be invited to the homes of Trinity folk - so many gracious homes and so much lavish hospitality. Sometimes there are surprises: one evening I was invited to dine with an Admiral and his lady and discovered that the only other guest was a General! On another occasion, with a choir parent, I discovered that one of my choir-boys spoke Turkish!

DECEMBER

Our Christmas Concert in Trinity - Britten's St. Nicolas Cantata, sung by our three choirs with orchestra - was a most moving occasion. Nicolas was sung by BILL EICHORN - a brilliant



tenor from New York Opera who lives locally - he not only sang the part superbly but also acted it. During the singing of the chorus when he is made bishop of Myra, for example, he was ceremonially dressed in cope and mitre, and then walked down the nave to greet his 'flock' (members of the audience). At the end of the performance nobody moved for fully 10 seconds before applause broke out. WOW!

On Dec. 21 I finally posted 450 Christmas News-letters to England, the first batch of a pile that had been covering my carpet for weeks. I HOPE to send this letter off considerably earlier! (1983 grand total was some 750!)

Christmas was marvellous: a light sprinkling of snow fell on Christmas Eve which got us all in seasonal mood; the midnight service (sung by the MEGs) was broadcast on local radio, after which I went to dinner with chairman GEORGE JONES - returning home at 2.45 am in a temperature of minus 16°C. Mad!

Christmas Day, after morning service, was spent in the lovely home of DAVID & PEGGY



PRESCOTT who blest me considerably by the loving welcome they gave me - it was my very first Christmas away from England and I will not pretend that I didn't feel it - but telephone calls to cousins and friends in England, and a call from dear friends in Blackburn at the start of the day, helped a awful lot. Boxing day (as we English quaintly call Xmas+1) was spent with more choir parents who took me to Peddler's Village, a quasi Dickensian spotte in Pennsylvania, where we enjoyed a most marvellous dinner.

JANUARY 1984

Whattaway to start the new year - by a truly marvellous carol service in the enormous chapel of Princeton University (comparable in size with King's Chapel, Cambridge). This was for me a very great thrill - over 1000

congregation and all three Trinity choirs wonderfully accompanied by IRENE WILLIS on the large chapel organ. Everyone was moved by the music and the processions (we did "Past 3 o'clock" with soloists strung out right down the nave) and after I'd blasted the congregation out with Widor's Toccata a lady came up to me to say that she was so affected by the singing that she would like to give \$100 for the choir. WOW (for the 3rd time)!

Ever since August our choir facility at Trinity (a large building with vestries, office and spacious practice room) had been undergoing total renovation - the whole place gutted, with new central heating, floors, lighting and plans for special music desks to be made (alla Blackburn Cathedral); all this was coming about through the generosity of many Trinity folk who clearly value the ministry of music there. Well - the vestries and my supa new office (with air conditioning) were finished by the new year and so The Men came, on Thursday 5th, to take my upright



piano and desk from my house to the office; it was some sight to see them struggle up the new stairway (all beautifully finished and painted) with the piano without making a scratch. (wow! [That's Wow backwards]) It put me in mind of the PG Tips advertisement on British TV -!

That day, at choir practice, I asked 3rd year university student DON KRUGER, who sings bass in the MEG choir, if he would like to visit England with me in August - he was delighted - so was I. (See August)

Some months previously I had been asked by the choirmaster of Bearsted Parish Church, Kent, England, if I would write a set of Evening Canticles for his choir. This came about after he had written to me in September 1982, following a broadcast by my Singers in Blackburn when we sang some responses I had composed to celebrate my Mother's 75th birthday. He wanted a copy of them. This blest me considerably for not only was I born in Bearsted but the broadcast had taken place on my birthday! Over the Christmas vacation, therefore, I had put pencil to paper, and on 6th January they were finished. They incorporated not only my parents' initials (in music) but also my Aunt's initials as the last chord (CEA) - and it happened that the day I wrote that final chord was the 90th anniversary of her birth (6th January 1894). It was a very family composition - and after I had written it out neatly I sent it to TREVOR WEBB at Bearsted. He liked it and said that they would be singing it at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, in August, and would I like to play for them? WOULD I !! So from that time I began to plan the England vacation with some degree of precision, the key dates being rehearsing with Bearsted choir at the beginning of the vacation and visiting Windsor with them on the last full day. Also I received an invitation to speak at a Christian Businessmen's dinner in Blackburn in the middle of August which would be attended by the Bishop of Blackburn - so that became the central pivot. I set about planning just whom I could ask to host the three of us (for my first cousin and Godson, Douglas Humphrey [my Aunt's grandson], who is at school at Christ's Hospital had asked if he could tagalongaswell.) The Atlantic, during the next few months, grew overcast by the flow of letters to and from Lawrenceville as, gradually, the whole plan fell into shape.

Saturday 7th saw the debut of THE PRINCETON SINGERS - a lovely group which I had formed only a few weeks before, much in the mould of my Blackburn Singers whom I missed so very much. The PS sang a programme of carols in the gracious home of Mrs ANN MARTINDELL, parishioner of Trinity and former Ambassador to New Zealand. We were well received and



I can't begin to tell you how excited we all were by our new group; so many talented and dedicated musicians ranging from a Ph.D. lecturer in music at Columbia University thro' members of the MBSG choir and University students from Princeton.

FEBRUARY

An unusual experience came my way when I was asked to preach at morning service at Westminster Choir College here in Princeton. I'd no idea what I should say until I discussed it with my weekly 'Cursillo' group - two lovely members of Trinity - wherein we share 'what good things the Lord hath done for us'. The whole thing suddenly fell into place and I found myself talking to a full chapel of staff and students about having a God Who is not 'too small' (in the words of JB Phillips). I was somewhat overwhelmed

after the service when so many people spoke with me (from the Top Man down) who said how those words had 'hit the spot'. Hallelujah!

That same day I had a letter from the Headmaster of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Blackburn, PHILIP JOHNSTON, asking if he and his family could spend a week with me in the early summer at the start of their US vacation. Golly, yes, I said. (See July).

The next day (as St. John was wont to say), a generous soul from Trinity donated a sum of money which enabled the renovations in Ivy Hall to be completed. The whole work cost \$157,000 - and it was all raised, quietly, in a matter of months. Hallelujah, again. We'd been living 'out of a suitcase' for many months - carrying books to and from church halls and not robing - which we were pleased to do 'for the joys that lay before us' (as St. Paul was almost wont to say) when the work was done. It was very nearly done and we could hardly wait to move into our splendid new practice room, which would be the last section to be completed.

Towards the end of the month the Rector, JOHN CROCKER, left us for a Sabbatical in the Holy Land, Egypt and England. Every few weeks he sent us a letter describing so clearly what was happening to him and to ELLIE, who accompanied him.

Whilst searching through some old correspondence I came across two fascinating letters to me which I had forgotten I had: the first from Boris Ord (who taught David Willcocks at King's Cambridge) dated 21 October 1955:

"If you are free, please come at 11.0 instead of 12.0 tomorrow [for your lesson], as I ought to go to see Dr. Schweitzer take his hon. degree which means leaving for the Senate House at 12.15". [I, too, went to the Senate House to see this living legend receive his hon. degree - a never-to-be-forgotten sight, and this in my first term at Cambridge!].

The second was sent to me in Northampton on

4th Feb., 1959 from the Royal College of Music, London. I was conducting a concert in St. Matthew's Church and wanted a flautist:

"The following student will be pleased to play for you for a fee of £3. 3s -

JAMES GALLWAY"

Both these letters, needless to say, I am framing!

MARCH

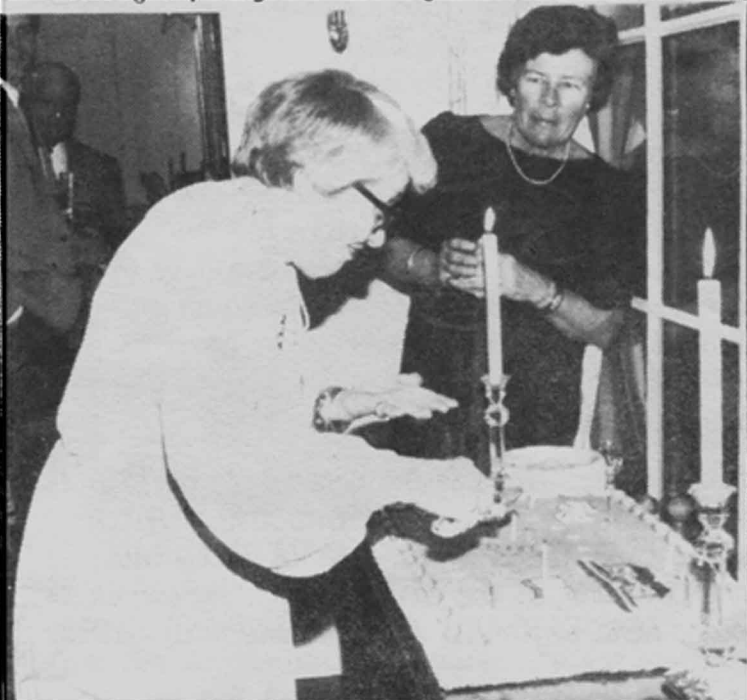
Three particularly lovely things happened to me in March.

(i) I gave a series of five organ recitals devoted to the music of Bach as part of the church's Lenten program. These blest me so much, for one can't play spiritual music without being spiritually moved - and this happened week after week when a most encouraging number of Trinity folk turned up to listen - even when snow covered the ground. The Princeton Singers sang Bach's "Jesu, Meine Freude" at one of the recitals - very well indeed.

Because of these recitals I had to give up my choristers' confirmation class for Lent, which took place on the same evening. These times with four of the lads who were seeking confirmation were most precious to me, sharing the things of God week by week. I was greatly thrilled one day when one of the lads brought his friend along - and even more when the friend's Mother sent me a super note of thanks to say how much he enjoyed being with us. Hallelujah, for the third time.

(ii) On March 19th the choirs moved into Ivy Hall wholly (having used the vestries for a few months). Now we could rejoice in our most splendid new practice room (which can hold 100 standing) with new music desks, magnificent 'cubbies' (200 of them) for each singer's set of music - made by a carpenter who had helped restore Mozart's house in Salzburg (nothing but the best in Princeton!), a lovely floor and effective lighting. The room must rank as one of the very best of its kind anywhere. Laus Deo!

(iii) Friday 30th: a few of us were honored to help celebrate JEAN CHORLEY'S 80th birthday. A wonderful party was held for her in LOUISE



BRISTOL'S lovely home and we experienced an evening we shall long remember. Jean, as all of us at Trinity know, is not only a most lovely person in every way but also highly talented. There wasn't a dry eye when she sang "Just my Bill". Whatanevening.

I had a letter from cousin Andy in New Zealand (where he is a doctor) saying his wife, Wendy, was 'expecting' - due in the autumn. As all the children in the Humphrey/Charge clan were boys (with the exception of Sheila) we all wondered if there would be a sister for 1½ year old Michael. Read on...!

Five supa things happened in
APRIL

Supaone: I was asked to conduct an ecumenical hymn sing in W. Windsor High School which was attended by congregations from half a dozen local churches of all denominations. This was preceded by a splendid 'pot luck' supper. We quickly discovered that the truths that bind us are far stronger than the traditions which divide.

Supatwo: The MBGs and Girls' choirs combined to sing a shortened version of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in Trinity. I had prayed that the Spirit would be evident in this performance - and He was. Not only did the choirs sing with magnificent dedication as well as our own soloists, but JOHN KEMP, our Evangelist, excelled himself and IRENE WILLIS had worked long hours on the accompaniment to provide us with majestic and sensitive support. Again, deep silence followed this performance and many people spoke to us after to say how moved they had been. We're doing it again this year.

Supertthree: Through the generosity of Trinity I was able to book myself into three church music conventions to be held in California and Colorado in the early summer. My summer plans were beginning to look very rosy indeed.

Superfour: On Easter Day, after splendid services at Trinity three guests dined with me in my home. After dinner we found ourselves discussing a program seen that week on TV which re-enacted the courtship of the Prince and Princess of Wales (or "Chuck and Di" as the Americans say!) Feeling I had to say something to keep my end up I said, "I've been to tea with her Grandmother", whereupon one of my distinguished guests immediately retorted, "I've been to tea with HIS Grandmother!" When will I learn to keep my big mouth shut?

Superfive: I gave several lectures to graduate students at Westminster Choir College - the last being on number symbolism in the music of Bach. I enjoyed this tremendously, but, nevertheless, was surprised when, at the end of the lecture, the students broke out into applause. Nice people here.

MAY

On May 1st I opened my copy of the RSCM quarterly magazine and found this advert: (which I knew nothing about),

JOHN BERTALDO IS ALIVE

AND WELL, AND LIVING IN AMERICA*

While his many friends and admirers in America can delight in the performance of his church music, published by OECUMUSE.

When I showed it to friends at Trinity it had them rolling, as they say, in the proverbial aisles.

We gave another big concert this month - Monteverdi's VESPERS - Irene Willis again worked tremendously hard, especially with the fine soloists, to help me weld the whole thing together. We used the whole church quasi quadrophonically and everyone who took part, as well as the appreciative audience, was thrilled at the way it 'came together' on the night.

Immediately after this I flew to Richmond, Virginia, by way of Washington DC, for I was due to speak at the annual dinner of the American Guild of Organists.



In Washington it was a joy to stay in the home of JOHN & MARGARET DRAVSON. Margaret & I had 'grown up' together in the same road in Shoreham, Sussex, and she had been a soprano in the first group of Singers I founded there. How lovely it was to talk of old times with them both, as well as to rejoice in the recent graduation from college of their daughter, SUE.

"...and this is where the story really begins," for summer is upon us - never have I experienced one like it:

10th Ivy Hall was dedicated by our 3 choirs and large congregation after morning service amidst great rejoicing and in a temperature of 97°!



14-15: Trinity staff enjoyed its annual 24-hours away at Louise Bristol's lovely seaside house at Bayhead. This was a sad time for us, as well as beautiful, for we said farewell to Rev. SARAH MOTLEY who had exercised a lovely ministry among us for three years. She carries with her the peace of God, as well as a large part of each of our hearts.

Three days later I flew to Los Angeles to begin my month of conferences, staying the first night with ERIC LAURIE, an organist friend of many years who now lives in a suburb of Hollywood. It was quite an experience to see something of what goes on in that part of the world about which I had only read.

The annual conference of the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM) opened the next day at Mount St. Mary's College - a most beautiful campus on a high hilltop in Beverly Hills. This was idyllic, palm trees, outdoor heated swimming pool + 200 colleagues from all over USA and Canada.

We were lectured by composers such as Richard Proulx, taken by coaches (past orange and lemon trees on Sunset Boulevard) to visit a number of churches and to experience the worship therein (which was EXCELLENT).

Two outstanding visits during the AAM Conference were (i) an afternoon spent in the Crystal Cathedral - Robert Schuller's amazing all-glass church in Los Angeles which holds 3,000, is full twice every Sunday and has a VAST organ (which I played last year - see Newsletter for 1983). This



was superbly demonstrated by the cathedral organist, FRED SWANN who mixed erudition, brilliance and high good humour in wonderful balance. And (ii) a superb Choral Evensong sung by TOM FENTON'S choir (our AAM President) in All Saints', Beverly Hills. The music was exclusively Walton and Havells and it was performed exquisitely - so much so that the congregaton burst into applause before the end of the service. I was left speechless, and that's sayin' sumpn!

We also enjoyed the delights of lunching around the Bishop of Los Angeles' outdoor swimming pool and dining aboard the Queen



Mary (shades of the days of the Glorious Empire). That wazza week.

The next week was spent at the Annual Convention of the American Guild of Organists in San Francisco. This was a big affair - 2000 organists of all kinds, experience and interests. Eric Laurie joined me for this remarkable week which was organ-orientated in divers ways. Every day there were first class recitals on superb instruments in the city and nearby universities. The week was notable for the number of specially commissioned works - one or two of which I would like to hear again, but all of which were given first rate performances.

Outstanding memories were of a recital given in Grace Cathedral by the winner of the AGO organ-playing competition, MARK LAIBACH, which had me in raptures - especially by his most musical performance of the Reubke 94th psalm. This was followed by an exquisite choral evensong sung by the cathedral choir in a packed cathedral, directed by the brilliant JOHN FENSTERMAKER.



Another evening to remember was SIMON PRESTON'S conducting of Israel in Egypt in the enormous RC Cathedral. It was good to be able to

exchange a few words with him, not having seen him since we overlapped at Cambridge. He's now reached the dizzy heights of being organist of Westminster Abbey, a post which he holds with much distinction.

The final evening was remarkable for two reasons - the closing concert in the RC Cathedral when we heard a work for cath. organ and 84 trombones! This was avant-garde in the extreme, and audience reaction at the end of this final performance of the convention was sharply divided! This was followed by a midnight recital on the cinema organ in a particularly colorful section of the city. This was wholly brilliant; LYN LARSEN's playing brought the house down almost continuously.

It was very good, at all three music conferences, to be recognised by many of my American colleagues - both those I knew and those who knew me by reputation only. It gave me a kinda warm feeling inside. Eric Laurie was known by a number of people in S.F., so we pretty well evened up the score that week.

Eric and I enjoyed several extra-curricular activities during the week including walking across the Golden Gate Bridge and back in a howling gale. This is something I've always Wanted To Do, so we did it.

The following week was free of music conferences, and so I spent it in Los Angeles with TONY MURPHY - former chorister of BLACKBURN Cathedral - who had flown to the USA from his first year at Nottingham University to spend three months working at Teen Challenge in Pennsylvania. We enjoyed much supra Christian fellowship and visited a number of places including Disneyland, which was right opposite our motel.

The last music conference was held near Denver, Colorado. A rustique camp set in the midst of most beautiful scenery - this was Rocky Mountain - ain' country - super food, most inspired



On the Sunday morning before flying back to Los Angeles (Eric having left two days earlier to play at his own church) I skipped morning service (having been in church every day for two weeks) and enjoyed a superb boat ride in San Francisco harbor. The weather was idyllic and the ride gave me one of the happiest 1's hours I've ever spent. The boat went from the Golden Gate Bridge (which was bathed in sunshine), past Alcatraz prison and up to the Bay Bridge. I recommend this most highly to all visitors to S.F. (PTO for PS)

lectures (including memorable talks by Bishop Chilton Powell, former Bp. of Oklahoma, and Gerre Hancock, director of music of St. Thos. Church, Fifth Avenue, New York) and most lovely colleagues - 60 in all.

For me the most memorable moment came when we reached the summit of Mount Evans (2 miles high) on our free day. The air was thin and walking was somewhat of a problem. I was just about to take a panoramic view from the summit when, for no apparent reason, I fell hitting my head (half an inch from my eye) on my camera, breaking the covering lense. I was IMMEDIATELY surrounded by ministering angels



Because the 2000 organists on the AGO Convention were spread over a number of hotels in the city, and the recitals were similarly held in many churches and halls, we spent much time walking the "Streets of San Francisco" & thus getting much healthy exercise.

But Eric & I also enjoyed the newly renovated CABLE CARS which are such a feature of this most beautiful city.

in the shape of course colleagues, who covered me with blankets (where they came from I know not), bathed my wound, poured in 'oil and wine' and set me on the nearest donkey (in the shape of a car) and rushed me to the medical center opposite the camp, an hour away down hair-raising hairpin bends. Thanks to this wonderful attention I quickly had 11 stitches inserted and was bound up in pretty spectacular fashion. The two families who looked after me so carefully (the BUNCHES and FLURYS) took me out to dinner immediately and promptly 'adopted' me.

And if that weren't enough, two days later the members of the conference had a whip-round and gave me a generous bundle of dollars to help pay for a new camera lense. WOW and HALLELUJAH! What a way to end a most remarkable four weeks.

Well, after all that I was pretty breathless. I arrived home safely, having been met by my housesitter JAMES BRUMM & Fiancee, KATHY. Two major items faced me - the first was to put together the choirs' program for the coming season at Trinity, 28 pages of close typing which included every piece we would sing, every voluntary we would play, every

practice, all names and addresses of singers and even when the clocks went back (& forrards). Our church secretary GORDON JACORS gave most patient assistance in all this and it turned out rather well. All we have to do now is to fulfil everything we've planned!

The second major delight was to welcome the JOHNSTON family from Blackburn who stayed with me for a week. PHILIP is headmaster of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, and he and his wife, CYNTHIA, were contemporaries of mine at Cambridge. They and their two teenagers, VIRGINIA & ANDREW, were partied and feted by so many wonderful Princeton friends during that exhausting week. They sight-saw this lovely town and I walked them off their feet during a gruelling but fantastic day in New York, which we approached by water on the Staten Island Ferry. (Memo: all guests will be given the same treatment - this is a spectacular way to see this great city for the first time, even tho' it was hard to see the Statue of Liberty on this occasion - the lady being covered in scaffolding whilst she is renovated).

Philip, Cynthia, Virginia & Andrew on BROOKLYN BRIDGE, New York, 1/2 way thru' a most supa day.



Their happy stay was particularly memorable for me for, every morning, the Headmaster brought me tea in bed. (Memo: all guests will be expected to give the same treatment!)

And so the weekend drew nigh when DON KRUGER (see Jan.) and I were to set off on our month's phantastique vacation in England.

But first we popped into Princeton University to say 'hi' to musical friends and colleagues who were gathering for the RSCM's annual course which, this year, was being directed by ALLAN WICKS, organist of Canterbury Cathedral. It was so very good to see so many talented folk, many of whom I had met for the first time three years previously when I had directed the same course, little thinking that I would shortly be moving here permanently!

Whilst there I took part in my first RSCM -USA committee meeting, having been elected to serve on this august body; not only is much splendid business fulfilled there, but also meetings serve as a delightful opportunity to 'chew the musical cud' with colleagues who have come from as far as Washington Cathedral, San Francisco and Montreal to give of their time and talent. I was roped in to a sub-comm. to work out details of the RSCM course I was to direct the following summer in Charleston and Charlotte, North Carolina, next summer.



This meeting, with BEN HUITTO (centre), organist of Charleston Cathedral, and KEN BERG, conductor of the Birmingham (Alabama) Boys' Choir, took place outside Thomas Sweet's delectable ice cream shop but we exercised great control by having only coffee & cookies.

The next day Don & I flew to England to begin what was, for me, a Back-to-my-roots vacation and which was for us both the experience of a lifetime. My Godson-cousin DOUG HUMPHREY came with us - he'd asked his Uncle John if he could tag along, and so this was for him also a time when our mutual family roots were explored in depth and joy:

In addition to visiting 22 cathedrals from Canterbury in the south-east (where MARTIN HOW was directing a fabulous RSCM Cathedral course choir) to Edinburgh in the north, and also the parish church in Shoreham, Sussex (built before 1103) where I was a choirboy, I was to meet with many friends, some of whom I hadn't seen for 20, 30, 40 and, in two blessed encounters, 50 years!

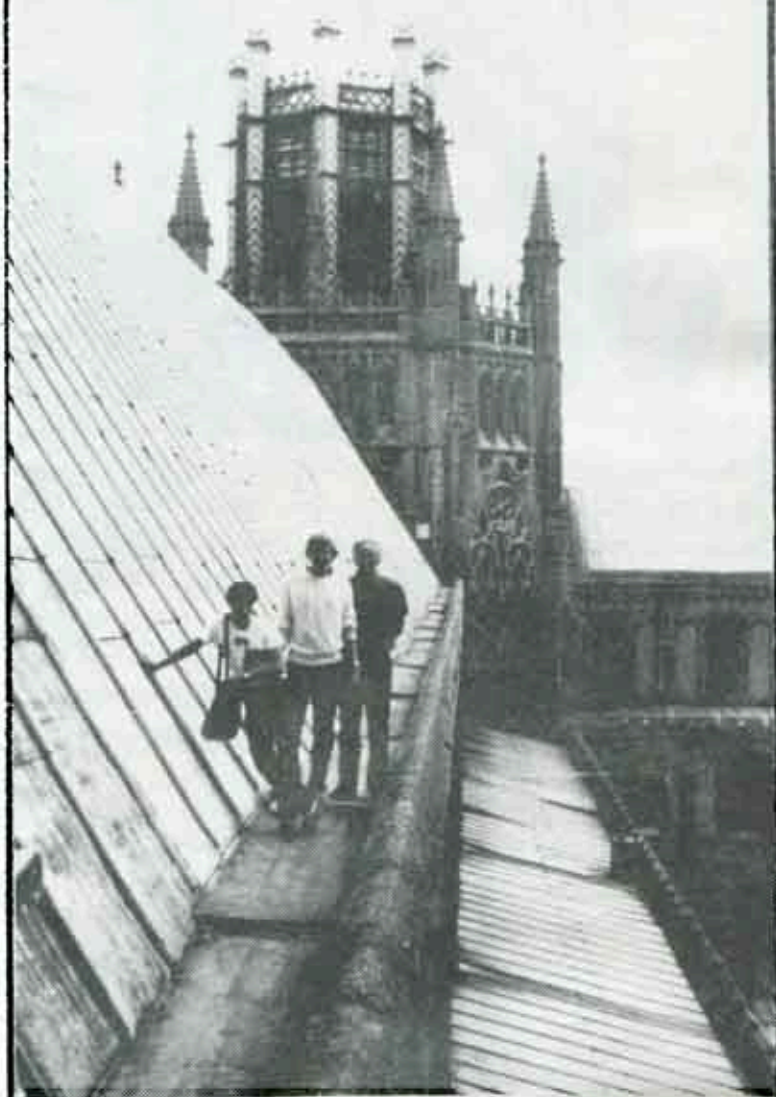
Another blessed co-incidence came when we visited ROY & RUTH MASSEY at Hereford Cathedral to find the choir of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton singing the Sunday services (very well). It was a joy, when we were later in Northampton, to meet many dear friends from 20 years ago (when I was organist there) and to see the Vicar JOHN MORTON, who was a contemporary of mine at Oxford. Both of us have got somewhat fatter, but neither has lost our auld sparkle.

In 30 days with stayed with 20 hosts, lunched and tead with many more in England, Wales and Scotland; visited the homes of my grandparents and parents, (including the house where I was born), retraced my footsteps of Cambridge years, (my room has been turned into a library - some room!), partied with members of my various choirs which I have conducted over the years, enjoyed VIP guided tours of a number of super places from friends Who Know (such as a narvellous visit to a chaplain to the Queen who showed us all over the Chapels Royal in St. James's Palace where he lives; here Charles 1st took communion before he was beheaded and here Queen Victoria married her Albert; here we saw the Chapel Registers with priceless autographs of Orlando Gibbons as well as the entire present Royal Family - WOW!)

Former colleagues from Blackburn had thoughtfully moved to elysian places where we stayed. Winchester (where our hosts were parents of an old chorister, and where a former Bbn verger now held sway in Winchester Cathedral which he showed us with much pride and inside info & with a splendid tea: "Aye, I know that the bones of King Ethelred are in that casket, I dusted them only last week!") - Exeter - where an old chorister is now Cathedral Succentor - here we watched a TV recording of a recent Billy Graham mission service, in the gracious sitting room of a 14th century house in the Cathedral Close - Worcester - where our host broke open the champagne upon our arrival ("Elgar used to ride his horse on the Green outside our house") - the Lake District - ("That's a magnificent recording of Widor's Toccata you're playing" said I. "Yes," said our BBC station director host, "That's you playing the organ in Blackburn Cathedral!") - Edinburgh - ("Come awa', John, we're a'goin tae tha' Edinburrrrgh Tattoo, ye ken!") [They didn't really talk like that, but we did the air is sae bracin, ye canna haelp ut!]

The highest (in every sense) guided tour experience was to walk over and through the roof and up the towers of Ely Cathedral - a hair-raising, breathtaking (also in every

sense) and wholly wonderful time . Our guide was a chairman of the cathedral, a colleague of our host that day, PETER HEALD, who is an old chorister of Blackburn Cathedral.



Balancing NOEL HUNWICK & his brother(R), CHRIS, who is my Godson, was no easy task when we lunched with them and their parents PHIL & JOAN during our eating and party marathon which lasted 72 almost non stop hours when we were in Blackburn. Friends and joyous memories abounded with much rich spiritual fellowship.

A particular "Blackburn Delight" was to visit all three living Bishops of Blackburn:



We spent a gracious night with STEWART & MARY, who also gave us breakfast; (the cat food which the Bishop was opening was for the cat, not us!)

...lunch with their predecessors in North Wales; ROBERT & TRUDA live in a lovely house which looks up to the ruins of Denbigh Castle in one direction, and a Welsh valley in the other;



and tea with their predecessors in Burreleigh Salterton, Devon. Both CHARLES and JANE had recently been in hospital, but they were making marvellous recoveries.

A Trinitarian Episcopal Visitation indeed!



Cousin SHEILA and DICK gave us most marvellous and loving hospitality at the beginning and end of our stay (living, conveniently, near London where we did the Sights, including a fantastic Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall with Cousin JOAN & LLEWELLYN). Because Sheila & Dick were, conveniently, going to Zambia for three weeks to see their twin sons, PETE & NICK, Sheila very kindly lent us her car to whizz around the country in (in which to whizzarround) which was an Experience, 'cos it was small and it had to accommodate three of us, lots of luggage and, on one occasion, a fourth passenger - FRANCIS JACKSON when we took him, with all our baggage, from his lovely cottage outside York, where we stayed with him and PRISCILLA, into the city, where we ate delicious hot potatoes, in a square, prepared by their son who runs a thriving business there by feeding the tourists.

The occasion which nearly blew my mind was to return to Cardiff, the capital of Wales, where my grandparents lived 50 years ago, in the company of our host-for-the-night, EDGAR TRIPPE who was their neighbour all those years ago. To visit their home and peer over the garden wall which I remember so well nearly annihilated me, so rich was the nostalgia. I remember the house so well - both my mother and Doug's grandmother (my aunt and Sheila's mother) were married from this house - and I am typing this Newsletter sitting at my grandfather's desk which I remember so vividly in that house, for when I was a small child we always spent family Christmases there. Memories are full of love and covered in tinsel.

My mother's favorite piece of church music was Stanford's Magnificat in G (The Spinning Wheel). When Edgar and I walked into Llandaff Cathedral (just a mile from grandparents' house) where my parents were married and where I, later, was baptised, the choir was rehearsing for Evensong and had just begun this very piece! This was for ME, a special present, gift wrapped and inscribed "To John with love from your Heavenly Father". Hallelujah, praise the Lord and Deo gratias.

But the core and mainspring of the vacation, apart from the central visit to Blackburn itself, which was beyond description, so lavish and so loving were the welcomes we received, was all to do with a set of Evening Canticles I had composed for the choir of Bearsted Parish Church, in Kent - the village

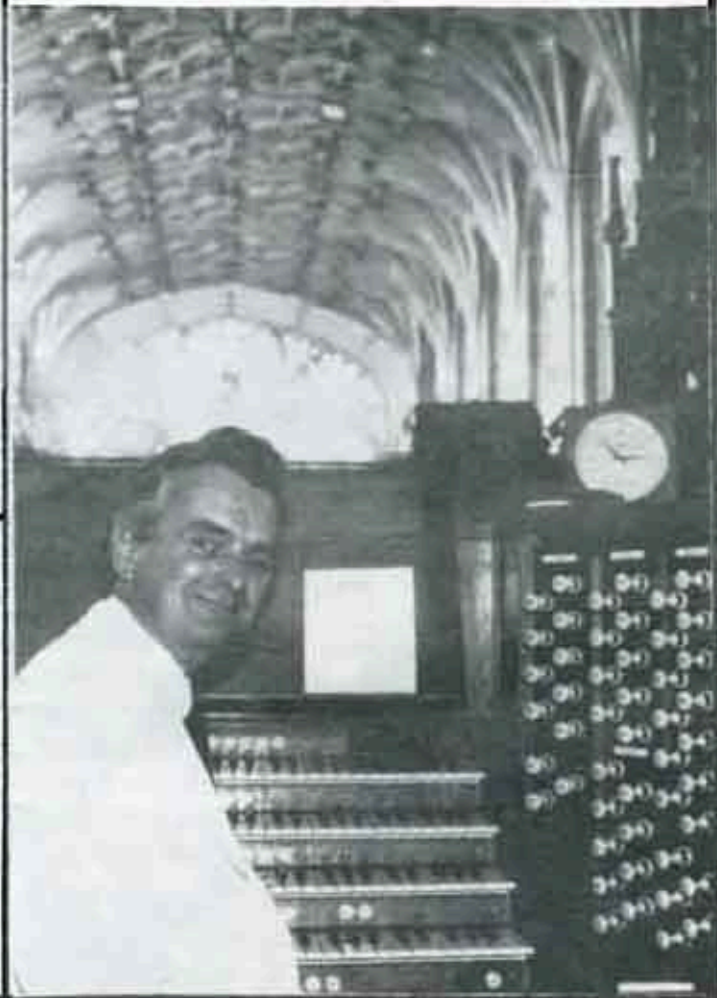


With Doug, Trevor Webb & daughter Hilary standing in front of the 14th century courthouse overlooking The Green, Bearsted.

where I was born. Here I renewed and refreshed my roots as never before, being welcomed by the Vicar, and by the choirmaster, TREVOR WEBB and his lovely family, and choir - all 57 of them - a magnificent team. It was an indescribable joy to rehearse this very fine choir at the beginning of the vacation in the Parish Church which is the epitome of what one thinks of as an English Parish Church. The choir sang not only my canticles, but also my responses which I had written 4 years ago for Mum's 75th birthday - and they sang them very well indeed.

An unexpected joy came my way when, in the church, I met two parishioners who knew my parents and me when we lived there 50 years ago. BILL & VERA PRINCE had been neighbours in those far off days and they invited us to their lovely home which overlooks The Green in the village (where, 200 years ago, cricket had first been played!) and regaled us with stories of old times. That was a real blessing.

It was an indescribable thrill, on the last Sunday of the vacation, to conduct this most enthusiastic and talented choir in my music at Evensong in the Parish Church, and then, three days later, on our final full day, to switch roles and accompany them on the organ when they sang my music, written in memory of my parents and aunt (Douglas's Grandmother) and in honour of Bearsted choir, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.



I cannot begin to express what this meant to me - that my music should be sung (and sung so well) in that very cradle of Royal England; the organ loft is placed immediately above the Queen's stall and that of Prince Charles and the Duke of Edinburgh. In between the choirstalls is a stone on which is written: "Here lie the bodies of King Henry VIII, Jane Seymour [his 4th wife - mother of Edward VI] and King Charles 1st" WOW!

What made the occasion even more special for me was the presence in the congregation not only of friends from Blackburn but also my cousins Sheila and Joan with Dick & Llewellyn and cousin Nick, who had come back from Jakarta a few days before, as well, of course, as cousin Doug and Don Kruger. My cup ran over.



Just before we left England we were thrilled to hear that, in New Zealand, WENDY had produced her second son - yet another Humphrey boy - TIMOTHY - a son for cousin Dr. Andy, a brother for Mike, a nephew for Doug & Brian, a grandson for Ann, and one more supa cousin for Joan, Sheila, Pete, Nick, big Mike & me. We already love you, Tim.

And so back to the USA where the choirs are singing magnificently and where we have a supa program arranged. Next September we shall welcome King's choir, Cambridge, to give us a recital.

The Rector has returned from his sabbatical in the Holy Land full of energy and inspiration ("Ellie and I have been running where Jesus walked!")

An unexpected and most welcome visitor blew in for the night in early October - JONATHAN RENNERT, former organ scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, and now organist of St. Michael's Church, Cornhill, in the City of London (where Harold Darke, my organ teacher, was organist for 50 years). We enjoyed a super evening's natter - especially about the forthcoming international congress of organists which he is helping to plan and which will be held in Cambridge in summer 1987.

My Princeton Singers blossom - some fantastically keen and intelligent new singers from the University and Choir College - they are a real tonic to conduct - Tuesday evening rehearsals energise all of us.

Superdelites which await me in 1985 include taking Trinity choirs to sing in New York again - (St. Bart's and St. John Divine Cathedral), conducting a "COME AND SING VERDI'S REQUIEM" (Wow) in Princeton, conducting choir festivals in Florida and Rhode Island and directing the RSCM Course and lecturing at the AGO Convention in North Carolina - GRRRRREAT!

Next summer cousin Doug will be coming over to the USA - for he wants to tagalong again with Uncle John for another Hectic Holiday and see something of this wonderful country and its marvellous people.

May you, dearest friends and relations, have been blessed this year, and may next year be even fuller of those joys which are imperishable - those 'good things which the Father has prepared for those who love Him' and which surpass all that we desire or deserve or even could imagine. Praise the LORD! (and WOW!)

John Bertalot

The quality of the photographs in this Newsletter is pretty awful. The printers did not do a good job. My apologies. JB