

THE PRINCETON SINGERS

in the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge,
immediately before their concert, 28th August, 1996



Front, L-R: **Stephen Cleobury** (Distinguished Host), **Scott Dettra** (Organist), **John B** (Founder-Conductor), and **George Guest** (Distinguished Guest)

The international music magazine **CHOIR & ORGAN** reviewed our concert in their November '96 issue, giving us over a page, plus photograph. Quotes: *'An elegant recital...a seamless and assured performance...faultless. [The Princeton Singers] are undoubtedly a fine example of American choral singing at its strongest.* Thank you, C & O.



'Everyone reads your Newsletter,' said **Simon Preston** to me over a large Gin & Tonic in NYC in April. 'I want my photo on the FRONT PAGE again!' Okay, here it is—twice!

SEPTEMBER 1995

The BBC called me to ask which choirs in Boston they should invite to sing on BBC Radio 3 (the British equivalent of NPR). I told them!

Drove to a Supa Store near Philadelphia to inquire about a new computah, acting on the advice of friends whom I had consulted in Hawaii, Australia, Denver and Princeton who all said that I should get a Power Mac 8500. The Supa Store didn't have any in stock but gave me details. It'll cost a norful lot!

Three days later I led a workshop for choir-masters in Pennsylvania, which went well. Driving home I decided that now was the time to Take Action, so I stopped by the Supa Store and ordered my Power Mac; they told me they'd have it for me in two weeks. I paid up and tried to look cheerful.

The next day I had a letter from **John-Michael Caprio**, director of music of St. Patrick's RC Cathedral, NYC, who told me that my arrangement of *Amazing Grace* (pub: Augsburg Fortress!) had been sung at the opening service to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations! Golly! I'm always happy to do my bit for international relations!

Ken Willy wrote to me with plans for his visit to the US in December. Ken is director of choirs at The Hutchins School, Hobart, Tasmania, where I had spent a terrific 5 weeks the previous year. He hoped to bring two of his best boys with him to sing with us at Trinity, and also to sing with Saint Thomas' choir, NYC.

The following week I finished composing a setting of *Salve Regina* for SATB choir and organ, written at the request of good friend, **Gerald Near**, who had said that he would write an anthem for me if I wrote one for him. I got the best of the bargain for he wrote two anthems for me, dedicated to the Princeton Singers—a setting of *Ave Verum Corpus*, and also a *Mag & Nunc*, which my Princeton Singers would perform during their up-coming supasupa tour of England.

OCTOBER

American TV, for nine straight months, had been showing **O.J. Simpson's** double murder trial live. Every news bulletin had details of the latest development. We were saturated with it. Today the jury, after only three hours' deliberation, returned a verdict of Not Guilty on both counts. I watched it, daily, and confess to being mightily relieved that it was all over. The reaction in the US was extraordinarily vehement, from unbounded joy, with singing in the streets, to blackest depression. Where standest thou, gentle reader?

The BBC called again—this time about my Princeton Singers' and Trinity's choir of men, senior boys and girls' up-coming broadcasts on BBC Radios 3 & 4 next month. For some reason they wanted details of what we would sing!

My headboy at Trinity, Princeton, **John Griffith**, who knows about these things, told me that the Power Mac 8500 is the best computah to get. I was pleased—and awaited delivery of mine with greater anticipation.

Up at 5.30am (a fairly regular habit, alas!) to put on to my old computah a setting of *The New City* which I had been commissioned to compose for the **Maryland State Boychoir**. When I'd finished I looked at my watch—it was 2.30pm. Doesn't time fly when you're having fun?

Mon. 9th. Collected **Vaughan Meakins** from Newark Airport. Vaughan had been a choirboy

of mine way back in the days when I was organist of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton (where **Alec Wyton** had been my predecessor, and **Michael Nicholas** and **Stephen Cleobury** my successors!) Vaughan directs a supa girls' school choir in Buckinghamshire which has won the BBC's Best Choir of the Year competition several times. (How good it is when former pupils do well in the Big Wide World!) We'd invited him over here to direct our Girls' Three Choirs' Festival (along with the choirs of St. Pete's, Morristown, NJ, and Ch. Ch. Grenich, Kernetikut. He was a wild success!

Four days later I sent my final printed version of *A New City* for SATB and piano or organ (courtesy of *Finale* 3.2.1.) to **Frank Cimino**, director of the Maryland State Boychoir. He told me that they would sing it in Annapolis (HQ of the American Navy) on New Year's Eve! I also sent to **Hal Leonard**, a publisher who had asked me to write for them, an arrangement of **César Franck's** *Panis Angelicus*. Sat back to see if they would publish it.

Mon., 16th. Frank Cimino called to say that my anthem had 'far exceeded' his highest hopes and that he was thrilled—so was I!

When I moved to the US from England, way back in 1983, I'd brought all my furniture with me, courtesy of Pickford's, in a 40ft container, which fitted very nicely into my American home. (the furniture, not the container!) However, my settee and easy chairs had been getting increasingly arthritic and the time had come to Take Action. After consulting **Ann McGoldrick**, concert manager of the Princeton Singers who knows What's What, I ordered a supa settee, which doubles as a double bed, plus easy chair and footrest. They arrived today and The Men huffed and puffed as they moved them up the steps through my front door and down steps into my sitting room. They only just made it, 'cos they're Big! (the furniture and the men!) I wallowed in Luxury!

That evening, at our weekly choir dinner, held between the boys' practice and the full practice, one of the parents, who was serving food to us, asked a boy, who had refused a helping of chicken, 'Are you a vegetarian?' 'Yes—ever since I bit my Mom!'

Phoned the Supa Store; my Power Mac hasn't come in yet! Try Monday.

Monday. It still hasn't come. Try again.

Thurs. 26th. The Princeton Singers' new CD of Christmas music (which we'd recorded during six months earlier this year!) arrived. Glorious! Also, National Public Radio issued their own Christmas CD made up of the best singing they broadcast during last Christmas. Included were items by **Chanticleer**, **The Robert Shaw Chamber Singers**, **His Majesty's Clerkes**, **The King's Singers**, and **The Princeton Singers**. That deserves a Christmas WOW!

Sat 28th. Called the Supa Store five times ref my non-materializing Power Mac. They promised to call me. They didn't.

The next day the Princeton Singers gave their first concert of the new season, with 13 new singers (out of a total of 32!) We were given two standing ovations! This augured well for what lay in store for us this season, which would culminate in 4 concerts for the AGO's Centennial Conference in NYC and a fabulous concert tour of England.

That morning **Bob Berglund**, a supa tenor in two Trinity choirs and also my Princeton Singers, told me that he could get a Power Mac for me. So I said, 'Get one!'

The next day I cancelled my Power Mac order with the Philly Supa Store, and Bob's computah friend said he would deliver my Power Mac later this week. It pays to know the Right People!

Tues. 31st. Quebec voted to remain within Canada (50.4% to 49.6%) Vive la Reine!

NOVEMBER

Th. 2nd. Read, in my Bible this morning, 'Every good gift comes from God.' My glorious new Power Mac 8500 was delivered and installed in my home. Hallelujah!

Sat 11th. Spent the whole day beginning to orchestrate my arrangements of *Once in Royal David's City* and *O come* for part of a concert the Princeton Singers were to give in December, accompanied by full orchestra. It was terrific fun to discover that my wonderful Power Mac 8500, coupled with supa *Finale 3.2.1.* music program, could print out individual instrumental parts from the full score and insert '10-bars-rest' signs automatically. Wow!

Mon. 13th. The BBC ('Beeb') arrived in the shape of **Philip Billson**, producer, **Graham Harwood**, sound, and **Mark Warburton**, PA. It was good to meet Graham again: he had been on the staff of BBC Radio Blackburn when I was there, 13 years earlier and we immediately lapsed into Lancastrian (a foreign language!)

The next day the Princeton Singers recorded a full Choral Evensong in Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, for relaying throughout Great Britain immediately after Easter. Trinity's own **John Baker**, was the recording engineer assisted by Graham. Regular readers of this missive will remember that John regularly records the Princeton Singers and toured with us in England the previous year. Our excellent organist was **Tim Harrell**, who sings a fine tenor with the Singers and is also organist of Trinity Cathedral. It went well!

The next day Philip Billson was kind enough to say that he would like to broadcast some of my music on the BBC's dally 'Daily Service', 'cos he liked my setting of *Lord of the Dance* (pub. Hinshaw under the title *Jesus Christ is Lord*) and also my setting of the *Responses for double choir* which we had sung the day before. (Memo: I must get round to sending Philip what he asked for!)

Finale 3.5 arrived, to update my music-writing program. It is very supa.

Fri. 17th. The Beeb (Phillip, Graham and Mark) hosted the Trinity and Princeton Singers musicians to a splendid dinner at the **Rusty Scupper**—a great Princeton Dining venue. He said that he'd like me to direct the music of some of his broadcasts when I return to live in England in 1998. Nice!

The next day the Beeb, with John Baker, recorded a special service for Thanksgiving in Princeton University Chapel, with my Trinity Choir of Men, Senior Boys and Girls, with **Scott Dettra**, our most talented assistant organist, at the **Mighty Mander**. We invited a select congregation from Trinity to join in the hymns, which they did with gusto, after I'd whipped them into shape.

Our Rector, **Leslie Smith**, preached a riveting sermon on the history of Thanksgiving in the US, and several of my arrangements, needless to say, were sung, including, an emotional version of *O Beautiful for spacious skies* (the American equivalent of *Land of Hope and Glory*) for choir, congregation, organ and bells. There wasn't a dry eye, and Phillip was kind enough to say that he was very pleased. So were we!

The next day **Scott Dettra** joined with his distinguished father, **Lee Dettra** (organist of West Point—the American equivalent of Sandhurst) in a *Battle of Organs* in Trinity Church, with our 4 manual Casavant in the west gallery, and a hired Allen Computer organ in the central space. The ubiquitous **John Baker** rigged up a large TV screen behind the Allen console so that the audience could see the player in the West gallery. It was a riotous and brilliant success, and \$11,000. (£7,000) were raised for charity.

The next day I went to the office as usual, but the office manager, **Nancy Metcalf**, took one look at me (after our somewhat hectic week) and suggested that I went back home to bed. I did as I was told!

The next day John Baker (again!) told me that National Public Radio in the US were so pleased with our BBC recording of the Thanksgiving service that they would broadcast it nationwide tomorrow! (It would be broadcast throughout Great Britain the following day!)

Mon 27th. Read in my Bible notes (Wm. Barclay's commentary on James) that *'Life is strewn with orange peel'*—it's very easy to slip up!

DECEMBER

Fri. 1st Took part in a great concert with the Princeton Singers and with the professional orchestra that **John-Michael Caprio** (see Sept) had founded. The Singers sang two groups, including my orchestrations of *Once in Royal* and *O come, all ye faithful* (both of which will be published by Flammer next year). So many folk wanted to hear us that we had to give a second performance of the whole concert the next day to an equally full house!

Two days later I began to try to catch up on a backlog of correspondence which had grown alarmingly during recent weeks. One was to **Patrick Rawlinson**, a former Northampton organ pupil of mine, who had invited the Singers to give a concert in St. Matthew's Church, Northampton in August when we would be over there. I was about to say 'No' because our tour was already fully booked, when I suddenly realized that we did have one spare day which could work very well for both of us. And so instead of writing to him I called him. He said that he'd actually called me at home an hour before, wondering if we could come—whatta coincidence!—and so joy was unconfined!

Sat 9th. The Singers gave their annual Christmas concert in Lawrenceville School Chapel—another standing ovation.

The next week the Princeton Singers were featured on local TV in a program they'd shot the previous year. Part of a rehearsal was included and I made a constructive remark to the singers: *'Tenors, it sounds as though you're picking daises!'* I'm not sure, now, what I meant, but they seemed to understand!

John Baker (again, again) called to say that NPR were so pleased with the recordings he'd made of the Singers' recent concerts that they would broadcast extracts from one, nationwide, the next day, and the whole of another concert, twice, on Christmas Day! Several days later NPR said they would broadcast even more extracts on three further days!

Christmas Eve: Made my annual pilgrimage to the home of **John Sully & Kathy Rohrer** and their singing daughter, **Clare**, to listen to the King's Carol Service, live. This has become, for me, a very precious tradition, for the Sullys are among my closest friends here—John and Clare sing in my church choir, and Kathy and John were founder members of my Princeton Singers. The service was, as ever, superb, and the best reader of lessons was, as ever, **Stephen Cleobury**. We turned off the radio when it was over, which was a pity, for, we learned later that no less than five extracts from the Princeton Singers Christmas CD were played nationwide immediately afterwards on **Richard Gladwell's** weekly program, *With heart and voice!* Three of the arrangements, I hesitate to add, were by me! Fa la la!

Christmas Eve services in Trinity were, as ever, packed to the doors. Over 30 alumni of our men, boys and girls' choir returned from universities all over the US to sing with us—it was glorious!

Two days later cousin **Dick Charge**, in Relgate, England, called me to say that he would be going to hospital the following week for a triple heart bypass. Rallied prayer support from a few close friends. As I was going to England two weeks later to set up the Singers' Tour, I told him to be sure to be well by the time I arrived.

It was a great joy to welcome, for a week's visit, **Ken Willy**, director of choirs at The Hutchins School, Hobart, Tasmania, (see Sept). He had been a splendid host to me 18 months earlier, and I was thrilled that he had brought with him two of his most excellent choristers, **Jonathon De Hoog** and **Nicholas Bester** who had impressed me so very much when I worked with Ken's choirs. The lads were given hospitality by the **Adam Family**—sons **Nate** & **St** sing in my boys' choir. Ken stayed with me. The weather was frightful—snow every day—so much so that all our plans to entertain our visitors fell through and Ken ended up by digging me out of my house and cleaning my garage. That is no way to entertain a guest, but I surely appreciated what he did for me!

On New Year's Eve, when we were snowed up, Ken asked if he could make a call to Australia. 'Yes, use the phone in the kitchen!' Twenty minutes later he returned to my sitting room with a peculiar look on his face. 'What's happened?' I asked. 'I've just got engaged!' he replied. We broke out the alcohol!

JANUARY 1996

Tues. 2nd The day of cousin **Dick's** heart operation. Read in my morning Bible study (James):- 'Believing prayer will restore to health the ailing person and the Lord will enable him to rise from his bed!' Called **Sheila** later in the day—the 5-hour operation was a success! **Dick's** spirit before the operation had been the

most positive the doctors had ever seen. Hallelujah!

Sat 6th. Took down over 200 Christmas cards, from wonderful friends all over the world, which I had pinned to my genuine imitation oak beams (the cards, not my friends.) So many of you had enclosed fascinatingly newsy letters. A few extracts deserve a wider audience:

'I shall go to Vienna and Prague and shall be spending a lot of time in the cemeteries visiting the tombs of Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and my other friends!'

'Nothing has been done to our Parish Church since the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1st, except for the installation of electricity!'

'I've just been elected Warden of New College, Oxford. We shall live in a collection of architectural second thoughts dating from 1379 to 1958!'

'Having proposed to my wife I immediately flew off to India for a 25-day holiday.'

'Next year I'm conducting the Bologna Opera, Bavarian State Opera and Houston Symphony Orchestra.' (Former pupil)

'The highlight of my parliamentary year was the 50th anniversary celebration for the end of World War II, held in Westminster Hall, where I met The Queen, Prince Phillip, Prince Charles and Princess Margaret!'

'My managing director is having an affair with his secretary!'

'The making of our CD was like giving birth to an elephant!'

Mon 8th. I was due to fly to England, but, because of record-breaking snow, all flights had been cancelled! All cars were banned from roads in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York. Life ground to a halt!

Owen Gaskins, another splendid tenor in Trinity choir, called. He is travel agent for a firm of attorneys in NYC and he'd arranged that I fly business class, instead of my usual steerage, to England on Wednesday! Hooray for snow! Tenor **Bob Berglund**, who owns a chauffeur business, collected me and drove me to Newark Airport in his Lincoln Town car—very swish—which prepared me for the VIP seat I was to occupy in the plane to England. I like knowing the Right People!

Thurs. 11th I arrived at **Dick & Sheila's** house



in Reigate at the very moment Sheila was leaving to collect Dick from hospital in Harley Street! Two hours later in they walked, with Dick looking almost new! Sheila later helped me stick 500 stamps on to envelopes containing my Newsletters sent to friends in England. I like my cousins!

Sat 13th. To London for a night with cousins **Joan & Llewellyn Williams**, who live in an exquisite flat in Sloane Street. They are superb hosts and, after 3 whiskies and a delicious dinner, I saw the world through rose-coloured spectacles.

Sun 14th. To Cambridge by train to spend a few nights at my old College, Corpus (founded 1352), to discuss the arrangements that were being made for the concert to be given by my Princeton Singers in King's Chapel in August. **Tony Byrne**, the college's Development Officer, was my expansive host, who broke out alcohol at the slightest provocation, and I enjoyed discussing every detail of the concert with him as well as meeting my current successors as organ scholar, **Nicholas Danks** and **Stephen Hargreaves**. They took me into the college chapel and Stephen played the organ for me, brilliantly—he is a pupil of **Ian Tracey**, organist of Liverpool Cathedral.

I took tea with the new Master of Corpus, Professor **Sir Tony Wrigley**, and **Lady Mieke**



Wrigley and presented the Master with copies of my two books on choirtraining (pub. **Augsburg Fortress**) which he was gracious enough to receive for inclusion in the college library.

After yet more drinks with Tony Byrne I enjoyed a superb dinner at High Table in the college dining hall, sitting opposite **Geoffrey Styler**, who was Precentor of the college chapel when I was a student there 40 years earlier, and who hasn't changed a hair! Conversation, like the wine, flowed delightfully for at least three hours until bedtime!

I was given the main guest room in the Master's Lodge, called The Duke's Room, because that's where the **Duke of Edinburgh** stays when he visits Cambridge. (He's Chancellor of the University!) I like knowing the Right People! (Whoops, I've said that before—twice!)

Mon. 15th Spent a happy hour with **Stephen Cleobury** discussing logistics for the Singers' concert in King's Chapel in August. He was, as

ever, a most gracious and welcoming host.

Then by train to London for lunch with **Donald Limon**, an exact contemporary of mine at Lincoln College, Oxford, 43 years ago (!) who was now chief Clerk to the House of Commons (you can see him during the televised Prime Minister's question time, sitting to the left of Madam Speaker.) Donald welcomed me into his spaciouly gracious and historic office in the Palace of Westminster, and then took me to his equally graciously spacious flat, which overlooked historic Westminster Bridge. His lovely wife, **Joyce**, had prepared a delicious lunch. They entertain a lot of VIPs there. It goes, as the Americans would say, 'with the territory' and they do it very well.

When I gave them their copy of my Newsletter, they said, 'Oh Good! This is the earliest we've ever had it!'

Donald had to be back at the House for the afternoon session of the Commons, but I prevailed upon him to have his photograph taken under Big Ben en route, just for the record!

Thence I popped over the road to Westminster Abbey to meet the Precentor, **Barry Ferguson**, to discuss details of the visit of the Princeton Sing-

ers there in August (for we'd give a concert as well as sing three services.) After that I went back to Reigate to stay with Sheila and Dick after a somewhat exhausting few days!

Th 18th I was told, on returning to Princeton, that one of my 10-year old choirboys was taking a 3-hour Hebrew exam at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he studies alongside adult seminarians. I learned, a couple of weeks later, that he only scored 95%!

The following Monday, when working with some 8-year old probationers and getting them to sing the word 'reign' correctly, one of them said, 'That's a homonym!' I find that working with Princeton kids to be somewhat threatening!

The same day a letter arrived from **Stephen Cleobury** saying that he would be delighted to attend the Princeton Singers' concert in King's chapel in August. Supal!

Sat. 27th. Led a workshop for choirmasters from 6 States at Westminster Choir College here in Princeton on how to teach kids to read music. One of them asked, 'How do I prevent my choir from breaking into conversation as soon as I stop them singing?' Whatta good question! Thought that I really ought to write a third book on choirtraining ('cos the others were selling so well and I had learned a lot more since writing them!) That question could be included—and a practical solution which really works!

FEBRUARY

Th. 1st. I was due to fly to Texas today to lead a 2-day workshop for choirmasters, but 45 minutes before I was due to leave for the airport a call came through telling me that they were snowed up, so it was postponed! Two days later we were snowed up!

Sun 4th Played the Bb bell in 'The True Story of Cinderella'—a superb and riotously funny one-hour entertainment for 12 solo singers and piano. It was given in one of the university concert halls, before a huge audience, in aid of charity. My part was to toll the hour of midnight, with a controlled diminuendo. That seemed to attract more favorable comment than almost anything else! (*Many Westminster Choir College graduates will know of this work. Those who don't and who would like to put on a performance themselves should write to WCC in Princeton for details. It will give you a guaranteed success and you'll have to repeat it!*)

The next day I finally bought an answering machine for home. Dunno how I did without one for 13 years!

Th. 8th. Quite a bizzee day: Proofs of my arrangement of 'Pants Angelicus' arrived from **Hal Leonard Corp.** (American Publisher: sorry—I didn't tell that they'd accepted it!) The same day **Kevin Mayhew** (British Publisher) sent me a copy of his *Ten New Anthems* book, which included my setting of *Set me as a Seal* which I rather like! I also faxed **St. Martin-in-the-Fields**, London, for my Singers might give a concert there in August, if we can squeeze them in! That evening one of our choirparents, who is sub Dean of the University Chapel, told me that the U. Chapel Choir would like some of my Trinity boys to sing the top Cs in Allegri's *Miserere* on Maundy Thursday. OK—anything to help the halls of higher learning! Excellent practices that night—we're bizzee rehearsing Byrd's 4-part Mass, as well as Howells etc., for a performance in St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave., NYC, after Easter. Yes—a bizzee day!

The following weekend I flew to San Francisco to lead a 2-day workshop for choirmasters. I was met by **Jonathan Dimmock**, my host, and



cathedral sub-organist **Chris Putnam**, who gave me a supa tour of that terrific city. At the cathedral Chris showed me the full-sized replica they had of the Labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral,

which pilgrims down the centuries had used to make a bare-foot walk of penance. The S. F. Labyrinth is immediately outside the cathedral—in marble. However, if the weather is cold, they have another one inside made of carpet! I love America!

The workshops went very well: I spent the morning working with some boys and girls—some from the cathedral—with their choirmasters watching, including ebullient **John Fenstermaker** (who's appeared in these Newsletters several times!) and co-host **George Emblom**. George and Jonathan had made me wonderfully welcome in their supa home built on the side of a hill. (Almost everything in that city is built on the side of a hill!) I also met **Paul Ellison**, secretary of the American Guild of Organists in SF. Paul is an Englishman (ex Queen's Cambridge), and Jon, George & Paul made me riotously at home in that fun place—all that was lacking was a Ringo! We called the waiter 'Ringo' at dinner that night—he seemed to enjoy it!

The following day I led a workshop for Adult Singers and the day finished with yet another dinner. I enjoy work like that!

The day after, following a most entertaining breakfast in one of the colorful parts of the city, I flew home, arriving just after midnight. Wow!

The next day I received an invitation to conduct a massed choirs' festival in Orlando Cathedral, Florida, and to compose an anthem for them. Yes! (*It would be an arrangement of 'Songs of Praise the Angels sang'*)

Sat. 24th At a meeting of the Princeton Singers' Board, at concert manager **Ann McGoldrick's** house (where she supplies us with breakfast!) it was suggested that I get a fax machine for my home. Ever obedient, I did. Whatta great machine—it has instant dialing and push buttons in red, green and grey that do all sorts of exciting things; how could I have managed without one?

Tu. 27th Charles and DI agreed...to divorce!

Th. 29th Trinity Church, for some time, has been planning to build new offices and extend the facilities for church school classes. Some \$3M had been raised by the Parish, and, today, workman began to erect a tall steel-mesh fence around the place. It looked as though something was really about to happen!

MARCH

Wed. 6th Gave a midday organ recital in the University Chapel. Afterwards who should erupt before my eyes but **Joan Lippincott**, senior organ professor at Westminster Choir College, University Organist and maker of scintillating organ CDs! She was, as ever, very kind and said, 'You haven't an unmusical bone in your body!' That's the sort of remark that one remembers! Thank you, Joan!

Mon. 11th. **Richard Wyton** invited me to be an hon. committee member to promote the celebrations he was preparing to honor his distinguished father, **Dr. Alec Wyton**, who would be celebrating his 75th birthday in August. Alec, my predecessor at St. Matthew's, Northampton, had sponsored me when I applied for Trinity Church, Princeton. He has been a wonderful friend and an inspiration to countless musicians in this country. I was thrilled to be asked and said 'Yes'!

The next day the Beeb called from London and asked me to fax them a copy of my arrangement of *Amazing Grace* for a BBC choir were going to broadcast it the next day—conducted by my successor-but-one at Blackburn Cathedral, **Gordon Stewart**. I did, they did, and he did—very well!

After another Singers' concert, the Board enjoyed a reception at **Ann McGoldrick's** home. A new Board member was there, **Wyman Rolph**. 'I'm going to England in a couple of weeks time,' he told me. 'Are you going to Cambridge?' I asked. 'No, but I'd love to.' 'Leave it to me and I'll fix it up,' said I, knowing that Corpus' Development Officer, **Tony Byrne** (see Jan) would be delighted to meet him and his wife, **Kathy**. Wyman loves ancient manuscripts; Corpus library has more historic treasures than almost any other library in the world. Faxes began to whiz across the pond during the next few days.

My office phone went wrong: an hour later a man turned up—I showed him the phone and he said, 'It's broke!' The phone company called a little while after and said they'd send someone round to look at it. 'But you've already sent someone!' 'No, we haven't!' The Man had clearly been casing the joint! Ho hum!

Tues. 26th. Saw the comet near the Pole Star. It's the first time it's visited our Solar system for 9,000 years. How do astronomers work these things out?

The next day a student from Westminster Choir College came to observe our practices. Afterwards he told me 'It was just like seeing your books come to life!' Nice young man!

APRIL

Our three splendid choirboys rehearsed their Allegri top Cs with the University Chapel choir. 'How did it go?' I asked. 'OK, but our copies are in English—they're singing it in Latin!' 'That didn't cause any problems, did it?' 'Of course not—we borrowed their copies and sang it in Latin too!'

Good Friday: A monk, interviewed during a TV news program, commented on the level of noise in our world, and how hard it is to communicate with God in our bizzyness. 'How can we communicate with God?' he was asked. 'By speaking his language.' 'What is God's language?' 'Silence is God's first language!' Wow! He recommended two 20-minute periods of silent communication per day, centering on one word (like *Love*, or *Peace* or *Jesus...*) This will tend to dissolve unhealed memories and give us strength to deal with the Now. Try it!

You'll know that our choir members can all read music ('cos I teach them to!) How exciting it was to form an 11-voice choir to sing 4 Latin motets during the 3-hour Good Friday service at Trinity. We had only an hour to prepare, and, of course, they sang superbly. Hallelujah! (Whoops, we can't say 'Hallelujah' in Lent. *Hooray*, then!)

A long-time friend in England, **Margery Howarth**, sent me a video of a 3-hour live programme just put out by the BBC of *The Young Musician of the Year*. It showed 6 brilliant musicians under the age of 20 (pianist, violinist, etc) playing concertos with the National Youth Orchestra, who are also under the age of 20, before a vast audience in Birmingham's new

concert hall. It was wholly superb! I was riveted by the whole thing, not only because the standard was astonishingly high and the viewers were kindly invited to pit their judgment against that of the distinguished adjudicating panel, (most of us picked the violinist—we were right!) but also because the whole concert was conducted by **Ivor Bolton**, a former chorister of mine from Blackburn Cathedral to whom I also taught the organ (he gained his FRCO at 17 with a staggeringly high mark!) I was thrilled to bits and faxed him, on my supa new machine, to tell him so!

The same day I received an invitation to lead a workshop in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in September, '...to give us a pep talk at the beginning of the new season.' Their dean added, 'I read your book on choirtraining in one go!' 'Why?' 'I couldn't put it down—they didn't teach us any of that when I was at Music College!' Thanx!

Also that day I received a fax from **Tony Byrne** at Corpus, Cambridge, telling me that he enjoyed the Singers' BBC broadcast last week (see Nov.) and looked forward to welcoming **Kathy & Wyman Rolph** next week.

The next day I had a fax from **Barry Rose**, genius director of music of St. Alban's Abbey, England, saying that he'd like the Princeton Singers to pop into St. Alban's during their upcoming tour to meet **Ralph Allwood**, genius director of music of Eton College, who would be directing a choir course there. Perhaps our choirs could sing to each other? Yes!

The same day, out of the blue, a letter arrived from **William Miller**, in New York, former vice chairman of *Bristol Myers Squibb*, who invited me to become a member of the Board of the St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Appeal in the US. After a little thought I replied, saying that I was honored to be invited, but, really, my business was making music, not raising money. But it was nice to be asked.

Two days later my choir of men, boys and girls sang the Easter-I service in St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Park Avenue, NYC, at the kind invitation of their genius director of music, **Kent Tritle**. (It's pretty challenging meeting all these geni!) That was a tremendously thrilling experience for us all. We sang a 20-minute Prelude at the high altar, then processed to sing in the glorious West gallery which houses the superb 4-manual Mander tracker, over which organists slobber. Their associate organist, **Nancianna Parrella**, played for us—brilliantly, accompanying us in a couple of Easter anthems I'd written, and giving notes for the Byrd 4-part Mass and other anthems. The congregation applauded us halfway through the service, and then twice more at the end. **John Mander** was there, too, and they gave him a well-deserved round of applause for creating such a fine instrument. Trinity choir parents swelled the congregation and everyone was very pleased! I like RC churches!

Two days later my arrangement of *Panis Angelicus* was published by Hal Leonard. They did a lovely job thereon.

During the following week I put finishing touches to two other anthems I was writing—*Salve Regina* for **Gerald Near**, and *I stand on the Rock* for **Fred Swann** at the Crystal Cathedral.

Wyman Rolph called. He was ecstatic about the reception he and **Kathy** had received in Cambridge the previous week. They'd been given a VIP tour of the University, dined at High Table in Corpus and visited Corpus Library where the Librarian, Dr. **Fred Ratcliffe**, told him to sit down. He did, and Corpus's most treasured illuminated manuscript was placed in his hands—St. Augustine's Bible—1,400 years old!

The following week I went to dinner with another new member of the Princeton Singers' Board. (I can't tell you her name, you'll see why.) During that wholly delightful evening she let slip that her mother was a cousin of the **Queen Mother**—both born in the same year! Princeton is full of agreeable surprises!

Sun. 21st. It was announced on US radio that **Christopher Robin Milne** died today, age 77. He will be, for so many of us, for ever 6. The announcer clearly hadn't been brought up properly—he called him 'Milney'!

The following day yet another fax arrived from the Beeb about the Singers' upcoming tour. How did I survive before having my very own fax?

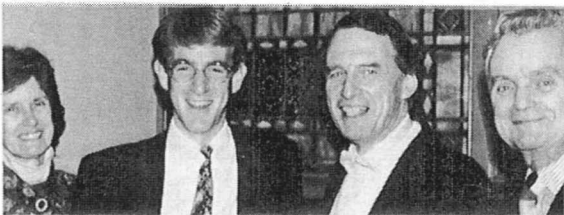
Received a gracious letter from **William Miller** in NYC thanking me for my letter in which I said No to joining his St. Paul's Cathedral Appeal Board, but 'couldn't we discuss it over lunch at the Waldorf Astoria?' I couldn't think of any reason, so I said yes! (Yes to the lunch, not Yes to the Board!)

Wed. 24th On a home improvements program on TV I learnt that one can fill in small holes in the wall with toothpaste—repeat if necessary, then paint. Also, if you're trying to hammer in small nails, you'll find it easier to keep them steady if held between the prongs of a comb!

That evening I went to St. Ignatius Loyola again—this time to hear a recital with Trinity's brilliant assistant organist, **Scott Dettra**, (see last year's Newsletter), given by **Simon Preston**.

It was, needless to say, brilliant, with a brilliant audience too, including **Fred Swann** from the Crystal Cathedral, Los Angeles, 2,500 miles away! 'We sang your *Jesus Christ arose from Death* again at Easter,' Fred told me! That makes three times on World-wide TV in four years. Wow!

After the recital **Nancianne Parrella**, **Scott**



Dettra, Simon Preston and I followed our host

Kent Trittle and a select gathering of a few friends, to a nearby restaurant for a scintillating dinner. Simon said, 'I hope you've brought your camera!' 'Why?' 'So that I can get my photo in your Newsletter again!' I did, he does—thrice!

Dan Colborne, executive of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) told me during the dinner that more people had signed up for the Princeton Singers concerts in NYC during the AGO's Centennial Conference in July than almost any other recital. Wow!

Two days later I was told that a former Trinity choirparent (I can't tell you his name, you'll see why), had just been to dinner with **President Clinton** in Washington, DC. There were twelve guests—all pretty high-powered people. 'It was absolutely marvelous,' he told me. 'The President has an encyclopedic knowledge and could converse engagingly with us on any subject. Also, he's very good listener. I was impressed! So was I!

Three days later I went to Saint Thomas' Church, Fifth Avenue, NYC to attend a workshop led by **Dr. George Guest**. George is one of the world's leading choirtrainers—I met him first over 40 years ago when he was first director of music of St. John's College, Cambridge—and he hasn't changed a hair in all that time. Many of America's finest choirtrainers were there, including **Bob Guade**, from Ohio, who is the President of the RSCM in this country, as well, of course, as our host, **Dr. Gerre Hancock**.



George led **Gerre's** fine boys and men in several practices and achieved exquisite phrasing from them in Sumsion's *Magnificat in G*. George was so kind as to commend to the choirmasters my books on choirtraining. How courteous can one get?

Walking back to Penn station after that most happy day I bought four colorful ties for \$10.00—bringing my collection up to 394!

MAY

Four days later I finally flew to Austin, Texas, (now that the snow had melted!) to lead a 2-day workshop for AGO choirmasters. I was met by my hosts **Kevin & Sara McClure** (Kevin had been a student of mine at WCC and also our assistant organist at Trinity for a year.) The temperature was 89°! That evening I gave a talk to the assembled throng: *How to be a Choirmaster and still be a Christian* which went down rather well. The next day I worked with the choirmasters in four sessions, ending up with a pretty supa Evensong. Bought two more ties—396—a most satisfactory visit!

The next day **Keith Bond**, my talented former sub at Blackburn Cathedral, played a supa Prelude before our Choral Evensong, which included the first performance of my new *Salve Regina* (for **Gerald Near**.) **Keith & Ruth** were staying with me—but, because I knew them so well, I had had no scruples about deserting them whilst I went to Texas! They left the next day, for Keith was playing in Washington DC. They left their bedroom even tidier than they found it—making their beds and washing their sheets. They can stay anytime!

Someone told me that **Napoleon** had said, a *propos* medals: 'Men will die for a bit of coloured ribbon!' It works the same for choristers!

Mon 20th A book arrived from the SPCK, with the author's compliments—a complete history of the psalms, and how they have been sung through the centuries. It's called *Make Music to our God*, written by **Brother Reginald, SSF**, a delightful monk from Cambridge who stayed with me some 6 years earlier. He was a gracious guest and generously mentioned Trinity's music, and his stay, in the pages of his fascinating book. I commend it wholeheartedly to choir-masters!

At Trinity's final choir dinner for this season (attended by families and friends) some of my less *bon mots* uttered in the heat of choir practices were read out to the assembled throng. Examples:

▲ *Some of you look as though you have the wrong examination paper!* ▲ *Will you not translate it into Chinese, please!* ▲ *Sing it as if Byrd were really quite a good musician!* ▲ *The word that springs to mind is 'incompetent'.* ▲ *Are you going to sing, or are you just going to stand there like a rat shot out of a cat factory?* ▲ *I apologize for asking you to think, but that's what life's all about.* ▲ *Tenors, please make this a memorable moment in the service for all the right reasons!* ▲ *Let's try that as if English were not your second language!* Thanks to chairman **Dan Zuckerman** who writes down these gems as soon as they've been uttered! This is a side of my choirtraining that I don't include in my books—but it does work!

The next day was pretty spectacular: I went to lunch at the Waldorf Astoria in NYC with **William Miller**. When I reached Princeton train station I asked the guard what time the train left. He replied, "What time would you like it to leave?" "Have I got time to get a cup of coffee?" "Yes!" (That's courtesy alla Victorian Tymes!) Once on the packed train the scene changed and a man came to sit next to me, clearly the worse for wear. He burst into snatches of song then mumbled, 'Get the **** off the track, the train's too slow!' Another snatch of song, then he announced to the world, 'I'm paranoid!' True! I tried to pass the time by reading more of **Brother Reginald's** psupa psalm pbook, and learnt how early Christians sang (better than my companion!), what St. Ambrose did, when harmony was introduced, what the first chant was...Golly!

When I arrived at the Waldorf Astoria **William Miller** walked in and said, 'Call me Bill!' So I did. Within five minutes he had me eating out of his hand, and within ten minutes I had said an enthusiastic 'Yes' to becoming a member of his Board! You don't become V.C. of Bristol Myers Squibb without knowing how to handle people!

Bill told me that he'd got my name from **John Scott**, genius organist of St. Paul's Cathedral. (Memo, write to John to say *Thank you!*)

That was a most happy hour, and I walked back along Fifth Avenue joyful as a lark, and celebrated by buying 3 more colorful ties—399. 'The next one must be most special,' thought I. In Penn station I passed a stall selling ties...and there it was! A glorious tie made up of keyboards, alla 10 organ manuals. That's exactly right for the AGO Centennial Convention in July!...and it was!

That evening I attended a splendid performance of Ibsen's *A Doll House* in Princeton, in which two of my choirboys were participating—**Max & Niall Lessard**—they were so very good, as was the whole production. A great end to a great day!

For some time I'd been trying to take off excess weight. (Lunching at the Waldorf doesn't help!) The following week, at our regular Trinity staff meeting, I said, 'I wish I knew of a good diet.' **Carol Stoy**, our deacon, said that she knew of a diet which would take off 7 lbs in a week! 'Wow—let me have it!' I replied, so she did. It's basically a soup made of cabbage, peppers, spring onions ('scallions') skinless tomatoes and celery, all boiled in water, with various flavors added. A spot of chicken or beef every so often, a banana and fruit juice. No fat or chocolates, of course.

Two days later I'd taken off two pounds! The trouble was I went to a party at the home of **Ted & Benita Ryan** (who have appeared in previous Newsletters: they're wonderful choir parents who live in a house in Pennsylvania which was begun in 1684!) Today I was due to open the magnificent new organ that Benita had had installed in her office in the grounds of her home (wearing my new 10-manual tie!) It was a 3-manual **Bob Walker** electronic, which is so good that one cannot tell that it isn't 'real'. I practised in the afternoon, and then a select number of distinguished friends arrived for the party and recital.

We had drinks on the lawn in one of the Ryans' flower-filled gardens as the sun went down and the moon came up. Then we repaired inside for a supa sit-down meal which Benita had cooked herself, after having spent the afternoon gardening. How does she do it?



I nibbled on small helpings of salad and sipped water *Helgh ho!*

Then we all repaired to the organ room and off we went. It was the greatest fun, and everyone was thrilled with Benita's Bargain Buy.

Oh, that we could have such an organ at Trinity!

The following day I went to another food-filled party! This was an Australian wine-tasting evening in the lovely home of **Shawn & Robbie Ellsworth**. Robbie is music secretary at Trinity, and does her best to keep me in order; her son, **John**, sings with us and the whole family are wonderful friends. Shawn owns one of the largest and most frequented wine shops in Princeton, and so he knew what he was doing when he arranged this party. I spent an excruciating hour there sipping water and eating celery (I'd taken off another pound!) until I felt my self-control slipping, and fled, leaving a host of happy guests who were sampling with gusto the many wines and delicious eats!

That evening I watched a TV program in which a doctor told about a recent experiment when rabbits had been fed with a high cholesterol diet. (*Oh, for the chance!*) One group had had the food just pushed at them. The other group had been stroked and petted while they ate—i.e. they were loved. The 'loved' rabbits had 60% less cholesterol than the other group. i.e. Being loved actually affects for good our whole being. Try it!

The next day I went to yet another party! This was for Trinity's Adult Choir (conducted by **Robert Palmer**, who is nearly a Ph.D. in music from Rutgers University.) Good food and good fellowship abounded. I enjoyed the good fellowship! One new adult singer told me that he had recently lost 20 lbs. He looked great. 'How did you do it?' I asked. 'By eating only half portions!'

Two days later **President Clinton** came to Princeton, for the 250th anniversary celebrations of the University. A smallish crowd lined the road and as his limousine swept past, albeit fairly slowly, he looked straight at me and waved! As I walked back to Trinity afterwards, I heard two people shout across the road to their friends, 'Did you see him?' And both of them said, 'Yes, and he looked straight at me and waved!' That man knows how to touch people. I was impressed!

During recent months I'd been doing a lot of composing and arranging, for the Singers' upcoming tour of England, including arranging all the psalms, and writing two new sets of responses. Today I had a letter from **Ken Robertson**, one of my English publishers, accepting my responses for treble voices. We were to sing them in St. Paul's Cathedral. Great!

The following day I went to a concert in Princeton High School where some of my choir members are pupils. They have a superlative choir which won national finals recently, and an equally good orchestra. But tonight I went to hear their jazz band, conducted by Trinity choirparent **Tony Biancosino** who is yet another genius. The band was terrific. I was blown away by their sheer professionalism and *jolie de vivre*. Their drummer, young Trinity bass **Peter Light**, had me transfixed by his incredible technique and unassailable sense of rhythm. That band had recently come a shining first in the Olympic Gold International competition in Toronto. I'm not surprised!

Hadn't been feeling too well off and on recently so I went to my doctor for a check up. **Dr. John Hagan** is a choir parent (two boys in

the choir) and also a choir spouse—his wife, **Andrea Hyde**, sings in Trinity's Adult Choir. He is a tonic in himself—as soon as he walks into the room one immediately feels better, thanks to his '*Spirit of Christmases past*' presence. He took a number of tests, including blood, and will let me know how I am. Basically I should take more exercise! (I'd taken off 7 lbs by now!)

The next day my Princeton Singers gave a concert in Princeton University Chapel. One singer, attorney **John Caruso**, had flown back from a trial he was leading in Florida, especially to be with us. That's dedication! Our program was the one we had chosen for our concert in King's Chapel in August. We discovered that the first half lasted 65 minutes! Some rethinking was called for! But the very large audience gave us a standing ovation and we felt good. **Ann McGoldrick** threw yet another party for us—but I tried to enjoy salad and water!

That evening, so I saw on TV, **Princess Di** attended a fund-raising dinner in Chicago for cancer research. She was a wow! Guests had paid \$50,000 each (£35,000) to be there!

The next day **Bishop Mellick Belshaw**, former Bp. of NJ, who lives in our parish (he's a former choirparent, too!) preached a supa sermon in Trinity. He quoted a Jesuit who talked of death: '*Death will be the last Amen of my life, and the first Hallelujah of Eternity!*'

The next day **Christopher Reeve** ('Superman') who had suffered a major accident when horse riding and was now a paraplegic, said on TV, '*Either you vegetate and look out of the window, or activate and effect change!*' He was certainly doing the latter: his incredible courage is a by-word in this country.

The next day, Tues. 11th, **Dr. John Hagan** called me. He said that my blood test showed that I had a suspected tumor on my prostate. The world stood still for a brief second, then I said, 'Well, well!' feeling that I may have received a death sentence. Suddenly one's priorities shifted—even the upcoming King's concert was not quite as central to my life as it had been.

The next day I told our associate Rector, **Kit Sherrill**, of my problem. His comfort was immediate because he had been through this himself and come out the other side successfully. He told me what I might expect. Although comforted I was not thrilled! During the following days I asked a number of friends around the world to pray for me. They did, and it made a difference. Thank you!

The next day I wrote letters to 500 members of the Association of Anglican Musicians (a quasi American Cathedral Organists' Association) inviting them to arrange a concert or service in aid of the St. Paul's Appeal. **John Scott** had given me four pages of musical suggestions, all culled from music written especially for, or performed at, St. Paul's during the last 300 years. I did this, be it said, with the help of **Bill Miller's** secretary, who addressed all the envelopes. However, I wrote *Dear Fred...Gratefully John* by hand on each letter and sat back somewhat exhausted, but mildly triumphant, feeling that I'd earned my Waldorf Astoria lunch!

The next day I took my car to have a slow puncture mended. They said that I needed a new tire and also a new crankshaft, so I read magazines whilst they ran up a hefty bill. 10

The first article I read was about prostate cancer, and that General **Norman Schwarzkopf** ('Stormin Norman' of Gulf War fame, and a Trinity Old Chorister!) had come through it all successfully. I was comforted. I then paid the bill for \$450.00 and was uncomforted.

The following week I had a call to firm up details of a workshop I shall be leading in Buffalo. My hosts want to take me to Niagara Falls afterwards. I didn't argue with them.

JULY

Wed. 3rd. Four phone calls: From Dallas inviting me to lead a workshop next year. From Delaware, inviting me to lead a workshop next year. From Florida, about my upcoming massed choirs' festival and from Augsburg Fortress (**Carol Carver**) who told me that they will be publishing my setting of *Let us with a glad some mind* in the Fall. Great Day!

The next day I led a one day workshop at WCC for choirmasters. One had come from as far as Australia—albeit mainly to attend the AGO's Centennial Conference in NYC next week. My Princeton Singers had been rehearsing meticulously for this for months!

Three days later (and 14 lbs lighter!) I went to NYC for the AGO's Centennial. I stayed in a hotel, but the Singers would be coming in by coach every day at 7.00 am! The whole conference was superbly organized—the opening service was held in packed St. Patrick's RC Cathedral (opposite the Rockefeller Center) where there wasn't even standing room. I met so many wonderful and distinguished friends during those five days that I can't even begin to name them.

The Singers sang like a dream. We gave the same concert every day at 10.45 am in St. Vincent Ferrer RC Church (beautiful) to an enthusiastic, responsive and very attentive audience who gave us standing ovations every day. Each day several delegates said to me, 'Your Princeton Singers are the finest choir I've ever heard!' or 'That was the best concert of the whole Conference!' One such, whom I'm happy to name, was **Dr. Ronald Arnatt**, past President of the AGO. Several delegates came to hear us twice. We were thrilled beyond measure.

What a crying shame it was that the AGO chose outside critics for the conference concerts who belittled almost every solo artist, contrary to the enthusiastic receptions they had received. Ours didn't like Howells for a start, or mixed-age choirs as a matter of principle, and thus the AGO seemed to have 'shot itself in the foot' as one unhappy AGO member wrote to tell me afterwards. We don't mind criticism, but let it be informed!

On the other hand, a number of delegates came up to me every day and said, 'I've read your books!' One even added, 'I began at my new church with no kids but now, after 3 years, I've got 150, thanks to putting into practice what you wrote!' (*Please excuse the quotable quotes which pepper this letter, for I am thrilled when folk say appreciative things. But one's gifts are from above, not a possession which we have created. All that we have do is to try to use them fully. I am painfully aware that I don't use those lent to me nearly as much as I should.*)

The following Monday I led a 5-day workshop

for choirmasters at WCC. They had come not only from nearby States but also from Minnesota, Arizona, California and even the Virgin Islands, Germany and Japan! I asked them how many children they had in their church choirs. One choirmaster said, '250!' I asked him how he did it. He told me! (His answer will appear in my next book!)

Two days later I flew to Chicago to lead a one day workshop for Lutheran choirmasters. That was a fabulous experience, for it was held in a lovely college campus on the shore of Lake Michigan and over 400 choirmasters attended my talks! When I arrived I asked one of the organizers what were the major problems that Lutheran choirmasters experience. She told me, and as a result I changed what I'd intended to say—addressing what the choirmasters needed to hear. They responded wonderfully, and I had, thereby, gained valuable material for Book 3!

When I returned home I received a delightful CD created by the South African Drakensberg Boys' Choir, conducted by **Bunny Ashley Botha**, with whom I had worked on three previous visits to that most lovely country. **Jim Litton** (director of the American Boychoir here in Princeton) has generously said that the 'Drakies' are the finest boychoir in the world! Their new CD, called **AMAZING GRACE** has as its first item my arrangement of *Amazing Grace*! They sing it, needless to say exquisitely. Thank you, Bunny!

Two days later I finished my arrangement of *Songs of Praise the Angels Sang* for the Orlando Festival. The next day **Tony Byrne** in Cambridge faxed me at home (*God bless fax machines!*) to say that he had obtained permission for the Princeton Singers to be photographed both outside and inside King's Chapel—but not, alas, to have the concert recorded. The first was a miracle, the second was fully understood.

The next day I received a call from **Chris Putnam** (see Feb) in San Francisco, inviting me to direct the RSCM's Boys' course in Grace Cathedral next summer. Yes!

The next day **Carol Carver** at Augsburg Fortress, called me to say that my 2nd book is being translated into Korean! I said I'd love to see a copy!

AUGUST

Three days later I received a call from **Brian Taylor** at Memphis Cathedral, Tennessee, inviting me to lead a workshop for them next year—on the strength of reading, guess what!

Three days later I had a call from **Dr. Anthony Vasselli**, the surgeon whom I had been seeing for several months: 'You do have cancer on your prostate, but it's OK to go to England with your choir.' Hallelujah!

Two days later I flew to England to prepare for the Princeton Singers Tour!

I really dunno how to describe adequately what we experienced during those two fabulous weeks. We gave a concert to a packed nave in **Westminster Abbey**; we gave a concert in St. **Martin-in-the-Fields** to a packed church; we also sang services in the Abbey and St. **Paul's** where we were welcomed back as old friends.

We sang for **Ralph Allwood's** choir in St. Alban's Abbey, and they sang for us (*Vox Diccit*) with host **Barry Rose** lapping it all up. When we sang in St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, 11



Ralph Allwood, Barry Rose & JB at St. Alban's

we were given the first standing ovation that there'd ever been at that church, according to our hosts, **Patrick & Pamela Rawlinson**. (Patrick had been an organ pupil of mine way back in the early 1960s.)

We lived for three glorious days in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (founded 1352) where **Tony Byrne** had arranged a superlative luncheon Reception for us and for some 300 guests including my lovely cousins. We then sang our concert in King's Chapel to a packed audience which included **Stephen Cleobury** and **George Guest**—extra chairs had to be brought in to accommodate those who wanted to hear us! Afterwards the Master, **Sir Tony Wrigley**, entertained us and 200 guests to dinner in the College. Our cup ran over.

My own cup continually ran over throughout the tour because very dear friends from long ago kept appearing to greet me, and my most favorite cousins were able to hear us at the Abbey, St. Paul's and King's.

When we were at the Abbey I complained to **Martin Neary**, in the Song School as the Singers were robing, that I couldn't use his music desk in the Abbey choir stalls as it was too low.

'How can you see the music?' I asked. 'I never have to look at the music!' he replied, creating a burst of laughter from the Singers! (Love 15!)

He added, 'You mustn't get too good, or I shall have problems here!' (15 all!)



After we had sung at Ely Cathedral, **Sir David Lumsden** popped into the vestry and said, 'You came here with an enviable reputation; but you leave here with your reputation enhanced!'

Our organists, **Tim Harrell** (organist of Trinity Cathedral, Trenton) and **Scott Dettra** (my assistant organist at Trinity) played brilliantly throughout. We were signally blest by their sparkling technique and musical sensitivity. A couple of weeks later, (for the record in view of last year's Newsletter), **Scott Dettra** told me that he felt he couldn't accept Stephen Cleobury's generous offer to be organ scholar at King's next year. I was sorry.

Stephen told me shortly afterwards that he was able to appoint a young man from Australia, **Ben Bayl**, to replace him. I was delighted, for I

had worked with Ben 18 months earlier, near Sydney, when we'd collaborated in making part of a CD. He will do very well at King's!

Our tour ended, of course, at Blackburn which was celebrating the 1,400th anniversary of the founding of the first church on that site. Provost **David Frayne** and Director of Music (and former JB student!) **Gordon Stewart** made us wonderfully welcome. The concert was sold out and a host of dear friends came up to me to say 'Hi' during the interval, which lasted almost as long as the concert, thanks to the numbers there and the quality of the wine that was served!

The next day we sang the Eucharist in the Cathedral after which I met the new sub-organist, **Ben Saunders**, who had arrived from Scotland only that weekend.



The hands of Ben, Gordon Stewart & JB!

After Choral Evensong in Mellor Parish Church Nr. Blackburn, where **Frank & Margaret Ashton** had arranged terrific hospitality for us in the homes of his choir folk and other mutual friends, that glorious day ended with a smashing dinner for over 100 friends including all our hosts and **Bishop Alan & Jenny Chesters**. We were speechless as well as songless after such an unparalleled Experience. Hallelujah!

SEPTEMBER

And so the new season began for us all. I was operated on 6 weeks later, upheld by loving prayers and tremendous support from all the folk at Trinity led by our Rector, **Leslie Smith**; **Robbie Ellsworth** took scrupulous care of me wholly wonderfully; **Dr. Vasselli**, my surgeon cut me up for 3 hours and sewed me together again, and it was successful—Praise the Lord!

May 1997 be a year of blessing for you and all whom you touch, and also a year of achievement by using your gifts to the full, so that God's Kingdom may come that little bit nearer.

John Bertalot
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