

2022

GOOD NEWS

It is with the greatest joy that we share the good news that our former Richard Tanner Organ Scholar, **JUSTIN MILLER**, who has, for the past half dozen years, been Director of Music of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton (where **Sir Stephen Cleobury** had been Director of Music, and at least half a dozen other Cathedral DoMs) has just been appointed Director of Music of **CROYDON MINSTER** and Director of Choral Music of nearby **WHITGIFT SCHOOL**.

The School sent out the following newsflash:

"Justin will build on the legacy of exemplary **Anglican choral music at the Minster** and work towards further outreach and integration of music in the wider community. At Whitgift Justin will teach and lead in developing singing in the school as well as overseeing Whitgift's many excellent choirs and choral ensembles.



"Justin has a proven musical track record, of organ playing and choral directing, in churches and cathedrals in the United States and in England. His current role, combining the role of Director of Music at St Matthew's Church, Northampton and Specialist Music Coach in the David Ross Education Trust, demonstrates his commitment to the Anglican choral tradition and the musical education of young people. Justin will start work in Croydon in the second half of the Lent term (mid-February) 2022."

Croydon Minster is an enormous church with a vast music programme, and Whitgift School is one of this country's leading Public Schools.

We are **ENORMOUSLY** proud of Justin and of his many high achievements, and send our very best wishes for his success and



happiness in his exciting and challenging dual roles.



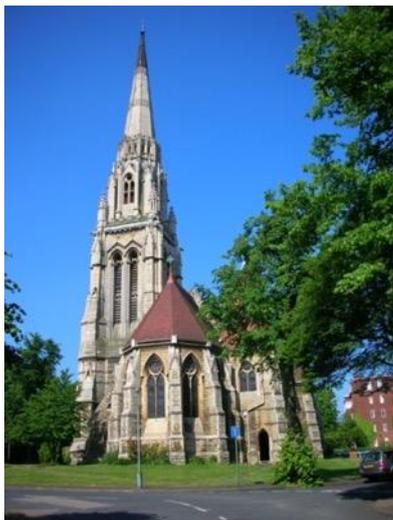
From our former organ scholar **HARVEY STANSFIELD**, now a third year student at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, AND newly appointed Director of Music of St. Augustine's Church, Edgbaston.



Dear JB,

My new vicar at St. Augustine's recently sent me a lovely card to thank me and say how delighted he was by my first Sunday as DoM at St Augustine's and the way I led the first choir practice.

He went on to say 'you clearly had everyone's attention and respect from the start. Above all, you communicate very well and really convey your enthusiasm and love of music. **The Advent Carol Service was one of the best, we have had in twenty one years**, and quite a number of people have said similarly. We are really pleased to welcome you and I hope the music at St Augustine's gives you as much enjoyment as it has me.'

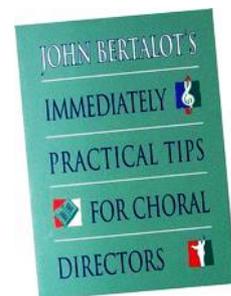


My installation was a very special moment which I'll remember for a long time to come. Lovely to be accepted by the Church family: many of the congregation have come up to me after services to say it's great to have someone leading the ship!

Very blessed to have a **lovely fellowship** with the choir, too. Looking towards a recruitment drive in the new year but it's been great to welcome extra singers over recent weeks who have enjoyed the experience so much that they would like to come back. I also currently have a young girl chorister who sings on Sunday mornings so looking at doing some recruitment there to create a chorister programme.

Also putting plans in place to begin RSCM awards training. If you have any advice or resources on starting this I would greatly appreciate it. **[Yes – see this book available online! JB]**

Just arrived at Church for this morning's Mass where we'll be doing Sir William Harris' Communion service in F. Lovely setting and so moving to be doing it in the church where he was Master of the Music.



I have been listening to the RSCM's talk launching **Roy Massey's book 'An Organist remembers'** where he mentions a few stories including his time on the Rossall Choristers' Courses. It was lovely to hear him mention your good self when he was talking about his time renovating the Hereford organ. 'My friend John Bertalot in Blackburn' and talks about when Blackburn Cathedral was being enlarged and in need of a new organ & tells the story of an envelope appearing with a cheque for the Blackburn organ! *If JB can do that so can I!* wrote Dr. Massey.

I was wondering whether you could put me in touch with Roy Massey as I would like to tell him of my appointment at St Augustine's and hear what his time was like at that Church. (Yes – done that.) **I must get his book of memoirs!** [For Roy's book, contact truffer@rscm.com JB]

Very best wishes,

Harvey

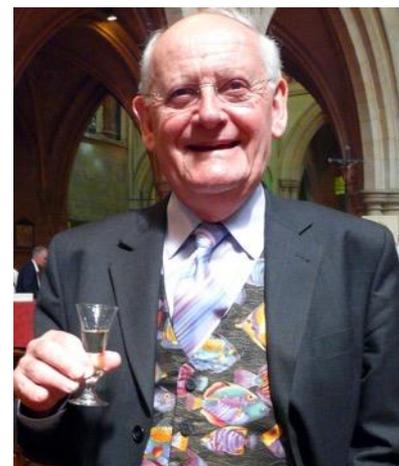
From Dr. Roy Massey (former DoM Hereford Cathedral where our John Robinson was a chorister and Roy's organ student)

Hi John,

Thank you for the latest M&M which I've found very interesting indeed. It is also good to see the cathedral coming to life again after the bizarre times through which we have been living and I'm sure, from what you are showing me, that Master Robinson *seems to be the right man at the right time in the right place. Things do seem to be humming again and I should love to have heard his *Messiah*.

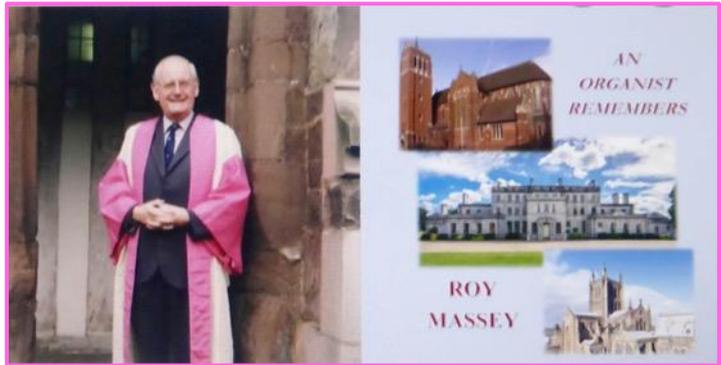
**I must point out that only I am allowed to address your esteemed young choirmaster as 'Master Robinson'! Due respect must be shown if I am quoted.*

You do me great honour in buying two copies of The Book and I hope you enjoy it as your name pops-up several times in the narrative and I hope John R. recognises - from a slightly different angle - the life of which he was a young part. I wrote the memoirs during the two years of lock down as it was good for my mental health -



to use a rather over-worked expression these days - to be able to retreat from time to time into my own little world of writing as an escape from the frightening plague in the world outside My old friend Paul Hale persuaded me to put pen to paper and it was of inestimable benefit to have him as my Editor, as his experience over many years editing *Organists' Review* gave him all the skills and expertise of knowing how to use photographs, programmes etc to illustrate the text in a colourful manner as the narrative proceeds.

I was also very grateful indeed that the RSCM agreed to print and publish for me as their printer made a lovely job of producing a product which is handsome to look at and comfortable to handle. The first print-run of 300 copies sold out in three weeks and has had to be reprinted and I'm told it is also selling very well. I've had some delightful feed-back on-line and by letters and phone calls, the latest being an E mail from an unknown clergyman telling me that he much enjoys the book and he reads a chapter every night before falling asleep. I always thought my immortal prose might be of some service to insomniacs who would almost certainly be fast asleep by the end of chapter two - if they managed to get that far!



I was also delighted to have the **St Augustine's Advent carol service**. Seeing the inside of that place brought back many memories. In The Book you will read of what that church was like in the 1960s when it was probably the richest church in the Diocese, but over the years the parish and its surroundings have seen better days and money is now in short supply. I wish Harvey all the very best for his new job and thought his Advent service jolly good for a first effort.

I trust you are keeping well. **Gordon Stewart** [former Blackburn DoM] and **Ian Harrison** [former Blackburn choir Prefect] came and took me out to Sunday lunch a few weeks back and it was lovely to see them again and we chatted happily about Ian's wonderful Bournemouth music festivals when you and I and many more friends had such fun. We also took your name in vain more than once! Gordon has phoned regularly during lock down which I've much appreciated. As ever,

Roy

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From **Kate Fulwell**, Mother of outstanding former Blackburn Head Choristers. 3 emails:

1. We're looking forward to getting Ollie and Leo back from **Hereford Cathedral** on Boxing Day where Leo's a choral scholar (hopefully Covid-free!) so that our family celebrations can begin. See you in 2022!
2. Ollie went down from York University to Hereford on Monday to stay with Leo and catch up with his friends there (and to do some casual work for Ludlow Gin, where he worked part time while he was living there!). He's been invited to the DoM's house along with Leo for Christmas dinner after tomorrow's services, and then he'll drive them both home on Boxing Day for turkey dinner number 2!
3. Well, **Leo's fellow Dec Tenor tested positive this morning**, so **Ollie got pulled in to sing**, which he was thrilled about! Lovely for them to be able to sing together down there, especially on a special day - and **Leo inherited all the tenor solos at the last minute!**



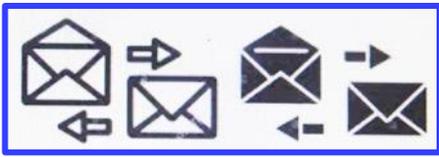
Leo & Ollie at Hereford Xmas 2021...

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February WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITALS: 12.15pm

- 2nd **Michael Wynne** – Organist to the University of Lancaster.
- 9th **Matt Edwards** – Organist and Music Co-Ordinator at St. Michael's Parish Church in Linlithgow.
- 16th **Mark Brafield** – former organ scholar of Trinity College, Oxford and Trustee of the Royal College of Organists.



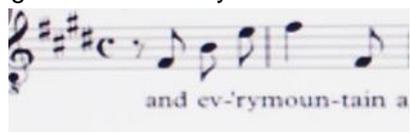


Exchange of emails between Dr Philip Moore, former Director of Music of York Minster, and JB



1. Dear John

Very many thanks for your January M&M. Such a good read. I like your comments about the Messiah especially. I noticed one small error in your quote: "*and every mountain*" the third note is a D# and not an E. As ever
Philip



1a. From JB to Philip Moore:

Yes, that misprint in *Messiah*: I got it from 'the web' which I had assumed to be note perfect - but did glance at that suspicious 'E' (thinking, in passing, that Handel had given a 'difficult' note to pitch) ...but pursued it no further! **No-one else has spotted it so far!**

2. From Philip Moore to JB

Oh the web! I once found an open score copy of Wood in F. "Wonderful!" I thought, only to find it littered with wrong notes. It was the sight of a succession of fourths that made me think it was Handel edited by Walton. Best Philip

Snippets of News



News from our former Director of Music, **SAM HUDSON**: now DoM of Worcester Cathedral:

"All well here, on the whole... Some stonework from the cathedral's tower fell through the North Quire aisle roof in storm **Arwen** a few weeks ago - missing the organ pipework by a matter of inches!

The Quire organ is out of action again, but only for cleaning!



From former long-time Blackburn Cathedral bass, **DAVID ROTHWELL**, who has moved to Nottingham.

"I'm enjoying the singing at St. Mary's, Nottingham [where the fine choir is made up mostly of university students] ... We did a carol concert at the Nottingham Albert Hall last Sunday in a similar sort of format to that which you used to do with the JB Singers ... in just one short rehearsal! It went well."

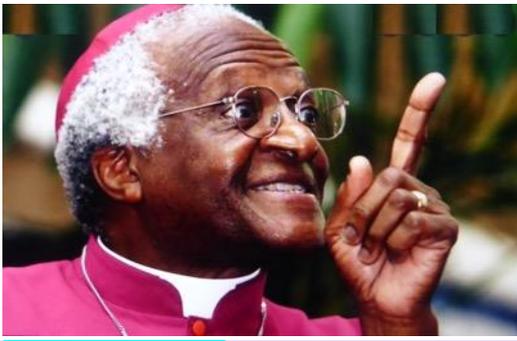
From **BISHOP NICHOLAS** upon receiving his copy of M&M:

"As always, how very thoughtful of you. I still don't know how you begin to find the time to prepare M & M – and make it so interesting. Many blessings for 2022.

As ever,
Nicholas"

**Yes, it's a pretty fulltime job which I enjoy – at the cost of keeping my house tidy!
Thanks indeed for keeping in touch. JB**





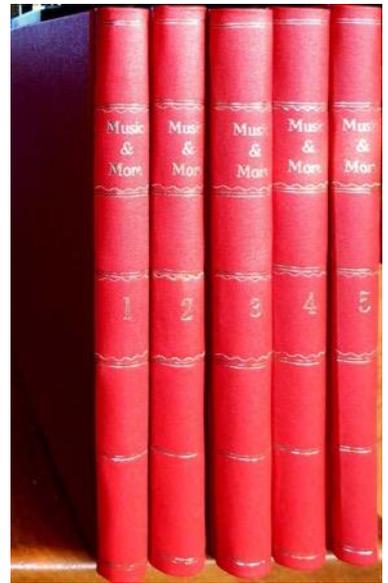
The news of the death of Archbishop **DESMOND TUTU** prompted your editor's memory, because one of our most active former Residiary Canons, **CHRIS CHIVERS**, knew him well and visited him more than several times.

Chris wrote, for the February 2008 **Music and More** about **one moving incident**. (Bound copies of M&M are available in the

Cathedral Library):

Here's Canon Chivers' article about the Archbishop's work during the painful months of Reconciliation in South Africa:

A 70-year-old woman had been called to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (chaired by Archbishop Tutu) concerning the activities of a policeman in her township.

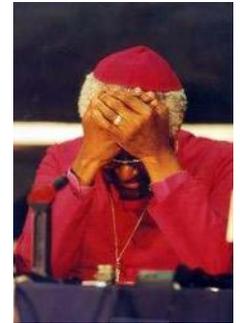


It transpires that he had come one night with some others and, in front of the woman, had shot her son at point-blank range.

Two years later the same officer had returned to arrest her husband, whom she supposed subsequently to have been executed.

Some time later the policeman came yet again. This time he took her to a place where he showed her her husband, still alive. But as her spirits lifted, the policeman doused the husband with gasoline, set him on fire and killed him.

As the woman concludes her testimony, Archbishop Desmond, trying desperately to keep his own emotions under control, addresses her: "What would you like the outcome to be of this hearing?"



After a long pause, the woman answers, "I would like three things. First, I want to be taken to the place where my husband was burned so I can gather up the dust and give his remains a decent burial.

"Second, my son and my husband were my only family. Therefore, I want this police officer to become my son, to come twice a month to my home and spend a day with me so I can pour out on him whatever love I still have remaining inside me.

"Finally, I want this officer to know that I offer him forgiveness because Jesus Christ died to forgive me.

"Please would someone lead me across the hall so that I can embrace him and let him know that he is truly forgiven."

As people lead the woman across the room, the police officer, completely overwhelmed, faints.

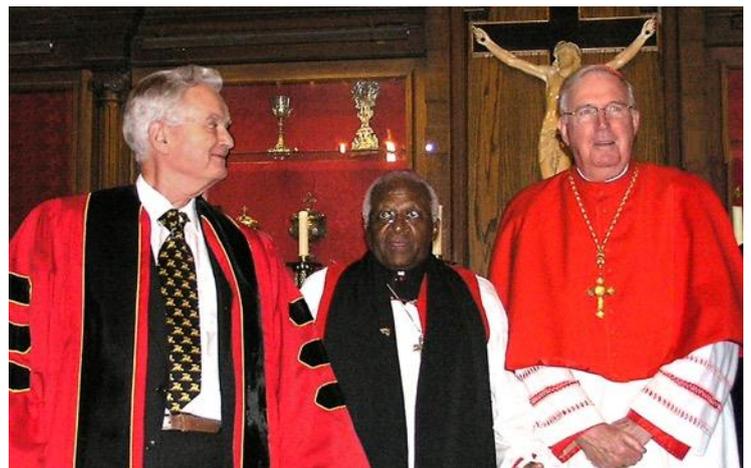
Officials help him, whilst the woman's friends and neighbours, most of them victims of similar sorts of violence, begin to sing softly, **'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me...'**

Some years later it was, for JB, a most blessed honour to be included in the same list as the Archbishop to receive an honorary Fellowship of the Guild of Church Musicians (FGCM) at the hands of the **Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster** in Westminster Cathedral.

JB was seated next to **Desmond Tutu** for the Cathedral ceremony – but when it came to the actual individual presentations, the Cardinal shook hands warmly with my other colleagues and me – but he gathered Desmond Tutu in his arms for *his* presentation.

I shall never forget it.

Here's a photo of us after the ceremony, taken in the Sacristy of Westminster Cathedral:



C.V. from our delightfully talented Lay Clerk:

CAMILLA SEALE

Dear John,

Happy New Year! I apologise that this comes to you so late, but hopefully still usable for the magazine. Photo attached also.

My older sister had singing lessons before I started; my mum asked me aged nine if I wanted to start learning with the same teacher, and nine-year-old Camilla was apprehensive, because the teacher in question had a kind of spikiness to her! I remember singing 'Morning Has Broken' in my first lesson (because I knew the tune) and quickly realising that this teacher was in fact rather entertaining, and I appreciated her no nonsense attitude.

Growing up, I sang in choirs inside and outside of school. I think, though, some of my favourite musical experiences have been when I sit down and get to listen to other people. My school choir toured a Vivaldi programme around Tuscany one summer, and apart from the ice cream, I most enjoyed listening to an incredible violinist in the year below perform the 'Winter' movement of the Four Seasons.

Right now, I'm in my last year of postgraduate study at the Royal Northern College of Music (like a few of the Lay Clerks at Blackburn) and have been doing quite a bit of opera in recent days. I love pretty much all baroque music, though, and really enjoyed the chance to sing as a soloist in the **Messiah** with Blackburn Chamber Choir in December. Here's to more Bach in the New Year, and hopefully not too much rain!

Best wishes,

Camilla



BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL'S EPIPHANY SERVICE on 6 Jan. 2022 was watched on YOUTUBE by many.

TO SEE THE ONLINE SERVICE CLICK the photograph immediately below:



It was sung by our **CATHEDRA SINGERS**, conducted by **JOHN ROBINSON**

L-R: **Basses: Alan Crameri** (Chairman of the Blackburn Chamber Choir) & **Damian O'Keefe** (long-time Chester Cathedral Lay Clerk), **Altos: Andrew Orr & Rebecca Weaver**, (**John Robinson** centre)

Sopranos: Angela Hicks & Camilla Seale, **Tenors: Sebastian Roberts** (former Head Chorister & now Student at St. Andrews University) and **Ed McCullough** (choirman and choir parent)



It was led most beautifully by **Dean Peter**, with **Bishop Philip**, and the splendid sermon was by **Canon Rowena Pailing**.



Many very long-time members of our congregation will remember chairman **BERNARD WEST** who was a founder-member of the Blackburn Bach Choir (now Blackburn Chamber Choir) His son, **JOHN WEST**, was also a Cathedral Chorister, who sent the following to your editor:



1957 John L. West
1958 Peter G. Crowther

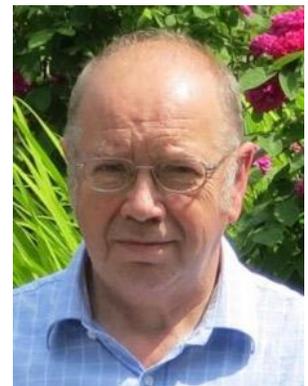
Good afternoon John.

Wishing you a very Happy New Year and good health to continue with more editions of your interesting Cathedral Music news. Of course, much of the content features singers and musicians well after my era as a chorister, but it is reassuring to see how the musical life of the place continues.

Before I left Blackburn and the cathedral choir I tried my hand at photographing the town which was changing rapidly in 1961. Many of my pictures were of scenes that were disappearing, and only very few of the cathedral on which work had stopped following the opening up of the crossing and transepts, and then the new shortened sanctuary. Of course even that has since changed and I thought that you might be interested in these internal views which I came across recently when doing some tidying up.



The old organ is prominent on its thinly disguised steel supports, but the light decorative ironwork which replaced the carved wood on the face of the old case is just about visible, as is the ironwork screen at the end of the nave. You probably have similar photos to hand. The choir had moved from being quite an intimate part of the assembly in the old arrangement at the top of the original Nave to being rather remote on the other side of the crossing with the organ in between. I'm not sure what the impact of this was on the congregation but TLD could lean heavily on the lower registers, and give good rolling illustrative sound to such passages in the psalms as when *"they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man"*. I doubt that even his demanding requirement for enunciation would be heard on those occasions.



best regards,

John West

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In my article in last month's M&M about the number of folk with the name of **ROBINSON** who have served in Blackburn Cathedral, I inadvertently omitted **TOM ROBINSON** who was, for many years, senior chairman here under the direction of T. L. Duerden. *My apologies!* **Here's Tom**



shaking hands with TLD



this omission:

Dear John
Happy Christmas.
You forgot about old Tom!
David Robinson (Cheshire)

JB's Memories of exactly 70 years ago

On 6th February, 1952, I was on the top deck of a London bus coming from the Royal College of Music, (near the Royal Albert Hall) where I was a student, and going to Victoria Station, to catch my train to Sussex where I lived during those student years. We passed a newspaper placard which proclaimed: **THE KING IS DEAD**. The conductor remarked to the man selling newspapers, 'Is he dead, then?' What an extraordinary question to remember!



Nine days later I and a fellow student made the reverse journey from Sussex to London, to see the late King's funeral procession as it made its way from the Palace of Westminster, where he had Laid in State, to Paddington station, for his burial in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.

I shall never forget it. There were vast crowds at Hyde Park Corner so we had to stand some way back. But the atmosphere was amazing – the silent crowd could hear afar off one of the military bands which got nearer and nearer as it played funeral music, until the gun carriage with the coffin came slowly into view, covered with the Royal Standard and surmounted by the Crown, and drawn by a hundred Royal Naval seamen, with the four Royal Dukes including the Duke of Edinburgh, and the boyish Duke of Kent (who in 2021 retired through old age from being President of Wimbledon) marching alongside, and followed by a carriage with the new young Queen, and her Mother.



I remember that a man standing next to me had kept his hat on. I asked him to take it off – but he didn't hear me, for he, like all of us, was mesmerised by what we were all experiencing. That was a moment of History.

**AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE COMMEMORATING THIS MONTH –
for our Queen has held her job magnificently, faithfully and virtually faultlessly,
for 70 long years
in a rapidly changing world, since that memorable week all those years ago.**

Because there will be special services in many cathedrals, and elsewhere, on 6th February to commemorate **The Queen's Platinum Anniversary**, and because there will be special prayers authorised for that day, JOHN ROBINSON generously invited JB to set them to music – which are inserted into the usual **Preces and Responses** on that day. Here they are: →

And what's more, John Robinson generously sent them to all other Cathedral Directors of Music in the UK

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DR FRANCIS JACKSON
 On January 11th the following email arrived from the President of the Cathedral Organists' Association, **Robert Sharpe**, at York Minster:

With sadness I write to inform you of the peaceful death of **Dr Francis Jackson** surrounded by his children in York yesterday afternoon 10th January, at the age of 104. Our love and prayers are with Alice, Ed and Will at this time who all give thanks for a long and wonderful life.

JB replied: **I grieve with you and countless others at the loss of dear Francis. He was as a father-in-music to me.**

And he was such a faithful friend whom I have known and loved since my Northampton years when he gave a recital at St. Matthew's in the early 1960s.

And, of course, he was the Consultant for our brand new organ in Blackburn Cathedral in 1969 for which he composed his first Sonata.

We shall not look upon his like again.

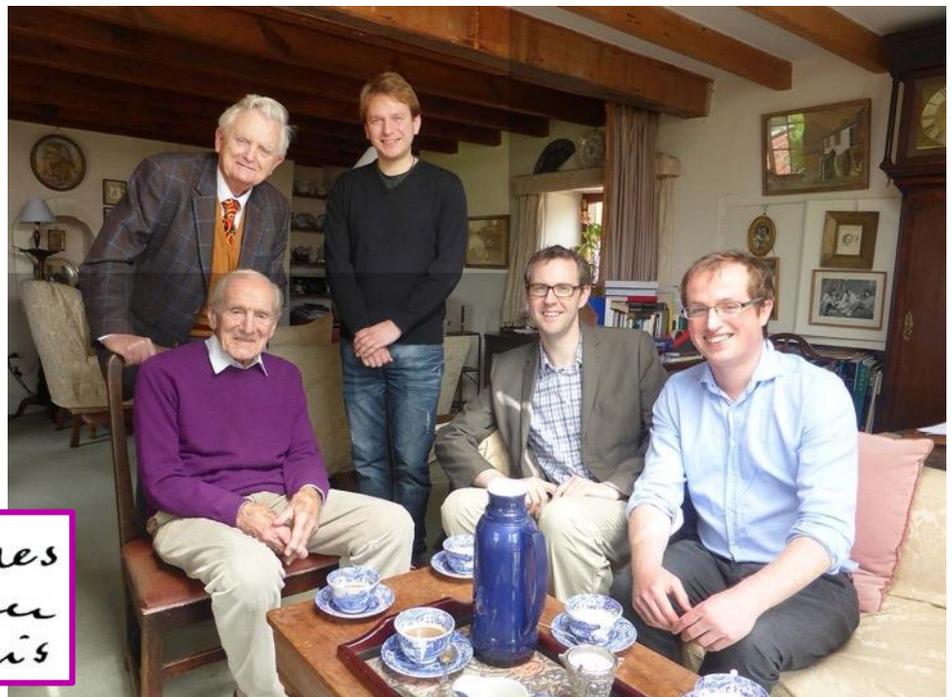
Faithful readers of M&M will remember that four of us, in 2016 during Sam Hudson's time with us, paid a visit to Dr. Jackson in his most lovely historic home near York – where he hosted us for a delightful lunch in the nearby Pub, and showed us his music room, which had a splendid organ. He rejoiced in our company as much as we rejoiced in his.

JB & organ scholar **Dr Ed Jones** (now DoM Wakefield Cathedral)

Dr Jackson with **Sam Hudson** & our Asst. DoM **Shaun Turnbull**

Francis Jackson was a gifted & immaculate letter-writer: JB has one of his graceful letters framed and on display in his sitting room:

*Lots of best wishes
 Always as ever
 Francis*



INSERT AFTER: 'And grant us thy salvation'

f Who put-teth her trust in Thee.
f Who put-teth her trust in Thee.
f Who put-teth her trust in Thee.
 O Lord, save the Queen. *f* Who put-teth her trust in Thee.

f And ev - er - more migh - ti - ly de - fend her.
f And ev - er - more migh - ti - ly de - fend her.
f And ev - er - more migh - ti - ly de - fend her.
 Send her help from thy Ho - ly place *f* And ev - er - more migh - ti - ly de - fend her.

f From the face of her e - ne - mies
f From the face of her e - ne - mies.
f From the face of her e - ne - mies.
 Be unto her, O Lord, a strong - lower. *f* From the face of her e - ne - mies.

CONTINUE with 'ENDUE THY MINISTERS WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS'
 Accession Responses: John Bertalot, Blackburn, Epiphany 2022



From John Robinson & JB...

Our Blackburn Cathedral Organ is not only very special to us but is, in many ways, unique in the UK Cathedral Organ World – for two reasons:

1: It is 'voiced' (made to sound) in the French manner which gives to the reeds especially, an exciting musical 'splash' and 'edge' which enables French and other similar organ music to give an incisive musical thrill.

And 2: the acoustics of Blackburn Cathedral are exceptional for such a relatively modest-sized building. One visiting organist from St. Paul's Cathedral told JB, many years ago, that playing at Blackburn was very like playing at St. Paul's!

So although we, at Blackburn, can hear our organ so frequently, yet international organ recitalists yearn for an invitation to play it. **Dr Roy Massey** is a shining example: he came to visit Blackburn Cathedral shortly after the new organ was installed and he improvised on it for a full half hour – he then turned with his face aglow to JB and said, **'This is the most exciting organ I've ever played!'**



So this is what we are making available to the international organ world right now, thanks to the marvels of modern digital technology: It will shortly be possible for organists to experience, on their digital organs at home, the exact sounds of our Blackburn Cathedral organ – and truly feel as though they were really in our reverberant cathedral. This is a current digital miracle. Other organs of international fame are also available to the 'at home' organists. **This is a NEW WORLD FOR ORGAN MUSIC**, and we, at Blackburn, will be an active, creative part of it.

"And," added JR, "this will not only boost the company's finances, but it will also bring extra finance to the music of Blackburn Cathedral and to the maintenance of our world-class organ."

JR also wrote: "We spent all night on Dec 28, 29, 30 and Jan 1st recording every pipe three times. Our Walker organ builders were here fine-tuning everything until the moment sampling started. I passed the time reading distant-past copies of M&M as pictured. We await the results with great excitement, as does the rest of the Hauptwerk world!"



"John Hosking is an astonishing musician- Director of Music at Holy Trinity Southport, but was at Westminster Abbey as third Organist with Martin Baker for three years. He's truly brilliant, and is turning his hand to recording technology as well as much composing, organ playing and arranging, etc."

From Wikipedia: 'Hauptwerk™ is a complete virtual instrument with advanced pipe organ modelling features capable of creating the most authentic and detailed simulation of real pipe organs. By combining state-of-the-art software along with world-class

sampled instruments, Hauptwerk™ has raised the bar for the digital organ world. The computer hardware used is standard 'off the shelf' components which can be readily replaced or upgraded if required so there are no worries about maintenance or obsolescence.'



Here are some of the other world-class organs now available through Hauptwerk. The 1735 Silbermann in Freiberg, the Schnitger organ in Zwolle, the truly historic organ in Haarlem, played by Mozart, the Cavallé-Coll in Madelaine, Paris – and now BLACKBURN!!

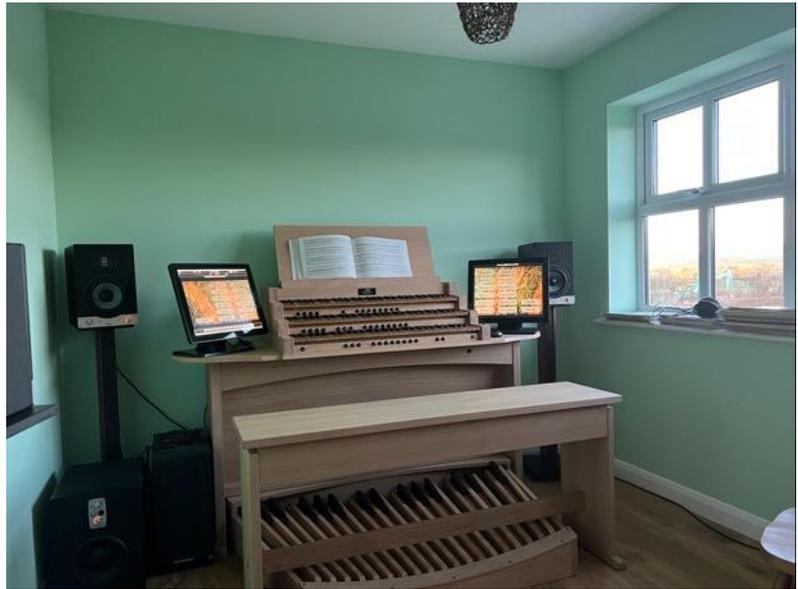
Look at John Hosking's **impressive website** – including his upcoming organ recitals in exalted places: <http://johnhosking.weebly.com/>



NIGEL SPOONER (writes about his own 'Hauptwerk' experiences.)

Nigel, who often visits our cathedral and has played our organ many times, is not only a brilliant organist (he was a finalist at the St. Alban's International Organ Festival) but he also teaches [chemistry](#) at Bolton School, where he is **Foundation Organist**, and has **12 organ pupils there!**

'Hauptwerk'



"After playing the organ for over 50 years, I finally have an instrument at home and what a joy it is! Gone are the days of fixing times to practise in (often cold) churches and being limited to set times of the week, organ availability, etc. Now practising and playing for pleasure is just the same as on a piano. It's particularly good to be able to run through music for the next day in a spare 15 minutes.

"But what is 'Hauptwerk', I hear you ask? First, the name is that of the main manual (keyboard) on German organs: what we call the Great. **There have been enormous advances in digital organs in the past couple of decades**, going from organs which are purely electronic (synthesising the sounds of the various stops) to those which use recorded sounds of actual stops on real organs. **Where Hauptwerk is different is that the recording or sampling of organs is reproduced in its entirety, actually recreating the sound of that instrument in the building where it resides** but playing it on one's own 'electronic' organ at home, **and, what's more, it's possible to have many organs to choose from.** The number of organs being sampled is increasing all the time and **Blackburn Cathedral is soon to be a significant addition!** Not many organs have been sampled in this country and Blackburn will be only the 4th cathedral organ.

"Hauptwerk is software which is able to put together all the sampled sounds of a particular organ, together with totally realistic reverb. It is then a matter of buying sampled organs (called sample sets) from the wonderful people who spend masses of time recording every single pipe one by one in an organ. Particularly good samplers are [Sonus Paradisi](#) and [Piotr Grabowski](#)

"The setup requires a console which has MIDI input. This allows it to interface with a computer. In the past, this was a matter of lashing up keyboards and pedalboards to a computer but now there are companies specialising in bespoke consoles. A particular organ is loaded into the computer and then it's possible to play the organ in glorious surround sound.

"I had heard of Hauptwerk a number of years ago and heard great reports but must admit to being rather sceptical. It was only when **Shaun Baldwin** (vicar of Bamber Bridge and Walton-le-Dale who has done wonders in securing and enhancing the Liverpool Cathedral west-end Phoenix organ for St Aidan's) said to me that I must try the Hauptwerk organ of a friend of his that I was immediately totally convinced. **It really is just like being there** and extremely difficult to tear oneself away from the organ bench. It was not long until an order was placed



(through the good offices of [Mr Hauptwerk UK](#), **Nigel Stark**), although it took a full six months for the [Noorlander](#) console to arrive from Holland (delays caused by, you guessed it, COVID and Brexit). Interestingly, Nigel was organist of St Michael's, Bishop's Stortford when I taught there but our paths never crossed!

"Nigel Stark spent a day putting the console together and then adjusting the different organs I had selected for the room that the organ is in. He procured all that was required and it was great that the setup was all in the hands of one person who knows what he is doing! It did not take long at all before sounds emerged. Nigel had set up all he possibly could on the computer before arriving.

“Because the console can play any number of different organs, there is little point in having a draw-stop console and so there are instead touch screens which display the stops for that particular organ. My organ music has, for the first time, been arranged according to which organ is most suitable for it! Playing different instruments has been an absolute revelation and it is amazing how the music immediately comes to life when it is played on the type of organ which the composer knew. This is so much the case with French music and playing the **Nancy Cathedral** organ (below, left) is always a wonderful experience. (Former Blackburn Head Chorister **William Fielding** is so lucky playing on these sorts of instruments all the time!)



“But it’s not only possible to nip across to France, but also to Holland, Germany, Austria and Italy, just by loading a different instrument and the corresponding new displays. Some of the small continental organs are a dream and fabulous for experimenting with articulation – so full of musical potential. It’s possible to be entranced playing on only a single 8-foot principal for ages!”

Nigel offers a wonderful choice of organs which he plays **AT HOME**.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUjwRjBlijxWEi5MWU1Foy0g/videos>

JB suggests, from the organs above which Nigel offers:

1. Try the **Widor Toccata** with the sounds of the Dupont/Cavaillé-Coll organ (1763/1861) in Nancy Cathedral, France
2. Then, for contrast, **Percy Whitlock’s Carol**, with the very different sound of the Father Willis organ in Hereford Cathedral
3. Then for thrills, **Marche Triomphale**, by **Lemmens**: the glorious sounds of the 1973 Marcussen organ in the Laurenskerk, Rotterdam.



Laurenskerk, Rotterdam (Marcussen 1973)

For details of this mighty organ’s glorious specification, click:
<https://marcussen-son.dk/church-organs-1848/laurenskerk-%C2%B7-rotterdam/?lang=en>

Nigel continues: “Playing Bach at Rotterdam (via my house organ), with its cornucopia of mixture ranks is always totally captivating and it’s great to play Howells at Hereford Cathedral. Richard McVeigh is probably the most high-profile Hauptwerk user in the country and greatly proud of his new console! Well worth watching the wonderful recital by **Martin Baker** on it.” Martin has held organ positions at **St. Paul’s, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral**, and he plays most of his programme from memory!

[JB adds: please know that it is not necessary to have such a large console that Richard McVeigh has, in order to enjoy the miracles of Hauptwerk sound. McVeigh ordered a replica of the giant new console of York Minster – which, I believe, now resides in his garage! But I commend you to indulge yourself in the amazing playing of **MARTIN BAKER** by clicking on the link, [Richard McVeigh](#) ... for you will see the versatility of this enormous console on which stop knobs can also be added or subtracted to match the historic organs which it contains from all over Europe.]

Nigel concludes: “Well, having written this, it’s time to immerse myself again in glorious sounds at an organ console somewhere in Europe!”

THANK YOU, NIGEL. We eagerly await our own Blackburn organ to join the ranks of other world-class instruments, through the marvels of Hauptwerk.



TOM BELL, international recitalist, who has given many recitals in our cathedral gave a shatteringly brilliant lunchtime recital here on January 12th which blew us all away.

Terry Givens took some super photos, and also commented:

'In addition to his prodigious technique and mastery of the organ console, perhaps not unexpectedly from somebody who apparently participates in 9-hour long organ-playing marathons!... I found Tom's conversational style of performance absolutely fascinating.



'Quite often one attends recitals where the recitalist barely says a word about the pieces being performed, and all that you have, if you're lucky, are a few programme notes. Which isn't remotely a criticism, after all public speaking isn't everyone's thing, and it should certainly be separated from the gift of public 'performance'.



'However Tom Bell's other great and very obvious blessing is as a communicator and an educator, and his ability to draw the audience inside the world of each composer by entertainingly describing the context of each work on the programme at the time it was written, and in quite some detail too, whilst also giving us some insight into his interpretation relating specifically to the magnificent Blackburn Cathedral organ.

'Even if Tom hadn't played a single note we would still have left the cathedral knowing a lot more about both Johann Sebastian Bach and Dieterich Buxtehude than we knew before we arrived. For example, Tom told us that as a young man Bach apparently walked 200 miles just to hear Buxtehude, presumably a gruelling journey on foot in early 18th century Germany. Well, all Alison and I had to do was drive over to Blackburn from Chorley, 20 minutes on the A59, and so on that basis Tom was clearly exceptionally good value!! We're already looking forward to Tom's next Blackburn recital!'



Canon Michael Wedgeworth (left) introduced our recitalist (for the residential staff we all away on a 'communications' workshop). Your editor, next to Canon Michael, gave the vote of thanks afterwards:

JB said that Tom had utilised the cathedral's exceptional acoustics creatively (allowing echoes to die away), which few recitalists did. And he used almost every stop, including the 16ft Holzregal and the spinning Zimbelstern – ending with the most glorious very full organ!

JB summed up our impressions of that brilliant hour: 'So musical, so authoritative – inspiring and uplifting, giving us renewed courage to face the Covid world outside. We have been privileged today to sit at the feet of a Master.'



WE'RE ONLINE TO THE WORLD!

Members of our congregation and visitors to our Cathedral may not notice several **video cameras** on tall stands, near the clergy stalls at the head of the Nave. They are a positive fruit from the Covid epidemic for they enable some of our Sunday services to be transmitted live to the world via YOUTUBE! Can you spot a 2nd camera?

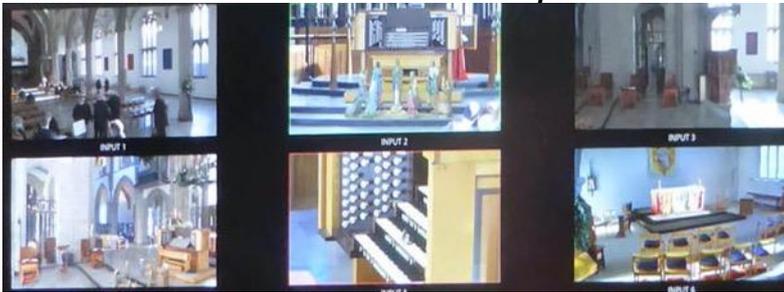
Canon GARY O'NEILL, our Interim Canon Precentor who is currently in charge of the actual transmission of some of our services online, writes about

Blackburn Cathedral's leap into this current technology:

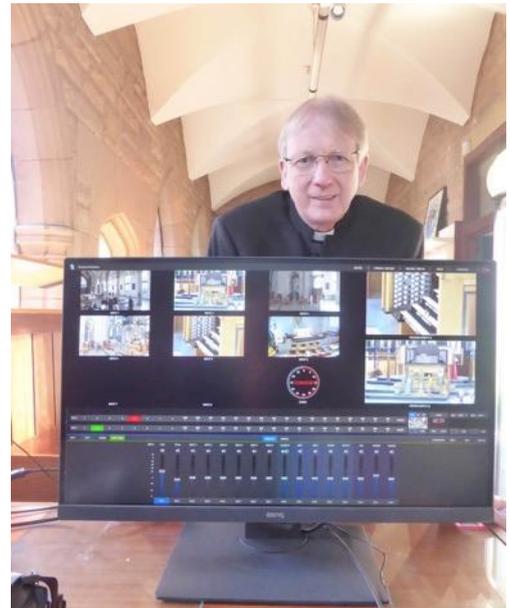
The Cathedral published its first Sunday online worship on **YouTube and Facebook** at the beginning of the pandemic on **Sunday 22 March 2020**. Since then, the Cathedral has premiered pre-recorded worship every Sunday and for the major Feasts and Holy Days. As Interim Precentor I have been responsible for these since July 2020.

Just ten days before Christmas we **installed five cameras in the Cathedral** (on a temporary basis, not impinging on the fabric) with a view to developing this facility as experience reveals the best positioning for cameras and, when more funds become available, providing more microphones and a sound desk which will improve even further the recorded sound quality of congregation, choir and especially the organ.

Close-ups of six monitor screens



We first live streamed worship for the **Nine Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve and also Christmas Day**. This Spring will see a mixed economy of either live streamed or pre-recorded worship each week as we explore the features of our equipment and **train teams of operators**, with a view to being able **to stream on a weekly basis by June 2022**. The front page of the Cathedral website indicates each week if we are streaming or using pre-recorded worship.



At large events such as Ordinations, Christmas, and Easter, it's not unusual for Cathedral precentors to have an invisible role because their primary task is to ensure the smooth running of worship, in other words we are not always required to be seen.

Taking this to heart, I am for a short while going to be spending more time in my broom cupboard as I call it (technically the AV operating space ... i.e. our former South transept Bookshop). Since precentors are concerned with the quality of our worship and how it comes across, it is natural for me to be concerned with how our worship is perceived on camera. Being in the broom cupboard is remarkably peaceful as excellent quality headphones cut out all distractions and at the same time stressful as you move and transition for camera to camera, trying to give the best televisual experience to those worshipping at home and not forgetting to keep an eye on the sound outputs. I have been surprised several times therefore by the sudden appearance at my right hand of our Vice Dean and Canon Missioner, or our Licensed Lay Minister **Christine O'Neill**, presenting me with the sacrament. It is a surprisingly moving moment.

Our live streamed worship remains on **YouTube** as a video which may be watched at any time as we enter this new world of cameras.

I am very willing to discuss our broadcasts with people and delighted to receive suggestions, comments, and reactions.





WHAT A JOY IT WAS

to welcome **GORDON STEWART** back to Blackburn Cathedral where he had been Director of Music* but has since launched into a worldwide organ recitalist.

He gave a scintillating recital on Wednesday 19th January to one of the largest audiences we have had.

*See the Organists' plaque behind the North clergy stalls

One of the features of a Stewart recital is that he draws the audience into his 'orbit' by chatting to them about the music he is to play. And his ever youthful presence seems, automatically, to spread joy. *What a gift!*

Photo by Terry Givens

It was with immense sadness that we learnt of the death of CONNIE HOLLAND.

Jack Holland was a most faithful alto in the cathedral choir during JB's time here, and Connie supported him so happily and strongly.

But in recent years Jack's memory began to desert him and he is now in long-time loving care in a Blackburn nursing home where there are truly wonderful nurses.

It was JB's privilege and joy to accompany CONNIE to that nursing home, only a few months ago, for a celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary. She seemed so well, but kept hidden that that was not so.

Her death came as a great shock to those of us who knew her. **The Revd. Ian Hollin** (former choirman) and JB used to visit Connie both before and after Jack had to move to the nursing home. Connie was always 'in charge' but always so welcoming. On one occasion she even gave to each of us a Victoria sponge cake to take away!



Connie and Jack in their lovely home in 2014



We have also received a long letter from **A strong** couple who were the life and soul of our Cathedral fellowship half a dozen years ago - but who moved away to the country.

Their letter is so important that we've included the whole of it, with photos, in our **March** edition. Can you guess who they are? **There is a clue A bove!**

Did you konw tihs?

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Sunday morning Eucharist from Blackburn Cathedral, 23rd January 2022

Click the [photo](#) below to experience this service:... *make sure that you start at the beginning.*



How good it was, and is, to be able to feel that we are once more worshipping in Blackburn Cathedral – even from the Covid-safety of our own homes.

The hymn singing was strong for this service, conducted by **John Robinson** with **Samantha Poh** at the organ: the treble line (only four boys) was excellent – they showed a real sense of responsibility. (Two boys were off with Covid, but there are 5 Probationers awaiting!) Also, the congregation exceeded 100 – the first time since early 2020.

The Dean (see p.6) led the service, as always, with calm authority; **Canon Pailing** (page 6) again preached a riveting sermon (on the importance of 'walls'); the lessons were well read and the Prayers of the People were led, also with authority, by the **Rev. Robert Moore** whose transatlantic accent added yet more grace.

And, may one add, the Television production, by **Canon Gary O'Neill**, was so smooth – concentrating *at the right time* upon whoever was singing or speaking, processing or playing.



Krystyna Saville and Alma Nicholls in the congregation.

Samantha Poh playing Bach



Robert Moore with Canon Wedgeworth behind.

Joyce Wicks made good eye contact when reading her lesson.

