



Editor: john.beralot@gmail.com 2022

vocal & organ scholarships

www.blackburncathedral.com

Blackburn Cathedral was the scene for two major services on Sunday 29th May:

- 1: A service, led by the Archbishop of York, to celebrate the **900th Anniversary** of three diocesan churches.
- 2: A service to celebrate **Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee**, in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant and many civic leaders.

For the first service we welcomed members from all three 900-year old churches:



Colne, St. Bartholomew,



Clitheroe, St. Mary Magdalene



Burnley, St. Peter

The Archbishop of York presided over the entire service in a delightfully informal manner.



Several members of Burnley, St. Peter wore their 900th anniversary purple T-shirts with golden logo. Well done!

Our choir was, as ever, in good form, singing the communion setting in C by Stanford,



Locus iste ('This is the House of God') by Bruckner, & *O taste and see:* Vaughan Williams, commissioned for the 1953 Coronation.

JB remembers that, when he was a student at the RCM, his harmony professor, Dr Osborne Peasgood, who played the organ for the 1953 Coronation, showed JB this new RVW anthem and despaired in mock horror that RVW had consecutive fifths and octaves at the end. (Strictly forbidden by the rules of harmony!!)

Our choir concluded with Parry's *I was glad*, sung at every Coronation since 1902.

Less than 4 hours later, there was an even more impressive service in our Cathedral, to celebrate **Her Majesty's 70 years as our Monarch**. *She eclipses Queen Victoria's reign which was for 'only' 64 years: 1837-1901.*



There was a most luxurious order of service in full colour for every member of the congregation, with photos of HM. Here we see HM and the Duke being welcomed by the Lord Lieutenant on Black-burn station for the ROYAL MAUNDY SERVICE in 2014.



The opening processions were impressive as the choir sang Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. The first photo shows the **two RC Bishops** of Salford & Lancaster as guests, and the 2nd shows the Standards being processed to the Dean as the congregation sang *Jerusalem*.



The Lord Lieutenant read the first lesson commandingly.

Our bishop preached about The Queen's lifetime-devotion to the Nation and Commonwealth.

It was a magnificent summary of Her Majesty's reign.

The cathedral choir, again, sang equally magnificently, directed by **John Robinson** with organ scholar **Samantha Poh** at the organ.



Other choral music was *Ubi caritas* by Paul Mealar: sung at the wedding of **Prince William & Catherine Middleton**, 2011, and *I love all beauteous things* - Judith Weir, commissioned by St. Paul's Cathedral to mark the **90th birthday** of HM The Queen,

and *God be in my head* - Herman Brearley (First Organist of Blackburn Cathedral, 1916-1939)

Prayers were led by **Canon Rowena Pailing** and the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, **Corporal Abigail Johnson**. Our two RC Bishop guests can plainly be seen, and also the capacity-filled South Transept.



Two verses of the **National Anthem** were sung as the Standards were lowered in salute. And as the Recession formed, **John Robinson** played **The Coronation March, 'Orb & Sceptre'** by William Walton.



No words of praise are to high for the mountain of preparation taken by the **Dean and Canons**, the **Director of Music**, and our most faithful **Virgers & volunteers**, to enable two such magnificent services to be carried out before the eyes of the world.



(An email came from the USA full of praise for what had been presented via **Live-streaming**).
THANK YOU, ALL and heartiest congratulations!



It was very good indeed to hear from a Cathedral Chorister who sang with **TL Duerden** and **JB** over half a century ago! **DAVID ROBINSON** was one of our finest Prefects. Here he is, (left) singing for TLD in **1962**, sixty years ago!

1964	Peter Eastham
1965	K. Neil Fellows
	Ian F. Harrison
	David Robinson
1966	Charles Hopwood
1967	Derek Crompton
1968	Bernard Hargreaves

And here he is (far right) as a former Chorister, visiting us for a Choristers' Reunion 21 years ago, in company with faithful choirmen, **BERNARD WEST** (left): founder member / secretary / treasurer / librarian of the Renaissance Singers, with (centre) **FRANK HARE**, who was a most beloved choirman; a company director, who joined the men's choir to be able to experience 'creative discipline'! He organised wild parties for the choirmen and their wives, and had a great sense of humour. Frank used to take his shoes off for sermons, but on one occasion his fellow choirmen hid one of his shoes until just before the recession! (Those were great years!)



This is what David Robinson wrote to your editor this spring:

"I was in Accrington for three days last month for a reunion of the 1970 Thwaites Scholarship group to Tanzania. We are all still in touch after all this time, despite being scattered across the globe.

"Attached is a picture of some of us during a climb up Pendle Hill. The gathering was supposed to happen two years ago to mark the 50th anniversary but it had to be postponed twice because of Covid. The aim is to get together again in 2025."

(David is centre)



David Robinson continued:

"Two Blackburn Old Choristers have featured in **The Times** this week ...

... **Ivor Bolton** in the birthday list and **Stanley Roocroft**, recalling the time he sang at the Coronation." [see Roocroft next page]

JB writes: **Ivor** was one of my outstanding choristers who earned his FRCO at 17 and played the organ for one of our BBC Choral Evensongs. He won the Clare organ scholarship, and after graduating with two music degrees he was eventually appointed conductor of international orchestras in Salzburg (Germany), Basel (Switzerland) and the Royal Opera House, Madrid (Spain). Here he is with fellow former chorister **Derek** & **Marilyn Crompton** and **JB** after he conducted his Salzburg Orchestra at a **Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall in 2006.**



And yes, in 1952 every British Cathedral was invited to send one chorister to sing in the 400-voice hand-picked choir in the Abbey for the Coronation in 1953.

1953 J. Alec Stuttard

Mr Duerden originally chose **Alec Stuttard**, but after a few months Alec's voice began to change, which ruled him out...

1953 Stanley Roocroft

...and so Mr Duerden chose Alec's younger contemporary, **Stanley Roocroft** who, thereafter, whenever he wore his prefect's cloak, also wore his **Coronation medal!**



Many years later (in 2014) **Alec**

Stuttard was one of the privileged folk who would receive Maundy Money from **The Queen** when she came to Blackburn Cathedral which almost made up for his earlier disappointment... and so he also received an invitation to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party along with the Cathedral staff who organised our Maundy Service!

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(Editorial note: We've come a long way since reporting our hearing from David Robinson. But that's what our **Blackburn Cathedral Music** does for those of us who are honoured to have been a part of it. We are members of a very **privileged community of friends** who **rejoice in each other's fellowship**, and delight in sharing so many treasured memories!



Today's young choristers may not yet realize that they have joined a very special fellowship which will last them for their whole lives.

If **you** are a former chorister of our cathedral but have not yet joined us, please drop a line to our secretary of **Blackburn Cathedral Choirs' Association**, **Graham Chapelhow**: [grahamchapelhow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:grahamchapelhow@hotmail.co.uk)



Our next **BCCA ANNUAL REUNION** will be in **September**

**2023** to give our Director of Music time to build up the numbers in our choirs which, like all cathedrals, have been somewhat decimated by the 2-year Covid outbreak.

**And talking of the coronation and former choristers,**

did you see that marvellous service from St. Paul's Cathedral which celebrated The Queen's 70 years as our Sovereign?

Did you marvel at the immaculate 'ordering' of that service, when everyone was ushered, by the Vergers, to exactly the right place at the right time?



**Joe in 2002**

**Verger JOSEPH KENNEDY** leading distinguished clergy (including the **Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster**) to their places before the service.

Who is Joseph Kennedy? **He's a former chorister of Blackburn Cathedral!** And his Mother, **Karen**, is a well-known member of our congregation.

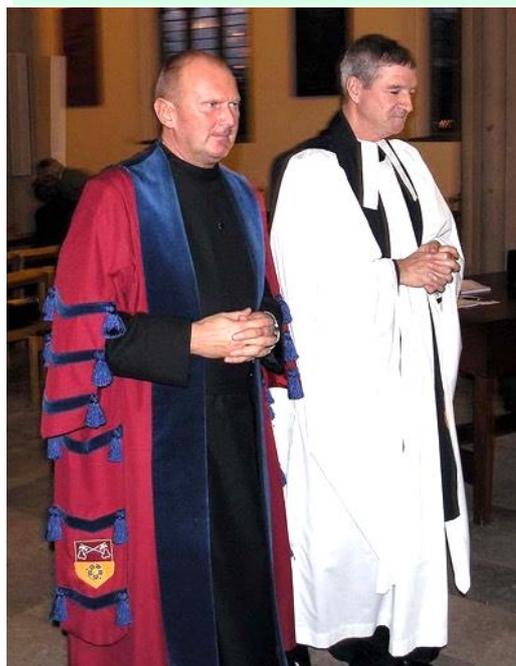
Joe joined our choir in **2002**, rose to become Head Chorister, sang with the Youth Choir, graduated from Blackburn College and became a Verger in Blackburn Cathedral in 2014.



**2008 Joseph Kennedy**

Here he is, visiting us from St. Paul's, and wearing his Blackburn Cathedral Choir tie.

**And talking of VERGERS,  
Our former 1996-2005 Head Virger, Howard Waddell,  
Is retiring after being Head Verger of Chichester Cathedral for 17 years.  
Howard wrote:**



Dear John  
Thank you for sending *Music and More*; it is interesting to read and catch up with what is happening in Blackburn.  
Also to let you know I will be retiring this summer after 17 years in Chichester I don't know where the time has gone: 6 months in Carlisle after my mum died, 2 years in Hereford, 8.5 years in Blackburn and 17 years in Chichester. I hope to stay in Chichester when I retire.  
I hope you are keeping well.  
Love and prayers  
Howard

*Howard recessing with Dean Armstrong after his last Blackburn service in 2005. (Howard was succeeded here by Mark Pickering, of course!)*

JB replied:

Thanks so very much for yours, Howard.

It's great to hear from you again.  
How well I remember that wonderful Southern Choirs' Fest in 2007 when you hosted me in your



delightful Cathedral Close home when I was engaged to lead a Southern Choirs' Festival workshop for the choristers of Chichester & Winchester Cathedrals.

Now that we've made contact - let's keep it up! Ever John B

*Afternoon tea in Howard's Chichester garden*

**Howard Waddell, Head Verger of Chichester Cathedral, standing before the John Piper tapestry**



**The subjects of the tapestry are (i) the Holy Trinity** which are represented by the central green triangle as a symbol of indivisibility. **God the Father** – the Light of the World – is represented by the white disc of the sun. **God the Son** is represented by the purple tau cross [Greek letter T], and the **Holy Spirit** is represented by the feathered flame. **(ii)** Also represented upper L-R are the four historic elements : **earth, air, fire and water.** **(iii)** In the lowest portions are symbols of the four Evangelists: **Matthew** (a winged man), **Mark** (a winged lion), **Luke** (a winged ox) and **John** (a winged eagle).





We've enjoyed some pretty amazing ORGAN RECITALS recently which were extraordinary, thrilling, unique and ever memorable!

**1. The first memorable moment** came when **MALCOLM SIM**, organist of Glasgow Cathedral, included in his Wednesday lunchtime programme a piece which was popular in Victorian times (when folk liked to be entertained at concerts).

IT WAS CALLED

**A CHURCH SERVICE INTERRUPTED BY A THUNDERSTORM!**

(It wasn't supposed to be 'great' music but, my goodness' it did grab one's attention!) The programme stated:

The piece starts with a peel of bells from churches in the village including distant sounds from a neighbouring village. The clock strikes 6 and the organist improvises an opening voluntary (sic!).



Photo: Brian Newton



Then follows the Responses (on the Vox Humana) and the introduction to the first hymn, a typical Victorian offering.

Then came **The Storm** – which, at its height, was so loud that your editor really wondered if our Lantern Tower was collapsing!

However the programme notes suggested that, when the storm did break, members of the audience should shelter under their umbrellas (it was raining outside). Some did!

But, to mark the occasion, your editor felt it would be appropriate if a photo were taken of John Robinson holding an umbrella over Malcolm Sim's head!

**2. The second extraordinary recital** came a few days later when **TOM BELL** played just one work: Messiaen's **MESSE DE LA PENTECOTE**, which he played here after a Sunday Choral Evensong. Why extraordinary?

- a. Because the audience sat around the central altar, where they could hear the organ stereophonically: **left – right – near – far.**
- b. Because Messiaen was a committed Christian. He poured his soul into his music, and Tom, likewise shares this active commitment. So we heard not only the notes, but more especially the message.
- c. Because Tom Bell knows this work so very well (he'd previously played it in Canterbury Cathedral when our John Robinson was on the music staff there). **Tom explained the music to his audience.**



**In proposing the vote of thanks afterwards, JB said:** “We have been privileged to experience a master organist play one of the most spiritual organ compositions ever conceived by a musician who, like J S Bach, lived his life governed and inspired by the great truths of the Christian Faith.

And what’s more, we were able to hear it stereophonically And if we weren’t able to comprehend every rich and deep message, we were indeed aware that we have been in the presence of greatness:

This magnificent organ,  
This Cathedral Church,  
Olivier Messiaen,  
and **Tom Bell**,

and we also thank **John Robinson** for his idea of having us sit around the altar so that we could hear this amazing organ speak to us so thrillingly.”



Most of the audience stayed afterwards to chat with Tom Bell, many of whom had travelled long distances to be with us, including a young musician who studies the organ at the Junior RNCM.

**Tom** also encouraged his baby son, **Rowan**, to ‘have a go’ at playing our organ! May he take after his Dad!

**3. The third outstanding recital was given on 15<sup>th</sup> June by our Resident Organist Elect, JOHN HOSKING.**

- a. John Hosking attracted the largest audience we have welcomed for some time!
- b. His playing blew us away, for much of his programme was ‘difficult’: fists-full of notes – some very loud indeed – but always so very musical. Many folk said that they had heard sounds on our versatile organ that they’d never heard before!
- c. He began with one of his own compositions which was so difficult that it could have been a set piece for an **‘advanced’ FRCO** exam!
- d. His large audience sat not only in the Nave, but also in chairs very near the console from where they could see and hear our skilful recitalist in the finest detail, and also hear the organ stereophonically. Many lingered afterwards to chat with John H. and subsequently to enjoy lunch with him in our **Checks and Greys** Cathedral Café.



Enjoy listening and watching JH play his last piece – a fantasia on two English melodies – **Home Sweet Home**, and **Rule Britannia!** It’s by the French composer, Alexandre Guilmant – the first half is quite quiet, but with some nifty pedal-work, and the second half is exciting & really has our organ played very loudly indeed! **CLICK the photo above to see and hear it. And, if possible, listen to it with headphones!**

*We are so grateful to **Terry Givens** for the photo and the video!*



From **Dean Armstrong** (now fully retired with **Geraldine** in Stamford)

Dear John,  
Thanks for your message about Howard's retirement and the two recollections, both of which are accurate and may be reproduced.

A **third incident** comes to mind regarding a loose filial at the west end of Blackburn Cathedral, dangerously situated above the West Door. The architect had provided a **cherry-picker hoist** for inspection and I was keen to see the damage too. **Howard**



**was present, looking suspicious and alarmed!** After some persuasion, he agreed to come up too so we both ascended in the hoist. Howard was very relieved to be back on *terra firma* but it illustrated his qualities of loyalty and courage.

I also attach some pics of **urban gardening at our new house**, which we are greatly enjoying. **It's been in the family for several generations** now so it was the obvious place to live in retirement, though we do miss the North enormously.

**Stamford is a beautiful town** with a rich cultural life which we are looking forward to exploring when we have time.

We are both very well and hope you are too! You continue to do a marvellous job with M and M! I trust this note - in its entirety - will get to you in good time.

God bless, **Christopher**



From **JOHN ROBINSON**:

Here pictured are **Jai, Jacob, Jasper and Harvey**, at their promotion last month. They are all keen as mustard, and bring our boys' total to 9, but then we lose a few at the end of the choir year (McCulloughs – see page 12).



**Book Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 12.15pm**  
**For a recital of Baroque music**  
By our former organ scholar **HARVEY STANSFIELD**  
with '**Charlotte**' (recorder)



## WE ALL KNOW...

that our talented Director of Music, **JOHN ROBINSON**,

was a chorister in Hereford Cathedral where he came under the inspirational influence of Hereford Cathedral's Director of Music, **Dr. Roy Massey**.



Dr. Massey gave him organ lessons so that he eventually became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and won the organ scholarship at St. John's College, Cambridge, where **Sir Stephen Cleobury** (DoM King's College, Cambridge) and **Dr John Scott** (DoM St. Paul's Cathedral) had also been organ scholars.

Well – John Robinson is setting up a similar Scholarships' scheme **here at Blackburn Cathedral** to encourage young musicians. **See below**

# vocal & organ scholarships

## Junior Choral & Organ Scholarships @ £800 p.a. JOHN ROBINSON

We are now able to announce a new scheme for **6<sup>th</sup> form Singers and Organists**. In helping our choristers to make the transition from singing treble to preparing to sing or play at University or Music College, we have always had our fabulous cathedral Youth Choir.



In addition, we now have a total of 8 positions (4 each year) to offer to singers no older than 'going into year 12.' These positions will involve singing with our Cathedral Choir (as SATB) and also with our Youth Choir.

Junior Choral Scholarships are open to applications from anyone below 'year 12', be they ex-choristers or not, and will be renewed annually until the end of year 13, by audition and will be **remunerated at £800 each year**. Sight-singing and vocal quality will be taken into account, but also knowledge of our Cathedral Choir repertoire will be a help.



The aim of this Scholarship Scheme is both to keep our Choirs healthy at the Cathedral, but also to prepare young singers for singing at University or Music College, including advice about courses, auditions, and future-goals. We are so thankful to the Pilling Trust, the **Blackburn Cathedral Choirs 1968 Bernard Hargreaves Association**, and former chorister **Bernard Hargreaves** for their financial support of this scheme.

**Our Jr. Organ Scholarships** will be available to candidates with suitably advanced keyboard technique, and a passion for the organ. Candidates should be able to learn and play a hymn at a day's notice, and lessons will be provided with one of the Cathedral Organists.

## THIS EDITION OF *MUSIC & MORE*



Is being sent early – to make sure that everyone knows about the concert to be given by

### **OUR CATHEDRAL CHOIRS**

... The **Blackburn Chamber Choir**

... our **chorister Girls & Boys** (with solo instruments as well as singing)

... and our **Youth Choir**

**ON FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AT 7.00 PM.**

*It will be a very special evening – not to be missed.*

Similarly, book **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June at 12.15pm** for a special lunchtime organ recital by our **JOHN ROBINSON**. *You will be thrilled!*

**From departing choirman and choir dad,  
ED McCULLOUGH**

Hi John

Thanks for your email. Sorry for the delayed response. Life is hectic at the moment, with our impending move.

Thanks too for the photo. I've attached my version of the same scene, with my Mum and Dad - **Reverend Canon Roy McCullough MBE** and **Judith McCullough**. This was taken on Easter Eve, after James' Confirmation.

We move to the Wirral in July so it will be an enormous wrench to leave the Cathedral after all these years. Everything must come to an end at some stage. It gives me enormous pleasure to think that **James'** and **Lucy's** names will join those of **my**



**brother and me** on the Prefects'

Boards, for posterity. I attach a photo of them in their Prefects' Cloaks. **James** always roots out the Prefect's medal with my name engraved on it!

Although we are leaving Blackburn, we are not leaving Cathedral music. I am pleased to advise that **James, Lucy and I** have all successfully auditioned to join **Liverpool Cathedral Choir**, where we will start singing in September. We are all looking forward to this.

When I last corresponded with you, I put out an appeal for a copy of **the live BBC TV broadcast, on Christmas Eve 1983**. [David Cooper had just succeeded you when you went to the USA at the end of 1982.] I am pleased to report that I have been able to purchase a copy from the BBC Archives. I have waited almost 40 years to see the footage and it didn't disappoint. We sang **Howells Coll Reg** Communion Service, with **David Cooper's Dormi Jesu** (which must have been one of the earliest performances) and **Bairstow Let All Mortal Flesh**, during communion. I correctly remembered **Derek Crompton** and **Peter Holroyd** doing the solos at the end.



**Christmas Eve live BBCTV**

**1983: Back row:**

Derek Crompton, Iain Thompson & Simon Daniels (known as 'Walt' who became a medical doctor).

**Front Row: Ed McCullough**

(in front of Derek), John Shaw (son of choirman Gordon), Lee Miller & Anthony Tattersall (who is now living with his family in New Zealand).

I will stay in touch and I look forward to catching up on the Blackburn news in future editions of M&M. All the very best

**Ed**

And renewed best wishes to you and to your talented family, Ed. Yes, please do

stay in touch for **you have all enriched our lives. JB**



**BLACKBURN CHAMBER CHOIR**  
**CONCERT by TERRY GIVENES** (who also took these fine photos)

Thursday June 9th saw our friends from Blackburn Chamber Choir, under the direction/accompaniment of their conductor **John Robinson**, give a most warmly received and well attended summer concert as their contribution to Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, at the **Whitaker Museum in Rawtenstall**.

The Whitaker stands in Whitaker Park in the hills of south east Lancashire, and was built as a family home in the 1840's by Lancashire textile mill owner George

Harman, and was originally called Oak Hill, but it now serves as a splendid museum and art gallery featuring numerous exhibits, a superb restaurant, and they can also accommodate live performances. Especially don't miss the quite extraordinary and one has to say rather unnerving 'Cabinet of Curiosities' where nothing is quite what it seems, and let's just say you certainly wouldn't wish to get locked in there on your own overnight!



The choir processed in singing an extremely spirited '*Sumer is icumen in*' and so immediately we're all surrounded by lots of seasonal "cuckoos" (that's the bird, not the choir members)... and they then went on to sing some Brahms, Josquin de Prez, a charming madrigal about a shepherdess called Phyllis, involving lots of kissing! and also Handel, Parry, and Elgar, so lots of

good patriotic Queen's Jubilee stuff.

Though there were no printed programmes, nobody's really missed them because in between pieces John

Robinson was able to treat us all to tales of a cricket (that's the insect, not the bat and ball variety) who apparently would have enjoyed a visit to the bar, the fact that Sir Edward Elgar's wife was far more thrilled about his knighthood in



1904 than Elgar was himself, and other such colourful anecdotes. The concert concluded with an invitation to the audience to all stand and join in with a rousing 'Jerusalem' which certainly raised the roof - in fact singers and conductor alike were apparently all gratified by the unexpectedly generous and splendid acoustic inside such a relatively small performance space, and so will doubtless all be wishing at some point to bring their music back to the Whitaker again.

**To hear part of the choir's performance of ZADOK** (with John Robinson doing his wonderful best at trying to create a large orchestra on his electronic keyboard), **CLICK the photo above!!**



From **JOHN MARR**

## “Joining the Blackburn Music Society” (BMS)

This all happened rather quickly and came about through a connection with another choir I'm involved with in Ribchester (The Music Makers – directed by **Edward Haythornwhite**).



Following a Music Makers' concert in April, one of the guest singers, who also happens to be a member of the BMS, suggested I might like to join the BMS. After

some careful thought, I decided to attend a practice at the beginning of May and was pleasantly surprised to discover that **John Robinson** is the Musical Director! Seeing a familiar face was reassuring; and his very amiable personality eased any apprehension I might have had about attending the practice which was both fun and enjoyable!

Before I knew it, I was involved in my first BMS concert - '**Music for Monarchs**' – which took place on **11<sup>th</sup> June in St. Silas' Church, Blackburn**. A musical celebration for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the comprehensive programme included works by Handel (*Zadok the Priest, The King Shall Rejoice*); Parry (*I Was Glad*); Brahms (*How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings Fair*); and Rutter (*This is the Day*).

The programme was supplemented by readings from choir members; and organ solos performed by **John Hosking** (the Cathedral's new 'Organist in Residence Elect') and **John Robinson**. They enthralled a very appreciative audience with a scintillating display of organ playing of Guilmant's *Fantaisie sur deux Melodies Anglaises* (JH), Elgar's *Imperial March* (Op.32) (JR) and Grayston Ives' *Intrada* (JH). The Cathedral is truly blessed to have two outstanding organists on its books from this September!

Under JR's professional guidance (he only became the Director of the BMS last September), the concert proved to be a wonderful experience - with a number of choir members commenting on how rewarding it was to sing once again in front of a live audience; and how much of a treat it was to have JH accompanying the choir on the organ. To quote one member: "his (JH) talented playing raised the roof of the church".



### Three Johns: Marr, Robinson & Hosking

It was also noted by the choir on how tirelessly JR has worked towards directing the choir – one member commenting: "he has given us such an insight into the music that we sing and has provided different opportunities for us to perform".

If there is anyone out there interesting in either taking up, or returning to, singing again, **then I can certainly recommend the BMS**. The choir returns to rehearsals at the Hornby Theatre (Blackburn Library) on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm to rehearse our Faure repertoire.

*JB added: Of course it is highly appropriate that John Robinson now directs the Blackburn Music Society, for that fine choir was founded by the first organist of Blackburn Cathedral, **Herman Brearley**.*

**PS: You have booked FRIDAY 24<sup>th</sup> June for the special concert in the cathedral at 7.00pm? See p.11**