



BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL 2021

Cathedral website: <https://blackburncathedral.com/>

NEW CHAIR! page 5.

Editor john.beralot@gmail.com/

Our cathedral was filled with most joyful music for Choral Evensong on Sunday 9th May when our Girls' and Boys' choirs sang, so confidently with soaring top Gs, when **Awards, Promotions and Valedictions** were made by our Dean, & announced by Director of Music, John Robinson. (L) Organist Shaun Turnbull & Lay Reader Christine O'Neill, (centre left) John Robinson, (centre right) Dean and Canon Gary O'Neill.



The music suited the sense of occasion so well: **Responses** by **Malcolm Archer** who gave his first organ recital here while he was still at school near Blackpool: he became Director of Music successively of Bristol, Wells and St. Paul's Cathedrals and has only recently retired. His **Responses** (accompanied by an independent organ part) were demanding not only for the choir but also for the Cantor (Canon O'Neill) who had to sing some notes above middle C more than several times. **See page 11 for more about Malcolm Archer.**

The Canticles were **Stanford in B flat** – the men's part in the Nunc Dimittis was sung by the trebles an octave higher, and the anthem was Vaughan Williams' **Come, my Way.**



Shaun Turnbull played Buxtehude's **Toccata in G**, before the service (beautifully timed) and **John Robinson** played **Toccata in G** by Dubois at the end – for which many of the choristers stayed in their stalls to listen – as did the congregation in their socially distanced seats.

The first ceremony was, to admit to the choir six probationers as **full choristers**, (L-R):

Zachary Strain, Joseph Wilson, Eleanor Partington, Rose Goodbody, Gifong Feng & Stephanie Adebayo,

Of course 'social distancing' for all these ceremonies meant that the Dean could not shake choristers' hands or place medallions around their necks. May all revert to normal next time.



John Robinson read out from the central lectern the names of every chorister in order. The whole service ran on smooth, well-rehearsed and well organised wheels.

Here **Darcy Tayler** and **José Mottershaw Goday** were raised to the status of **Prefect** in the Girls' and Boys' the Cathedral Choir respectively. **Darcy's brother, Zak, had also been an outstanding chorister-Prefect in our choirs.** Later he became a regular Crucifer for our 10.30 Eucharists.

Charlotte Roberts was self-isolating due to contact with Covid. – but she also would become a Prefect.



Next came:

George Seedall and **Logan Goodbody**, 'who, by their service and loyalty had proved themselves worthy of being promoted to **Deputy Head Choristers** in the Cathedral Choir.'

Then came: **Jessica Fellows** who



was promoted to **Deputy Head Chorister** in the Cathedral Choir. (The photographer's apologies for taking this photo when Jessica blinked.)



Next was **Poppy Felipes** who was raised to the status of **Head Chorister** in the Cathedral Choir. **Poppy has two brothers, Lee & Luke, who were also dedicated Prefects in our Cathedral Choir.** They later became faithful Servers for our Sunday 10.30 am services.



All these ceremonies were watched attentively by **the congregation** – (which included many of the choristers' parents) whose seats had been placed at safe social distances.

The second part of these ceremonies was to give the **LIVESEY TRUST AWARDS.**

The Dean explained that this had been set up as long ago as **1769** to assist choristers in the old Borough of Blackburn.

This was amended, by permission of the Charity Commission in 2013, to benefit **'any boy or girl chorister of Blackburn Cathedral who resides within the Diocese of Blackburn.'**

This award was given to **George Seedall, Freyja Shoniwa & Neo Murphy** and, in her absence through self-isolation, to **Charlotte Roberts.**



The Livesey Trust also funds the **Dean David Frayne Award** to an **outstanding candidate**, who is **Head Chorister Poppy Felipes**



There was **one final award** – to choristers who had graduated from our Cathedral Choirs.

Wide photo L-R

Canon O'Neill, Helen Davies whose work with, and care for our young singers is outstanding, **The Dean** and young singers **Hayden Foster, Neo Murphy, Melanie Tatlock & Yuibun Feng.** See next page



Hayden Foster, Neo Murphy, Melanie Tatlock & Yuibun Feng.



After having been thanked by the Dean for their years of faithful service in our choirs, each singer was given three presents: a **HYMNAL** to remind them of their many years of Cathedral choir singing, an Old Choristers' **TIE** to mark their entry into the **BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL CHOIRS' ASSOCIATION** (some of whose liveliest members go back some 60 or more years to their own times as cathedral choristers – and right proud they are of their own years of service!), and a **1662 Book of Common Prayer**, which, for some 450 years, has guided countless Christians in their faithful walk.

And there was one more presentation of **FLOWERS** to the **parents** of our four 'leavers' to thank **them** for supporting, so actively and faithfully, their sons / daughter during their creative and so-important years in the cathedral choirs.

Here is **Hayden Foster** with his parents, **Nicola** and **Paul** – with the flowers. A lovely tribute for each set of choir-parents.



And after we had all relished John Robinson's brilliant playing of the Dubois *Toccat*a, **parents and choristers** joined each other for a time of photographs, which will long be treasured in their family archives.



WE HAVE A NEW CHAIR OF THE BLACKBURN CHAMBER CHOIR aka THE RENAISSANCE SINGERS: Introducing ALAN CRAMERI



I joined Blackburn Chamber Choir (or Renaissance Singers as it was then), around Easter 2017. I'd moved back to Catterall (near Garstang) and was looking for a good chamber choir to sing with. Having recently moved from Glasgow, where I had sung with Glasgow Chamber Choir, I'd been invited back to sing with them on a short exchange visit to Amersfoort (Netherlands).



Anyway, I was lucky enough to meet **Ben Fourie**, (Gill's son) had by then moved to Glasgow, was part of Glasgow Chamber Choir, and recommended the Renaissance Singers to me. The rest, as they say, is history – I was given a friendly welcome by the **Singers' Chair Jean Duerden**, joined a couple of rehearsals, and

after surviving the audition by Sam Hudson, here I am!

I started singing at school, and as a teenager trying to decide if I was a tenor or a bass, joined the local parish church choir in Sunbury-on-Thames where I was brought up. But it all became more serious when I got to University, and was lucky enough to be part of the chapel choir at **Clare College, Cambridge**, singing under the directorship of Tim Brown. It was an amazing experience, and I learnt so much, although it was hard work at times. **Studying Natural Sciences** meant I often had practicals in the afternoon, which overlapped with rehearsals, leading to a frantic cycle back from some far-flung part of the city to get back to College in time! But I will never forget the absolute clarity and precision of the singing, and what it feels like to be part of that.



Since then, I have sung with various groups, depending on where we've been living at the time. **I'm married to Kathryn**, who chose an academic career, which first brought us from **Cambridge** to Lancaster and our home in Catterall. We then got the opportunity to move to Sydney, Australia, and spent 6 years there, travelling whenever we could to various parts of the continent and beyond. Many Aussie friends said we'd seem more of their country than they had!

Check out **SingOn**, from Sydney University Graduate Choir / Choral news, thoughts and reflections <<https://sydneyuniversitygraduatechoir.com.au/>>, the choir I sang with there, with its slightly crazy but surprisingly effective director Chris Bowen.

For my day job, I work in IT (which can mean almost anything, I know!), focussing on data & AI. I have a varied role, scoping and leading projects – everything from predicting green energy usage, to planning student populations within Universities, to migrating data between systems for one of the UK's largest police forces. Pre-Covid, I was travelling 3-4 days a week mainly between home, Edinburgh and London, but of course now my days consist of video meetings from a spare bedroom.

Enough about me! I'd like to say a big thank you to **Jean Duerden** for her last 7 years as Chair, and for everything she's done for the choir. I'm looking forward to this next phase in the choir's journey, as **Blackburn Chamber Choir**. It was great to see so many join our recent AGM, and to hear how keen everyone is to start singing together again, once Covid restrictions allow. At this stage, it's hard to know what performances may look like later in the year, but the current plan is one of the big choral works to announce our return –



watch this space!

WELCOME, ALAN!



From our former organ scholar, **JUSTIN MILLER**, who is the dynamic Director of Music of St Matthew's Church, Northampton, and who is re-starting his St Matthew's Concerts.

Justin hasn't wasted a minute now that lockdown restrictions are easing: he wrote, online:

"We are pleased announce that we will be bringing high-quality live music back to St. Matthew's, Northampton. Our Saturday afternoon series is designed to fit around our increasingly busy schedules

as we return to a more normal way of living. All concerts last just one hour, and we have some terrific music lined up!

All tickets [@ £10] are fully refundable, so you can book with ease. We look forward to welcoming you to St Matthew's."

Justin continued:

"In this first public recital since the easing of lockdown, Philippa and Justin look forward to bringing a joyous selection of songs which look forward to the coming of summer and the promise of a return to a more normal way of life."

Philippa Hyde is, of course, the gifted wife of Richard Tanner, our former DoM, whose solo singing enriched us all during Richard's creative years here at Blackburn.



Here's a 'taster' of the musical joys created by these two sublime artists:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KCBk8MaHCo>

[Philippa Hyde's website](#)

NICK HODGES, Chairman of the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations (FCOCA):



The Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Associations

whose most recent letter to all British Cathedral Choirs' Associations stressed that to encourage lively Associations **communication is the key**.

He was generous enough to mention Blackburn's **Music & More**: He wrote: "...take a look at the Blackburn Cathedral offerings. Organist Emeritus, John Bertalot, produces a **monthly** newsletter for the Blackburn Association filled with really interesting articles, which is really reaching its audience."

Nick Hodges wrote: 'I have been inspired by your M&M, for my own Newsletter! You are Spot on.'

THANKS, NIC

To enjoy FCOCA's website, Google
<https://www.fcoca.org.uk/members-news.html>

... you will discover many editions of **Blackburn's Music & More online** as well as some magazines from other Cathedral Choir Associations.

*Once a Chorister
 Always a Chorister*



STAND BY FOR JOHN ROBINSON'S DAZZLING RECORDING ON OUR MAGNIFICENT ORGAN which celebrates its 50th birthday (though delayed because of Covid)



JR writes:

This is a 50th Anniversary recording of Blackburn Cathedral's magnificent Walker/Wood Organ, and it's themed around significant events in Blackburn Cathedral's history:

Whitlock: Sonata in C Minor (composed 1938, laying of the foundation for the cathedral's extensions). This is the longest 20th Century English Organ Sonata in the Romantic tradition. Our organ brings a new fire to this epic Rachmaninovian canvas.

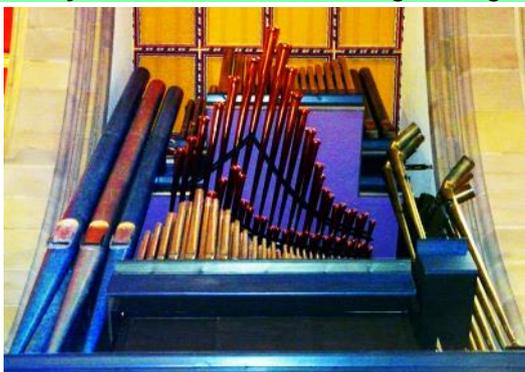


Jonathan Harvey: Laus Deo (composed 1969, to mark building of the brand new Walker organ) Harvey's remarkable work was conceived in a dream, in response to a Three Choirs' Festival commission by Simon Preston. It is truly 'avant garde' and very exciting.

Francis Pott: Introduction, Toccata and Fugue (2001 work by Wood to add our 4th manual and more stops). This extensive work by perhaps England's foremost living contrapuntal composer makes reference to Duruflé's 'Prélude et Fugue sur le nom de Alain' as well as the last chord of Alain's 'Litanies.' It's perfectly served by our organ, which revels in clean lines and vivid colours.

John Bertalot: Variations on 'Regent Square' - originally composed and played by our remarkable Organist Emeritus for the dedication of the brand new organ in December

1969! John has taken the Hymn Tune 'Regent Square' by Blackburn Organist **Henry Smart**, and woven a glittering and contrasted collection of variations for pedals only! **Our magnificent 32 foot Serpent stop** makes its presence known, as does our **polished copper Imperial Trumpet** chamade reed.

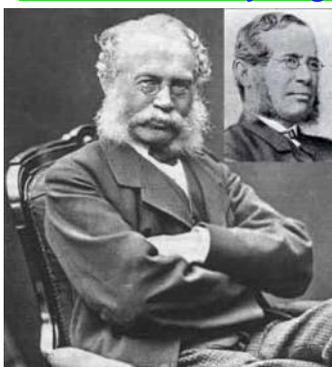


The recording is with Regent Records and will be for release later in the year. It's been an amazing process working with the keen ears of **Gary Cole** in the control booth, on our iconic organ. We're grateful to members of the **Blackburn Cathedral Choirs Association**, and other generous friends for their financial support of this project.

HENRY SMART – young and older.

See and relish **JOHN ROBINSON** playing these pedal variations:

Available from Encore Publications https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hle-IO_ncyg



Energetically

1

Diapasons, 16, 8, 4, 2, Mixture

(G compass)

We all know and rejoice that BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL HAS MOVED ITS CHOIRSTALLS, but SO HAS CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL!

Our former Assoc. Director of Music, now DoM of Chelmsford Cathedral, **JAMES DAVY** writes:

I'm thrilled to see that the Blackburn Cathedral choir has moved to be nearer the organ and the organist is now in a commanding position too! I hope that it doesn't disturb the singers too much to find a bishop lurking in their midst, or has the throne been decommissioned?

We've undertaken a similar experiment here in Chelmsford Cathedral: for about eight years it's been our hope to remove the choir stalls (unwieldy and cramped they are too)...

CHOIR'S OLD SEATING ... a long way from the Nave. Note the semi hidden **chancel organ** on the right.



(Below) CHOIR'S NEW SEATING at the far East end, but facing the congregation which enables the choir to stand in a formation which allows the sound to travel directly from the chancel to the nave.



James continues:

The former Collegiate seating for the choir works fine if the congregation can get close enough to hear, but ours couldn't.

For the time being we're seated in the nave where we can really spread out, **but we're in the chancel for the Eucharist**, when there's a larger congregation.

The stalls have been removed temporarily (we haven't begun to formulate the necessary plans to apply to the DAC for a permanent change) but hopefully their absence will continue past the need for social distancing at least to the enthronement of our new bishop in September – [our former bishop is now Archbishop of York!] the removal of the stalls means that for the first time the bishop will be able to gather her college of canons around the throne (where the archdeacons and bishops suffragan already sit).

[Curiously, the bishop's throne was only installed 14 years after the rest of the re-ordering project, so there are some architectural discrepancies, and the stalls have got in the way of just about everything & everyone since they went in in the 80s.]

When the choir sings in the nave the congregation feels so much more part of the action – it's odd that such a small building should have such difficult, distant acoustics, but there are lots of arches and very little wall to project the sound forward!



Photos from the dismantling are included so that you can see how much it opens up the building and reveals the '80s reordering as it's never been seen before.

The **chancel organ** (on the South side of the Chancel) can currently be seen from floor to ceiling (instead of being hidden by choirstalls) and looks much better for it – hopefully we'll have a glass screen in the gap to prevent people from falling over the step but allowing the view to remain.



All this happened

because of a chance email to the Dean led to one to the architect, then to the chair of the works committee, and then to the man who organised the volunteers to dismantle the stalls. **Isn't it great when people get things done?!**

All of our singers are now back and pursuing a full schedule, in fact we've upped the girls' involvement in the weekly schedule, although we're without an organ scholar so I'm playing more and Simon Hogan (ex-Swallow no 2 and husband of our no 2 Hilary) is playing too, so it's rather full-on. It's good to be back though, and our volunteer back row have given extremely generously of their time to allow us to rehearse more, learn more music, and do a wonderful roster of Holy Week services – it's all paying off with better ensemble and a good sound, so there has indeed been a shining silver lining to the dark Covid cloud!

Sorry this is a bit of a mammoth epistle but it's good to share good news!

Ever,
James



GOOD NEWS INDEED! Thanks for keeping in touch, James. JB



From TENOR CHORAL SCHOLAR MICHAEL HILLESSEN

For the next season, I think the plan is to play things by ear for the most part. As you know I have been progressing onwards with my apprenticeship so I believe the next move for me will be to move closer to the job once Covid allows for office working once more. Until then it's enjoying the lovely services and music that Blackburn has to offer while studying towards the computer science quots!

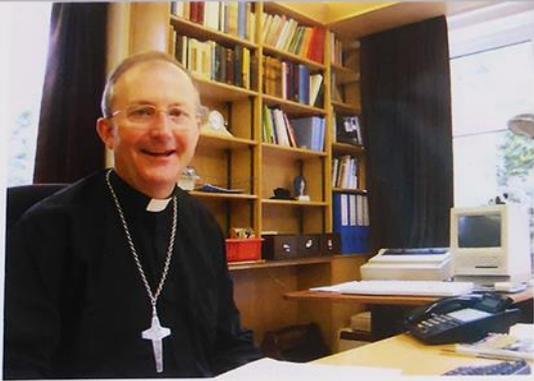
Other than that, my colleague, **Matthew Baldwin** (bass), and I have recently started **bouldering*** in Preston which has been a lot of fun and keeps us out of trouble for the most part!

All the best, Mike

**Bouldering is a form of free climbing that is performed on small rock formations or artificial rock walls without the use of ropes or harnesses,*



Some Addresses
by
Bishop Nicholas Reade
(8th Bishop of Blackburn)



'Remember always with thanksgiving that God has entrusted to your care Christ's beloved bride, his own flock, bought by the shedding of his own blood on the cross.'

(Words said by the Archbishop to the Bishop-designate before the Ordination and Consecration prayer)

Bishop Nicholas sent your editor his marvellous collection of some of his addresses made during his creative pastoral years in Blackburn.

**Your editor enjoyed two extracts particularly:
1: From Bishop Nicholas's first address to the Diocesan Synod: June 2004:**

At the close of the nineteenth century, our neighbouring Diocese of Liverpool was created. The new Bishop had a mountainous task ahead of him.

When the priest chosen for the work received the letter of invitation [to be the first Bishop of Liverpool] he had no idea whether the call was right for him.

He prayed and prayed without apparent answer. But after three weeks in fervent prayer *he had a vision of a nun* – most strange for him, because he was extremely 'Low Church'. Even more strangely, the nun said, 'Accept the Diocese and I will bear the burden of it'.

Five years later the Bishop went to Vespers in a convent in his Diocese and as he looked down the chapel he saw the face of a nun which he knew he had

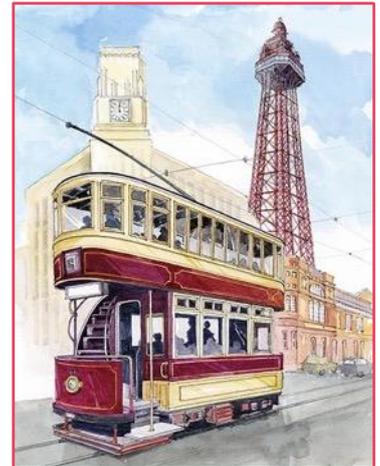
seen before. So after the service he said to the Mother Superior: 'I would like to see your sisters, one by one for I must thank one of them for her work.' [Eventually the Mother Superior said] 'There is one who does most of the simple tasks.' 'Is she holy?' asked the Bishop. 'Very.' And there she was – God had chosen that lowly simple sister to carry the load of the Liverpool Diocese through her holiness.



2: In his maiden speech in the House of Lords, 24 November 2009, Bishop Nicholas said:

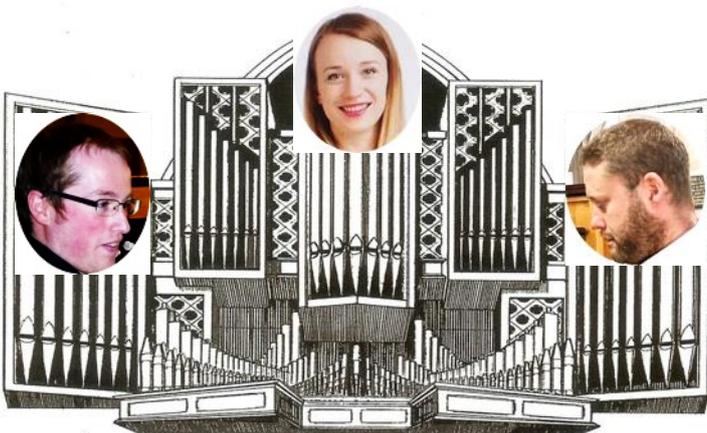
"Earlier this month I had the privilege of taking the Most Reverend Primate, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for a ride.

"We took a tram journey along Blackpool promenade, where I was allowed to operate the controls under the supervision of watchful



experts. As we travelled ...we found that experiences could be shared, realities established and Christian understanding developed... It is **through journeys of encounter** that policy can come alive."

THIS COLLECTION of EPISCOPAL SPEECHES WILL BE AVAILABLE in our CATHEDRAL LIBRARY



**WEDNESDAY
LUNCHTIME
RECITALS ARE
BEGINNING
AGAIN!**

SEE page 12



From former Head Chorister **SEBASTIAN ROBERTS** who is in his first year at St Andrews University – which, happily, should now be reopening to students – in company with all Universities in the UK

Hello Dr Bertalot!

Hope you are well. Clara Slater asked me to give you an update on what I'm up to at the moment.

I had a fantastic first term at St Andrews and really enjoyed beginning my Organ and Choral Scholarships there.

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to go back for this term, so I've been working from home. However, this has given me the chance to help out in my local churches. In March, I put on a virtual production of **Swingin' Samson** with the churches of Balderstone, Mellor and Samlesbury, which raised over £1000 for the Mothers' Union caravan. **I've attached it here: [Click:---](#)**

[Swingin' Samson.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

I'm not sure when I'll be able to go back to St Andrews, but I'm looking to singing Tenor in the cathedral choir and YPC for the rest of term.

All Best,
Seb

His Mum, **Helen**, added: 'It was lovely to see you on Sunday – isn't it wonderful to get back to a little bit of normality!'

Here are Helen, Seb and the Dean after a splendid Sunday Choral Evensong



From **MALCOLM ARCHER** who has recorded on our organ and guest conducted our cathedral choirs.



Malcolm was Director of Music of Bristol, Wells and St. Paul's Cathedrals (See page 1)

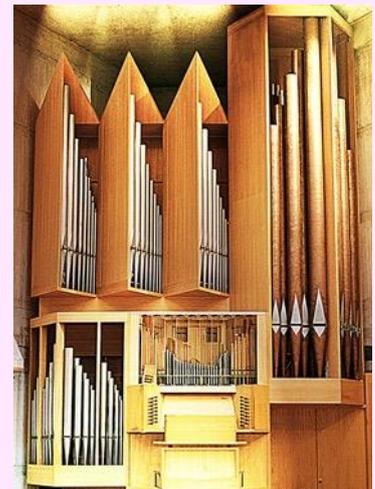


Hi John,
It was so good to hear from you... I will always be grateful for the support you gave me when I was a teenager for it helped in launching me on a career in church music. Thank you.

I am glad to know that Blackburn sing my **treble Responses**; I assume the ones with organ accompaniment. The Cantor part was written for a chorister to sing (because at Bristol Cathedral there were some occasions when the clergy didn't turn up!) so I never intended for an adult male Precentor (too high) though it would work well with a female Precentor of course. Having a chorister sing the cantor part was wonderful training for them, especially holding pitch in Collects. *Necessity was the mother of invention!*

I am busy working towards a series of recordings of **Bach** on the **Clifton RC Cathedral Rieger organ** in Bristol (marvellous for Bach) which I am sharing with a very talented young player, **James Gough**. We have two volumes 'in the can' so far.

I hope to see you again when I am next oop north. All best wishes, **Malcolm**.





From Canon Ian and Janet Stockton in Lincoln

Dear John

We were very interested to read your M&M reflections on the history and development of the spaces in Blackburn Cathedral for choir, console and canons.

Janet is delighted to be back for piano lessons at Lincoln's Song School with **Jeffrey Makinson** (former Sub Organist at Manchester Cathedral and now Assistant Director of Music here at Lincoln Cathedral).

From working on pieces by Clementi, Bach, Beethoven and one jazz composition, her next exercises, for a change, are Elgar and Debussy. She never had any formal with her grandmother (a piano teacher).

I am taking mid-week services at Lincoln Cathedral and helping out in historic Lincolnshire village churches.

Last Sunday there were 15 communicants at the village of **Kettlethorpe** for a 9am BCP Eucharist, a sermon, and hymn verses played by the organist, but not sung.

Kettlethorpe is a village in Lincolnshire, which consists of 13 dwellings with a population of just 55 people.

I am due my second vaccination on Sunday. Janet, although younger, had hers on Thursday.

We have met our Durham family at Yorkshire Sculpture Park as an almost half way location.

Edwin, now 17 months, we saw for the first time since August. We enjoys now a Toddlers' music group, but is surprised to see suddenly others of his size.

Here, I have been busy protecting the greenhouse plants from regular early morning frosts.

We hope that you are keeping well.

With all good wishes Ian



WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS ARE STARTING AGAIN!!



June 9th 12.15 **Angela Hicks** (International Soprano) will sing songs by Finzi and others, with **John Robinson**, Piano

June 23rd 12.15 **John Robinson (Organ)** plays quiet prayerful music as part of a day of reflection



July 7th 12.15 **Matthew Baldwin and Michael Hillesdon** (Choral Scholars) will sing songs . . . with **John Robinson**, Piano



July 14th 12.15 **Shaun Turnbull** (Organist) will perform on the Cathedral Organ.

John Robinson writes:

"We're so excited to be relaunching our Wednesday Lunchtime concert series, with a Summer mini-series to warm everyone up! **All concerts now begin at 12.15pm**, and are subject to local restrictions."



The next full series begins on Wednesday September 1st

There are now a few vacancies for girl & boy singers in our glorious choirstalls, for Time, during the year-long Pandemic Lockdown, has worked its natural miracle, and boys who were leading Trebles 12 months ago, are now turning into most promising young Tenors and Basses! Our Girl choristers get better and better!



So, ENJOY this wonderful video, prepared by our dynamic Director of Music, JOHN ROBINSON, to encourage active recruitment for girls and boys to our exciting and so-rewarding choirs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMk7wObYz68>

CONTACT: John.Robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk

