

November



MUSIC
& MORE

Editor: john.berlatot@gmail.com

2021

Blackburn
Chamber
Choir

ALAN CRAMERI, BCC Chairman, writes:

Blackburn Chamber Choir is delighted to have resumed in-person rehearsals for the new term.

We are now rehearsing in the South Transept of the Cathedral, which gives more



space and ventilation than the Song School.

It's encouraging that almost all of the previous singers have returned after our 18-month break, plus we have 3 or 4 prospective new members joining us for trial rehearsals over the next few weeks.

We do have a few vacancies, though, especially in the Tenor section. Any prospective members should get in contact with me - come and try us out! alan@crameris.com

We're focussing our efforts towards a performance of **Handel's Messiah on Saturday 4th December**, so put the date in your diaries, it's sure to be a great occasion."



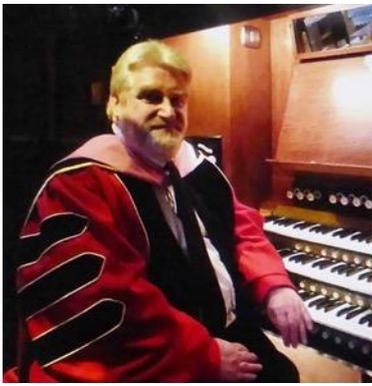
John Robinson
CONDUCTOR

The Cathedra Players
ORCHESTRA

SOLOISTS

Soprano: Angela Hicks
Alto: Camilla Searle
Tenor: Matthew Pochin
Bass: Peter Lidbetter

TICKETS £10 (free for under
18s) FROM EVENTBRITE
<https://bccmessiah.eventbrite.co.uk>



MUSIC IN BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL IN NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS 12.15 pm

Nov. 3rd **Dr Colin Porter** a well-known organ recitalist who is Chairman of the North & Midlands School of Music and Director of the Liverpool Festival Choir



Nov. 10th **Daisy-Belle Dumsday** (Soprano) a former outstanding Blackburn Cathedral choral scholar



with **Bekah Ashton** (Piano)



Sunday Nov. 14th 7.0 pm

Tom Bell plays Messiaen's Livre du Saint-Sacrament

Tom Bell's playing has been described as "invigorating" (Sunday Times), "compelling" (Organists' Review) and "brilliant" (American Record Guide).

Wednesday Nov. 17th Charles Francis

Charles is currently studying for a BMus (Hons) in Organ Performance at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire studying under Daniel Moulton. He is Organ Scholar at St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham.



Wednesday Nov. 24th Marc Murray

he has given recitals and played in concerts throughout South Africa, as well as the USA, Germany, Sweden, and the UK, including solo recitals in Westminster Abbey, St Paul's, Southwark, Chester, Newcastle and Bradford Cathedrals.



Looking ahead:

Saturday 5th December, 7.30pm

Handel's Messiah sung by **Blackburn Chamber Choir** conducted by **JOHN ROBINSON**

See page 1.



Edwin Booth – an early member of the **Blackburn Bach Choir** in the 1970s.

He sat alongside (Bass) **Duncan Stainer** – great grandson of **Sir John Stainer**, and **Andrew Darke** (Bass) - grandson of **Dr. Harold Darke**. **Whatta line-up!**

(From online news:) **The Queen appointed Edwin Booth to be the High Sheriff of Lancashire for 2021.**

Edwin is the chair and chief executive of Preston-based premium

supermarket chain **Booths** and represents the fifth generation of the family to lead the business since 1847.



The Office of the High Sheriff is an independent non-political year-long appointment supporting the Crown and the judiciary, lending support to crime prevention agencies, emergency services and the voluntary sector. The holder funds his own expenses.

Edwin addresses his attention to three issues: Crime, homelessness and education.

He said: "It is a privilege to be recognised for this role and I want to celebrate everything that is good about Lancashire, a county my family has called home for nearly 200 years.

"There is a great deal of opportunity in Lancashire, and it is my wish to give others the same inspiration and chance to succeed that I have been fortunate to receive.

"Access to education, and by that I don't just mean academic education, but inspiring people to find and celebrate what they are good at, can be a driver in solving the larger societal issues of crime and homelessness."

He added: "I often use the phrase, 'there is no such thing as a dull person.' Finding and cultivating what excites people is key to education.

"My great, great grandfather Edwin Henry Booth, believed in giving back. Orphaned at the age of 11, by age 19 he was a tea dealer, opening his first shop in Blackpool.

Edwin has worked with the Lancashire universities in the areas of leadership and business change programmes, receiving an **Honorary Doctorate** from Lancaster

University for his services to the region and industry.



He is chairman of the Harris Charity (Preston) which was co-founded by his forebear, Edwin Henry Booth, and is a founding trustee of the **Prince's Countryside Fund**.



In 2019 Edwin was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (**CBE**) in the New Year Honours' List for services to business and charity. He has been a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire since 2005.

Edwin Booth has been a most generous benefactor of our cathedral concerts – for which we thank him indeed. Professional Orchestras are expensive – but a good orchestra makes for a good concert – so our thanks to Edwin are redoubled.

More news from our former Head Chorister, WILLIAM FIELDING, (a blossoming organ virtuoso), who begins his second year studying in Toulouse

“The festival, **Toulouse les orgues** starts today - a fantastic two weeks of varied organ music. I’ll have the pleasure of accompanying the Fauré *Requiem* at **Notre Dame de la Dalbade**, with the **Maîtrise of Toulouse** and Mark Opstad, [\[see photos and specification below\]](#) and at St Sernin, the *Vierne Messe Solennelle* (I’ll be at the choir organ) plus Franck and Tournemire, (at the Grande-Orgue).

“It is a real pleasure to have the opportunity to play in only my second year, so **I’m very grateful to those generous friends who made it possible**, and I’m really looking forward to performing!

Composition sonore / Stop List
Orgue de tribune / Gallery Organ

I. Grand-Orgue		II. Positif (expressif / enclosed)	
Montre	16'	Quintaton	16'
Bourdon	16.	Diapason	8'
Montre	8'	Bourdon harmonique	8'
Bourdon	8'	Violoncelle	8'
Flûte harmonique	8'	Unda maris	8'
Viole de gambe	8'	Dulciana	4'
Salicional	8'	Flûte douce	4'
Prestant	4'	Doublette	2'
Quinte douce	3'	Cornet-Carillon	III
Doublette	2'	Baryphone	16'
Piccolo	1'	Trompette	8'
Fourniture 2'	IV	Cromorne	8'
Cymbale 2/3'	IV	Clairon	4'
Grand Cornet	V		
Bombarde	16'		
Trompette	8'		
Trompette harmonique	8'		
Clairon	4'		

III. Récit (expressif / enclosed)		Pédale	
Flûte harmonique	8'	Bourdon	32'
Bourdon/Cor de nuit	8'	Contrebasse	16'
Viole de gambe	8'	Soubasse	16'
Voix céleste	8'	Flûte ouverte	8'
Flûte octavante	4'	Octave	4'
Octavin harmonique	2'	Bombarde	16'
Trompette harmonique	8'	Trompette	8'
Basson-Hautbois	8'	Clairon	4'
Euphone	8'		
Voix humaine	8'		



“In other news, I’ve had my first lessons with Yoann Tardivel, at the organ in **St Pierre des Chartreux**, mainly focusing on works of **Louis Marchand** [an almost exact contemporary of JS Bach, but because he was French – very different from JSB]. This is proving to be most interesting, and I’m looking forward to the coming year, and to preparation for Paris.”



Paul (Dad) & William Fielding



We should have included this photograph in our September edition:



It was a great joy in August, as ever, to welcome former chorister **BERNARD HARGREAVES (L)**, who had flown from his home in California for his annual visit to his Mum in Blackburn. 'Mum' is now a spry 90 and Bernard popped into the Cathedral for Sunday morning service – just before the choirs had returned. But he was welcomed by Old Chorister **John Marr (R)**.

Bernard wrote:

"I'm enjoying my visit and Mum is still active and doing pretty good. We've been out and about visiting family and friends in Wirral, Lytham and Ormskirk while the weather has been good. It brings back so many happy memories and well worth the visit."

Bernard was a cathedral chorister from St. Wilfrid's School, along with his three brothers, way back in the late 1960s – and was a contemporary of **Derek Crompton** and **Ian Harrison**.

He is now retired, but justifiably proud that his three sons have graduated from Berkeley University. Bernard shows his appreciation for all he gained from his membership of our choir by sending a sizable annual cheque to Blackburn Cathedral's music fund.

Thank you, Bernard.

What was the Cathedral Choir like in those far-off days?

JB recently received a letter from **Professor Ian Tracey, Organist Titulaire of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral**, where he has raised over £900,000 for the maintenance of the largest cathedral organ in the UK.

"You influenced so many of my generation at that crucial stage in our lives I was a mere 15-16 when I used to come to Blackburn on the train to hear your work there and musically 'sit at your feet'.

"Blackburn was alive with a totally refreshing and 'new' spirit in your time there. I was far too shy ever to come up and ask 'for a go' but really used to joy in listening and I never missed one of your BBC 3's either...**"Choral Evensong on Ice"** as BBC producer David Craig always called them - superb!"

Golly! Thank you, Ian. But with choristers like Derek Crompton, Ian Harrison, Bernard Hargreaves, David Rothwell and very many more, and with the lively acoustic of Blackburn Cathedral, how could we do other than exult in the exciting music we sang?

What's more, there was a spirit of active musical inspiration amongst the trebles in those days. They loved to sing descants, but when I omitted to write one for a hymn which they all enjoyed, **they used to create spontaneous musical flourishes** on the last few notes of last verses, especially if they could end up on a high 'G'.

One of the Canons used to object to the 'tap room endings' but **I relished the boys' creativity!** JB

PS: On one occasion, many years later, when I was on vacation from my Princeton NJ church, I sang in the Blackburn Cathedral Choir for a Sunday morning Eucharist and happened to stand next to one of my former creative choristers who was now singing tenor. I discovered that **he was improvising musical flourishes throughout** a hymn – not singing the written notes, but creating his own tenor part which harmonised with the rest of the choir. It was so glorious and so creative that I could hardly sing a note myself.



When I asked him, afterwards, what led him to do this he replied, "When you played hymns in those days you often didn't play the written notes, especially in final verses, but **you made each verse different to bring out the meaning of the words.** So you'd effectively given me permission to do the same!"



The Colne Singers at Norwich Cathedral by Alizon Elliott

Over the last ten years many of us have enjoyed cathedral weeks, singing the week's services while the resident cathedral choir is on holiday. These have been organized by **Graham Moon** (former member of Blackburn Cathedral Choir and the Renaissance Singers) and his University friend, **Mark Bellis**. (Graham & Mark took it in turns to conduct us.) The name 'Colne Singers' came about because we have the town Colne here in Lancashire, near Graham's home, and there is a river Colne in Essex near where Mark lives, and so the name seemed to link the two. It takes some explaining when resident cathedral clergy enquire as to the origin of the name!

Last year the group should have sung in Canterbury, but covid put paid to that, and this year Norwich was planned. After much communication with the cathedral it was eventually agreed that the week could go ahead but with some restrictions. Only half the choir could rehearse in the song school at a time, and full rehearsals could only take place in the choir stalls in the rehearsal immediately before the service.

Prior to our visit there had been just one visiting choir for a weekend, and we would be the first choir in residence for the full week.



For many of us it was a difficult decision to make - what would things be like with the covid restriction? My husband, **Dave**, and I had planned to go, also our son **Andrew**, whom we hadn't seen in person since February 2020. Eventually we took the plunge, confirmed our accommodation and headed for Norwich.

Andrew Elliott is a lecturer at St. Catherine's College, Oxford.

On first arriving at the cathedral we found queues of visitors who were there to see **Dippy the Dinosaur** - the diplodocus copy skeleton from the Natural History Museum which was residing in the nave from 13 July to 30 October. Lots of excited children enjoyed their visit. Some older visitors did get tempted to stay for services having heard us rehearse! It did mean that getting into the cathedral from the song school, instead of a short walk under cover, involved going round the outside of the building. Fortunately the weather stayed fine for us! (Photo by **Dave Elliott**)



See the Colne Singers at Norwich on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fclOVE-UkCw>



Alizon & organist Ian Pattinson.

Graham Moon

(Photo below from the Sunday morning YouTube)



For most of us this was the first time for so long that we had sung in person in a good acoustic and it was quite emotional. We had a wonderful week, accompanied on the organ by **Ian Pattinson**, who has played for all the Colne Singers' visits.

Many thanks are due to Graham and Mark for making it all happen under very difficult circumstances. The group looks forward to visiting **Hereford Cathedral** next year.

From **IAN PATTINSON** – former organ scholar at Blackburn and now Organist of Lancaster Priory who played the organ in Norwich Cathedral for the COLNE SINGERS' visit:



Dear John,

Great to hear from you. Very many congratulations, belatedly, on your recent milestone of a birthday! I hope that you also are flourishing. I'm managing, so far, to keep away from viruses, including minor colds and more serious ones.

I played *Fugue sur le thème du Carillon des Heures de la cathédrale de Soissons* by Duruflé at the end of the Eucharist at Norwich Cathedral. Glad you liked it! I enjoyed playing it on an organ which is due to be taken out for restoration next year: so the Colne Singers were fortunate in having timed their visit for this summer.

The joint choir directors, **Graham** and **Mark** chose many well-known Evensong settings such as Murrill in E, Sumsion in A, Watson in E, Purcell in G minor (sung, as ever, in A minor!) and Wood in E flat No.2. We also did the less well-known Radcliffe in C, which the Colne Singers had previously sung in Lincoln Cathedral in 2012. It's probably fair to say that I had great fun in accompanying the Widor mass setting for two choirs and two organs. The anthems included Bainton's 'And I saw a new heaven', Brahms 'Geistliches Lied', and Purcell 'Hear my prayer'. Mark Bellis had recently composed a beautiful anthem, 'The Genealogy of Christ' (for soprano solo, SATB choir and organ) which we did on the Saturday.

I'm sure Alizon will have mentioned that during our week in the Cathedral, we met 'Dippy' the dinosaur (on a national tour from the Natural History Museum)!

All the very best,
Ian



Thanks to the initiative of an enterprising Lancashire musician, and the supportive encouragement of a distinguished Deputy Lieutenant, (South of Lancashire!) your editor was recently awarded an honorary doctorate (his second!). *How very generous friends can be!*

JB's first hon D. Mus was awarded as he completed his 40-year career of making music all over the world. His formative years began as a chorister in his Sussex parish church, then winning organ

scholarships to the RCM in London, to Oxford and to Cambridge. The '40 years' of directing ecclesiastical music began in Northampton, then Blackburn (also as Sr. Lect. @ RNCM) followed by Princeton, New Jersey, and also spreading out as far as Switzerland, South Africa, New Zealand & Australia as well as Canada and the USA. There was an ever-memorable ceremony in **Princeton University Chapel** when his doctor's hood and certificate were first presented.

Thank you, Rider University in Princeton!



But if JB were 15 years younger, he would certainly have hopped onto a plane for a similar ceremony in **Florida** to be dubbed Hon. Doctor of **Sacred Music!**

But, instead, the award came safely through the post and is now handsomely framed on JB's wall.

PS: The doctorate hood is ENORMOUS! *How very, very generous friends can be! THANK YOU.*

From honorary choirman, DAVID DEMACK in Leyland – "MUST WATCH!"

We have just been watching **Choral Evensong from Winchester**. The **music** was pure Winchester – total perfection and as always a delight – Canticles: *Dyson in D*, Anthem: *Bring us, O Lord God at our last awakening* – Sir William Harris, and Bach's *St. Anne Fugue* as Postlude played by the Director of Music, **Andrew Lumsden**.

But what we particularly found striking was the **sermon**. The service having been dedicated to the memory of one **Tim Pride**, a Winchester lay clerk who sadly died from Covid last year, the focus was on the contrast between music and silence, which was drawn both sensitively and eloquently.

We can honestly say that it was **one of the best sermons** Ruth and I have ever heard; if every sermon were as good as this one there would be no congregational complaints about their length or content!

So, if you did not watch this service, please do so.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UWyxudQ9PY>



MUST WATCH!!



**From our former Associate Director of Music,
GREG MORRIS**

who left us to become Organist of the **Temple Church** in the City of London plus other musical responsibilities ...
and then he was appointed Director of Music of **St. Margaret's Church** right next to Westminster Abbey (where his organist is **Tom Trotter** – one of the most brilliant organists in the UK! Tom gives weekly recitals in Birmingham Town Hall. But at the same time as Greg took up his new responsibilities **Covid struck** – thus no choral services!



Greg writes:

I am still DofM at St Margaret's, Westminster, though there is sadly no prospect of Sunday worship returning for the foreseeable future, if ever. But we are fairly busy this term with memorial services, weddings and, come December, carol services, both in St Margaret's and in the undercroft chapel in the Houses of Parliament. I also continue with my chamber choir, *Collegium Musicum of London*, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year, and the *Bar Choral Society*, as well as playing the organ as a visitor in all sorts of wonderful places.

Rachel continues to work full time as a neurology consultant at Addenbrookes in Cambridge, with a special interest in Epilepsy.

Anna (16, centre) did well in her GCSEs this summer, and has just started at Hills Road sixth form college, where she's taking French, History, English Literature and Maths. She continues to play the violin and sing, and hopes to read Arabic at University. **Joseph** (12, left) plays the 'cello and football, but his big love is drama, and he has just landed a role in the local pantomime. (A rather alarming footnote to this is that I have ended up being the pianist - I've never been to a panto before!)

Maddie (9, right) is in year 5, enjoying the *Shakespeare in Schools* project that they are doing at the moment, doing gymnastics, playing the flute and singing (all 3 sing in the choir of Little St Mary's in Cambridge).



These are tough times - I really hope the music at Blackburn is able to recover fully after everything we have all been through in the past 18 months. All power to everybody trying to ensure that it does!

**From our former organ scholar, HARVEY STANSFIELD
re our former Director of Music, GORDON STEWART**



Dear JB,

I just wanted to share with you my lovely visit to Birmingham Town Hall for the lunchtime organ recital last week given by **Gordon Stewart** as unfortunately **Thomas Trotter** wasn't able to play due to an injury.

Splendid programme and a real pleasure to meet Gordon after the recital too.

Best wishes,
Harvey
See more of Harvey on p.9.



Our New Contralto Lay Clerk Jessica Conway

I have loved music for as long as I can remember but I took up the violin when I was 4 years old, I think mostly because my mum is a violinist and I wanted the glamour of wearing concert dresses like she did! I didn't realise at the time that you don't get to perform in concerts until you're considerably older and have done a lot of practice...!



From then, I have always been passionate about performing, starting with National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and Edinburgh Youth Orchestra, then discovering singing at the National Youth Choir of Scotland aged 11.

Since then, I have studied at St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh and the University of York and have just finished a Masters in Vocal Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. I loved my time there, studying with the fantastic **Hilary Summers**, and am now embarking on a freelance career as a singer.

As well as doing some opera, I sing as a soloist for many choral societies across the UK and I specialise in singing in small chamber groups, such as Dunedin Consort and award-winning octet **Octavoce**.

The church singing tradition has been an amazing place for me to learn lots of good repertoire and I have always enjoyed the camaraderie of Sunday singing.

I already feel so welcomed at Blackburn Cathedral and I'm looking forward to some of the great music we have coming up over the next few months.

A very warm welcome to you, Jess, for you will add so much to our glorious music and to our lively fellowship. JB



ENJOY HARVEY STANSFIELD'S RECITAL IN HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, GOSPORT.

click:

[Organ Recital at Holy Trinity Church, Gosport](#)

Prelude and Fugue in E flat (BWV 552)
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Six studies in Canon form Op. 56
IV. Innig
Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Trois Pieces
III. Pièce héroïque
César Franck (1822-1890)

Harvey was, of course, organ scholar in Blackburn 3 years ago, followed by a similar post at Coventry Cathedral whilst studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

He's not only a talented organist, packed with energy, but he is also skilled in current internet technology.

From our Director of Music, **JOHN ROBINSON**,
who is now the conductor of the



"When I was Assistant Organist at **Carlisle Cathedral** right after being Organ Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, I found myself the director of **Cockermouth Harmonic Society** (by default!), one of the oldest such choirs in the world.

"I think I was probably a bit sceptical about what a shy 22 year old would be bringing to a large and experienced choir whose age ranged from 9 to 90. How wrong I was! They took me under their wing, and sang with tremendous energy, whatever I threw at them. We had a glorious time, in which I really discovered my love of the North, and especially the Choral Society tradition.



"My first accompanist was **Tim Ravalde** who went on to follow me at **St. John's Cambridge**, and who is now Assistant Organist of **Chichester Cathedral**. We had a great deal of fun. That choir had no airs and graces at all, but they worked really hard. There were sectional rehearsals led by enthusiastic volunteers in their houses so that by Monday night they would all be in shape.

"So, I gradually upped the ante, until we sang **Stravinsky's** *Symphony of Psalms* in concert with a choral version of **Borodin's** *Polovtsian Dances*, after a year or two. I remember my final concert with the group was as part of the **Carlisle Festival**, with other societies from the area, in Schubert's Mass in E-flat, and **Beethoven's** *Symphony 9*, with the Northern Sinfonia.

"So when **Blackburn Music Society** sounded me out about filling in for a term, although we are rather understaffed at the Cathedral at the moment, I considered it my duty to give back to the world of choral societies, and do my best for them (also on a Monday night).

"They are a splendid group of people, with a mighty alto section(!) and general will to sing very well. They are brilliantly organised by Chairperson **Gill Broom** and accompanist **Joy Fielding**, (no relation to William). Gill & Joy are Blackburn Choral legends in themselves. So, I do feel I've come full circle.

"We've been working on breathing a lot, and especially on awareness of the **epigastrum*** and its role in 'support' which I learned about while in the USA, where they are very interested in vocal health."

[**epigastrum*** During breathing the diaphragm contracts and flattens, **displacing the viscera and producing an outward movement of the upper abdominal wall** (epigastric region). It is a convergence of the diaphragm and the abdominals, so that "when both sets of muscles (diaphragm and abdominals) tense, the epigastrum pushes forward". *from Google*]

"We're working towards a **Fauré Requiem** in the Spring, as well as **Handel's Messiah** Choruses on November 20th at St. Silas Church. We will also be joining the **Blackburn Chamber Choir** and **Cathedral Choristers** on the **Tuesday of Holy Week**, with the **English Touring Opera**, in a performance of Bach's **St. Matthew Passion**, in the Cathedral.

"When our Organist Emeritus sent an email to me & pointed out that **Herman Brearley** had founded the **Blackburn Music Society** it was a day we happened to be singing Brearley's '*God be in my Head*' with the choristers here, which I took as a sign of some kind. I know of one other rather splendid work by him, but would be fascinated to know of more. Meanwhile, here's to some happy Monday evening rehearsals!"



Blackburn Cathedral Choristers, past and present:
Send **your news**, with photos, to john.bertalot@gmail.com for **M&M**

From former long-time Blackburn chorister and choirman
J. DAVID ROTHWELL who recently left Lancashire.



David was a TLD chorister, then stayed in our choir for very many years as a magnificent bass. He has moved from Preston to Nottingham.

I am now a regular member of the choir at **St Mary's Church, Nottingham**. I think that my Dyson in F solo on my third service there was probably my 'audition'! Our Director of Music is **John Anthony Keys**.

There's a choral scholarship scheme for people in full time education, which attracts student singers from the Universities. There is also an organ scholarship scheme in partnership with Trent College, Long Eaton which attracts people who want some experience, usually before taking up an organ scholarship at Oxford or Cambridge.

It is a real pleasure to sing with them – they are a group of very talented singers and it is very satisfying to be part of such a good choir. I think I am the eldest member by some margin! I am familiar with much of the repertoire, though there is still an opportunity to do some sight-singing! The Sopranos make a beautiful sound.

The Church is enormous – and most impressive.



I guess the choir's attendance averages about 25 people

...all adults, most of whom are undergraduates or pursuing 2nd degrees.



There was an informal 'curry night' after Evensong on Wednesday, which was great for getting to know people better. Unfortunately, one of the contraltos tested positive for Covid 2 days later. I had been sitting directly opposite her at the meal, but, fortunately, I seem to be OK – a Lateral Flow Test on Saturday morning proved negative. Nevertheless, I had yesterday off, just in case I was carrying the virus, so as not to (possibly) infect others. I have still not had any symptoms and, assuming that another Lateral Flow Test is negative tomorrow, I will be back in action for Wednesday Evensong - Stanford in B flat & Wesley's 'In Exitu'.

There are still no Friday night choir practices (because of Covid restrictions), so each service is based on a 30-40 minute pre-service rehearsal.

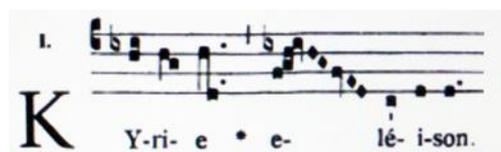
Our house is coming together now in terms of furniture etc., and we should be almost 'complete' by Christmas – everything has just taken so long from order placement to delivery – Covid and Brexit are the favourite excuses!

I trust that everything is OK with you.

I hope to be able to create a bit of time for a slightly longer visit to Blackburn soon, so I'll let you know when I'm coming and hope to pop in for a cuppa, if you're available.

Take Care, David

When David first moved to Nottingham he sang for a while in the choir of Nottingham RC Cathedral under the direction of former Blackburn Choral Scholar **Gregory Treloar**, however he found sight-singing plainsong in neumes somewhat challenging. But thank you, Gregory, for giving David that valuable, educational and so-welcoming experience. JB



Can you work this out? It's quite easy if you realize that the second note is B flat. (The first (lower) note is A)

Who else is Newly Who in the Back Row of our Cathedral Choir? See also p.9

REBECCA WEAVER Contralto

I was born into a family of non-musicians but one that whole heartedly supported and encouraged me to pursue any path I chose. I sang in a local youth choir who were trained by rote with an exceptional level of discipline that resulted in two first place rankings in the children's choirs category at Llangollen International Eisteddfod between 2000 and 2008. Recorder playing however was my true passion, until I reinvented myself as a first study singer when embarking on my undergraduate music degree at The University of Sheffield.

In my third year came the first significant decision about music and my career as I turned down the opportunity to perform in an opera project in favour of organising it. Eight years later and after various roles in schools and venues, I gained an MA in Arts Management, specialising in audience development,

and began my tenure at King George's Hall, Blackburn.



In those interim years I relocated to Somerset and auditioned for the Bath Bach Choir with Nigel Perrin and promptly found myself singing with them, his Chamber Choir, Bath Camerata, and the Bath Festival Chorus. It was my first opportunity to sing some of the staples of the choral repertoire and certainly instilled a desire in me to continue singing at some level. A move to Hertfordshire led me to the Holst Singers and then Blackburn which, with its wealth of choirs, opened the door for me into liturgical singing.

Throughout the pandemic, alongside time to focus on delivering a range of digital projects within a full-time day job, I enjoyed a number of musical opportunities through the creation of Cathedra Voices at Blackburn Cathedral and a digital infrastructure at Bradford Cathedral which enabled them to live stream. I've loved being immersed in liturgical music over the last 18 months and was delighted when the opportunity arose to continue with that into this academic year with Blackburn Cathedral Choir.

Aside from music, I'm currently the administrator for the Ribble Valley International Piano Festival and, after a decade working in Programming and Marketing at King George's Hall and Darwen Library Theatre, I have recently moved into a Programming and Partnerships role at The Grand Theatre, Blackpool.



CALLUM McCANDLESS Bass

I have been involved with singing in choirs for over a decade but I took up the violin when I was 5 years old, followed by the piano at 7 and finally voice at 11. I didn't realise music was my ultimate passion until I joined a choir and sang in St Paul's Cathedral.



From then, I have always been passionate about performing, starting with playing violin in the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland from aged 10 before switching to voice in the National Youth Choir of Scotland aged 11.



Since then, I have studied music in school and travelled to many significant musical venues across the globe. I have just finished a Bachelor's degree in Classical Voice at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. I learned so much during my four year tenure and I'm excited that I'm currently doing a Master's at the same place. I continued to pursue choral singing throughout my undergraduate studies and during lockdown.

The choral singing at church is, regrettably, something I know very little of. In my few weeks of singing at Blackburn Cathedral, I have never felt such commitment to the music being performed and I'm looking forward to expanding my repertoire knowledge and bonding with my fellow choir-mates this year.

WELCOME, Rebecca and Callum and Jess again (p.9) !



From **CONSTANCE HEALD** (founder-member of the Blackburn Bach Choir, 1965)

who attended the choristers' Reunion in September which also celebrated JB's 90th.

Dear John

What an absolute delight and pleasure it was for me to be able to be with you at Evensong with Dorothy on 12th September and to join in your 90th BIRTHDAY celebrations, and for you to be on such good form. The October M&M was also a great joy to read and in what other publication would you read articles ranging from a wonderful rendition of the **Chattanooga Choo Choo** to pictures of the

huge **Lego Parasaurolophus**, not to mention all the memories from past choristers and up-dates from those who have gone on to have marvellous musical careers fostered from their time as choristers and lay clerks at Blackburn Cathedral.



Our church in Ely (St. Mary's) is now closed for at least nine months for major transformation work of the interior to be carried out returning in the summer of 2022 into a renewed and transformed space available for use seven days a week by Church, and Community groups,. The Makin organ will be re-sited to the left of the Chancel steps.

So, am now playing keyboard for the 8.30 am HC Service in the Chapel of the former Ely Retreat House. Happy Days!

With my love and best wishes

Constance

From **MILDRED SLEIGHT** (also a founder-member of the Blackburn Bach Choir, 1965)

who also attended the choristers' Reunion in September.



Kathleen Robson and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Blackburn Cathedral on Sept. 12th for it was so good to meet up with our fellow singers once again, from those days of yore. We loved chatting to the twins **Constance Heald** and **Dorothy Wade**... apparently they hadn't seen each other for 2 years. With Covid restrictions now lifted, Constance had travelled up from Ely by train to spend a few days in Preston with Dorothy.

It was also lovely talking to **John Marr** – what a nice gentleman he is.

I was also able to tell him a few things about his mother, **Doreen**, when we were both in St.



Michael's Youth Club and church choir as teenagers into our early 20s.

I'm sure you are well aware that Evensong has more or less disappeared from most of our Parish Churches, so it was really good to be in Blackburn Cathedral for that service and to hear the choir lead the singing once again after so many months of restrictions. I particularly enjoyed the anthem *Let all the world* (RVW) for it reminded me of being asked to be the accompanist for a concert given by the **National Youth Choir of Great Britain** here in Scunthorpe. Some of the older teenagers in our own Scunthorpe choir joined forces with the NYCGB for the day and we all had an exciting time.

May you have enjoyed the special Reception given in honour of your 90th birthday, for we certainly did!

For recent copies of Blackburn's **MUSIC & MORE**, click <https://www.fcoca.org.uk/members-news.html>

Your Editor sent birthday greetings to our former Dean, David Frayne in October.

He replied from his home in North Somerset:

“Thank you for your birthday greetings! Yes - we celebrated the day "family style" with our daughters who both live near us here in Clevedon before a two-some lunch at a local pub the day after. The attached photos tell that there is still a bit of puff left - and for which I also gave thanks to the Good Lord as I celebrated the **60th anniversary** of ordination as priest here at All Saints, Clevedon at Michaelmas

“**Liz and I** send our love and prayers for you and any at Blackburn who still remember us after 20 years of retirement! David”



60th Anniversary as a Priest

& Birthday cake

+++++

It was the most enormous privilege and joyful delight to meet again the HUNWICK extended family along with Derek & Marilyn CROMPTON all of whom, on Oct. 23, gave your editor a surprise second 90th birthday lunch at the Millstone, Mellor, followed by a relaxing cuppa in the Hunwicks' holiday home near Langho.



The delicious birthday cake at the Millstone seemed to have 90 strawberries on top and all around!



But this group, taken after a cuppa at Langho, illustrates many inspirational years in the choir of Blackburn Cathedral: L-R **DEREK CROMPTON** with **MARILYN** (who live near Blackburn). DEREK was one of JB's first 'new boys' in 1965 – he became an outstanding treble soloist (see insert top L.) and graduated to be an equally highly committed solo tenor in the Cathedral Choir for very many years until Covid hit.

Next to Marilyn is former most faithful Cathedral tenor **PHIL HUNWICK** who, with his late wife, **JOAN**, sired two equally talented Blackburn cathedral choristers: **CHRIS** (far right) with his family: **GERALDINE**, **Miranda** (aet 10) & **William**. Chris is archivist to the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, and **NOEL** (next to **JB**, see JB as chorister in Sussex 80 years ago, insert above) and Noel's wife **EMMA** (son **Teddy**, inserted below her, was sleeping!). **NOEL** won a choral scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford and he helped to create two outstanding **INAMO** restaurants in London. His brother, **CHRIS**, studied 'Greats' at Lincoln College, Oxford, and won a half blue for **Rugby League** (see insert above top R.)

And may it be remembered, with thanksgiving, that the music of Blackburn Cathedral was greatly enhanced and blessed during a period of nearly 60 years by these dedicated, highly committed and most gifted choristers. THANK YOU!



Come and Sing!

An open morning
for boys and girls to find out more
admission free

Blackburn Cathedral

Saturday November 13th
2021

Saturday, November 13th 9.00am - 10.30am

For more details, and to book in, please contact
John Robinson, Director of Music
john.robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk



Yes! Parents of current choristers are urged to seek out their neighbours who have young children so that they, too, may experience this special day of singing in the Cathedral.

The best recruiters for a choir are those who are already singing in it!!