

hello OCTOBER

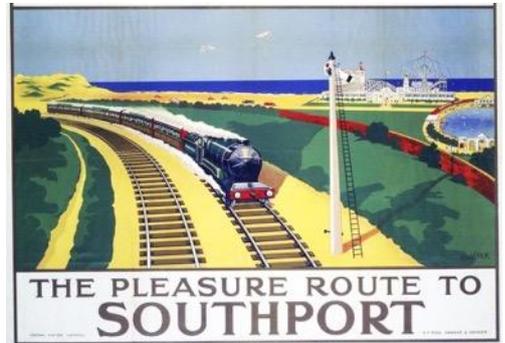
MUSIC & MORE

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

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL 2021

Editor john.bertalot@gmail.com

LITTLE MOMENTS = BIG = MEMORIES



Readers of M&M will remember that, in the **July 2021** issue, former chorister **Peter Crowther** (see pp 5 & 7 here)

mentioned the Blackburn Cathedral choristers' annual outings to Southport when **T. L. Duerden** was Director of Music:

- "The choirboys' annual trip to Southport: sailing on the Marine Lake and enjoying other attractions - and ending the day with a fish and chip supper at Salt's Café..."
- There is a story going round that the trip to Southport was by **train** and that all the boys tried to get into a carriage that TLD was not in, so that they could enjoy themselves without TLD spoiling it for them. **This may or may not be true but I never experienced it.**"



But read what former chorister **Bryan Lamb** remembers about those train journeys!

"All the 'good' boys used to travel **on the train to Southport** with TLD in his carriage. Not being so categorised **I used to join the other lot in a separate compartment where we could all smoke!**"

More cathedral choir memories from **Bryan Lamb**, former (naughty?) chorister, who became a Squadron Leader and travelled around the world.

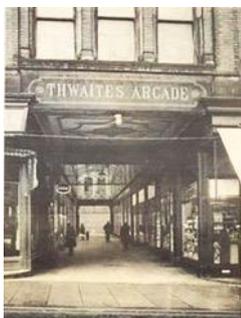
"**I only played truant from my cathedral duties once, and I will never forget that occasion.** It was at the end of February 1943. By this time I had

moved to Blakey Moor School where I spent a dismal year in post-failure of the 11-plus gloom before going to QEGS. It was a Thursday and I was due to appear for the normal weekday Evensong, but for some reason I got fed up and **decided I wouldn't go.** I think the sub organist, Mr. Hoskins, must have been in charge that day. I wouldn't have dared to be absent if TLD was around.

"Unfortunately I was supposed to meet my Mother and Air-Force-elder-brother in **Thwaites Arcade** after the service. Unbeknown to me, they had decided to go to Evensong. I wasn't there, of course, and took some tracing afterwards. A right old ticking off ensued.

"My brother was a great diarist and I still have his wartime volumes for 1942 and '43 which describe his operational experiences. His very last entry describes the tedious behaviour of his small brother that day.

"Five nights later he was killed on the way back from Cambridgeshire base after unloading high explosives over Berlin from a Stirling bomber."



T. L. DUERDEN, DoM Blackburn 1939-1964 playing the organ from its former position over the current clergy steps to the central altar.

T. L. DUERDEN with Bishop Baddeley, D.S.O., M.C. War hero, who served as Bishop of Melanesia from 1932 to 1947 and Bishop of Blackburn from 1954 until his death in 1960.





From an article in the Cathedral Choirs' Newsletter, Spring 1981:
by former chorister, and subsequently Cathedral Bass,
JACK SMETHURST

who became 'your friendly neighbourhood copper' - his son was in the choir - but Jack also had had an 'after death' experience which helped many who feared death. He was a tremendous character and loved by us all.

Jack wrote: "A MOLE IN THE CHOIR?"

"The British Intelligence Service had no greater admirer than the former master of the Choristers, **THOMAS LUCAS DUERDEN** Mus. Bac.(Dunelm), who exercised control of his boys with a firmness of a Victorian father and the subtlety of MI 5 and 6.

1944



"My awareness of his talents in the espionage field was suddenly brought home to me when, on a Saturday in the early Spring of 1944, a fellow chorister – who shall be nameless (but is the elder of a family which has a large representation in the Choristers' Association) and myself decided that we would not attend the R.S.C.M. Diocesan Choirs' Festival to be held in **St. Silas' Church, Blackburn**, that evening but would instead go to a birthday party to which we had been invited. Our decision was swayed by the fact that the party was for a girl to whom we were both attracted, and the prospect of *Postman's Knock* was too much to forego.

"On that fateful morning when we attended the last rehearsal for the festival, we decided that we would not inform T.L. of our conspiracy as the thought of his reaction made us

tremble in our boots.

"Throughout the practice we diligently did our best, for any variation in our usual performance would have been spotted immediately. We exchanged knowing looks occasionally and at the termination of the practice we made last minute plans to meet that evening to attend the party.

Knock – knock



"On leaving the Song School I made my way home by 'bus and on arriving, there being no-one in the house I lit an illicit cigarette. I had only just finished it when I heard a knocking on the front door. I went to answer the caller's knock, thinking of nothing else than the pleasures of the evening which were to come.

"On opening the door I was confronted by **the piercing eyes of T.L.** with a face one could have made horseshoes on. I very nearly had an emergency which would have involved the laundry man, for I knew that our whole secret had been blown.

"In a few short words that gave off fire and brimstone T.L. revealed his knowledge of our whole plot and made me feel that I was on nodding terms with the lowest creature that crawled on the earth. In the face of this massive onslaught and rendered defenceless by the suddenness of his appearance and his bewildering knowledge of our scheme, I surrendered unconditionally and quickly agreed with him that the salvation from eternal damnation was to attend the Diocesan Festival. My friend was also confronted in a similar manner.

Police Baffled

"To this day I do not know how T.L. could possibly have been aware of our careful plans as my conspirator and I did not discuss them with anyone. I am convinced that if the British Intelligence Service is half as good as T.L. was, our country is safe from any machinations of a foreign power. Needless to say the Festival went well, and the two former plotters gave of their best, under a very watchful eye!"



+++++

Readers of M&M will remember that in our **AUGUST 2021** edition we featured former Head Chorister **CHRIS SNAPE** who won a place to Clitheroe Royal Grammar School where he played lead trumpet in the school's wholly exceptional **SWING BAND**

Photo: CRGS SWING BAND in our cathedral crypt led by Nigel Spooner



So here they are playing **Chattanooga Choo-choo!**
double click to the left
Enjoy!!



OCTOBER WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS

12.15pm

Stay for lunch afterwards in the Cathedral Café

6th **Anthony Gritten** Organ. Royal Academy of Music

Anthony Gritten has given recitals in Canada & France, as well as over 300 recitals throughout the UK.

13th No recital

20th **Samantha Poh** Organ. Our new Organ scholar

27th No recital



From our cathedral's former music secretary, **Gill Fourie**

Singing in schools has been so hard hit during the last few years but I'm delighted to say **David Scott-Thomas**, **Matthew Thomas** and **Tom Newall** and I are back working in schools as we have always done.

Last week I had 120+ KS2 children singing in the hall all together for the first time. It was very emotional for all of us and luckily the children haven't forgotten all the words! Interestingly the youngest children, aged 7 have little recollection of singing worship songs in the hall as they stopped when they were in year 1 (5 years old).

It is so important that we continue to motivate and inspire teachers and engage the next generation of musicians so we shall be **continuing to recruit children to sing in other choirs including, of course, the cathedral, as the continuation of church music is so important to all of us.** I shall let you know of any concerts and particularly of any resulting videos that can be linked to your M&M publication!



Thank you for including my work in M&M, it is very much appreciated.

OLLIE FULWELL and family

It was very good to visit former choir parents, **Kate & Daren Fulwell** in September – just before **Ollie** returned to York University to start his second year of music studies. Ollie, like his younger brother, Leo, was an **outstanding** head chorister during **Sam Hudson's** years with us! (Ollie drove JB to and from the Fulwell home as JB doesn't drive these days!)

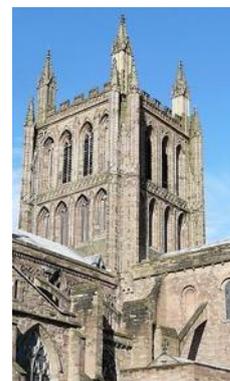
Kate is still involved with the Blackburn Music Society (which our **John Robinson** now conducts – which is highly appropriate for that fine choir was founded by **Herman Brearley** – the first organist of Blackburn Cathedral).

Daren works from home – which is most convenient for everyone – even though the 'decorators' were in. Kate and Daren are thinking of moving away from Blackburn in the not too distant future. **We shall sorely miss them for their whole family were so closely involved in so many Cathedral volunteer activities.**



Younger son **Leo**, is enjoying his year as choral scholar in the choir of **Hereford Cathedral**. A position recently held by his elder brother, Ollie. (What a terrific thrill this must be, for the Hereford Cathedral choir is one of the finest in this country – which would also involve singing in the prestigious Three Choirs' Festivals!)

Kate told your editor that she and Daren watch Sunday services which are streamed live from Hereford Cathedral. Roll on the time when Blackburn Cathedral can do the same – but, of course, that would cost money!



THE WORCESTER
THREE CHOIRS
FESTIVAL 2021
TRIUMPH for our
former Director of
Music: **SAMUEL
HUDSON** which the
Church Times described
'a heroic festival - a
resplendent week of
events'.



Here is Sam acknowledging the applause during the final concert of the Festival after Guy Johnstone had played Herbert Howells' Cello Concerto.

(Photo by The Church Times – on line)

The Church Times also gave special mention of 'our' **DAVID BRIGGS'** contribution to the Worcester Festival which was described as *staggeringly commanding – joyously flamboyant – dazzling transcriptions of orchestral works (Mahler especially) ... an international triumph*'.

Blackburn Cathedral lays claim to **David Briggs** for, during **JB's time**, he gave here his very first organ recital when he was only 14 – and played the whole programme from memory. He is now a world class virtuoso recitalist headquartered in New York. Many years later, during **Richard Tanner's time**, he headed up the Appeal as our Consultant for the restoration and enlargement of our organ. David regards our Blackburn organ as one of his favourite organs in this country.



double click above

So here is David playing one of his organ transcriptions – from Mahler's 5th Symphony, familiar for its emotional use in the film *Death in Venice*.

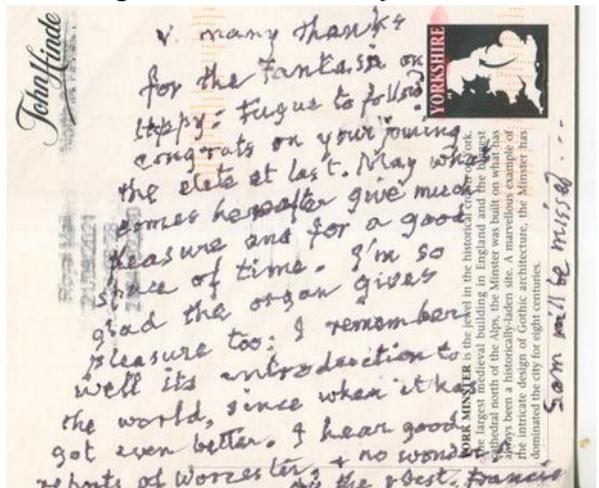


Dr. FRANCIS JACKSON CBE

Organist and Director of Music, York Minster 1946-82...

who was the Consultant for our brand new organ way back in 1969 (i.e. he worked with JB and Walker's Organ Builders on every last detail of the instrument which we now enjoy) ...he is one of the most highly respected Cathedral Directors of Music not only in this country but also around the world.

On October 2nd Dr. Jackson celebrates his 104th birthday!!



JB sent him an early birthday card, not expecting a reply, BUT Dr. Jackson DID!!! He sent a postcard and wished JB a Happy 90th. Now that is olde world courtesy indeed!

When the Blackburn Cathedral Choirs' Association held their Annual Reunion on Sunday 12th September

we were *thrilled to bits* to welcome folk who had travelled long distances to be with us.



A special guest was **ALASTAIR POLLARD**, Secretary of the **National Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers' Association**. (He'd been a chorister at Durham Cathedral.)



One OC had travelled all the way from near Hereford, and another faithful singer had come from Ely (see below). And there were **FOUR founder members** of the newly renamed **Blackburn Chamber Choir** (originally: **Blackburn Bach Choir**, founded by JB in 1965!)

The afternoon began with the traditional (fairly exciting) Annual General Meeting chaired by our Director of Music, **John Robinson**, after which we all tried to **squeeze** together to fit into JB's camera view-finder:



JB (DoM 1964-1982), **John Marr** (BCCA Treasurer, Prefect 1974), **Andrew Orr** (Chairman 2003, new committee member), **Graham Chapelhow** (BCCA Secretary, Prefect 1976), **Iain Thompson** (Prefect 1979 [see p. 12](#)), **Louie Hindle** (current Youth Choir), **Clara Slater** (BCCA Student rep. Prefect 2017), **Adrian Wilson** (Sr. Old Chorister 2017), **John Robinson** (DoM 2019), **Alastair Pollard** (FCOCA Secretary), **Allan Holden** (Prefect 1945) **Philip Carr** (Prefect 1970), **Peter Crowther** (Prefect 1958, [see pp. 1&7](#)).



John Robinson then rehearsed the cathedral choir (men, girls and boys) for Sunday Choral Evensong,

whilst the rest of us enjoyed a refreshing cuppa and caught up with each others' news.



Millie Sleight (R) from Scunthorpe, N. Lincs, a founder-member of the **Blackburn Bach Choir**, talked with BCCA Treasurer, **JOHN MARR**,

whilst, (below) **Kathleen Robson** from Horwich, who joined the **BBC** just a year after it was formed, talked with long-time Old Chorister, **ALLAN HOLDEN**, watched

by BCCA treasurer **GRAHAM CHAPELHOW** and former chorister and former Church Warden **PHILIP CARR**.



Twin sisters, **Constance Heald** from Ely, whose news often appears in M&M, and **Dorothy Coupe** from Preston, founder-members of the **BBC** with **JB** (founder-conductor)



As with all our guests it was a special joy to welcome 1977 choir prefect **Stephen Rickerby** and wife & business partner **Lisa Shekede** who had come all the way from Ross-on-Wye.



See their **supa website**

<https://www.rickerby-shekede.com/about-us>



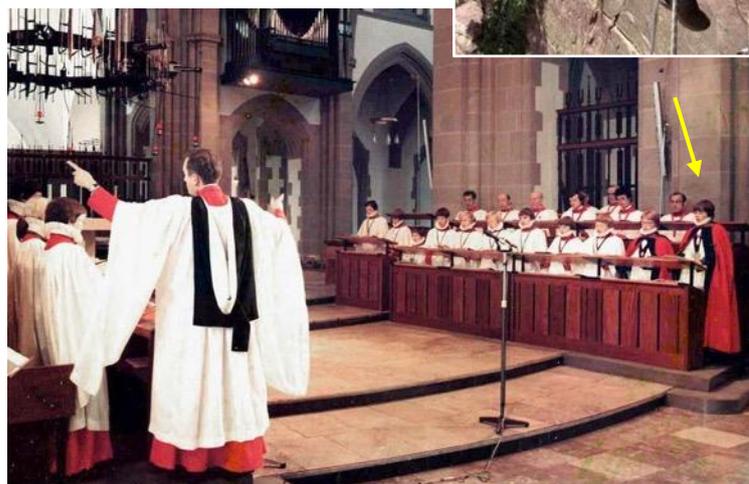
Readers of M&M will remember, in the November 2020 edition of M&M, that **Stephen** was shown fulfilling his specialist profession as a **conservator of historic wall paintings around the world**, which sometimes involved hazardous moments: here he was, in a **red** helmet, scaling a cliff-face to reach a painting in Ethiopia!!



Go back 44 years: see Head Chorister, Stephen Rickerby on the far right, singing for **the final consecration of Blackburn Cathedral in 1977** in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra!

So, present day choristers, who are dressed in similar impressive robes, you, too, will grow up and go into the big wide world where **the sky's the limit**. So, **make up your mind now to strive to be able to FULFIL YOUR DESTINY as Stephen has!**

See more of Stephen on **page 12** and what our choir meant & still means to him!



After an impressive Choral Evensong, sung by our boys and girls and 'back row' directed by **John Robinson** and assisted by our new organ scholar **Samantha Poh**, we all gathered for a group photograph, with the choir:



The **Dean** (L): Front row L: founder-members of the **BBC** with founder-member and OC **Peter Crowther** next to JB, & former choristers (already named) on the right but with the addition of **Edward Haythornwhite** 4th from R.

But the evening was not yet over, for we all trooped into the South Transept where there was a generous reception with wine, delicious nibbles and an amazing **birthday cake** to celebrate JB's 90th birthday in 3 days' time.



Colin Jones, the Cathedral's Chief Financial and Operating Officer (left) dispensed wine (generously!)

Long-time member of the Singers, **Alizon Elliott** (R) was there talking to **Kathleen**

Robson & Millie Sleight (and you'll recognise well-known members of our congregation there, too.)



The Chairman of the **BCC** - **Alan Crameri** (R) presented JB with a birthday card signed by all members of the choir. (*Thank you!*)

Some of our new Lay Clerks were there. See page 11.



John Marr (L) presented JB with bag full of presents from BCCA. (*Thank you!*)

And then JB cut the 'organ console' cake, which had been wondrously created by **Laura** from our Cathedral Café.



Thank you all, dear friends, for a truly wonderful day! JB

THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY

**James Davy conducted Choral Evensong with his Chelmsford Cathedral Choir
LIVE ONLINE**

and he was generous enough to choose all the music by JB:
Responses, psalm chant, Canticles and anthem.



Whatta gracious birthday present!

Very many of us remember James' creative ministry with us at Blackburn during RICHARD TANNER'S tenure: his lively creative presence, his marvellous sense of humour, his impeccably talented playing and so much more.

Well, he's doing the same at Chelmsford. And even though the Covid situation has decimated his boy choristers (there were only six) yet they sang with tremendous confidence – including ringing top Gs even in divisi.

THANK YOU, JAMES, and very well done!

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL : outside the West door:

LEFT: We're still offering COVID jobs

RIGHT: a wonderful display of flowers



and **inside:** an inspiring series of bosses on the Nave roof.





Jeremy Duerden's **LANCASHIRE WALKS**

The **Blackburn Cathedral Rambling Group** was able in 2020, to enjoy a temporary relaxation of the restrictions imposed because of the Covid pandemic, but it soon came to an end. We were keen to use what was left of this year when the rules were relaxed once more, and this time without a false dawn. Half of the year's programme was lost but we made up for it with some excellent outings, both gentle and not so.

We were fortunate in the weather when walking along the banks of the **River Ribble from Hurst Green**, one of Nature's better examples of Lancashire scenery, the river that is, not the village, which was packed with others of similar intent, to enjoy the freedom so long denied us.



A few brave souls tackled the Langdales in the Lake District, and the less adventurous gathered at the epicentre of Great Britain at Dunsop Bridge.



A walk in the Ribble Valley was in sunny weather, although the wet conditions which had obtained beforehand had encouraged huge amounts of growth in the **riverside plants which gave the impression of jungle trekking**, but without the benefit of a machete to hack the way through.



A promise to climb Kinder Scout, the scene of the mass trespass nearly 90 years ago, which gave rise to so much open access to the hills in the UK, was frustrated in 2020, but was made good in July, with a good turnout of walkers who tackled the 543 metres of ascent over nearly 14 kilometres in warm sunshine, pausing at the trig point 633 metres above sea level for the obligatory photo.



The views over the Cheshire plain and Manchester towards Blackburn and Rossendale, were well worth the effort of the climb, and, of course, what goes up comes down, so there was ample time for chatting as well as inspecting the ancient Edale Cross.



The most recent walk was in the spectacular, if flat, Fylde Coast from Conder Green through Glasson Dock and to the historic ruins of Cockersand Abbey.

The morning circle was seven miles long, slightly lengthened by a footpath having been overgrown by the reeds which grow profusely in that area.



After lunch at The Stork Inn, a listed old inn recently reopened after a devastating fire, we took a short, three-mile stroll to the east.



More walks are planned for the rest of the year including a visit to the restored gardens at Rivington Pike, with a climb up the pike itself, a modest walk in central Lancashire, and there is always a short Christmas walk, to allow a proper get-together at lunch toward the end of the season.

The Walking Group is mixed in ability and persuasion, including friends of members, who have no connection with Blackburn Cathedral, but who are always welcomed when

they can join in. If you want to look at joining any of the rest of the year's programme you would be welcome.

Full details may be obtained from [Jeremy Duerden](mailto:jeremy.duerden@virginmedia.com) who coordinates the rambles, on jeremy.duerden@virginmedia.com. We have welcomed new members of the group this year and are always happy to have new walkers come along with us.



WE WELCOME MANY NEW LAY CLERKS and a new ORGAN SCHOLAR.

Here's our new TENOR LAY CLERK, **SAMUEL MAY**

Dear Dr Bertalot,

I met you at your 90th birthday Evensong where you took a picture of me and two other scholars. (See p.7) John Robinson has said you would appreciate my writing my musical experience for your magazine. I've written a little précis below : -

I am 18 and have been a choral scholar at Blackburn Cathedral since September 2021.

In 2014, when I joined my local parish church choir near Canterbury as a treble, I'd never thought it would have led to such an intense enthusiasm now for Anglican church music.

Singing such beautiful music each week in my skilled church choir encouraged me to take my newly-found passion further. My greatest memories are singing in Canterbury Cathedral in many RSCM (of which I'm now a proud member) festivals, choir tours to Norwich, St Albans and Guildford and numerous other cathedrals, and simply being part of weekly worship. Later, I enjoyed being organ scholar there, accompanying the choir in psalm, anthems, and hymns. This is something I'd love to continue to do.

Even from humble beginnings, I was inspired to join a number of other choirs such as Kent Youth Choir to soak up as much music as I could.

For my A Levels, I started at **St Edmund's School, Canterbury**, owing to its strong tradition as a choir school (incidentally, it is where the Canterbury Cathedral choristers attend). It was there that my love of choral music was magnified as I was able to perform great masterworks such as Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* at the Gala concert in Canterbury cathedral and countless other works.



It was truly inspiring!

It was also at **St Edmund's School** that I developed my ecumenical musicianship when I started studies at the organ under **Dr David Flood** and **Mr Adrian Bawtree**, both organists at the cathedral.

This year, I started here at Blackburn Cathedral as a tenor choral scholar; it's been so humbling to take such a prominent position in cathedral worship - and it's been great fun!

I am also continuing my organ studies with **Mr John Robinson** and am working

towards my Grade 8, which is very exciting. I also currently study Biomedical Science at **Lancaster University** while here at Blackburn.

I look forward to being part of the vibrant community at Blackburn.



Welcome, Sam ... and welcome to your colleagues whose articles will appear in succeeding M&Ms.

Introducing our new ORGAN SCHOLAR – SAMANTHA POH



Samantha comes from Singapore. She writes:

My mother met an educational consultant who recruited international students in Singapore for schools in the UK and decided (with my input) that it would greatly broaden my horizons to send me abroad.

I arrived in the UK in 2016 and was schooled at Ruthin, I was taught mainly by Fay Adamson, an organist in Wales and got to know the *organ*-isation of the surrounding area.

I had several lessons with the late **Roger Fisher** (former DoM of Chester Cathedral) and it became apparent that I wished to pursue the organ seriously, and so I also had lessons with **John Hosking** (who is Director of Music of Holy Trinity, Southport) and **Philip Rushforth** (the present DoM of Chester Cathedral). At some point, this grew into accompanying services at St Asaph Cathedral and playing at Chester's 2017 Organ Marathon, where I played Guilman's first Sonata.

I eventually became a choral scholar at **Keble College, Oxford**,

(I have perfect pitch) and I spent my undergraduate choral scholar years with the luxury of playing the very fine Keble organ. Through Keble I became strongly acquainted with the ins and outs of Anglican and Catholic church music - Keble's Tractarian roots introduced me to the best of both worlds.

It is likely this proximity to Keble's annual Early Music Festival and tutorials, with the likes of **Robert Quinney** (DoM New College, Oxford), Professor **Steven Grahl** of Christ Church, Oxford, and Professor **Owen Rees** of The Queen's College, Oxford, which led my academic career in the direction of early sacred music. I went through my finals with particular emphases on early music-oriented options. These included writings on the works of Josquin, pitch standards in the modern performance of early choral music, an imitation mass movement in the style of Palestrina, and a module on choral performance - sightreading in conventional, part-book and plainchant notation.

My continued instruction on the organ while I was at Oxford was given by **Sebastian Thomson** (Blackburn recitalist on 29 Sept.), whom I got to know via John Hosking from Southport.

I also got to hear of the Blackburn Cathedral Organ Scholarship post through John Hosking, and believed (rightly so!) that **John Robinson** and I would get along. Not to mention the effusive praise JR has for the Blackburn organ which, after Oxford I spent a year back in Singapore being relegated to an electronic machine (I accompanied some services at a local church for a time) sounded to me like an oasis looks to a man dying of thirst when I first walked into Blackburn cathedral. Accommodation being included on site was also a big factor (and the **trumpets en chamade**). In essence, a confluence of every good thing I was looking for in a post; I've been truly lucky to get here.



WELCOME, SAMANTHA! We're lucky to have you here for this exciting year.



A wholly delightful letter from Iain Thompson (see page 5) **about him and Stephen Rickerby**

Hi JB,

I thought you might like this follow up story from this year's BCCA meeting.

I don't think I had seen **Stephen Rickerby** for about 40 years, so it was nice to see him at your birthday party.

In conversation I asked where he was living nowadays and he said Ross-on-Wye. Now **Carrie-Anne and I had never been to Ross-on-Wye**, but the week after BCCA we were heading down to South Wales for a family wedding, and by pure coincidence we had chosen to break the journey with a short stay in Ross, and on Thursday of that week we had booked to eat in the pub just round the corner from where Stephen and Lisa live.

So we enjoyed some very pleasant pre-dinner drinks in their lovely garden, and Carrie-Anne took this photo. **As you probably remember, when I first joined the choir (in 1976) I was "assigned" to stand next to Stephen, who was a head prefect at the time, and I had to follow his music. A few years later (in 1979) I inherited that same set of Can 1 music!**

All the best

Iain

I am *greatly* moved by your letter, Iain, for it encapsulates the very essence of Christian fellowship, mutual respect, **commitment** and affection which membership of our fine cathedral choir still encourages. **THANK YOU!!** JB



Long-time members of Blackburn Cathedral choir will remember, with great affection, **JACK HOLLAND** who sang alto with us for many years. **Jack & Connie** were great supporters of all we did so long ago. (See this photo taken in 2014 in their lovely home)

Alas, Jack has been increasingly unwell and is now in a Blackburn nursing home, where he is cared for so lovingly. He and Connie recently celebrated their **60th wedding anniversary** & there was a party to which JB was invited along with many of Jack & Connie's family.



It was not only a joy to be with them all, for it was such a happy gathering, but it was also a joy to meet Connie's sister, **Marie**, who had been Connie's bridesmaid all those years ago. Marie also had been **Canon Wedgeworth's** secretary when he was headquartered in Accrington! **Floreat Coincidences!**

YOU NEVER KNOW WHOM (or WHAT) you're going to meet when you visit Blackburn Cathedral!

Here's **PATRICK**, a young **PARASAUROLOPHUS**, exploring our South Transept !



Parasaurolophi lived in N. America 75 million years ago. They grew to 10 metres long and weighed 3.5 tons! So Patrick is nobbut a lad!

Patrick had taken 113,625 Lego bricks and was built by 5 builders who took 398.7 hours to create him!!

See **BRICK LIVE** on Google for Patrick & friends are going round the country!

