

MUSIC & MORE ONLINE: SEPTEMBER 2020

For and by members, past and present, of **BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL CHOIRS**
And for all who relish, treasure, enjoy and encourage **INSPIRATIONAL CATHEDRAL MUSIC**.

Editor: Dr John Bertalot, Blackburn Cathedral Organist Emeritus

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

WHY I JOINED THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR all those years ago – 1 **by Stewart Hopkinson**



Here's Stewart Hopkinson, as Chairman of our Cathedral Choirs' Association, giving the vote of thanks to members of our Young People's Choir after they had given a concert at a recent Choristers' Annual Reunion.

Dear John B,

It was lovely to talk with you recently and to be reassured that you are coping both mentally and physically with the restrictions placed upon all of us in order to safeguard ourselves against the Corona virus.

It struck me that when we first spoke to each other **I was eleven years old** and now I am on the 'home straight' to retirement; it was almost half a century ago. Of course, when I say we 'spoke to each other' there was a clear context - **you were auditioning me for membership of the Cathedral choir!**

My memories of this experience, and subsequently of life in the choir, are still remarkably vivid and the impact on me both then, and throughout my life since, has been hugely significant; allow me to explain:

I was the second eldest of six children in a single parent family. My parents' marriage was a troublesome one and my mother left when I was 8 years old. At eleven years of age I passed the entrance exam to Blackburn's **Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School** which was wonderful, though my school friends were largely brought to school by chartered bus from towns outside of Blackburn. In consequence of these things there was no money, no structure outside of school (apart from football and the odd 'scrap') and little, if any, opportunity to socialise and 'grow'. My family were not 'church-goers' either.

Soon after my arrival at QEGS, in 1974, we were all made to sing a few notes by the then Head of Music – **Jack Longstaff**. Within a few weeks, and totally unexpectedly, **I received a letter inviting me to audition for the Cathedral choir!** The audition was to take place after the Epiphany Carol service. On the day I donned my best apparel and set off with Dad.

I had never been to the Cathedral before. It was such a grand and inspirational place.



Candles were lit all around us and, as the lights dimmed, an air of solemnity, awe and expectation filled this glorious place;
I physically began to shake.

Then, after a period of silence, - 'boom'!! The organ sounded, the choir processed down the nave led by the cross and acolytes. Old Chorister **Frank Hare** (sadly no longer with us) led the choir as they sang Cornelius's *'Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar'*.



I had never heard a voice like it, I had never heard a choir like it, I had never before encountered such an all-round moving experience and I was completely transfixed. **I can remember thinking 'You've no chance – you couldn't possibly be a part of this' but I knew I wanted to be, so very much.**

Well, the audition soon came around and I entered the Song School to be greeted by this charismatic and flamboyant man whose accent I had only previously heard from the likes of BBC Newscasters or Royalty on T.V! I was ushered to the side of the piano and was asked to sing the first verse of the hymn, **'There is a green hill far away'**. My education seemed to begin there and then.....

I took a deep breath and began ..."Thurr is a green 'ill far away (breath) without a city wall"

You: "Okay, shall we start again? Can you say 'Thaair'?"

Me: "Yes"

You: "Then please do. Can you also roll your 'r's'? The hill, with an 'h' Stewart is grrreen!"

I started up a second time and again took a breath after 'away' and was abruptly halted:

You: "Can you see that symbol at the end of the first line?"

Me: "Yes"

You: "That means that you should continue to sing through to the next line. You took a breath there and you shouldn't have done. It does not mean that the grrreen Hill lacks a city wall! Rather, it means that the grrreen Hill lies outside of the city wall. Could you sing it again as though you understand?"



But see p.4

Me: Gulp – “Yes”

At the third attempt I managed to sing as far as the third line:
“Where our dear Lord was crucified....”

You: “Stop! Our ‘Law’ was not crucified Stewart but our ‘Lor *duh*’, the Saviour of all mankind, was. Please pronounce the ‘d!’”

I have since endured easier interviews for senior management positions, but I persevered and after half an hour or so you asked me, “So, when would you care to join us?” I was elated and felt indescribably privileged.

I remember my first rehearsal a short time later. I arrived on my own, feeling rather nervous and out of place. You ‘paired’ me with a boy that I recognised from my junior school – [Stephen Rickerby](#) - and he tutored me in following the written music. (We had to follow the notes with our thumb in those days to indicate that we understood the value of the notes and the rests!). Stephen and I are still in touch today, as we became good childhood friends. His mother, [Maureen](#), was very kind to me; she was one of the most devout, non-judgemental and caring people that I have ever met. I met lifelong friends in the choir, including brothers [Nigel and Philip Chew](#) (now Reverend Philip) and [Graham Chapelhow, John and David Marr](#). Nigel and Philip’s mother, [Sarah](#), became my adoptive mother until her passing over ten years ago. Similarly, Graham’s mother, [Sheila Chapelhow](#), also showed me great kindness. I still visit Sheila often, and without fail on Mothering Sunday.

(R: Sheila & Stew)

In addition to the love and support shown to me by so many during my time in the choir, I was provided with **discipline, structure, challenge, responsibility and opportunity**. I passed my chorister tests and eventually rose through the ranks to Prefect. **I experienced my first recital tour (of Holland and Germany), which was my very first holiday and my first trip abroad! We stayed with both Dutch and German families which, in itself, was a new and unique experience.** I also led the choir out at the Three Cathedral Choirs’ festival (with Manchester) in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral which was such an honour.



Our Cathedral Choir about to board the coach to take us for our second concert tour of Holland and N. Germany



Ruth Bond



Stew Hopkinson



Blackburn Mayor



Provost Jackson & John Bertalot



I had been given the wherewithal to ‘grow’ and to develop both spiritually and as a person.

The heartbreak came all too soon when, two and a half years later, my voice broke. I remember it as though it were yesterday. We were singing the opening refrain to Monteverdi’s “*Beatus Vir*”. (I’ve just

played a recording of it and it brought tears to my eyes.) I began to sing 'Beatus' on the 'E' in the treble clef and hit a bottom C in the Bass clef on "Vir". My time had come to leave – I was devastated.

I subsequently spent some time as a server before leaving for University. Work, a wonderful wife and two wonderful children (and now 6 grandchildren) followed. I did return to the Cathedral periodically for the 'Old Choristers' Reunion' weekends which I found uplifting. Some 17 years ago, the then Director of Music, Richard Tanner, invited me to rejoin the choir as a second Bass. I was very raw but happily did so, enjoying more wonderful experiences. For example, I sang Mass with the Blackburn Cathedral choir in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris – what a privilege!



Nigel Chew rejoined the choir in the back row too for a while, and we took part in a recital tour in Normandy, France, which included a visit to Bayeux (see photo of Stew & Nigel: R). Sadly, some two years ago, I was forced to 'stand down' from the choir ahead of hip replacement surgery (too much football!). However, and as you know, I have remained actively involved in Cathedral life via the Blackburn Cathedral Choirs' Association and my present role as Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Coordinator.

My association with Blackburn Cathedral has spanned almost 50 years now, and I have no doubt that it will continue until I'm 'called home'. I will always remember, and be thankful for, the vast array of friends (including your good self), experiences and opportunities that I have been blessed with over the years, including the time that you had to explain the meaning of the word 'corollary' to me!



explain the meaning of the word 'corollary' to me!

Stewart Hopkinson handing on his office as 'Senior Old Chorister' in the Cathedral Choirs' Association to John Marr (See page 11)

Truly wonderful! THANK YOU, STEWART!! JB

JB's Audition Technique. (From p. 2)



Please note that JB quickly amended the way he auditioned boys and girls – for instead to telling them what they did 'wrong', he asked them to tell him: 'What letter did you miss out in 'Lord'? What's the opposite of 'withOUT'? So can you sing 'without' in such a way that it means 'outside'? 'Where should you breathe in that line?' 'Show me how you should stand when you're singing...'

By doing this, the potential new singer suddenly found that s/he could sing far better than s/he ever had – and grew increasingly excited at the prospect of learning more from this man. IN OTHER WORDS the audition was not to discover if the boy/girl was good enough to join the choir, but they increasingly discovered for themselves that they really wanted to join.

Once JB had established this new way of asking the right questions, he never lost a potential new candidate to any of his choirs in the UK or USA, for he followed it up, in choristers' rehearsals, by always asking instead of telling!

Thus choristers took a continual pride in realising that THEY were doing the leading.



From **Barry Brown**,
Director of Music of
Padiham Unitarian
Church...



...which is known for its many
fine concerts which Barry
arranged before
Covid-19.

I enjoyed reading in the *August M&M* about former Blackburn chorister **Bryan Lamb's 89th birthday** [or as I remember him: *RBLamb!*].

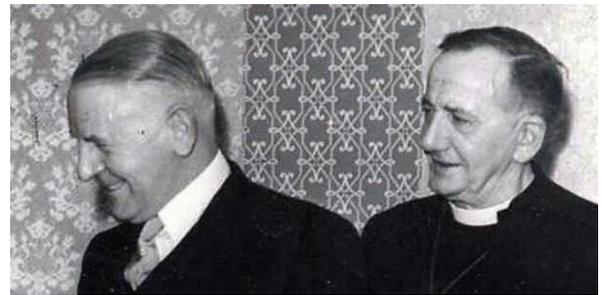
He was, as the article says, **Head Boy at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School** when I was a 'little boy' there.

BUT I remember him in one of the famous school plays that were always put on at Troy St. Community theatre ..now I think a mosque. He was a principle in many school plays and I remember him delivering the immortal words '*I have two damned specs of mud on my boots!!*'

I also have happy memories of **T. L. Duerden** who was Director of Music at school [as well as at Blackburn Cathedral 1939-1964]... he auditioned me for the choral society and we performed at school functions in the cathedral and King George's Hall. He was a talented Organist [Mus Bac Durham]. He constantly chewed polo mints!

TLD & Bishop Baddeley

He would stamp on the floor in Big School to establish the beat as we were rehearsing something. I also remember him on the platform at King



George's Hall when **Fred Dewhurst** [who was also sub-organist at the cathedral] was accompanying some piece on the hall organ and Tommy shouted up to him, '*Stamp on the 32ft Fred!!!*'

As an 11 year old I didn't really understand what the instruction was!

Happy days with some wonderful people!
Barry

Bryan Lamb with Peter Heald (Founder-Secretary of our Choristers' Association) in the cathedral crypt, looking at the portrait of war hero **Bishop Baddeley**, whom they would have known.

FROM BRILLIANT ORGANIST AND FORMER BLACKBURN CHORISTER WILLIAM FIELDING who celebrated his 21st birthday last month & studies at the Royal College of Music in London, and is organ scholar at the Chapel Royal!



Dear John,

Good to hear from you - I did receive the latest M&M, and thoroughly enjoyed reading it!

I'm now allowed to practise at the Chapel Royal; it's a relief to be playing the organ again! I have been preparing repertoire for my visit to study in Toulouse - Bach A Minor & G Major Preludes and Fugues respectively, Widor VI, and Dupré's

Trois Préludes et Fugues. I am slowly going through Reubke 94th psalm as well, though that is for myself for the time being. So business as usual! I will be travelling over to France on September 1st; [for specialist tuition] fingers crossed everything will be running.

How about you? Is everything well up in Blackburn? Very best wishes, **Will**

From long-time Renaissance Singer **ALIZON ELLIOTT**



(Dr) Dave & Alizon preparing for a party!

The Elliott family are pretty amazing: individual members are either doctors or married to a doctor (medical or PhD) – and/or equally highly intelligent, with similarly gifted offspring.

They are all packed with energy and are wholly delightful.

Dear John B

Thanks for your message. What a super job you are doing with *M&M* - always a good read.

Just a few words as to our goings-on in these strange times **Dave and I** feel we are in

semi-hibernation! Most of our food has been delivered from **Darwen market** who have been brilliant, with the stalls all liaising on deliveries. We've had supermarket deliveries for other things - the first we have done online.

We've kept in touch with the family and friends via **Skype, FaceTime or Zoom** and some local visiting as allowed - which has recently, of course, been put off-limits. **Daughter Rachel** and her **husband Simon** as medics have been working all through, with their **three children** at school, but they have had to employ a childminder at great expense to plug the gap between school ending and work finishing.

Our **son James, his wife Clare and daughter Josie** in Cologne have similar restrictions to us but James is driving to work instead of using the train. (James is an engineer with Procter & Gamble and they are shortly moving to Bonn as Josie is due to start at the International School there.)

Our **son Andrew** has had to do all his Oxford University economics teaching online (as below). We celebrated **my brother's diamond wedding** with a wide group of family but on **Zoom** (hosted by James) instead of the planned big gathering.

While we were able to gather in the garden I did manage to have an afternoon playing string quartets



(two current and two former **Renaissance Singers'** members) so I attach a photo as proof. Fortunately we had lovely weather that day!

L-R Mavis Bathe, (RS) Michele Allen,(former RS) A. E. (RS) and Janet Goodship (former RS)

I've also taken part in various recording sessions at home but it is a poor substitute for singing in beautiful surroundings with a good acoustic!

Let's hope the vaccine developers are successful soon so that some sort of normality can be restored.

Best wishes - keep safe.

Alizon

From Alizon & Dave's son **Andrew Elliott** who lectures in Oxford
(young photo, senza beard)

Life in Oxford (St Catherine's College) continued through Trinity Term, with tutorials, lectures and final examinations all moved online, which required considerable and rapid efforts of reorganisation!



Many markers of University life continued in different ways. For example, a **virtual** Boat Race took place, a **virtual** May Morning with a video performance by Magdalen College choir from a **virtual** tower (still available on YouTube) and various finalists' leavers' drinks conducted on Zoom, all with glass in hand!

Some musical groups found ways to rehearse and perform online; my own a *cappella* group *The Beatroots* has continued with weekly 2-hour Zoom rehearsals employing various techniques to keep singing in harmony even at distance. It was good to keep singing and we have a *de rigueur* lockdown video coming out very soon!



THE BEATROOTS
with **Andrew Elliott** front row L !



THE TIMES

Many folk will have read a two-page © article in the London Times headed **The fight to save cathedral music**, by Richard Morrison. Here are several quotes – with Blackburn additions:

With the Church of England's 42 cathedrals predicted to lose £28 million this year and at least £15 million next, and with places of worship throughout Britain still banned from doing choral services, the celebrated 500-year-old tradition of Anglican choral music is surely facing its biggest threat since Oliver Cromwell abolished church choirs in the 1650s.



Westminster Abbey, itself having to deal with a £12 million reduction in income because of the lack of tourism, has already disbanded the excellent professional choir of the church next door, St. Margaret's, [where former Blackburn Associate DoM, **GREG MORRIS** had just been appointed Director of Music].

York Minster, contemplating a £5 million loss of income, has closed its ancient choir school, which traces its origins back to well before the Vikings...

[Harry Christophers, founder of The Sixteen, wrote] “I find it totally bizarre that child choristers are at present allowed to sing in their school halls, but not in cathedrals.”
 [He added] “... just look at the way that **Leeds Roman Catholic Cathedral** operates. Five or six different choirs, all drawn from inner-city state schools, ticking every diversity box, and a music outreach programme that reaches over 4,000 kids each week.
 “That’s fantastically encouraging and a good role model. With the state of music in state schools so dire at present, cathedrals can play a huge part in reaching out to children who will otherwise miss out on any sort of music education.”

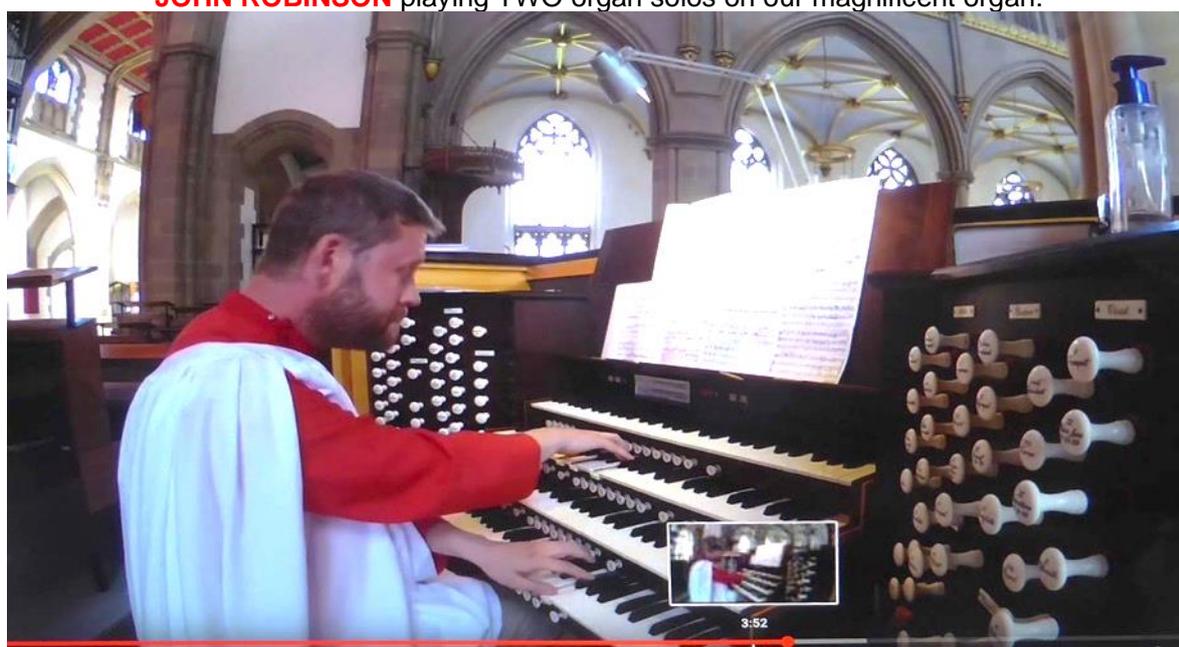


PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC OF LEEDS RC CATHEDRAL who is responsible for overseeing its amazing musical outreach is **BEN SAUNDERS** who was **Blackburn Cathedral’s Associate Director of Music in the late 1990s.**

Blackburn’s Dean has already announced that there may have to be some **redundancies in our own cathedral’s staff**, due to loss of income. But our energetic and highly gifted Director of Music, **John Robinson**, is working hard to enable our ambitious music programme to be resurrected. He deserves our active support.

ONLINE BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL MUSIC FOR YOU TO ENJOY:

JOHN ROBINSON playing TWO organ solos on our magnificent organ:



March on a theme of Handel by Guilman (it gets increasingly exciting – and LOUD)

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKgCJ77ivVg>

Phantasie in E flat by Saint-Saens (a gentle echo-y piece with rapid changes of manuals)

2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7idkj4ggk_s

3. AND extracts from an online service in Blackburn Cathedral with solos by two of our young choristers:



Connor Markwell (L. whose ambition is to become a doctor) singing Vaughan Williams’ *Come my Way* (@ 0.51 seconds into the video)

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackburnCathedral/videos/3124817774276337>



...followed by **Seb Roberts** (R. who studied for 4 years at the RNCM Jr dept and has now won choral and organ scholarships at St. Andrews University) **SEE P. 15** singing *Come to the Feast* (@ 9.50 minutes into the video)

And be sure to listen to Seb singing some BACH superbly (with words added on screen) @ 22.54 minutes into the video **Yes! SEE page 15**

HAS THE LE ' ' ER



BECOME REDUNDANN?

By Jon Berrlow

Spoken English is continually changing: 500 years ago the word 'SALVATION' was pronounced SAL-VAY-SEE-ON; we know this because that's the way the composers in those days set the phrase 'And grant us Thy salvation'. But today the accepted pronunciation is 'sal-VAY-shn'.

Choirmasters' high vocations include not only enabling their choirs to sing all the notes wholly accurately, in tune, well balanced and with lovely tone, but also that the words (which are the inspiration for the music) should be pronounced with equal care. For example, 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son...': how many singers pronounce the 'd' of 'and' as well as the 't' of 'to'? ('And [uh] to'...). Barry Rose, one of this country's finest choir-trainers, always insisted that his singers not only pronounced every letter, but that they understood the meaning of every word. (His choristers knew what the word 'holpen' meant. Do you?)

But what about other words? JB spent some time during the August lockdown watching the world snooker championship on TV, and time and again he heard the following:

Judd Chrump has scored another senchree.

He played perfectly.

Ronnie's at the top of the chree.

That escape was chrikkee.

(And even grammar):

The black will go into both pockets: [NO!]

The black could go into either pocket!

Lazinesses from other programmes:

London Underground is called the choob.

Flowers can't grow at that altichewd.

Holland is known for its Chewlips.

Slovenliness and incorrect grammar:

The fewcher will be difrent to the past [NO!]

The future will be different FROM the past.

Wochoo gonna do ... whoops!

What are you going to do about these downwards slides?

Did you mentally pronounce the two Ss – between the last two words?... and the two Ts between 'last two'?



WHY isn't my news included in M&M?

Because you haven't sent it to the editor!

So, SENNNNNND!!!!!!!!!!!! (plus photos)

We need to share what our present and past choristers are doing.

john.bertalot@gmail.com

And also enjoy **JB's Music Website** which receives **2,000 hits a week** from all over the world!

Google: Bertalot.org

THE PETER PRINCIPLE



From an article sent to us by one of our readers:

Every year there is a small miracle that takes place in every cathedral across the land.

Perhaps the word miracle is a little strong, but the event is still remarkable and deserves to be noted and commemorated.

At the end of the school summer term, the most experienced four or five boys/girls who have led the treble or top line in the choir leave for new schools or because their voices change. At one stroke up to a third of the senior children in the choir, those with the most experience of solo work and leading all the other children, disappear. What happens then is that a new more junior group emerges to take their place. **The 'miracle' is in the fact that within a few weeks these younger members of the choir have overcome their lack of experience and their habit of depending on the more senior children, to fill the shoes of those who used to be at the top of the choir.** They invariably, as we say, 'rise to the occasion.' Certainly, by Christmas the choir is back to strength and to the standard it had achieved under its old leaders

It keeps on happening at Blackburn: here's the young Leo Fulwell standing on the right of Head Chorister William Fielding see p. 5 (who was singing a solo). As Leo grew in experience and musicianship he eventually sang many solos himself.



(Right) And here's Leo a few years later as a prefect singing at the service of Consecration of our new Cathedral Court in the presence of the Archbishop of York.



THE ARTICLE CONTINUES:

It remains to be seen whether the cathedral choirs of Britain will be able to rise to recover quickly after the considerable

blow to their functioning caused by the corona-virus. No doubt cathedrals all over the country are dealing with this crisis in different ways. Perhaps the recovery time will be a bit prolonged but we can still trust that the younger choir children will still find their place of responsibility within their choirs in spite of the disrupting pause they have experienced.

The article continues with discussing other promotions within the Church.

Download it [HERE](http://survivingchurch.org/2020/08/10/the-peter-principle-incompetence-and-the-church/): <http://survivingchurch.org/2020/08/10/the-peter-principle-incompetence-and-the-church/>

From **GILL FOURIE**, co-ordinator and inspirer of BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL'S SING TOGETHER programme – which enables 1000s of schoolchildren throughout the Diocese to experience the joy of singing.



“Unfortunately, the news for singing in massed groups is not so good. **Sing Together 20/21 planning** has had multiple scenarios from carrying on as normal (not possible) to waiting a full year to start again. All the materials are ready to go and **David Scott-Thomas** and his team have worked very hard composing new songs with interesting lyrics: there's some cracking, energising songs.

“We are, of course, negotiating the way between keeping children socially distant whilst singing, keeping them in their own 'bubbles' whilst coping with new regimes at school, filling (or not) concert halls to a capacity that would cover costs... the list goes on.

“However we do remain optimistic and have a few ideas to encourage the continuation of singing in schools within all the limiting parameters... **watch this space!**”

WHY I JOINED THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR

exactly 50 years ago – 2

by John Marr

seen here wearing the Senior Old Chorister badge of office, 2006



Dear John B,

As promised, a few words on the occasion of my 50th anniversary of becoming a chorister in the Cathedral Choir.

What do I remember? Well, I remember my mother bringing me to the cathedral song school for a short audition with you with a feeling of trepidation and, if I'm honest, of not wanting to be there! I think my mother had been encouraged to bring me by my Great Aunt & Uncle (Margaret & Charles Sykes – former Churchwarden) who were regular attendees at the cathedral and whose ashes, together with mum's, are interred in the Columbarium. They would have been aware of the chorister recruitment drive you (JB) had undertaken and had brought it to mum's attention.

Needless to say, you put my mind at ease very quickly with your enthusiasm and encouragement which allowed me to get through a few lines of a psalm and a hymn! Several weeks later (September, 1970) I had joined the choir.

In those early days, **Ronald Frost** was sub-organist and responsible for the Junior members of the choir together with the Young Men's Choir. (The girls were added much later in 1974.) Similar to JB, his enthusiasm, encouragement and beaming smile were infectious and created a marvellous environment to learn and sing music.

Thus began a wonderful and happy period of my childhood/teenage life which spawned not only lifelong memories, but also lifelong friends for which I will be eternally grateful!

Whilst **discipline**, in the form of **punctuality, smartness, respect and good behaviour** were part & parcel of the duties of being a good cathedral chorister, they were achieved with **a great sense of fun and teamwork – traits that have remained with me ever since!**

There are so many abiding and happy memories – too numerous to mention here! However, if I were to pick a couple then, firstly, **being a Prefect on the first ever overseas choir tour to Holland & North Germany was an experience I shall never forget!** Our hosts were most hospitable, and each of the venues at which we sang were full to capacity, creating a marvellous atmosphere.

PHOTO 1974 L-R: Brian Edmundson, Stephen Ward, John Marr & Stephen Holmes

The highlight, for me, was singing in front of 1200 people at the Roman Catholic Church in the Hague.

Nine years later, after JB had left Blackburn for a major musical job in the University town of Princeton, New Jersey, I paid the first of three visits to **JB's new home in the USA**. (One visit involved a 500 mile journey on a Greyhound coach!) It



was with immense pride that I caught a glimpse of myself, and fellow Prefects, in a photograph advertising the Holland tour - situated in JB's 'Blackburn nostalgia corner'.



Wall photos on R of this photo:
Rehallowing of the Nave
1965 in the presence of
HRH The Princess Margaret.

(Below that photo) the photo at the bottom of p. 11

John Marr is holding a photo of our Choristers' Reunion in 1982 when JB announced that he was leaving Blackburn for the USA.

The second abiding memory is of one particular Saturday morning practice! JB introduced the choristers to the Mag & Nunc Dimittis of Kelly in C. It was a rollercoaster practice, with the

composition like no other that we had sung before! It incorporated Latin American rhythms and, needless to say, much fun & laughter was had by all whilst trying to master the speed & rhythm of the piece! Suffice to say, JB pulled us all through in his own inimitable, personable and encouraging way!

After almost five happy years in the Cathedral Choir, time was now calling on my treble voice! After originally not wanting to be there at the beginning, there was a touch of sadness: now, I didn't want to leave!

However, I was able to join my sister Margaret in the newly named, and ever growing, Young People's Choir (YPC), efficiently led by Keith Bond. At its peak, the choir had a membership of over 30 singers! At the time, Keith had put the choir's success down to 'hard work, team work, efficient organisation and parental encouragement'. I would also add that its success was also due to the kindness, support and dedication given by Keith, ably supported by his wife Ruth, which allowed the choir to develop and thrive. I spent a further five happy years in the YPC before work took me to London.

The Young People's Choir 1982, with John Marr and Stephen Rickerby back row extreme right. Keith Bond can just be seen to the left of John Marr



To this day, I still retain a copy of the instructions **'What I expect from Prefects and Team Leaders'** which was given to me by JB when I became choir Prefect. Under the final item (8): **'Something to be remembered for the rest of your life'**, JB states that:

"You will now find that in your position of responsibility you will be separate from the choirboys, and you will be no longer 'one of the boys'. This may hurt a bit, but it is the price you have to pay for accepting responsibility.

"You are growing up, and this position of responsibility, if accepted and carried out well, will help you grow into a man.....a Prefect in the Cathedral Choir is an important position, and one which you will be able to look back on with pride for the rest of your life."

As a fairly average young boy, this was both inspirational and motivational! It helped shape my development and character throughout my personal and working life. I do indeed, now look back on this part of my life with pride, and will continue to do so for the rest of my life!

With every good wish, now, and always,

John Marr

Here are two more photographs of John Marr:

1979: John with his sister Margaret having received the Bishop's senior Award for excellence in the YPC



Angela & John's Jan 2019 wedding – perhaps the culmination of John joining the cathedral choir.

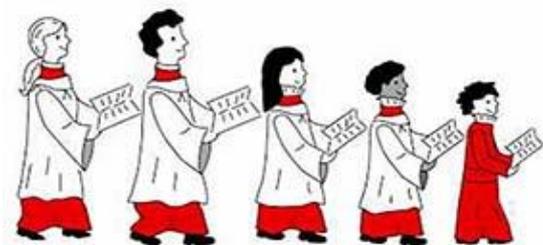


THANK YOU, JOHN, for these wonderful memories of our Cathedral Choirs which you and I have been so privileged to serve – in the company of such a host of talented friends. **And heartiest congratulations on achieving the 50th anniversary this month of becoming a cathedral chorister.** May your and Stewart's memories inspire new generations to follow your shining examples. JB

JOHN ROBINSON will shortly be auditioning **girls and boys** to **reinvigorate our cathedral choirs.**

sing@blackburncathedral.co.uk

To be a cathedral chorister is to give
a boy or girl
an experience they will cherish for ever.



**GO
FOR
IT!**

**good
things
happen
when you
go for it**

Do you love to sing? BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL!

- ✓ Opportunities for boys and girls from the age of 7
- ✓ Have fun and make friends
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- ✓ Develop so many other skills

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www.blackburncathedral.com



BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL has had, for many years, an enviable reputation for supporting **one of the most exciting Cathedral music programmes in the UK** – and it's created mostly by local volunteers: boys, girls, teens, men and women.



We're now led by an outstanding musician **JOHN ROBINSON**, who was a chorister himself in the choir of Hereford Cathedral, who won the coveted organ scholarship to St. John's College, Cambridge.

In 2008, he became Assistant Organist at **Canterbury Cathedral** where he made a solo DVD of Canterbury Cathedral Organ with Priory Records, hailed as '**Recording of the Month**' by Music Web International.

In 2010, JR was appointed Organist and Director of Music at St. Paul's Choir School in Harvard Square, Boston, USA.

In 2019 He was appointed here to Blackburn Cathedral, where his musical gifts have dazzled us all.

So if you know of a boy or girl who could flourish under such gifted musical leadership, get in contact with **JOHN ROBINSON NOW. Email: sing@blackburncathedral.co.uk**



From one of Blackburn Cathedral's outstanding choristers: Seb Roberts

Seb wrote to your editor: "I was delighted with my A level results last week and I'm going to St Andrews University to study Modern Languages (Russian, German and French). I've also been awarded an organ and choral scholarship, so music will continue to be a big part of my life."

Editor's quick comment: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ST ANDREWS?

St Andrews University (without an apostrophe) has been named as the UK University of the Year for Teaching Quality in a recent university guide from *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.

This is where the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge met as students. St Andrews has also been ranked as the third in the UK overall – up from fourth in the previous guide and putting the university behind only Oxford and Cambridge.

Seb continues: "I finished Saturdays at the Jr Dept. of the Royal Northern College of Music in July after four very happy years. I was really sorry to leave as I have made some fantastic friends there.

"I kept myself busy during lockdown helping out with the music for the weekly zoom services at my local churches (Balderstone, Mellor and Samlesbury). We had a children's choir, an adults' choir and even managed Open Gardens (all virtually of course). I sang in Harvey Stansfield's choir and really enjoyed singing for the Cathedral service on 2nd August.

"Hopefully I will be able to join the Cathedral to sing when I am home for Christmas – fingers crossed that everything is back to normal by then.

With many thanks

Seb"

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS, SEB, and WOW!! JB

Seb's cathedral choir career in 3 photos:

- 1: Being admitted to the choir by Dean Armstrong, 2008
- 2: Soloist: "Once in Royal", next to Prefect Oliver Fulwell (who has just completed his year as a choral scholar in Hereford Cathedral's superb choir)
- 3: As Sr. Prefect of QEGS, playing at a QEGS service in Blackburn Cathedral. *The world lies before him!*



Why don't you SEND this MUSIC & MORE to all your online musical friends to enjoy... YESS!

