



Editor: john.bertalot@gmail.com 2024



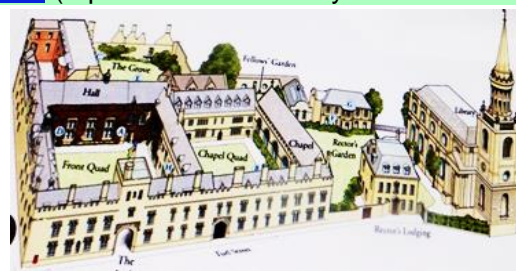
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From our former organ scholar, **TOM DAGGETT**, who went on to win the organ scholarship to [Lincoln College, Oxford](http://www.lincolncollege.oxford) (a position also held by JB before CCC, Cambridge) and also by JB's successor as DoM @ Blackburn Cathedral, **David Cooper**, and also by another Blackburn organ scholar, **Jonathan Turner**, who is now DoM at New Hall School, Chelmsford.

CLICK

<https://www.newhallschool.co.uk/>



Lincoln graduates from Blackburn Cathedral also include **Chris Hunwick**, who has often appeared in M&M, (*Chris is Archivist to the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle*). Other Lincoln College graduates include **Richard Tanner's father, John**, and **John Robinson's wife, Emma!**

But Tom Daggett, after earning a **first class Oxford degree in music**, instead of seeking a prestigious post, moved to the East End of London to encourage kids there to experience the joys of singing together. His successful efforts soon attracted the attention of musicians and clergy at **St. Paul's Cathedral** who appointed him to their distinguished music team, so that he could encourage very many more children to sing – which he did so very well.

One of Tom's gifts is to encourage people to **'take part actively'**. He did this when he gave an organ recital in Blackburn Cathedral – he invited the *audience* to surround the organ console so that he could explain just what he was doing to produce such thrilling sounds for them. And so, after many productive years at St. Paul's Tom was recently appointed Director of Music of **Sheffield Cathedral**,



CLICK <https://www.sheffieldcathedral.org/> where the previous hierarchy had disbanded the choir! Tom is succeeding, as his letter shows:

Dear John, Thank you, as ever, for this wonderful collection of news, stories, pictures and anecdotes.

M&M has been a mainstay of my life as a cathedral musician since my formative time at Blackburn.

The dust is settling following **my first year in Sheffield** as Director of Music; a huge part of that role is to also direct the *Schools'*



Singing Programme. We have eight school partners receiving weekly choral tuition at the moment; we are also due to launch a *keyboard studies programme*, and I have a growing team to deliver this.

The Cathedral Choir goes from strength to strength; this year, they sang for TRH The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, joined by children from Prince Edward Primary School, on local radio, and of course in many moving liturgies and carol services which I enjoyed crafting and experiencing for the first time. **We have eight choral scholars**, most of whom study at the University of Sheffield, **as well as professional singers** drawn from across the region. In the next year, building on a highly successful year of schools work, I will begin reintroducing choristers following the closure of the former choir in 2020. It has been good to build strong connections with the Steel City Choristers this year, who have sung on a number of occasions with us.

Life in the north is treating me well; with ready access to the peaks, and so many family and friends, I have enjoyed coming 'home' following a very fulfilling life and ministry in St Paul's Cathedral. It was a special joy to attend the **Cathedral Organists' Conference in Norwich** alongside (see L) **Sam Hudson, Richard Tanner & James Davy.**



Also there were **John Robinson** and Blackburn's former Assistant DoM, **James Thomas**, who later became DoM of Bury St. Edmund's Cathedral.

The merry-go-round (See p. 10) provided much hilarity for Cathedral organists who dared: it was a first-rate conference organised brilliantly by **Ashely Grote**, our DoM host.

I trust this finds you well; you continue to be an inspiration to so many of us.

Very best,
Tom



My dear Tom,

Thank you so very much for your wholly delightful and so very positive email revealing your abounding gifts to enthuse folk to make joyful music together - and thus rebuilding the music programme of Sheffield Cathedral ... as we all knew you could.

Long may you inspire the good people of Sheffield to enable them to surprise themselves and even to surprise and delight **you** by what they and you are achieving together!

Most warmly, and with resounding congratulations,

John B



Watch **Blackburn Cathedral Choir** singing the **Coronation anthem: ZADOK THE PRIEST.**

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV2dnJzmOp0>

To consider the privilege of joining **Blackburn Cathedral Choir** contact our Director of Music, **John Robinson**, who was, himself, a cathedral chorister (at Hereford Cathedral) and went on to win the prestigious organ scholarship at **St. John's College, Cambridge.**

Please get in touch with **JOHN ROBINSON** at john.robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk

or by phone **01254 845307**



Wednesday Lunchtime Organ Recitals, 12.15 pm, featuring the anniversaries of STANFORD & BAIRSTOW



What better way could we begin our new series of **Wednesday LUNCHTIME RECITALS** than with

Sept 4th JOHN HOSKING

Including Stanford's Sonata Eroica

enjoy seeing John H playing **6 ½ minutes** of this work right **now**:

CLICK: <https://youtu.be/DAKP-Fbphqo?si=cyrpR6dGHlnGOAzJ&t=3123>



Sept 11th JOHN ROBINSON

Including Bairstow's Sonata

Sept 18th Dr JEREMIAH MARTIN
from the USA

Including Stanford's Sonata Celtica

'Jerry' is a surgeon as well as an organist who blew us all away last year and he even launched his own website about his visit.



This organ does LOUD like no other! Blackburn Cathedral - an astonishing experience!

CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkvcMHaofYU&t=8s>



Sept 25th NIGEL SPOONER

Including Stanford's Sonata Britannica





From **Constance Heald** near Ely:
(Founder member of Bbn Bach Choir 1965)

Many thanks again John and congratulations on the continuing editing of this very special **M&M Magazine** and my goodness what a wealth of music still flows through the stones of Blackburn Cathedral, AND for all of us to enjoy. Thank you !

I'm still called upon to play for a few Weddings and Funerals in the area: the Funeral at the end of this week have requested '*Nimrod*' to enter and '*We'll meet again*' to conclude ! I happen to have a very musical arrangement of the latter which I've played for various musical events over the years and which I was very glad to lay my hands on without too much searching. As long as I feel able to continue, I will.

With my best wishes and love
Constance

KEEP ON
KEEPING
ON

My dear Constance, Thank you so much for your generous email. I know how you feel – for it's M&M which keeps me going!! John



From '**Judith**'
an Executive of the **American Guild of Organists**,
European Chapter.

"M&M is simply mind boggling".



On the next page you will find a copy of the official invitation to our
BCCA Reunion on Oct. 5th – 6th

If you haven't received your own invitation, **please print the next page** and fill in details as requested. ***It would be wonderful to see you again.***

If you plan to stay overnight for the Sunday morning 10.30 service,
The Premier Inn, right next to the Cathedral, is highly recommended –
with a car park.

Cathedral and Hotel are both right next to Blackburn train station.

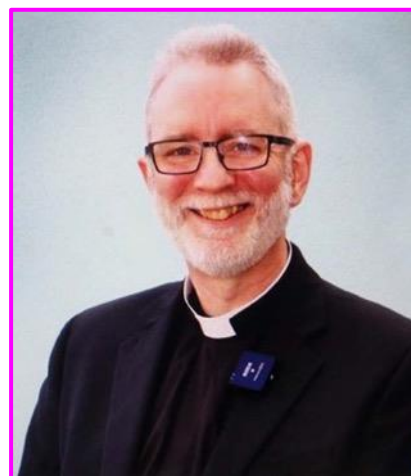


<https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/hotels/england/lancashire/blackburn/blackburn-town-centre.html>



Be sure to come to the Cathedral for Choral Evensong on **Sunday 8th September** to welcome our new **BISHOP OF BURNLEY**,
the Right Reverend Joseph Kennedy,
who will be installed during Choral Evensong at 4.00pm.

Mrs Kennedy, **EMILY**, works for Oxfam and they have two children.



BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL CHOIRS' ASSOCIATION

2024 REUNION

Welcome & message from

John Robinson

I'm delighted to be able to invite you to our BCCA Reunion 2024, this year on October 5th. It will be very good to be able to see familiar faces, to sing together, and for us all to be able to talk about the best ways forward with supporting our beloved Cathedral Choir, as we start to approach the Cathedral's 100th anniversary in 2026. This will be a chance to hear our current Cathedral Choristers (your successors!) and indeed for you to sing with them at Evensong, if you would like. I'm looking forward to meeting you all again.

Thank you, John Robinson

PROGRAMME

Saturday October 5th

- 11.45 a.m. Meet in Temple Gallery (Cloister)
- 12.00 p.m. Lunch
- 1.00 p.m. AGM
- 2.15 p.m. Rehearsal for Evensong
- 3.30 p.m. Tea/Coffee
- 4.00 p.m. Evensong
- Sunday October 6th**
- 10.30 a.m. Cathedral Eucharist

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 5TH 2024

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers and Remembrance of those no longer with us
 2. Chairman's welcome
 3. Apologies for absence
 4. Minutes of the 2023 AGM
 5. Matters arising from the minutes
 6. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report
 7. Honorary Treasurer's Report
 8. Director of Music's Report
 9. Future of BCCA
 10. Election of Officers & Committee
 11. Any other business
- The meeting will close with prayers

October 5th 2024

4.00 p.m. Choral Evensong Music

Responses: Betailot
Canticules: Brewer in D
Anthem: A Song of Wisdom (Stanford)

October 6th 2024

10.30am Cathedral Eucharist

*Sung by the Cathedral Choir
Directed by John Robinson*
Former choristers to assist at this service.

Please bring this portion with you to the reunion

BOOKING FORM

Name :

Address :

.....

.....

Telephone No. :

E-mail :

* Lunch: I will/will not be attending the Reunion Lunch
(*Please delete as appropriate)

* I will/will not be attending Evensong
(*Please delete as appropriate)

NB: Lunch is free to members.

Annual Subscription £20
(for those who do not pay by Direct Debit)

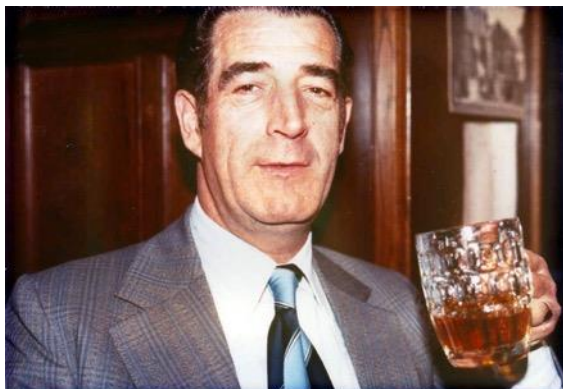
No. Total £

Paying by Telephone/Internet banking:
Blackburn Cathedral Choirs Association
Bank Sort Code: 010004
Account number: 17715563

Please make cheques payable to BCCA and return this form not later than September 27th 2024

Please advise if you have any special dietary requirements.

We much look forward to seeing you again: please make the effort for this could be our almost last reunion. See M&M July 2024, page 12.



Readers may remember an article written by former chairman **JACK SMETHURST** about a traumatic experience he had had when, as a boy chorister, he tried to play truant from Mr. Duerden when he didn't want to attend an extra service.

Jack's very different second article was written in June, 1979: After a Friday practice some of the cathedral choirmen had repaired to a local hostelry, as was their custom, to quench their thirst, and I, JB, was talking to PHIL HUNWICK (tenor). The subject of death came up. 'Jack's had an after-death experience,' he told me. I was stunned. Jack returned to our table carrying replenished pints, and I asked him about it. 'Yes,' he said, raising his glass, 'Cheers!' I asked him to write his story for publication in the choir Newsletter. This is what he wrote:

On Wednesday, 29th July, 1975, as a Police Officer, I had returned home from Lancaster Castle where I had been on security duties in regard to a trial which had been brought there as a result of an I.R.A. terrorist bomb attack in Birmingham earlier in the year. The security duties were long and arduous, requiring constant vigilance and concentration; the trial was in its twelfth week

Heart attack

The same evening, having promised to help a young colleague to celebrate his 21st birthday at a public house in Lower Darwen, I was driving my car along a quiet road when, suddenly and without warning, I became nauseous, very cold, sweating profusely and had a severe pain throbbing from the back to the front of my chest, and pain shot down my inner arms.

Fortunately there was no other traffic on the road at the time and I managed to bring my car to a stop. Having some knowledge of first aid I knew that it was imperative that I received expert medical attention as quickly as possible, but I found that I was semi-paralyzed. There were no houses nearby and I tried to attract the attention of passing motorists by sounding the horn and flashing my headlights, but to no avail.

Hospital

After some time had elapsed I realized that I had to try to reach the Royal Infirmary, and after some difficulty in turning round my car I managed to reach the hospital and stagger into the casualty department where I lost consciousness. I was given immediate heart resuscitation for I had a massive thrombosis in the wall of the heart muscle, known as myocardial infarction.

In the early hours of the following morning I was aware for a few minutes of my wife being with me, but I could not speak and I again lost consciousness. At this time I had been placed in the intensive care unit and my heart and pulse were being monitored by electrodes. During the short time of awareness I knew my life was in the balance. I asked God to forgive my sins and grant me his loving mercy.

Later the same morning at about 7.45 when the Day Sister was taking over I gave a deep roar (so I was told later) and my heart and pulse stopped. The staff applied maximum electrical heart stimulation.

Heavenly Father

At this time I found myself walking in a dark place with no pain. I was at the bottom of an incline and on looking up I saw that as I climbed the incline it was getting lighter from black to brown, red, and at the top bright as sunshine. Silhouetted by the brilliant light were two figures and I knew that the one on the left was Almighty God, but I could not distinguish His features due to the blinding light behind Him. I went to Him at a slow pace, with the utter trust and wonderful joy that can only be described as a child going to his father, with no other thoughts in mind but that I wanted to be with Him.

Conversation

I knew as I was getting nearer that if I saw His face I was going to stay and I didn't want to leave Him. He said to me (by transfer of thought), "You are going to return, but you must never tell anyone what you have seen." I replied, "But it is not fair, as desperately ill people will get great comfort if I tell them what I have seen." I said this spontaneously. He replied, "Because you have thought this, then you may." I then awakened in the unit and although I was very weak my mind was crystal clear, and I said to an auxiliary nurse who was standing by my bed that I had seen God.

Answered prayer

At four minutes past eleven on Sunday, 3rd August, 1975, I was mentioned by name in the prayers for the sick at the Holy Communion Service in Blackburn Cathedral. At the same moment my heart went into perfect rhythm. I later made enquiries about the exactitude of the time and it was corroborated by medical record and witnesses. From that time I made steady progress and on the following Wednesday I was transferred to a general ward and a week later was able to go home.

Comfort

I now lead a normal active life and do not need any drugs and, apart from a fat free diet, there are no restrictions on what the average person of my age can do. I have written the above so that my experience may give comfort to the desperately sick and bereaved.

Jack was given 15 more years of life before he returned to his Heavenly Father for ever. Every memory of him is joyful. JB
(This article, with a photo of Jack, is now framed in the Song School)

It was with joy that we received a delightful email from **former Head Girl, Clara Slater**, who was such a driving force in our choirs six years ago and also a lively member of the BCCA Committee.

Here she is (i) playing her Trombone accompanied by Sam Hudson in 2018, (she studied, part time, at the Jr. RNCM) (ii) as Head Girl in 2020, and (iii) with her Bristol University group in 2022.



Clara had been booked to study further at the University of Washington, Seattle, USA, but COVID put a stop to that.

Clara wrote to JB:

Good afternoon John,

When the most recent M&M landed in my inbox, I had rather a gorgeous time sifting through and seeing what everyone's been up to and realised it's been an age since I sent you a memo!

I've been somewhat snowed under (if you'll pardon the eventual pun). I began my PGCE in Geography in September, teaching at two schools in Bristol and loving sharing my passion for Ox-bow lakes and colouring in with 12-17-year-olds. I've also sung and played with their various ensembles, it's been grand.

In the meantime, my band '**Hot Piece of Brass**' is going from strength to strength, with sell-out gigs in Bristol and London, contracts with Channel 4 and BBC Studios and a five week tour around French and Swiss ski resorts...

To view Clara and her band, **CLICK** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKKqh2Do-QI>



...The last of which I managed to join over a half term (photo included from playing in Chamonix). I swiftly learned I was a much greater fan of exploring glaciers and bakeries than skiing! Far more geography-teacher-appropriate.



Furthermore, we have just completed recordings of some new music in **Studio 2 at Abbey Road** - where **The Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald, Pink Floyd** and now I have recorded albums there! It's been a slightly different experience from my memories of choral recordings (such as the 'Natus' album under Sam Hudson), but a complete treat!

I hope you are well: I look forward to getting back to school after my Summer holidays. Best wishes, Clara Slater

Thanks for your terrific letter and photos, Clara. You always were a leader, and now you are enjoying some splendid early fruit! Well done, indeed, and thanks for keeping in touch. JB



SHEILA SHAW

We were so very sorry to hear of the recent death of **Sheila Shaw**, who, with her choirman husband, **Gordon**, was such a lively member of our cathedral – giving lavish parties for their so-many friends in their most hospitable home and enormous garden on Whinney Lane, Mellor.

Their two sons, **David & John**, were most faithful choristers during JB's time, (there wasn't a girls' choir when daughter **Elizabeth** would have been eligible), but the three children eventually added **eight grand-daughters** to the Shaw family.

(There was a packed Cathedral Nave for Gordon's funeral in Nov. 2013.)

Gordon's poem for Sheila

'A Day to Celebrate a Life'

Written by Gordon Shaw, 6th February 2009

A day to celebrate a life,
A babe, a child, a girl, a wife.
A mother, a friend of many souls,
Of children, of husband, of many roles.

Three score years and ten we're told
In books of wisdom new and old -
Is measure of life lived in the whole.
Achieved, acquired by many a soul.

What joy, what sorrow each decade brought,
Many days, some lost some fought.
A farm, a street, a pub a home,
A search for Knowledge, a need to roam.

A woman begat generations three,
The babe, the child - could not foresee.

A girl, a girl, a girl, again!
Our Grandma Shaw, our Mother Hen.

A speaker, clear in thought and mind.
A worker, a leader, hard to find.
Opinions, Words, ne're at a loss -
Persuades us all that 'she's the boss'.

Who could foresee, who could foretell,
We all should fall under her spell.
A beauty a lover - of many parts,
A force of life within our hearts.

A day, a week and yet more years -
To cast her wisdom o'er our fears.
Her love, the cut and thrust of life,
Her challenge to us, in times of strife.

Look on, look on, look for the good.
Thank God, the one, the understood
A babe, a child, a girl, a wife,
A day to celebrate a life.

Sheila's funeral service was led by **Rev'd Noel Colley** and **Colin Edmundson** officiated on the organ for another very full St. Peter's Church at Salesbury.

One of Sheila's sons, **John**, provided the Eulogy with fond & lovely memories of his dear mother. [**John Marr** jotted down a few notes which included the following]:

His mother led a full and active life.

She was brought up on a farm in Accrington, later moving to a much larger farm at Whalley Nab.

After leaving Blackburn High School for girls, she met Gordon and later married at St. Gabriel's (where Gordon had been a chorister). They settled in Salesbury where they brought up 3 children: **Elizabeth, David & John**.

In the Spring of 1984, they moved to Sunny Bank in Mellor.

She wrote a weekly 'Agony Aunt' column for the Lancashire Telegraph and Newcastle Chronicle.

Amongst several hobbies, she loved researching local & family history.

Her dedication to charity work was spread over a number of diverse areas which included founding the '**Brook Advisory Centre**' in Blackburn; volunteering with the **Samaritans**; involvement with **Cancer Research** and the Primary Health Care Trust. For this dedication she was rewarded with two invitations to garden parties at Buckingham Palace. Sheila was also chosen to receive the **Maundy money from The Queen in 2014**.

In summary, John described his mother as a wonderful, kind lady who passionately cared for others.



She was an excellent listener. Though his mother's passing was very sad, the family were now relieved that her suffering from her illness was no more!

Every memory of dear Sheila and Gordon is blessedly joyful for all who had the privilege of knowing them.





Edward and Anitra Haythornwhite recently visited **Canon Ian and Janet Stockton** in their lovely home and garden in Lincoln. (Ian had been, of course, Canon Chancellor at Blackburn.) The Haythornwhites wrote:

"We have recently enjoyed a delightful weekend with Janet and Ian, visiting the wonderful **Stow Minster (L)**, with its marvellously preserved Saxon and Norman architecture, and Doddington Hall Gardens.

"Ian and Janet's garden (R) has evolved beautifully and we saw great changes from the garden they inherited. As you can imagine, the vegetables are superb, and provided much of our delicious meals.



"On the Sunday we went to the main Eucharist at Lincoln Cathedral and were lucky to hear their resident Men and Boys' Choir (Girls sing alternate weeks), as it was their last appearance before the Summer break."

Ian and Janet celebrated their 51st Wedding Anniversary in August. Congratulations!

From Dr Barry Rose, OBE

Dear John,

I don't know how you do it.

MUSIC AND MORE is an amazing publication, full of interest and so beautifully and professionally presented.

They say that people of our (grand old) age lack computer skills - you sure destroy that view !!

More power to your elbow. Keep going !

Barry



Thank you so very much, Barry, for your most generous email about our M&M which I greatly appreciate. I confess that it's M&M which keeps me going.

Prior to retirement back in the UK it was the training of choristers in the USA to sight-sing which gave me a *raison d'être*, plus, of course the full church choir at Princeton (which could be like going into a cage of lions, unless the choirmaster was on top... which I usually was)... plus my wonderful **Princeton Singers**... whose members came to Princeton for an intense two-hour rehearsal one evening a week from as far away as NYC and Philadelphia – all standing after their own busy professional vocations. And after that rehearsal most of us repaired to a nearby pizza café to celebrate our lively fellowship. One was a medical doctor, two were practising attorneys, several were PhD students from Princeton University and I was delighted to include some teen members from my church choir who, of course, could now read music like professionals.

And so, in 1998 when my retirement began in the UK with 'nothing to do' I was asked, eventually, to take over a small village church where the depleted adult choir hadn't rehearsed for over a year, and the ancient organ was a fire risk. It was my joy, fairly quickly, to fill my choirstalls with eager adult singers who wanted to learn how to **sight-sing**, (which resulted in my 4th book!) and we also raised the money for a **brand new organ** which was dedicated **on my 71st birthday!**

I was with those lovely people for 11 years until the driving became a bit too much for me.

And so, now, with the support of good cathedral friends & colleagues who offer articles and photos, and with the encouragement of the Dean of Blackburn, and with John Robinson's & John Hosking's creative collaboration, it is my task to support them all through the pages of M&M... which blesses me as much as it does our readers.

And it's receiving gracious letters, such as yours, which puts icing on the cake.

Thank you, Barry, for all that you have taught me over the years, and my abounding admiration for your own life of energetic inspiration which continues to encourage countless musicians throughout the world!

Ever, John B

See PS page 13



To relish Barry's inspired choir training abilities, CLICK <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lj0fPBWoc>



From our former ebullient Associate Director of Music, **JAMES DAVY**

who writes of his many musical adventures since leaving Chelmsford Cathedral

Dear John,
As promised, some writing-up of adventures in East Anglia and further afield!
COA at Norwich first:

Photo: Helen Cox

The Cathedral Organists' Association hosts a residential gathering annually and it's always a good time for networking, sharing expertise, and most importantly – good fellowship with colleagues. As we know, cathedral music is a small world and there are always many degrees of interconnection... with *Blackburn Cathedral* being a point of intersection for many people. (See, eventually, page 18)

It was particularly good to see **Tom Daggett**, sometime Blackburn organ scholar and YPC member and **now director of music at Sheffield Cathedral**, at his first Spring conference at Norwich in May, along with **Richard Tanner**, **Sam Hudson**, **James Thomas**, and the wonderful **John Robinson**.

The conference was jam-packed with things both serious and **fun**; our activities included visits to the majestic churches of Cawston and Salle, and indoor rides at the **Thursford Collection**: for *Thursford fun*, **CLICK** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5KcKJHro9k&list=RDQMpYDXRgal89q&start_radio=1 where we all marvelled at *Robert Wolfe's exuberant and lightning-fast performance on the Wurlitzer organ*.

Music at Norwich Cathedral is in very good hands indeed and we were treated to two superb Evensongs, one of which included the **Edith Cavell** commemoration for which we all processed out to the East End to sing *Abide with me* at her graveside: a very moving experience.



(L) Richard Tanner & Tom Daggett on the Merry-go-round during the COA Conference. (Photo: James Davy)

The hospitality at Norwich was sumptuous, not least the always-anticipated conference dinner, when **RT**, **SH** and **JBD** were seated together, prompting a good number of reminiscences about events and people past and present!

We all value our Blackburn connections very highly – and your ears may have been burning too!

It's been a packed 9 months for me since leaving Chelmsford, with many new opportunities alongside existing sidelines: **recitals** have included a **'Battle of the Organs'** in **Brentwood Cathedral** with Donald Mackenzie, organist of the ODEON Leicester Square, solo recitals in Essex, Cornwall, and a lunchtime concert at **King's College Cambridge** (see below); working with new choirs and conductors has been refreshing and inspiring and has reconnected me with friends and colleagues from past years, too.

I was delighted to be working with **Aldeburgh Voices** in a concert at **St Mary's church in Bury St Edmunds** [CLICK https://stmaryschurchbse.org/](https://stmaryschurchbse.org/) – the programme was Kodály's mighty *Missa Brevis* (complete with thunderous organ part and soaring soprano top Bs and Cs), alongside Britten's upper-voices setting, and I greatly enjoyed working with conductor **Dom Ellis-Peckham** at our first rehearsal together.

It was a surprise to everyone when he announced that the concert would be his last – we were booked to sing at the Aldeburgh Festival Eucharist as well as a repeat of the concert programme in November, and the choir was due to form the backbone of the chorus in *Saint Nicolas* in a Festival recreation of the very first Aldeburgh Festival concert – so I was delighted to be offered the opportunity to work with a group of very talented singers and both eucharist and concert went off swimmingly (the latter being recorded for broadcast on Radio 3 two days' later); it meant also working with a Norwich-based choir and the back row of St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir.

This was my third appearance at the Festival as chorusmaster (after two operas with the Chelmsford choristers in 2014 and 2017), and a joy to be involved in so much music at **Snape Maltings, (L)**, a place that is very close to my heart.



The national Women's Institute has resumed its annual meetings at the **Royal Albert Hall (R)**, so June saw me heading down there to accompany 5000 delegates singing *Jerusalem*, *Hen wlad fy nhadau*, [*Land of my Fathers*] and *God save the King* - it's a mighty sound and good to be back there after a few years' break. [See video](#) by a member of the 'audience'.

[CLICK](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_Tgkn5FZkA

The organist's life can be a solitary one, and the past few months have involved a lot of time in the car getting from one engagement to another but it has introduced me to a great number of wonderful people, and brought many

special moments along the way, none more so than the opportunity to **play at King's, Cambridge in April**. (Below L),

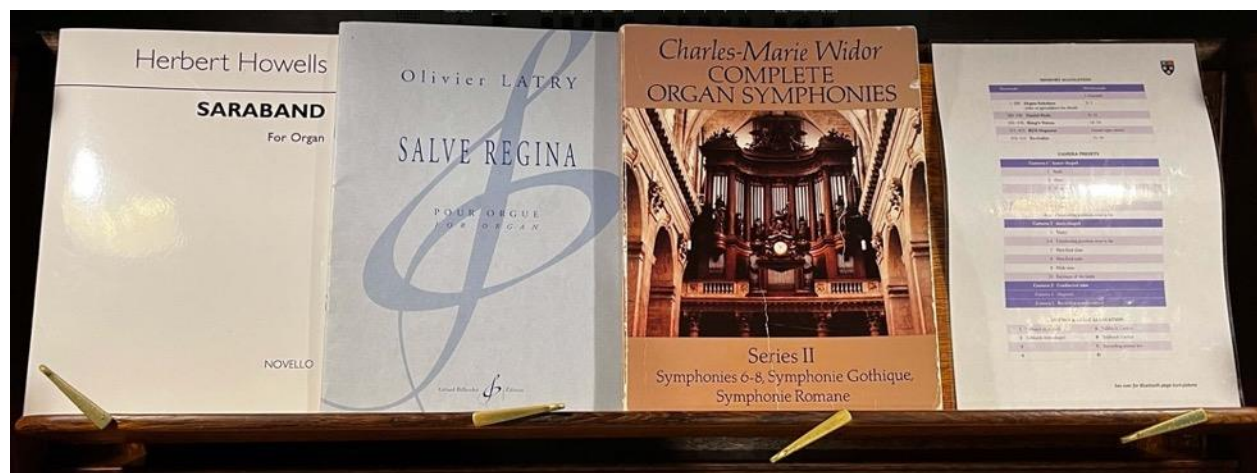


I was able to choose a date after Easter which suited my planned programme: Saraband for the Morning of Easter *Herbert Howells*, Choral from Symphony 10 'Romane' *Charles-Marie Widor*, Salve Regina *Olivier Latry*. The DoM at King's, **Daniel Hyde**, was my predecessor as organ scholar at Durham Cathedral, and I've always been in great awe of Dan, but in addition to his musical prowess he is a very warm and generous man and he put me at my ease on my first visit to that place with no little history.

I'd never been at the King's console (like most people I've watched over the shoulder of the organ scholar during *Carols from King's* thanks to the BBCTV) so I'd no idea what a comfortable space the organ loft is with a soft carpet and bags of room, creating a relaxing environment in which to ponder the organ, that magical acoustic, and how best to bring the music to life in there; the organ felt familiar in colour and sound to



Durham (and requiring a similar amount of imagination about what the audience hears) and what might seem a disparate programme sat rather well together.



It was an enormous privilege to contribute, however briefly, to the daily music at King's and to enjoy the so-musical singing of the choir at Evensongs on Saturday and Sunday – plus Sunday Mass at Little St Mary's was another treat, and the organ was played very beautifully by my Blackburn predecessor **Greg Morris**; that's the other great thing about music's connecting power.... 'people'. **We are so fortunate to work in a**

people
matter

subject where people matter and our connections to places are strongest through the people we work with – *M&M* keeps us all connected through the years and in spite of sad news like the recent deaths of **Bernard Hargreaves** and **Sheila Shaw** we revisit great memories of the people who shared our experiences, and we're indebted to you, JB, for cultivating those connections!

Behind all this variety, my two main adventures have been taking the role as director of music at **St Mary's Woodbridge**, the parish church of a delightful riverside town in Suffolk (where you'll be pleased to know they have excellent ice cream!) and where an enthusiastic choir has been working hard learning new anthems, **Will Todd's Jazz Missa Brevis** (see *CLICK* left below), hosting a 'Come and Sing' Evensong for Sea Sunday, and where we take great pleasure in making music together.

CLICK https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Will+Todd%E2%80%99s+Jazz+Missa+Brevis+



Finally I've seen my first end of year at the **Royal Hospital School, Holbrook**, Suffolk, (L), where the naval traditions are at their height in the Sunset Ceremony (live ammunition is no longer used...) and the musical experience is superb – a chapel-full of 700 pupils plus staff, families and guests (*below*) singing the Kyrie from Widor's Mass for Two Choirs and Organs and *Go forth with God* by Martin Shaw is quite unimaginable until you hear it live – hymns are sung with real gusto

and the enormous organ isn't quite equal to the volume of the singing (it's called the 'Holbrook Sound' and there's nothing like it!).

The team at Holbrook have made me very welcome and we have an exciting year of events ahead – *accounts of more will follow, as and when!*



Aside from the music, there has been much more time spent with **Max**, and I'm learning to sail in order to volunteer with a charity for disabled and visually-impaired sailors: it's amazing work and quite a privilege. My parents have had a great deal of benefit from 'E.A.S.T.' and it seems right to pay something back – and very different from being indoors on the organ!

See p. 13 PS 2

For the school's music: **CLICK** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQ0ggKgyvtU> (made before James' appointment).

PostScript...

1 from JB's reply to Dr Barry Rose's generous letter, page 9:

'... taking full choir practices at Princeton was like **"going into a cage of lions..."**

When I arrived in Princeton in Jan. 1983 I discovered that 3 of my choristers' mothers were studying for **doctorates** as well as raising their families and being active in that so stimulating community. It was almost true to say that on every street of that University town lived a millionaire. (More than several were parishioners but one didn't talk about it.)



My head chorister was bilingual, and **my assistant organist** was trilingual. **My head girl** was the grand-daughter of **Sir George Dyson** who was Director of the Royal College of Music when I was a scholar there. **Her father, Dr Freeman Dyson FRS**, was a world famous scientist! [CLICK https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeman_Dyson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeman_Dyson) [See p.17 to listen to an especially fine example of Sir George Dyson's music]

Among the adults in my choirs were a medical doctor and a University professor of music as well as talented music students from Princeton's fine music college and also singers who were strong members of Trinity church.

One afternoon I was leading a rehearsal for four new boys, aged 8: I was teaching them, inch by inch, how to sight-sing. This was their third week with me and so they were sight-reading (slowly) a motet by Palestrina which was, of course, in Latin. I felt that they should also understand how Latin worked: "God be merciful" is **DEUS** *misereator*, whereas "Thanks be to God" is *DeO* *gracias*... *Te DEUM* is "We praise Thee, O God" ...etc. **One of the new 8-year old boys, being helpful, piped up and said, "It's the same in Greek!"**.....

So if I had to deal with such bright young choristers, what would it be like to deal with my choir adults?

[Answer] I was greatly stimulated by their strongly supportive presence, of course, and enjoyed 16 gloriously fruitful years with them all & many lasting friendships were formed. (See the August M&M page 12)

* In 2014 this same 'boy' (now a PhD, of course, and a USA college lecturer in music) came from the USA with his wife to visit me in Mellor. He hadn't changed at all, except that he was taller than I am. (His parents were lecturing in Oxford ... they came, too.)

2 from the end of James Davy's essay, page 12: **"My parents have had a great deal of benefit from 'EAST' and it seems right to pay something back."**

James writes: Max is my horse - I believe I'm the first cathedral organist in recent years to keep a horse and ride regularly although I know that others have done this. Flying aeroplanes seems to be a more common pastime these days...!

'E.A.S.T.' is a wonderful charity that offers sailing to the disabled, to visually impaired people, and to children who may be neuro-divergent or be in receipt of free school meals - basically lots of people young and old who mightn't get the opportunity otherwise.



Last week I acted as a guide to a blind 10-yr-old boy whose grasp of the subject and life in general was remarkable: he used a cane to get about but liked to take someone's arm to move around - if you can picture navigating him around a boatyard with cables and potholes, and then onto a narrow floating (and rocking) pontoon, all the time having to translate a world of sound into a 3-D picture. Quite a challenge and a privilege.

My father has been sailing here for nearly 10 years, since his stroke in France; it has offered him the chance to sail regularly and to find a freedom that he doesn't enjoy physically on land. The people who run it are all volunteers and the most remarkable group. I have two days of training to join them this weekend - wish me luck!

My parents moved back to Suffolk (where I grew up) when I was at university but this is the first time I've really worked in the place where they live so they don't have so far to come now to hear me play!

They've been the most enormous help looking after **my dog Tess** while I've been exploring new jobs - I couldn't have put down these new roots without their help.

FROM BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL'S NEW HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

I'm **Daniel James** and I joined the team at Blackburn Cathedral back in January this year having been appointed to help plan, manage and deliver the various elements of our upcoming **Centenary in 2026**.

Born and bred in Blackburn, I was attracted to the role primarily as I have an affinity with the Cathedral built over the years and a strong commitment to the town.

But as an experienced marketing and communications professional, I also wanted to play my part in delivering what I believe will be an incredible time for the Cathedral, the town, the Diocese and the county at large.



We are all committed to a year of truly memorable events and are already busy working on a variety of ways to help mark such an important milestone. It is my intention to ensure that although we will reflect on the past one hundred years, we will also work towards ensuring that there is a legacy that lasts for the next century too.



But I know what you're thinking... 2026 seems like such a long time away - so in the meantime, what have I been doing? Well, we started by updating the Blackburn Cathedral brand to create a clearer and more consistent visual appearance. We have introduced a range of new supporting materials and we've relaunched the Cathedral website: www.blackburncathedral.com.

In addition, we've also updated our email newsletter: <https://blackburncathedral.com/blog/> sorted our internal signage and begun to promote ourselves more directly.

Indeed, in the last month we have launched a brand new **Welcome Leaflet** that guides guests around our incredible building and highlights many of the key points of interest. We've also added **a quarterly Events' Guide** to our marketing arsenal that details everything that is going on at the Cathedral from special services, live music, theatrical performances, fundraising and of course **our much-loved organ concerts**.

This is all part of a broader strategy to develop our standing, increase awareness and promote our offerings more directly. We want as many people as possible to know what is going on and to encourage them to visit us and experience Blackburn Cathedral for themselves - whether that is through worship, attending a musical event, visiting an exhibition or even for a meal in **our bustling café**.



We're constantly looking at innovative ways to reach new people and to engage with them but we are well aware that Blackburn isn't on the tourist trail, nor do we have the historical pull of many other Cathedrals but what we do incredibly well comes down to four basic elements: we're welcoming, we're authentic, we're effective and we're enterprising.

I'm new to the Cathedral sector, having previously owned a design and communications agency and working commercially for 25+ years, so my introduction to working in the Church of England (and with a workload that I now know to be pretty standard for the Cathedral world) has definitely been a baptism of fire. I have learnt that some cathedrals have internal marketing teams of 10+ people and external design agencies carrying out their marketing and promotional activities for them. We rely solely on our small team and the support of our wonderful community.

At Blackburn Cathedral we are well and truly punching above our weight.

But I believe we're making great progress. We have many exciting things going on now and also planned for the future - and I have been so impressed with how things work behind the scenes. From the administrative team to the extended Cathedral family - such as volunteers, welcomers and enthusiastic supporters - it really is one big family all working together.

Whilst this sounds great, **we want to do more**... we are constantly looking at ways to grow our congregations, develop links within our communities and specifically to develop our musical offering further. With input from our wonderful Director of Music, **John Robinson** and Organist in Residence **John Hosking** and the support of the incomparable Organist Emeritus Dr **John Bertalot**, I believe we are on a sound footing.

We are hard at work developing our online concert streaming service as we aim to grow our follower-base - both at home and abroad. We are looking at ways to monetise some of our activities to enable us to expand what we do, to increase awareness and interaction with interested parties and to place our organ - and our music more broadly - in front of even more people.



Additionally, we're constantly looking at opportunities to ensure the goals of **The Lantern Music Trust** are met and are supporting the music department with ways to generate further income to support what they do.

Finally, I have been pleased to see the steady growth of our popular **Wednesday organ concerts (see page 3)** and am very much looking forward to the forthcoming Autumn season where we will be paying tribute to

three church music icons - namely Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Sir Edward Bairstow and Théodore Dubois.

**If you have any ideas, thoughts or useful insights,
please do let me know –**

**I'd love to hear what you think
and will welcome any input you wish to share.**

daniel.james@blackburncathedral.co.uk



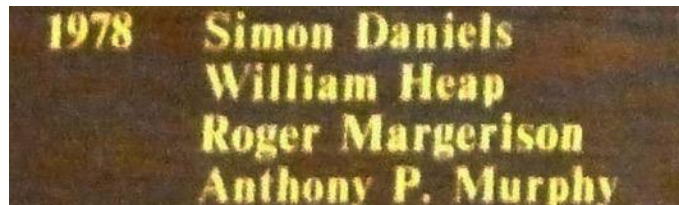
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Cherished Memories



It was with great joy that your editor opened an email from a former cathedral choir Prefect of the 1970s, **ROGER MARGERISON**, who was a contemporary of **Nigel Chew** and (the Revd) **Philip Chew** as well as with **Simon Daniels** (who became a medical doctor in Sunderland), **William Heap** who lives in the Isle of Man and has two daughters, and often visits his mother, who lives in Mellor; and **Tony Murphy** who has two sons, & enjoyed many happy years working in San Francisco and New York; he now lives in Ireland.

Roger wrote:

I came across your website recently <https://bertalot.org/> and found in one of the newsletters from **Autumn 2004** that I appeared in a photograph **(R)** with **Philip and Nigel Chew** where you asked what I had been up to.

Only 20 years late I'll give you a quick synopsis:

Philip & Nigel Chew (why so serious?) with **Roger Margerison**, during the cathedral choir's tour of Holland, August, 1975



I left the choir in 1978 when we as a family moved to Durham. After A Levels I went to Portsmouth Polytechnic and gained a degree in Engineering Geology.

I retired recently after 37 years working in civil engineering and tunnelling, having initially lived in Chorley and since 2002 in Nantwich. I married in 1991 and have 2 'children' now 26 and 18.

I didn't keep up with singing but carried on having a close interest in music. I play guitar **but still rely on the knowledge I gained during my time at Blackburn.**

I read through the history of your career and found it fascinating. You certainly made an international impact. The history of Blackburn's organs was also very interesting.

In the meantime I hope you are keeping well. **It was very good to remember some great times with you and my fellow choristers.**

Best regards, **Roger Margerison**

JB replied: How very good indeed to hear from you, Roger, **for I do remember you** from all those years ago. Many thanks for your happy memories of our cathedral choir - Philip and Nigel Chew are still around and indeed Phil (the Revd) & Nigel feature in last month's cathedral **Music & More** magazine - which I attach.

I'm including your email in the September edition of Blackburn Cathedral's **M&M**.

Yes, I have had a wonderful life of creating harmony - both in music and, hopefully, in personal relationships. I shall be 93 next month!

Renewed thanks for your own most welcome letter. Please continue to stay in touch.

Most warmly
John B

Nigel Chew wrote in that same Autumn 2004 (number 5) M&M, about those happy days: 'I remember, when I was a boy in the choir, we sang a televised Easter Day service - [Darke in F]. **I had a black eye** and next to me was **Roger Margerison** who had **his hand bandaged**. My family who were watching the service on BBCTV thought it was very funny for it looked as though we had been fighting just prior to the service (both injuries were totally separate). The camera caught us both as we processed into the cathedral.'



JB's PS: **Dr Harold Darke** was in the congregation for that BBCTV live broadcast. In his retirement he usually spent Easter with his son, Michael, who was a Manchester University lecturer - but agreed to be with us if we sang **Darke in F**. *We were happy to oblige.* After that service the choir returned to their stalls so that Dr Darke could meet them all. **That was such a joyful day.** *Photo of Dr Darke taken by JB in room 90, RCM 1953*



Re some well-known local singers – and more --
The Colne Singers go North!
by Jeremy Duerden

Each Summer as the resident choirs of our national cathedrals take a break, the Colne Singers offer their services to sing the evening services as well as a Mass on Sunday, during the absence.

Last year it was **Canterbury** that received us and this year it was the turn of **Durham** for the first week of August.

In the way that these things turn out, Sunday 11th August was the day for celebrating the foundation of Durham Cathedral and a proper setting of the Mass was required so **Mozart's Missa Brevis in D, K194** was sung and was very well received by clergy and congregation alike. It was paired with **Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus** for the anthem.

It should not be thought that the music provided was strictly from the Classical period: it was not. Throughout the week the Responses were by **Leighton**, and the Service varied from **Sydney Watson**, via **Howells New College Service** to **Bob Chilcott's Three Choirs Service**, which was coupled with his **Irish Blessing** as the anthem.

The final Evensong service was sung to **Dyson in D**, which is an excellent way to leave the listener wanting more but unable to have it, so as to encourage a deeper dive into Church Music.

[Editorial insert: Listen to **Dyson in D** Magnificat **CLICK** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FIBzqM94tk&list=RD3FIBzqM94tk&start_radio=1 (The choir of Trinity, Cambridge).

This is one of the most demanding settings of the Magnificat – full marks to The Colne Singers for choosing it. JB]

Other anthems through the week were **Richard Lloyd, View me Lord**; **Sir Edward Elgar, The Spirit of the Lord**; **Sir Ernest Bullock's** arrangement of **Drop, Drop Slow Tears**; and **Sir William Harris's, Lord of the Worlds Above**.



It will be appreciated that preparing for, rehearsing, and singing these services takes some time and effort, but the satisfaction of keeping Church Music alive during vacations is extremely satisfying, as well as allowing us to visit new cathedrals, towns and cities, and to bask in the glorious atmosphere of singing in quires around the Country.

It also allows comparisons to be made between our own Blackburn Cathedral, still not a hundred years old, and the great Medieval buildings. We were very lucky to have glorious weather toward the end of the week, so the normal impression of 'dark and gloomy places' was replaced by **sunshine**.

OUR NAME?

It is just possible that readers might be wondering how Colne, which does not have a reputation for choral singing, can provide the singers to make up this group: the answer is fairly simple.

Colne is near to

Blackburn, and the **River Colne** flows through **Colchester**. The friends who created the choir, wanting a straightforward name for the choir, were respectively from those places and members were drawn from both areas, although the choir has now grown to the point where some regular members come from **Norfolk** and others from **Cumbria**, and the accompanying organist from **Lancaster Priory**!

For the last few days of the week, two former Choristers of **Blackburn Cathedral** joined, **Oliver** and **Leo Fulwell**, now both very competent tenors who sang the solo sections as necessary: it was good to see them again, although both have attended weeks in the past while still singing the top line.



I mentioned that a lot of planning goes into these sessions: **we are already booked to serve a week in Winchester** next August

Durham Cathedral at night

Photos Lindsey MacDonald



Let One's Hair Down

One more photograph taken at **The Cathedral Organists' Conference at Norwich** when the distinguished music leaders of the UK's great Cathedrals included **six who have strong Blackburn connections**, all of whom were able to 'let their hair down' at the **THURSFORD COLLECTION**

which is a working museum of mechanical organs, Wurlitzer shows, silent movies and old fashioned fairground carousels and static displays of both fairground engines and road engines and all kinds of related memorabilia.

CLICK https://www.visitnorfolk.co.uk/attraction_activity/thursford-collection



L-R:

James Thomas, organ scholar: Gonville & Caius Cambridge, twice a finalist at the St. Alban's international Festival, Assistant Organist at **Blackburn** and Chichester, DoM St. Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Richard Tanner, Chorister @ St. Paul's Cathedral with Barry Rose, organ scholar: Exeter College, Oxford, DoM All Saints' Church, Northampton, DoM **Blackburn** Cathedral, Director of Chapel Music Trinity Laban. Director of Music, Rugby School.

Tom Daggett, organ scholar: **Blackburn** Cathedral and Lincoln College, Oxford. Nine years at St. Paul's Cathedral from where he encouraged thousands of children to sing. Recently appointed DoM of Sheffield Cathedral.

James Davy, A galaxy of organists' appointments including Portsmouth, Durham, St. Albans and Asst DoM @ **Blackburn**, DoM Chelmsford Cathedral. Now @ The Royal Hospital School, Holbrook & St. Mary's Woodbridge.

Sam Hudson, DoM **Blackburn** & Worcester Cathedrals.

John Robinson, Chorister @ Hereford Cathedral with Roy Massey, organ scholar: St. John's College, Cambridge. Asst. & Carlisle & Canterbury. DoM **Blackburn** Cathedral.

If there are any omissions in the above, please let me know. JB



Blackburn Cathedral composition competition

sponsored by Charles and Camilla Hadcock

Blackburn Cathedral is pleased to announce its third composition competition. The aim of this series of competitions is to provide new, accessible organ music of a high quality relating to important occasions in the church year. This third competition will contain **one** category for those aged 25 and under on 1st October 2024. There will be a first prize of £1000.

The organ voluntary should be considered as part of the service; a great deal of thought goes into repertoire choices by many organists. Once engaged, members of the congregation can find this a powerful liturgical tool, but in many churches a certain level of education is necessary to culture an interest in the music being played rather than being dismissed as being something played in the background to be talked over.

In this third competition:

Composers are invited to submit a composition of around three minutes in length which will be suitable for use as the processional piece at the start of the Cathedral's Advent Carol Service, listened to in silence as the clergy and choir process in. The work must be based on either the chorale "Wachet auf" or the "Veni Emmanuel" plainsong. The mood should be triumphant and expectant, but shouldn't overshadow the pending arrival of Christmas.

- All scores must be submitted by 1st October 2024 to john.hosking@blackburncathedral.co.uk
- All scores must be typeset by a standard music notation programme – ideally Sibelius
- The level of difficulty should be **no greater** than Grade 8 ABRSM standard
- All scores must be unperformed and unpublished

The competition will be judged by Paul Mealor (Royal Composer and Artistic Director of the North Wales International Music Festival), Colin Walsh (Organist Emeritus of Lincoln Cathedral) and John Hosking (Organist in Residence, Blackburn Cathedral).

It is hoped that future competitions will yield a quality of compositions worthy to be published by the Blackburn Cathedral Music Press in a collection of organ music for the liturgical year. All submissions are made on the understanding that publication may follow to support the work of Blackburn Cathedral.

Both the winner and selected runners up will be invited to the Cathedral for the day on Advent Sunday to hear their works performed and take part in a composition workshop with complimentary lunches provided.