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# BMYC Friends

## Newsletter

Issue 7 - May 2004



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### **Preparing Music for the CD**

It has been a long time in the planning but we are finally decided on what, where and when we will record a new CD. It was felt by many in the choir that to simply record works that are already available on excellent recordings would be somewhat futile and a wasted opportunity. At the same time we were constantly encouraged by our concert audiences who really appreciated the times when our music took a fresh approach to more traditional texts.

We are therefore preparing to record a collection of new settings of familiar hymns such as What A Friend and The King of Love alongside new versions of blessings and prayers. These pieces are by no means intended as replacements for the better-known versions - rather they are intended to reflect new light on the rich heritage of Christian writing.

The recording is taking place through the summer with a view to launching the album in the autumn in time for Christmas; I'm sure that you will know someone that would appreciate this new music from BMYC in his or her stocking!

**Ashley Thompson, Musical Director**

  
The **Methodist** Church

## **Bishop Auckland 27-28 March 2004**

The last weekend in March 2004 saw our return visit to Bishop Auckland Methodist Church, County Durham, in North East England. It was a long journey for many of us, so it was quite late by the time we all arrived on Friday evening.

As usual, a friendly welcome was awaiting us. There was only time for a short practice on the Friday night and after the blessing we were soon on our way to our host's homes. Needless to say, I slept very well, but managed to get up by 8am on Saturday morning. My host's spoiled me with a hearty cooked breakfast. I was thankful for this, as it turned out to be a long and tiring day.

The choir are planning to record a CD in July, so this weekend was a chance to practice many of the songs that will be recorded. These are mainly new hymns or songs, or new settings of well known hymns and texts - arranged by Ashley and other members of the choir. The audience at the Saturday concert were therefore treated to the first public performance of many items, as they had been written specially for the CD. The focus on rehearsing for the CD meant that the programme of music was not as varied as usual, though we did manage to squeeze in the ever popular Les Miserables medley and a number of pieces from John Rutter's 'Feel the Spirit'. We have now sung these on several occasions and I think we all enjoy them. I certainly have a good time singing 'Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho'.

This was our second visit to Bishop Auckland, so the surroundings and many of the faces, were familiar. I even found my name in the visitors book from our last visit in 2000. As before, we were fed extremely well, by a highly



**During the  
concert at Bishop  
Auckland**

efficient team of helpers, operating out of an impressive large kitchen.

Unfortunately, we did not have much time to relax and explore the local area as the choir AGM was held on Saturday afternoon. After a cup of tea and half an hour to stretch our legs, we returned to the rehearsal, as the concert was half an hour earlier than usual, at 7pm. It seemed to go very well, with lots of smiling faces in the audience and plenty of compliments from the Minister.

As usual, we also took part in the morning service on Sunday. We sang several items during the service, members of the choir read the lessons, and Brian and Mark performed a sketch. The weekend was rounded off with an excellent 3 course Sunday Lunch and before we knew it, we were on our way home again! This was a tiring weekend (for me anyway) and it seemed to go very quickly, but we enjoyed ourselves and went home with our spirits lifted.

**Andrew Glendenning, Choir Member**

## Message From The Choir Administrator



**Gilbert Jones**

In the eleven years that I have been associated with the choir I have counted it a privilege to be able to have been in contact with such vitality and energy that comes from having a choir composed entirely of young people. During this time I have made many friends amongst the members, both current and former ones. It has also been in many ways a most frustrating experience for it seems that no sooner have folk got themselves enjoying choir life and all that it has to offer, they move on either because of age, marriage or just the desire to grow into something bigger than BMYC. During last year we lost a choir member each time we met because of this, and by the time this year is over we shall have seen a similar number depart. At the moment we are not recruiting at the same rate and unless we can get new people to join there will be one inevitable consequence.

In July of this year we are to record a CD of favourite hymns set to new contemporary tunes, written by Ashley our MD, Andrew our assistant MD and Neil our current chairman, I can promise you a real treat when we are able to offer it for sale later in the year. We will let you know when it becomes available.

Our weekends continue to be an inspiration to the churches we visit judging by the letters I receive after a visit, 2005 is fully booked so we shall now be looking for bookings in 2006. If your church is considering inviting the choir, do not delay drop me a line or an email and start the process of invitation rolling.

I started this by reflecting on the passage of members through the choir, and now I'm afraid it's my turn to join those who are to depart, as I have told the choir that I shall not seek re-appointment after the March weekend next year (2005). This has not been an easy decision to make, but time marches on, and for the future well-being of the choir I shall depart. I hope our editor will let me write again before I do!

**Gilbert Jones, Choir Administrator**

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## **Choir Member News**

Ashley (Musical Director) and Katie are delighted to announce that Joseph William Thompson was born on Monday 8th March 2004 weighing 6lb 13oz; both mother and baby are very well.



Congratulations to Kevin Soulsby and Amy Robinson (both choir members) on their recent engagement. Amy proposed on 29th February and Kevin gave her the ring at the Trevi Fountain in Rome.

### **Save the Choir Money and Paper**

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of future issues of the BMYC Friends Newsletter, you can join a list be Emailed when it is available on our website ([www.bmyc.info](http://www.bmyc.info)). To request this, send your name and Email address to [friends@bmyc.info](mailto:friends@bmyc.info). This will remove you from the postal list.

## From the Chairman

One of the commitments I try to observe with BMYC is attendance at the AGM which, after all, I'm supposed to be present at and chair! So a long train journey in March brought me to Bishop Auckland and into the company of the friendly and generous people of that place as we gathered to present another choir weekend.

One of the first things I discovered was that Bishop Auckland Methodist Church has 2 organs, one with pipes (out of action) and another which is the largest and most complicated 4 manual electronic organ I have ever seen. I felt a certain admiration for those who played this instrument during the weekend and made it sound very good each time. Rehearsal was as hectic as ever and included 4 pieces of mine, one of which had never yet been heard – let alone performed! The choir made a valiant attempt at my efforts as they did with two arrangements of traditional hymns produced by Andrew. All the practice resulted in a well-received concert on the Saturday evening which was attended by a sizeable crowd.

I was going home on Sunday morning but, having discovered that Ashley needed to leave early, was (quite easily!) persuaded to stay and help with the morning service. Not such a large gathering but certainly another good time together. I do like playing for the choir – it helps ease my mid-life crisis!

The AGM was OK. We dealt with everything quickly and filled all the vacant offices without too much discussion. Gilbert had sent word with me to the effect that wished to retire as Administrator at the 2005 AGM and Ashley told us that we will need a new M.D. in three years time so we had

some serious thinking to do. Ideas and possibilities were discussed which, to me at least, seem exciting. I remain very optimistic about the future of BMYC.

**Neil Thompson, BMYC Chairman**

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## **Choir Retirement**

### **Helen Morten**

Back in 1994 our minister's wife, Hazel Senior, took me and some other young people from the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church to see the MAYC Orchestra & Singers at the Assembly rooms in Derby. Hazel knew one of the Choir members, Suzie Kitchin, who also happened in sing with BMYC! Suzie gave me all the details about who to contact and told me what a great thing the choir was. Foolishly I never did follow up the contact. It was six years later when I was visiting my Auntie and Uncle in Bishop Auckland that I happened to stumble across BMYC again. This time I really couldn't ignore that fact that here was a whole group of like-minded people around the same age as me who made a fabulous noise when they sang! - I really had to join.



I've never thought that I was the greatest of singers, I still don't, but I love having a go! That's the great thing about BMYC – you don't have to be pro or want to sing all the solos, being part of the choir is just fine.

I've met some really nice people through BMYC. If truth were known, I'd gone through university not mixing with very many Christians and the choir came along at the right time and restored my faith in the fact that there are young people out there who believe the same stuff as me.

BMYC has also made me realise how brilliant it is to sing with a choir – where teamwork and co-operation are so important. I'll miss going to Choir weekends but I thought it was time to try something new.....

.....I've now applied to and being accepted as a member of the Manchester Gospel Choir! Apparently most of the members are 'Methodists who like a good sing'.....The big time here I come!

## **Future Concerts**

**11-13 June 2004**  
**Wem and Prees Green Circuit**

**22-24 October 2004**  
**St Andrews Methodist Church, Doncaster**  
For Doncaster tickets contact:  
Joan and Ian Soulsby, 40 Greenleafe Avenue,  
Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5RF,  
(01302) 367746, i.m.soulsby@btinternet.com

### **Message from the Friends Secretary**

Sorry this is such a short issue. The choir has only had one concert since the last newsletter and is busy preparing for the CD.

If you wish to make a donation to the work of the British Methodist Youth Choir, could you please send cheques along with your name, and address, to myself. Cheques should be made payable to "The British Methodist Youth Choir".

Please continue to pray for the choir, especially this summer whilst they rehearse and record the CD.

**Naomi Whittaker, Friends Secretary**

### **BMYC Contact Details**

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