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# BMYC Friends

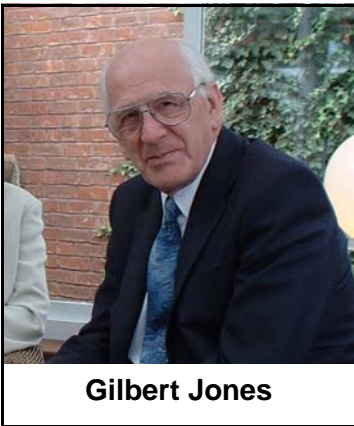
## Newsletter



Issue 3 - May 2002

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### Message from the BMYC Administrator



**Gilbert Jones**

Here we are again, well into another choir year with two excellent weekends completed at Roker in Sunderland and Haxby in York. Both examples of the generosity of our Methodist people in hospitality and generosity to our choir members, and both concerts played to full churches, not an empty seat anywhere. We are greatly encouraged by all this and this is helping to attract new members, especially male ones which we are short of.

In a few weeks we shall be at Barry in S. Glamorgan the first visit to Wales since I have been associated with the choir, something we are all looking forward to. I recently met Don Maclean, from the BBC programme "Good Morning Sunday", told him about the choir, and he has offered to give the weekends a mention if we will send him the information - yet another door opens, who knows what will come of it!!

After the June concert we have a long break until November when we are jointly presenting a concert with the Methodist Youth Brass Band at the Central Hall Trust in Grimsby. This will be the first venture of its kind, as we are sponsoring the whole event to raise funds for NCH. We have over 600 seats to sell, if you live anywhere in the area of Grimsby and can help with this please give me a call. I understand that coaches are coming from North

Lincolnshire and York and who knows from where else. We have been helped and supported so much in recent times we felt it was time we helped others. Please pray for what we do in the name of this Methodist church we all serve in so many different ways, pray for our "Mission in Song". Every blessing.

**Gilbert Jones Choir Administrator.**

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## **Editorial**

I hope you enjoy this, the third BMYC Friends newsletter. In it we have a new section, with news from past choir members. If you are an ex-member of the choir and would like to let us know what you are up to, please send your news to me.



**Naomi Whittaker**

If you know any ex-BMYC members who are not on the BMYC Friends address list, please ask them to contact me, as we'd like to keep in contact with as many past members as possible.

I'd like to send a big thank you to the MCMS (Methodist Church Music Society), who very generously printed and distributed 1000 BMYC leaflets with their January magazine. I welcome all those who have joined the BMYC Friends as a result of that leaflet.

Please see page 13 for information of the new BMYC web page, which includes electronic copies of this newsletter and more photos of each of the weekends.

I'm moving house in July this year, so please send post to me via Gilbert Jones after 30th June (see contact details on back page).

**Naomi Whittaker, BMYC Friends Secretary  
New BMYC Treasurer**

Where to begin..... I'm quite a new recruit to the choir, only joining in October 2000 and am loving every minute of it! The opportunity to sing in a "real" choir again within a Christian context continues to be a brilliant experience. I just regret that it took me until the ripe old age of 24 before I had the courage to join; better late than never I guess!

At the Haxby weekend in March I volunteered (kind of!) to be the choir treasurer as Sian was retiring. As far as I can gather at this stage my main responsibilities are :

- keeping the books up to date so that we know how much money we have and where it's all disappearing to
- writing cheques out: mainly to choir members for expenses
- accepting cheques on behalf of the choir from generous host churches and BMYC Friends
- paying the choir insurance

Not really a glamorous job (apologies to those who have fallen asleep reading this!) but one which is vital to the successful continuation of the choir. It's important that there's enough money in the account to pay costs as we travel around the country. I am still in the process of wading through the reams of paperwork required by the bank in order for me to become the new treasurer but am persevering (if somewhat slowly!). Just don't ask me any complicated financial questions...yet!

Apologies to those people I continue to hassle – your support is gratefully received.

**Susanne Charlton**



## **Sunderland Weekend 8 - 10 February 2002**

We asked Stephen to write the following review of his first weekend with the choir.

“I first heard about the Choir when they came to my church in Southborough in 1997 in our Diamond Jubilee year and gave us a fabulous concert. I thus had no hesitation when Andrew Cottrell asked me whether I would be interested in joining in my first week in Oxford.

I was somewhat worried on my first morning when I heard that there would only be three men singing for my first weekend. However, this proved to be quite an opportunity, as we were given a good deal of help (which I certainly needed) and there was nothing to stop me singing loudly where I wanted to. Everyone else in the Choir was very supportive and I think appreciated the effort I was making even if much of what came out was not expected. This was one part of the ethos of the Choir which I greatly valued. In Oxford I tend to get very strange looks from ‘serious singers’ (i.e. people who try to take the fun out of singing rather than those who sing well) when I sing, but here the





emphasis was clearly on encouragement and on fulfilling our mission through sharing the music. The audience obviously enjoyed our concert greatly and were wholehearted in their tributes on the Saturday and the Sunday morning, and we felt we had achieved something as a result. The choir ethos was also born out in the fellowship of the weekend – the sightseeing, the food (which even by the standards I'm used to at the Methodist Church in Oxford was exceptional – we even had cheese and biscuits and after dinner mints) and the pub visit, which I was somewhat surprised to

find on an official Methodist activity!

I look forward to what I hope will be many more years of singing with the Choir”.

**Stephen Burgess**



## New Choir Members



New choir members at the Haxby weekend.  
From left: Ben C, Stephen B, Rachel M, Peter B and Peter J

### **Peter Barker**

Peter comes from Yorkshire, but joined the choir through the John Wesley Society in Oxford, where he is currently studying for a degree in Physics. Having played many instruments, he finally found that if you play the bassoon then you can get into any orchestra, simply as they're desperate. The other advantage is that it's in the bass clef (unless it's Beethoven-grrh).

Peter started singing with his local Gilbert and Sullivan Society and so enjoyed being a sailor in Pinafore that he hopes to make a career out of it. Peter likes writing about himself in the third person.

### **Stephen Burgess**

Stephen is a first year undergraduate at Merton College, Oxford reading Maths. He is a regular at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford where there is an active Methsoc and where he now sings in the choir.

Stephen sang in his school choir for several years, where they sang some interesting works such as Handel's *Messiah* and Walton's *Te Deum*, as well as some fairly average works by Vaughan Williams and Tippett. He still tries to sing as much as possible in Oxford, but this is not easy given the hectic nature of the terms. Stephen plays percussion in a couple of orchestras, which is an excellent opportunity to have fun making large amounts of noise. His main instrument is the piano, however, which he's played for about ten years. Here Stephen also tends to prefer the 'loud' option, playing Liszt and Rachmaninov wherever possible. He hopes to start learning the organ later this year as well, as his local church in Kent currently has no regular organist (even though two years ago they had about three).

During terms and holidays Stephen also play bridge and has even been known to work occasionally.

## **Ben Cookman**

Ben Cookman is 20, and lives in York. He is about to complete a degree in Economics at Jesus College, Cambridge, and will begin training as a Chartered Accountant in Leeds in September.

Ben has played the piano since he was seven, and he is the organist at his home church. He has played the 'cello since the age of eleven, and played in the York area youth orchestra, and is now in his college orchestra. He sang in his school choir, and is a member of the University Chorus at Cambridge. Once he moves to Leeds, Ben hopes to get involved in as much music as possible! Besides studying and playing music, Ben also enjoys listening to it, playing sport, cycling and travelling.

## **Rachel McAdoo**

Rachel is 17 and is currently studying for her A-Levels in Geography, English Literature and Maths with Statistics. In September she is hoping to go to university to study primary teaching.

As well as singing, Rachel plays the flute, in which she has reached grade 4, and the piano, to which she has reached grade 5. Rachel plays the flute in the school windband and in the local church band.

Rachel has sung in various carol services and presentation evenings in small groups for school at Newcastle City Hall. She sang with Graham Kendrick in Newcastle when he came with his national tour of "Rumours of Angels"

Rachel is currently singing in her circuit choir in which they performed a show, which was specially commissioned for them called "The Seeker". More recently She has sung at Gateshead Metro Centre where they sang a Christmas musical.

Rachel really enjoyed her first BMYC weekend at Haxby.

## **Heidi Upham**

One of the first things that most people find out about Heidi is that she's from Cornwall. She has sung in Camborne Wesley Choir now for about 5 or 6 years and they have performed some of Heidi's choral pieces as well as the Wesley Memorial Choir in Oxford.

Heidi graduated from St. Catz\*, Oxford in 2000 in music, had a year out, and is currently doing a PGCE in secondary music, which has taken her most recently to Somerset, where she teaches in Chard and spends most of the time travelling a long



way and feeling very tired! When Heidi was in Oxford she was secretary and president of the John Wesley Society. She plays lots of instruments and likes writing music whenever she gets the time.

Heidi first encountered the BMYC in Bridgwater when she just happened to be there too ;-).

\*St. Catherine's College



## **BMYC Membership Changes**

This is a summary of the choir membership changes that have occurred in the last 6 months. Those not detailed in this issue, will hopefully be in the next issue.

### **New Members:**

- Stephen Burgess
- Ben Cookman
- Peter Judge
- Rachel McAdoo
- Peter Barker

### **Retired Members:**

- Chris van den Bos
- Laura Scott

## **Weekend at Haxby and Wigginton Methodist Church, York 15 – 17 March 2002**

Being the first BMYC weekend I have attended, almost everything that happened at Haxby and Wigginton Methodist Church, near York, was new for me... but not everything, as I live just a few miles up the road, so I didn't get to experience the hospitality of the host families from the church. Even so, everyone said they'd been very well looked after!

As people arrived on the Friday evening, it was a chance to meet new choir members, and catch up with old friends, before we opened the weekend with a short devotional service, and had a quick sing before people went home to their hosts.

Early on Saturday morning, with a few bleary eyes and none-too-alert minds, we set about learning some new relatively new



**Congregational hymn during the Haxby and Wigginton concert**

pieces, taken from John Rutter's "Feel the Spirit", and bringing already-known items up to scratch. For myself, and the other new members, nearly all the pieces were new, although when we came to sing the Les Miserables compilation, there were flickers of recognition! We were told that having several extra male voices new to the choir resulted in a much more balanced sound, and took the onus off the ladies in having to keep up the volume levels.

Following lunch, the choir held their AGM, where thanks were expressed to everyone who had helped with the choir. Several new committee members were elected, and there was a general discussion about the choir's development, and the exciting possibility of making a CD recording at some stage in the future. The rest of the afternoon was a chance to grab some fresh air around town, and have a final rehearsal for the evening's concert.

The concert began at 7.30, after a delicious tea of lasagne and salads. We sang to a full audience, and for me, it was great to sing as part of a small choir again, having been a member of the 200-strong university chorus for the last two years. Singing hymns as part of the concert was also a novelty for me, but it was excellent to hear the audience in full voice! After the concert, liquid refreshment was on offer at the pub next-door, as well as a chance to socialise with other members.

Sunday morning began with a quick rehearsal for the morning's service, then we enjoyed sharing in the church's worship service with another full congregation. Members of the church had brought mountains of food to the Faith Lunch after the service, and we went away looking forward to the next weekend in Sunny South Wales in June!

This was a fantastic weekend's singing: some excellent pieces and performances, and a wide variety of musical styles, and we are most grateful to everyone who helped organise our time in Haxby.

**Ben Cookman**

## News From Past BMYC Members

### Liz Cheesman (néé Muff)

Reading Andrew's goodbye in the last newsletter I realised how long it has been. I left the choir along with Rachel and Jane, about the time Andrew joined – we probably had a year in the choir with him.

When I joined the choir it had been formed for about a year and everyone had just come back from America. At that time, Martin was the Musical Director, Pam and Phil were the organisers and Ashley (current Musical Director) was an alto!



**Left: Rachel Jacob (néé Seaward), Middle: Jane Burgess (néé Patterson), Right: Liz Cheesman (néé Muff)**

News of those of us in the photo (taken in spring 2001):

- ◆ Rachel is married to Tony and has two small children – Joshua and Emily. She is a teacher.

- ◆ Jane is married to Dan and in mid-summer 2001 they moved to New York with Hannah. Their second child, James, was born in March 2002.
- ◆ I, Liz, am single again (having been married). I am a senior nurse for the national cancer charity Cancer BACUP and love it!

We all have such great memories of our time in BMYC, staying in hosts homes and, when we could persuade Pam and Phil, in church halls. We all went on several summer tours, including Scotland, Ireland and East Germany as well as the usual weekends.

We have also all got together at weddings and have sung Ashley's "Light a Candle" for each other.

Its good to hear the choir is still going strong and, if there is a choir weekend in the London area, you may find me at the concert.

**Liz Cheesman (née Muff)**

## **BMYC Web Page**

The British Methodist Youth Choir now has a web page, on which you can find information about choir members, lists of the choir programmes for 2002 and 2003, past copies of this newsletter, photos of the weekends, and much more.

The web site is:

**[www.bmyc.info](http://www.bmyc.info)**

Please use the form on the BMYC Friends section to contact the Friends Secretary with changes of address, etc.

# Retiring Choir Member

## Chris van den Bos

I joined the BMYC in 1996 and have enjoyed singing in the choir for six fantastic years, but sadly the time has now come to say goodbye.

Membership of the BMYC provides a great opportunity to travel to a lot of different cities, towns and villages and meet a lot of different people. While I've been a member of the choir, we've travelled as far as Bishop Auckland and Kendal in the north of England, and Eastbourne, Brighton and Torquay on the south coast. Of course the 'big events' like the workshop with John Rutter and the World Methodist Conference at Brighton have made big impressions on my memory, but the 'ordinary' concert weekends in different churches around the connexion have all been special for different reasons. Methodist congregations vary greatly in size and in their style of worship, but the genuine warm welcome seems to be the same everywhere!



In June last year I left England to work in Stockholm, Sweden, for eight months. Sweden has a very strong choral singing tradition and I was persuaded to join a choir soon after I arrived. Initially I didn't understand anything that the conductor said, or any of the words I was singing, but it was a great experience! It's a pity we don't celebrate St Lucia's day (13th December) in the UK. Choirs are in great demand on this day in Sweden to sing in workplaces, supermarkets, hospitals, shopping centres, railway stations and so on. For choirs, it's a good opportunity to raise lots of money: the choir in which I sang did twelve short 'concerts' through the day in different venues around Stockholm, and was paid more than two thousand pounds in total - enough to pay the conductor for the choir's weekly rehearsals through the whole year. In the BMYC, in

contrast, our conductor is never paid anything. We are very fortunate to have a professional musician of Ashley's calibre as our musical director, and I hope this is something we have never taken for granted.

I've now moved to another new country. Since March, I've been working as a researcher at Delft University of Technology, in the Netherlands. I haven't joined a choir yet, but I intend to find one!

Finally, thank you to all the Friends of the choir who have supported the choir in any way while I've been a member, and to all the choir members who have made my time in the choir so much fun. Best wishes to you all for the future! I would love to keep in touch with people: my email address is [cvdb@cantab.net](mailto:cvdb@cantab.net)

**Chris van den Bos**

## Congratulations!

One current choir member and one recently retired member have announced their engagements recently.

Michael Fryers and Helen Firbank  
hope to get married in Autumn 2002

Kirsty Scott and Andy Stovell  
plan to marry in August 2003

We send them all our best wishes and good luck for all the planning.



# **BMYC Programme 2002 - 2003**

June 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2002

The Methodist Church Barry, South Glamorgan, Wales

November 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> 2002

Joint Concert with Methodist Youth Brass band  
at Grimsby Central Hall Trust in aid of NCH

February 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> 2003

The Methodist Church at Cove Farnborough, Hamps

March 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003

St Andrews Methodist Church ,Skipton

July 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> 2003

Endcliffe Methodist Church, Sheffield

September 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> 2003

Sale Methodist Church 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Services, Cheshire

## **BMYC Contact Details**

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\* Naomi will be moving in July 2002, please contact via Email or via Gilbert from 30th June 2002.