
BMYC Friends Newsletter

Issue 4 - November 2002



British Methodist Youth Choir News



Naomi Whittaker

Welcome to the latest issue of the BMYC Friends Newsletter. In this issue we have two pieces of news about next year. To celebrate their 21st anniversary in 2003, the choir will be recording a CD in the spring and are holding a reunion in July.

You will be contacted nearer the time of the CD recording, about how you can pre-book your copies.

The reunion will be held in Sheffield on the 4 - 6 July 2003. All past members of the choir are invited to attend and partners are very welcome. More details of the reunion will be available nearer the time, but we now need to contact as many ex-choir members as possible. If you are a former member of BMYC, please fill in the form on page 15 and return it to myself. If you know other past members, please encourage them to also send their contact details to me.

I hope you all enjoy this issue of the newsletter and are looking forward to the next year of the choir.

Naomi Whittaker
(BMYC Friends Secretary)

The **Methodist Church** 

Weekend at Barry Methodist Church, South Glamorgan 14 - 16 June 2002

After competing to see who could take the longest to get there (I think I won, it took me 7½ hours!) the choir gradually arrived in Barry, South Wales on the Friday evening, to be greeted by Dot, host extraordinaire and very definitely not Welsh! (She's actually Scottish!). After a relaxing for a (very!) short while, we were put through a brief rehearsal by Ashley before going thankfully to our beds.

Saturday morning dawned fine and bright, despite the forecast of rain for South Wales for the whole of the weekend, and we made our way to the church for rehearsals. An imbalance in numbers meant that Helen Cook had to sing Tenor instead of her usual Alto, an experience she and I have both had in the past. We do urgently need more Tenors!

We finished for lunch earlier than normal, for those who wanted to watch England thrash Denmark 3-0 in the World Cup. The church members attempted to set up a large screen for this but failed, and the football fans were kindly taken off to a member's home to watch the match whilst eating fish and chips and sending text message updates to the rest of us!



Those us who did not watch the football were taken to the Amelia Farm Trust for a barbeque and brief tour of the farm. The farm was left as a legacy to the church on the condition that they used it in some way to benefit disadvantaged children and young people. It is now set up to run

workshops for young people in activities such as music, cookery, woodwork, pottery and other skills to help them to support themselves and perhaps create a career from. The farm also has a collection of animals such as donkeys, goats, pigs and chickens, some of which are bred to sell at market. We were introduced to the donkeys, who got perhaps slightly too close for the comfort of some!

The farm is a thriving concern, and the hostel there is booked by many groups of people for a whole variety of reasons. Gilbert is even giving some thought to taking the choir back there to record our CD at some point in the not too distant future, as they also have a recording studio on site as part of their music rooms!

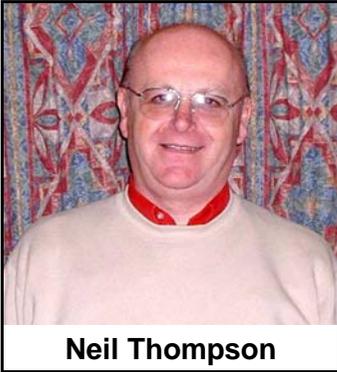
The rains came just as we were leaving the farm, and we returned to the church for more rehearsals before the concert which was very well received, and, judging by the volume of applause, very much appreciated. We even had the honour of the presence of the local mayor and his daughter, complete with their gold chains of office; and we touched the heart of the minister by singing last years Methodist Conference song, 'The Rainbows Response', written by Ashley and conference president Christina LeMoignan, as she was ordained at conference.

After the concert, instead of our usual sojourn to the pub, we returned to the house of Dot and Bobby (Andrew's and my host) for a party, to which hosts and other church members as well as choir members were all invited. There we were fed copious amounts of every variety of bread you can imagine as well as the usual party snacks, and royally entertained by Ashley, a 19 year old rugby player who we may even have persuaded to join the choir!

The choir participated in the Sunday service by doing the readings and also singing pieces specially selected to fit with the topic of the service. Afterwards we were provided with a buffet lunch before leaving for home, and were strongly encouraged to take a picnic for the journey home, even being provided with sandwich boxes!

Emma Watson

Chairman's Message



When I was 14 years old I started playing the organ at our local church. I had what I suppose was the enthusiasm of youth and spent hours of my precious teenage time practising. This did bear some fruit since I went on to music college, gained some letters after my name and have been involved in Christian music ever since, but it had its challenges along the way.

On one particular occasion, as I was coming to the end of my rehearsal stint, I became aware of a visitor in the church. He walked up to the organ console and asked what I had been playing. I explained that the piece was Karg-Elert's chorale prelude based on "Nun danket alle Gott" and, for my trouble, received the most extraordinary reply. In plain (and rather strong) terms this strange man told me that only the music of J.S. Bach should be played on the organ – nothing else was worthy!

Now I, like many of you reading this, will know people in our churches who hold similar views when it comes to the hymns and songs we sing as part of our worship. The division between those who like that which is "new" and those who favour what we might call *tradition* is often quite marked and does nothing to help our sharing of the Gospel of love and peace which God has given us in Christ Jesus. I'm glad that there are some signs of hope around also and delighted that BMYC is one of them. When I see how churches respond to the choir during a weekend and how varied a programme the choir is capable of, incorporating music far older than that cherished by the traditional camp as well as new (sometimes very new!) items and the best of what comes in between, I do think that I see a precious ray of light shining in what can often be a dark tunnel.

This is something we need to keep working at. Whether singing at the Methodist Conference or in the smallest of chapels BMYC really makes an impact, a difference and a valuable contribution out of all proportion to the size of the choir. I know it means a lot of travelling and thereby some sacrifice but I believe it is well worthwhile for the difference we make and I hope that the choir, and its work, may long continue.

Rev. Neil Thompson
Choir Chairman



Barry Concert, June 2002

Weekend at Grimsby Central Hall in Aid of NCH 1-3 November 2002

The latest BMYC adventure was to a wet and cold Grimsby in early November for a joint concert with the National Methodist Youth Brass Band. Despite the weather, the welcome at Scartho Methodist church was very hospitable and the large number of members who made the arduous trek to North East Lincolnshire were soon being plied with cakes and tea. Our accommodation was a carpeted church floor, and together with the fact that the church possesses one of the few functional heating systems in Methodism, made for a more comfortable night than expected. However, an early morning alarm call meant the choir were soon up and rehearsing and the morning was spent being reminded how to sing by our musical director Ashley Thompson.

In the afternoon, the choir were transported to Grimsby Central Hall, and had a short time to explore Grimsby. For some unknown reason, the fish docks were a popular visiting spot! But there is no rest for the wicked and the choir were soon rehearsing again, our dedication impressing some of the Brass Band players. There followed a light buffet tea (or a not so light Burger King for some of the greedier choir members).

The concert in the evening was well attended and the compere for the evening was the local MP Austin Mitchell. The choir sang their usual wide range, including music by Bruckner, Rutter and Rogers, as well as Ashley's modern settings of favourite hymns and the Geographical Fugue. A tired and slightly hoarse choir made their way back to Scartho but the fun wasn't over for the day. A joint choir and band quiz was then



Austin Mitchell MP



Rehearsals at Scartho Church

held written by some choir members who clearly watch too much TV and listen to far too much pop music. It was very enjoyable and there were even prizes.

On Sunday morning the choir and band formed a rather large music group for the Sunday morning parade service, which was on the theme of gifts appropriately enough. Following this was yet more food, and a long journey home. The weekend was very enjoyable and our thanks go out to Ashley, Gilbert and the team at Scartho. A special mention also for our assistant musical director Andrew Hornsby who arranged the whole weekend for us and worked very hard to make sure everything was successful.

Peter Barker

BMYC Web Site
<http://www.bmyc.info/>



The Concert

Hopefully, those of you who have access to the web, have had a chance to look at the choir web site, it's been going now for just over six months. Many thanks to those of you have made suggestions regarding it.

The web site is aimed at members past and present and any one who has an interest in news relating to the choir.

The web page contains background on the choir, a list of choir dates for this and next year, along with a photo album from the past concerts. If any one has photos from past concerts it would be great if you could e-mail them to me at info@bmyc.info with details of when and where each photo was taken.

There is also a section dedicated to the Friends of BMYC and, if you would like to read past editions of the newsletter, these can be downloaded from here.

If you know anyone who would like to host a choir weekend, or join the choir, then there is a form on the web site for contacting us.

In the next few weeks there will be a live discussion board on the web site, where you can discuss memories from the choir or anything else choir related you want to add to it.

Our web page hosting service offers free email forwarding, so if anyone would like an email address which forwards to your own in the format of xxxxx@bmyc.info, please contact me on the above address.

For those of you who haven't had a chance to visit, the website can be found at <http://www.bmyc.info/>

Kevin Soulsby

Retiring Choir Member

Nikki Gray

"And now the end is here and I must face the final curtain"



That well known Sinatra number was played at the recent Grimsby weekend by the Brass Band and it was very apt for me, as unfortunately it was my final BMYC weekend and concert, because I have reached the grand old age of 28!

I first joined the BMYC in May 2000, aged 25. Yes, I was a late starter as I only found out about this choir when I was 24, thanks to Helen Heyes who told me about it at the Methodist Youth Conference in late 1998. I decided to join because I was attracted to the idea of singing with other young Christians and travelling round the UK to perform to other Methodist churches.

I have always loved singing from a young age and in addition to this, have had a strong Christian involvement, especially within the Methodist church. I was already a member of a local choral society and operatic society, in my home town, but I was (and still am!), very much one of the youngest. I wanted to be part of a young choir singing a mixture of light classical/popular music and Christian hymns/choruses. I really have enjoyed the variety of material we have sung and I am so impressed with Ashley's conducting and musical arranging talents!

In addition to the musical side, I have relished the social aspect of the BMYC. It has been fun getting to know other choir members and people from our host churches, not to mention the warm welcome and the delicious food always laid on for us!! As for the travelling to these places, I have become a real connoisseur of National Rail, especially GNER!!!!

I have made some great friends in the choir with whom I'd like to stay in touch. I'm also looking forward to receiving BMYC Friends

mail, so that I keep updated on what's happening. I can't wait for the reunion next July!

Overall, I would like to say a big thank you to Gilbert for his dedicated administration, Ashley for his lively and original musical directing and the whole of the BMYC for their warmth and friendliness and for my lovely leaving card and gifts! I shall certainly be encouraging other young Christians who enjoy singing to join.

KEEP UP THE HIGH STANDARD OF SINGING AND ALSO THE FUN, FRIENDSHIP & FELLOWSHIP!!!! GOD BE WITH YOU ALL!

Nikki Gray

Past Member News

It's now more than twenty years since we stood at Temple Meads Station in Bristol looking lost. Apart from 2 or 3 who knew each

Congratulations!

To Lucy Gardam (BMYC Member) and Dave Bird on their engagement. They are to be married on 22 February 2003.

To Michael Fryers (Ex-BMYC Member) and Helen Firbank on their wedding on 12 October 2002 in Nottingham (see photo).



other from school, we were all total strangers, but by the time we went home on Sunday afternoon we felt as if we'd known each other for years. All members and past members will agree with me, I'm sure, that this is a feeling which stays with you whenever you join or leave the Choir, friendships made within BMYC stay with you.

Friday 26th March 1982 it was and by Saturday night we were giving a concert in The New Room to a full house. Susan Thomas was our 1st soloist – Almighty and Everlasting God rings a bell – with an instrumental interlude courtesy of Phil Carter and the recorder group.

From thereon in we went from strength to strength, Birmingham London, Leeds, Taunton, nowhere was too small, nowhere was too big – not even the Bicentennial celebration of the founding of Methodism in the USA in Baltimore in April 1984 - this of course was one of the reasons we were brought together in the first place.

Twenty years on, it is a joy to see that BMYC is still flourishing and enjoying the fellowship, friendship and music making which have become it's trademarks.

I spent a total of seven years with the Choir, including the tours of USA, N. Ireland, E.Germany and Italy. The venues in the UK are too numerous to mention and I think it fair to say that no-one had any more fun (or poked any more fun at other people for that matter) than I did..

Twenty years on, I am still working in the Shipping industry, living in Felixstowe for the past 6 years, I've spent the last 4 and a half years working for MAERSK LINE – the largest Shipping Line in the World, but have just moved in October to a small, privately owned Company. Still playing the fool and sad to say that the ravages of time, and too much Karaoke, mean I now only sing in the bath.

Now that the BMYC Friends is up and running, it would be marvellous to catch up with old friends again. Come on all you

founder members, where are you all ??????

Mike Waller
(mjwaller13@hotmail.com)

**Ex-BMYC
Address List**



Members

Mike and others have requested copies of addresses of other ex-members of the choir. I cannot give these out without permission of the people concerned (and I also don't know who on the Friends address list is an ex-member). Thus, I propose to set up a list of those ex-members who would like to be on an ex-members address list. They would then receive a copy of the up to date list, with their Friends newsletters.

If you are an ex-member and would like to be on this list, please fill in the form on page 15 and send it to me. (This is the same form for the reunion, so please tick the relevant box on it).

Naomi Whittaker
BMYC Friends Secretary

BMYC Programme 2003

February 7th - 9th 2003

The Methodist Church at Cove Farnborough,
Hamps

March 21st - 23rd 2003
St Andrews Methodist Church, Skipton

July 4th - 6th 2003
Reunion Weekend
Endcliffe Methodist Church, Sheffield

September 26th - 28th 2003
40th Anniversary Services
Sale Methodist Church , Cheshire

Ex-Member News and Old Photos?

Are you an ex-member with news about yourself or memories of your time in the choir? If so, please send them to Naomi Whittaker (preferably with a photo of yourself).

Do you have old photos of the choir? Again, please send them to Naomi (or Kevin, see page 8) and we'll put them on the web site and in future issues of this newsletter.

BMYC Contact Details

BMYC Administrator:

Gilbert Jones
35 Westwood Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B73 6UP
Tel: (0121) 605 8766
Email: gilbert.jones@blueyonder.co.uk

BMYC Friends Secretary:

Naomi Whittaker
104 Bishopthorpe Road
York
North Yorks
YO23 1JX
Tel: (01904) 635 278
Email: N.A.Chester.91@cantab.net



BMYC Ex-members Form

Please fill in this form if you wish to be informed of the details of the reunion in July 2003, or if you wish to be on the ex-members address list.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Post Code:

Phone:

Email Address:

The years you were a member:

Please tick:

Please keep me informed about the reunion.

Please add my details to the ex-members address list.

Once completed, please send this form to:

Naomi Whittaker
104 Bishopthorpe Road
York
YO23 1JX

BMYC Friends Donation Form

As we seek to enlarge the choir and meet the needs of our young people we are increasingly dependent on the generosity of many people and churches to help us maintain the high standards we have set for the choir. Any help you can offer, however small, will be gratefully received and you can be assured we shall spend wisely as we move into the coming year. **Most importantly of all, we ask for your continued prayers for the group and all that we undertake.**

I wish to become a “Friend” of BMYC. Please place my name on your mailing list. (*Only tick if you are not already a member*)

I enclose my donation to the BMYC of £ to support their “Mission in Song”.

Name.....

Address.....

..... Post Code.....

Date.....

Please make cheques payable to “The British Methodist Youth Choir” and send to:

Naomi Whittaker
104 Bishopthorpe Road
York
North Yorks
YO23 1JX

Thank you for your generous support