
BMYC Friends Newsletter

Issue 6 - November 2003



4 - 6 July 2003 21st Anniversary Reunion Weekend



The full choir in afternoon rehearsals

A sunny Friday evening saw over 20 choir members descending on Sheffield at Endcliffe Methodist Church, host of the very special 21st anniversary reunion weekend of the choir. After a cup of tea and sandwiches we were straight into a rehearsal – the schedule for the weekend was hectic so we needed to get in practice when we could. It was also lovely to welcome back Alison, after her year in Germany.

The **Methodist Church** 

The minister led us in prayers and meditations before we were sent off to our hosts' houses for some much needed sleep. Fortunately, our host lived directly opposite the church, so there was no need to remember directions and no chance of getting lost!

Saturday morning, back at the church, Heidi led us in devotions before rehearsals started again. It was the last chance to run through the programme for the first half of the concert. At 11am we stopped for the customary tea break (and to buy pencils), but this weekend we welcomed our guests – ex-members of the choir, many with partners and children in tow. We had plenty of time to meet up with old friends, and make new ones, chatting about 'old times.' It was a time of discovery for the newer members - hearing about the 'interesting' dresses the women had to wear, and the old sashes and waistcoats made us appreciate our maroon and black t-shirts!



Working out a timeline of choir weekends

After a light lunch the augmented choir set about rehearsing the second half of the concert – Vivaldi's Gloria (along with a few of the pieces from Ashley's *New Gloria*). We were skilfully accompanied by Andrew on the piano and Mark on the organ, after solving the mystery of the missing bars in one of the movements! Many of the ex-members found the sight-reading a little tricky, being a bit out of practice, but they hid it well and the

sound was glorious! Another short break (where we gate crashed the crèche that had been provided for the children) gave opportunity for more chatting, more tea, and a chance to stretch the legs and get a bit of fresh air. The opportunity was also taken to use the knowledge of the ex-members to create a timeline of the life of the choir over the last 21



Ex-members looking at photos of the first choir weekends

years, which made interesting reading. More rehearsing followed to perfect the Gloria before tea.

The concert proceeded smoothly, although some of the audience found themselves sitting on their own in the second half as ex-members moved from the pews to sing. The comments from the audience afterwards were positive, as always. Instead of a trip to the pub, the entertainment for the evening was provided by the choir reps Andrew and Lucy in the form of a quiz. It uncovered hidden talents, such as those who know the capital cities of most countries, including Peru! We also made light work of the snacks and drinks we had been left – anyone would think we hadn't been fed all day! It was late that night that a weary choir headed back to their hosts' houses, and the ex-members back to their B&Bs.

Sunday morning began with a quick rehearsal, along with standing and sitting practice! During the service we took part in the readings and prayers, performed a sketch, and two members spoke about their time in the choir. We also sang a Worship Medley, and 'May The Road Rise' as a benediction.

After the service, present members were provided with lunch by the church before heading home. Sadly, we said goodbye to Judith, who is leaving the choir after many years of service. Her amazing knowledge of hymn numbers will definitely be missed!

All in all it was a memorable weekend, and we are already looking forward to our Silver Jubilee in 4 years' time!

Sharon Ransome

New Choir Member



The current and ex-members during the concert

Stop Press! Website News!

Kevin intends to redo the entire BMYC web site over the next year and re-launch, hopefully, at the same time the new CD is produced.

You can check out our current web site at: **www.bmyc.info**

Jenny Wright

Jenny has found it impossible to leave the dreamy concrete spires of Bath University and so is still there at 23, now studying (in-between coffee breaks) for a PhD in maths applied to problems in structural engineering. She refuses to comment on what she might do afterwards as she knows that by the next time she is asked that question she will have changed her mind.

Although brought up in the Methodist Church, Jenny now attends an Anglican church in Bath where she enjoys singing with the choir each week. She also belongs to a large local choir and plays the piano at every available opportunity.

Jenny really enjoyed the BMYC weekend in Sale and is very grateful to all the members of the choir for making her feel so welcome. She is looking forward to the next weekend in Bishop Auckland and the opportunity which the choir provides her to make friends all over the country.

Ex-members!

If you are an ex-member of the choir and have not received a copy of the ex-members address list, then you are not on it. If you would like to be on it (and thus get a copy), please send the following details to me (address on page 14):

Name, maiden name (if applicable), address, phone number, Email address, years in the choir.

Naomi Whittaker

York Minster 24th May 2003

300th Anniversary of the Birth of John Wesley

In January, the choir was approached by Stuart Burgess, the Chairman of the York and Hull District, asking if we could supply some singers to take part in a choir for a service in York Minster, celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley. Five months later, 9 of us turned up at York Minster on the Friday evening to find we could not get in due to a bomb scare!

The nine of us included 4 ex-BMYC members. Three of us were residents of York and thus provided accommodation for



The nine BMYC representatives at York Minster

the others. We joined singers from Heslington Church to form a choir of 21. The Heslington church is in the middle of York University and is one of the oldest LEPS. Thus many of the choir members were students.

The service on the Saturday morning was jointly led by Stuart Burgess and David Hope, Archbishop of York. There was a congregation of between 2000 and 3000 including many civic dignitaries as well as members of Methodist and Anglican churches from the York area. The service included the signing of two covenants. The first was a covenant between the York and Hull Methodist District, and the York Anglican Diocese. The second was a partnership agreement signed between the York and Hull Methodist District, and the Cape of Good Hope District of the Methodist Church of South Africa.

The choir sang two pieces. "One is the Body" by John Bell and "Thuma Mina", an African song which was sung under the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. These went well and much better than the first hymn ("O for a Thousand Tongues") in which the organist was varying the speed throughout the hymn, which led to an even larger time difference between parts of the congregation than was expected due to the size of the building.

Many of the BMYC members finished the weekend with a pub meal, shopping and then watching the Eurovision Song Contest. Thanks to Helen Cook and Amy Crampton for being our contacts for organising this event. We hope it has been a good advert for the choir.

Naomi Whittaker

Retiring Choir Members

Judith Carter



At my last BMYC weekend, someone commented that I'd been in the choir "for ever". Well, 10 years did sometimes feel like that...but also I do wonder where all that time went. I joined at the New Malden weekend in March 1993, having heard about the choir from relatives who were Gilbert's predecessors as administrators. (I kept this pretty dark at the time though - didn't want anyone getting the wrong idea!)

It's certainly been a varied and interesting 10 years. I've had the opportunity to sing a rich variety of music from Byrd to the Beatles - I'll especially miss Ashley's pieces. This varied repertoire has done wonders for my sight-reading! I've travelled probably thousands of miles by train, getting lost in the most unlikely stations. I've become a connoisseur of church food, floors and facilities. On several occasions I've sat up till all hours with fellow choir members and hosts, putting the world to rights - and got locked in at least one strange bathroom at 1.30am!

But the most important thing for me would definitely be the people. No other choir has offered me such an opportunity for Christian fellowship with people my own age. Travelling round the country, you get to meet a wide range of people - and in the close-knit world that is Methodism, you can bump into friends in the least likely places! Another particular highlight was a weekend at a church where the minister was an ex-choir member: she had "shown me the ropes" at my first weekend. Perhaps most importantly, I have been

grateful to people for accepting me for who I am. The last 10 years have at times been a bumpy ride, and I'd like to thank everyone who supported me (and put up with me!) over the worst bumps.

So where do I go from here? The friends I've made will remain friends. I won't be deprived of opportunities to sing, between Nottingham Bach Choir (which I joined in September 2002), and getting dragged into Circuit choirs. I expect that, with my Local Preacher hat on, I will also be testing congregations' musical boundaries a bit! (MCMS Conference is a dangerous thing!) I'd like to finish by wishing all BMYC members the very best, and if the choir comes to Nottingham...you won't have to sleep on the floor, honest!

Kirsty Stovell (neé Scott)



I was introduced to BMYC by some very persuasive, but friendly, members at a recruitment drive during an MAYC weekend. After I had signed up for information I was invited, along with other new members, to a 'Taster' weekend at Erdington. I went away from that weekend really excited and couldn't wait until the next weekend.

I live in Wiltshire and, as most of the concerts are in the North, over the last three years I have travelled thousands of miles, sung in around 12 concerts and experienced a huge amount of Methodist hospitality. The most memorable concert for me was when we joined with the British Methodist Youth Brass Band for a joint concert in Central Hall in Grimsby. Although it meant sleeping on church hall floors it was a tremendous weekend of fun, fellowship and music. My favourite piece of secular music is the Highlights from Les Miserables and my favourite piece of church music

has to be Ashley's version of I Will Sing The Wondrous Story.

I have now reached retirement age plus two and a half years so I feel it is time for me to move on. I will still keep on singing and playing the oboe when I can, and will keep in touch with the choir members. I would like to thank all members of the choir for making me, and Andy, welcome over the last three years, and for the real sense of fellowship and friendship that we have both enjoyed. You all do a grand job, and it is so important to keep music in Methodism alive. So please KEEP SINGING!

I would like to thank Andy, Kirsty's husband, for the many photos he has supplied of choir weekends for this newsletter. I will miss his contributions and help.

Naomi Whittaker



2004 Concerts

27th March 2004
Bishop Auckland Methodist Church

3rd July 2004
Huddersfield

23rd October 2004
St Andrews, Doncaster

Message from MCMS

3 July 03

On behalf of the Methodist Church Music Society, of which I am Chairman of the Executive, very many congratulations to BMYC on your 21st anniversary. At the last Executive meeting I was asked to send you our congratulations, and I do so gladly.

We are delighted to have been instrumental (or should that be vocal?) in your formation and never fail to be impressed by your consistently high standard. You are a credit to Methodism. We have enjoyed very much your contributions to MCMS conferences and, particularly, the concert with NMYBB at Hoddesdon in 2001. People are still talking about that event as undoubtedly one of the highlights of recent conferences.

May you have a fantastic concert, a great year, and continue to both celebrate the gospel and entertain many with your joy and professionalism.

God bless you all.

With best wishes,

Nick Young

Editorial

Thanks to all those who contributed to this issue of our newsletter. If you would like to contribute or suggest something for the next issue, please contact me (see page 14). The deadline for the next issue is 1st May 2004.

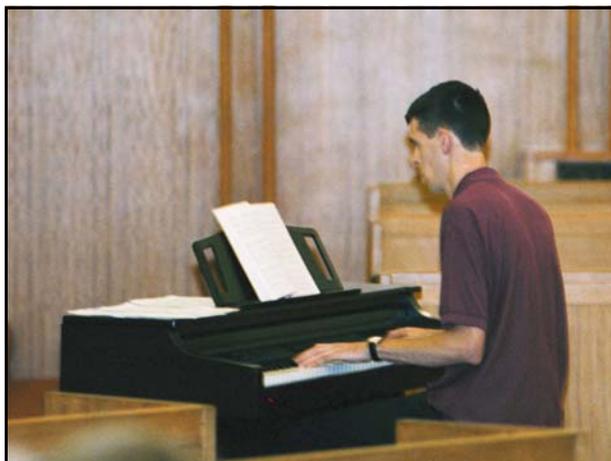
Naomi Whittaker

“The Chairman’s Conducting!”

Sale Weekend, 26 - 28 September 2003

BMYC had a long-standing booking for Sale Methodist Church on the last weekend of September 2003. Ashley let me know some time before that he couldn't make it so asked if I would come along and assist Andrew Hornsby. I said yes and then discovered that Andrew couldn't come either so that left two choices – I acted as M.D. or we called the weekend off. In the end we went and the result was at least OK – maybe better than OK.

Arriving on the Friday evening I had forgotten how long we sometimes have to wait for everyone to arrive. Still, about 9.00 we had some time to practice and quickly discovered something I already knew – there were three items on the programme which I could not play, let alone play and conduct. I'm a musician but I'm not Ashley! Still, God is good and He had brought Andrew Glendenning along who could play “Ain't Misbehavin” and “The Saints” and “The right hand of God”. Hallelujah!



Andrew Glendenning playing the piano

Saturday came and we rehearsed – a privilege for me to direct such a well-trained group of young singers. Two new members fitted right in and survived both the rehearsal and my warped sense of



Neil conducting during the concert

humour. The concert was well received and we were asked to come again. I even got offered a job for 2007 but I'm not due to move then!

Sunday was the first day back for the local minister after his sabbatical, and also the Church's 40th Anniversary, so we perhaps did less than usual in the service, but our contributions both in word and song were appreciated by the congregation. Ashley's "God be in my head" and "May the road rise" seemed to be the Sale favourites.

I enjoyed my few days as M.D. and I'd do it again if needed. But not too soon, it's very hard work!

**Neil Thompson
BMYC Chairman**

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Choir Member News

Congratulations to Helen Heyes and Andrew Glendenning (both choir members) who recently got engaged. They plan to marry on 7th August 2004. Yet another service BMYC offers its members - find a partner!



The marriage took place on Saturday August 16th 2003 of Kirsty Scott (choir member) and Andy Stovell (BMYC photographer) at St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham, Wilts. The reception afterwards was held at Lackhams Countryside Centre, Corsham. Kirsty retired from the choir after the Sale weekend having reached the age of maturity for such things! She and Andy will be missed from our weekends. We wish them every good wish for their

future happiness.



Molly

Molly Katherine Toogood, daughter of choir member Carolyn Toogood, was born on 16th May 2003 at Petersfield Hospital in Hampshire. She weighed 7lb 1oz.

Samuel Isaac Whittaker was born to Naomi (BMYC Friends Secretary) and David Whittaker on 16th July

2003. He weighed 8lb 10oz. He managed to avoid arriving during the reunion concert!



Sam and Naomi

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:

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104 Bishopthorpe Road
York
North Yorks
YO23 1JX

Thank you for your generous support