
BMYC Friends

Newsletter

Issue 8 - May 2004



The Road To A New Dawn

At last - the long awaited recording of BMYC is complete! It has been a long time in the making and even longer in production but I hope you will all agree that it has been worth the wait - it will be available towards the end of November.

As many of you are aware, the choir has been planning their first CD recording for about 18 months. The first task was to decide what to record. Although our repertoire is very varied it was not straightforward gathering a collection of choral works that worked as a whole and that was not already recorded. Following much discussion, and in the light of audience reaction, we decided to record a collection of new settings of familiar hymns alongside new versions of blessings and prayers.

I drew up a shortlist of about 15 pieces and the choir worked most of them into performance shape; it was then much easier to assess which pieces to record.

As the recording was to take place in a studio over two days (a week apart) the choir needed to sing to a click track – it would otherwise be impossible to guarantee identical tempi, particularly for the unaccompanied moments. I began the

The **Methodist** Church 

tiresome task of recording the click tracks in May. The choir sang along to them in rehearsal at Wem and I was then able to adjust where necessary. Once the tempi were set, there really was no altering them.

By June click tracks had been transferred to *ffg*, the studio in Gloucestershire, and the drummer was able to record his part. The choir was recorded to the click track, the drums and a simple piano accompaniment (as little as possible, to avoid unnecessary sound spilling over onto the vocal mics.). Once the choir was recorded the following few weeks were taken up with the unenviable task of listening back to the many takes and editing the parts together. At the same time the engineer and I were finding the right sounds to enhance the accompaniment. This editing process lasted until September when the recording was at the stage that each song could be mixed from many tracks - some pieces contained well over 100 tracks (notably *Wonderful Love* and *The Lord's Prayer*) - to stereo. The 12 stereo tracks were mastered in a different studio altogether and are now awaiting the final artwork.

A New Dawn, titled because of the new light the music casts on the rich heritage of Christian writing, features 12 pieces, many of which have been specially written for the choir. Also included on the disc is the inspirational *The Right Hand Of God*, a favourite at many of our concerts and now given a very lively performance and the blessing of the Caribbean Christian Conference!

Please Help Sell the CD

I hope that the recording will appeal to a wide audience. I'm sure that you will know someone who would appreciate this new music from BMYC in his or her stocking! In addition, I would ask that Friends might not only consider purchasing

the recording, but might also act as ambassadors for the choir and sell copies too. Your church may have a bookstall that would be willing to stock the disc; you may also know a number of other outlets (local Christian book shops, other church stalls etc...) that would be of assistance to the choir. I hope you are able to help in this way - if so, please contact Gilbert Jones for further details and for CDs (on a sale and return basis).

Ashley Thompson
Musical Director

New Members

Katherine Surrey

I'm Katherine. I sing soprano, and have now been to two BMYC weekends which I have really enjoyed. In real life I am a teacher, and in my spare time (ha ha!) I am involved with a youth choir at home and a children's choir which I run!



Weekend at Wem Methodist United Reformed Church 11-13th June 2004

We arrived (some earlier than others) on the Friday night to a warm welcome of home-made soup and cheese (made on a local farm). I think the choir wondered where they were coming to, intermittent trains and COUNTRYSIDE?! Brian arrived at about 9:30 and after admitting he was a fan of cheese, tucked into about a pound of it. Well, it kept us entertained until 11:13 when Mark's train arrived!

Saturday morning started fairly early with a photo shoot for a local newspaper. Rehearsals eventually began much to Ashley's relief. After initial worries about numbers because the weekend was in exam time, we ended up with a substantial sized choir – the men, for once, were not too outnumbered.

Lunch was a bounteous feast, as usual, and after being



Rehearsals at the Wem Weekend

offered thirds and fourths we were ready for our afternoon free time. I think everybody managed to see the entire metropolis of Wem (about two or three times) before finding their way back for more rehearsing! During rehearsals we welcomed bottles of water which had been thoughtfully provided by the Church.

Then it was time for tea, our hosts must have thought we looked like very hungry students! The concert was a great success; we sang our usual variety of pieces including many from our CD. The congregation in the heaving Church obviously enjoyed themselves, judging by all the applause! It was an emotional concert for Helen Heyes and Andrew Glendenning as it was their last concert with the choir. They will be getting married in this Church in August.

Instead of going to the local pub for our evening entertainment, we were kindly invited back to our host's house for drinks and loads of snacks and cakes. Then we returned to our individual hosts for concentrated sleep.

The service started at 10am, which meant an early start for everyone. Many choir members wondered if they were in the wrong profession as they took up their starring roles in the drama. We all sang pieces that fitted with the theme. Our performance must have been inspiring since it attracted a new member! HOORAY! Then we had more food before setting off on our journeys home, lovely for me as it only took 10 minutes!

Our thanks go to Ashley and Gilbert for making the whole weekend go like clockwork and thank you to the choir for making the effort to come, the circuit hasn't stopped talking about you since!

Heyes

Sian

BMYC Members News

It's been a busy six months. Firstly a big CONGRATULATIONS! to the following choir members on their engagements:

- Elaine Allen (BMYC) and Martin, who plan to marry in December 2005.
- Susanne Charlton (BMYC) and Neil, who got engaged on Friday 13th August and are getting married on 17th December 2005 in Skipton.
- Lucy Crampton (BMYC) and Ben Cookman (BMYC) who got engaged on 23rd August, in New Orleans and are getting married on October 15th 2005



Congratulations to Sue and Richard!

Susan Morris (née Harden) former BMYC member and gave birth to a son John David (to be called Jack) on Saturday August 28th 2004, he weighed in at 8lbs 6ozs. Mother and baby are both well.

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). To request this, send your name and email address to friends@bmyc.info. This will remove you from the postal list.

A BMYC Wedding



On Saturday 7th August Helen Heyes and Andrew Glendenning were married at Wem. It was a true BMYC wedding, the couple met through the choir, the organist was an ex-member, the wedding choir was made up of current and ex members, the best man is a member (as well as being Andrew's brother) and the bridesmaid is also a member (and Helen's sister). Gilbert and Marie Jones were also there and took these photos. Helen and Andrew retired from the choir two months earlier, at the weekend in the same church as they were married. We all wish them the very best.

A Generous Donation

We were starting to worry as last year we had received less donations from the Friends than it cost to do this newsletter (about £1 per friend per year). However, Gilbert received a very generous donation from the estate of a lady who used to be a Friend, but had died last year. It just shows that God listens to our worries and answers them in ways that we do

Goodbye Message from Gilbert



Gilbert Jones

One thing in this life is certain, whenever we start a new project there will be a point at which it will end. That point was reached by me as far as Administrator of the BMYC is concerned at the conclusion of the weekend the choir gave at St Andrew's Methodist Church Doncaster October 22-24th 2004. In many ways it does not seem over 10 years since I took the job on, as it has been a quite busy and exciting time in the life of the choir. I shall not go over the whole of the happenings, except to remind you of the major achievements of the choir during that time. I will list them below roughly in the order they occurred:

- The inauguration service for Dr John Taylor as President of the Conference at Westminster Central Hall in London.
- Tour of Devon.
- Singing at the Methodist Conference at Ipswich in the open air when Rev Christina le Moignan was made President.
- Singing at the World Methodist Conference at Brighton, as well as recording for the BBC Sunday Half Hour programme in the afternoon.
- Performing in Grimsby concert hall with the Methodist Youth Brass Band for NCH.
- Singing for the Methodist Church Music Society (when we sang for John Rutter in the afternoon) in the local parish church at High Lea along with the Youth Brass Band again.

The choir have had some "mountain top" experiences which few are privileged to experience, we have got into areas of Methodism

which many do not know about, and I know in the process of all this God has used the group to great effect, bringing congregations together to share a concert, opening doors to hearts and minds in a way which only young people can. I must here mention Methodist food! The choir have been wonderfully well catered for wherever they went, it is one of Methodism's closely guarded secrets that we have some of the finest kitchens in the land and certainly some of the best cooks any one could wish for.

In my time with the choir I estimate that it has sung to over 15000 people, visited over 40 churches throughout the Connexion and, as I am forever told, brought new hope to the churches.

As I write this we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of our first CD recording made earlier in the year, and now soon to be let loose on the churches and populace in general. If I wanted, I could not have chosen a better moment to say farewell as this new departure for the choir becomes a reality. I have handed over the choir to my successor, but I am staying in the background for a short while to market the CD and help get it off the ground (there is an order form enclosed with this newsletter).

Here I must say a big "Thank You" to the present choir members for their generosity in presenting both Marie and myself with such lovely and unexpected gifts as we depart, not out to grass I can assure you. I wish them and future members every success now and in the future. As they take their "Mission in Music" around the Connexion.

Thank you dear "Friend" for your generous support over the years, it has been much appreciated and at times a life saver for the choir, I do hope you will continue that support by your prayers, your gifts and talk to anyone you meet about what the choir does and go along to the concerts when they are near you. I wish you all every blessing now and in the future.

Gilbert Jones

Choir Retirements

Helen Glendenning (neé Heyes)



I joined the choir nearly ten years ago and have had many enjoyable times since – singing throughout the country, meeting new people, sleeping on Church floors and being welcomed into many different homes. The generosity and friendly nature of the people in host Churches has played a big part in making the choir such good fun. We seemed to fit so much into the weekends and yet they would be over in a flash.

Particularly notable times were; singing at the Methodist Conference, joining with the National Methodist Youth Brass Band, being involved with a musical day with John Rutter and the relief at finding various Churches in the dark! I remember getting lost with Amber, ringing to ask for directions and then realising that our host house was only a few metres away! Also, I once returned before my hosts and managed to set off their burglar alarm! More recently, we have had the excitement of being involved with the CD recording in a converted barn in Gloucestershire.

The choir is very fortunate to have people prepared to spend a great deal of their own time to make everything happen. Ashley provides endless encouragement, composing new, exciting songs which I will never forget. Gilbert, for many years the Administrator, never seemed to tire of organising new places for us to visit and spent a great deal of time making arrangements with the host Churches.

I have made so many friends with the choir and feel privileged to have been involved in such a special organisation. I have, however, been especially fortunate since seven years ago a particularly special person joined the choir and we were married on August 7th this year!

As the choir sang 'may the road rise to meet you' in Wem Methodist Church in June, it was the end of another enjoyable

choir concert. It was a particularly poignant time for me, since I had always hoped that the choir would be able to visit my home Circuit. Many friends and family were present, both in the choir and the audience. However, my excitement was tinged with a little sadness since this was my last concert with the BMYC. It was very special for Andrew and me to have the choir in the Church where we would be married less than two months later.

Now we live in Cheshire and have become involved with a Circuit musical and another friendly Church. We look forward to welcoming the choir to our new Circuit in Sandbach and wish the members many successful times and lots of fun. Keep singing and smiling!

Susanne Charlton

I'm not exactly sure how long I've been in the choir - I joined at the Darlington weekend. I'd like to say that I joined because I strongly believed I should share my faith and love of singing with other young Christians but truthfully.... Andrew Roberts pestered me and made me come!

I felt completely out of my depth and overwhelmed at that first weekend, and some may say at every weekend, but the feeling I got when we began to sing in the concert was truly unforgettable. In fact, every concert I've performed with BMYC has made the hairs on my arm stand up and it's that amazingly spiritual feeling that I'll miss most.

Probably the best memories revolve around two separate occasions. Firstly, our "tour" of Brighton and Eastbourne and the World Methodist Conference was brilliant. The chance to sing to an auditorium of 3000 people contrasted with the opportunity to transform the morning worship of a congregation of around 10 people was something special.

The second memory is the choir performing at my own church in Skipton. Singing to a full church, singing to friends and family – that's a night to remember.

I'll miss BMYC, the people and the music, but my copy of "A New Dawn" will no doubt be a lasting memory.

Editorial

It seems to be season for change. I too am retiring from my job as BMYC Friends Secretary, having done it for 4 years. I will retire at the March AGM, so this is my last newsletter. I hope the choir



Sam Whittaker

finds a willing volunteer to take over, it helps if they know most of the choir members, so are still in the choir or have recently retired. Any volunteers, please contact Lucy Bird, the new Choir Administrator.

As requested, I've not included a photo of myself (no that was not the request!) but one of my son Sam, who is now 16 months old and getting into everything (just think, I was singing at the reunion weekend only 9 days before he was born!).

Since I have been doing this job, the membership has more than doubled from 49 to 103 members. This includes many ex-members that I spent a long time tracking down from 20-year-old address lists for the reunion last year.

I have been involved with the choir for nearly 10 years (most of the time that Gilbert has been the Administrator) and have thoroughly enjoyed the time. I wish the choir every luck in the future and look forward to getting the CD.

Naomi Whittaker
BMYC Friends Secretary

Words of Appreciation

The choir weekend at Doncaster had something of an *end-of-era*



Lucy gives Gilbert and Marie a gift

feel about it as we marked the retirement of Gilbert Jones as our choir administrator. Gilbert has served the choir in this capacity for over ten years during which time the choir has expanded its repertoire and seen a significant rise in public profile. The achievements of the last decade should not blind us to

reality. BMYC has had some lean and difficult times and Gilbert's hard work and persistence, as often as not behind the scenes, has brought us through this and on to the notable events of recent years. The choir has sung for the Methodist Conference in Ipswich, for the World Methodist Conference held in Brighton (an audience of some 3000!) and has made several recordings of which the CD "A New Dawn" is the most recent.

All this is great but, in my own view, the regular contribution made by BMYC to the life of the Connexion is just as important as the special events that we have shared in. The difference made to churches and circuits by a choir weekend is enormous (once they have recovered from their exhaustion!!). At a time when so many congregations are both ageing and dwindling the presence of twenty or more young Christian men and women (all from what Methodism now calls "Generation X") prepared to sacrifice time and effort for a good cause has a powerful impact. People are genuinely inspired and given at least a glimpse of renewed hope by a BMYC visit and that is something of importance.

We wish Gilbert (and Marie – as we made our presentations to them I suggested that behind every great man there is usually an even greater woman!) joy and blessing in retirement from BMYC and hope that we keep in touch with them in the future.

Neil Thompson (BMYC Chairman)

BMYC Contact Details

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(Please continue to contact me until told of the new Secretary)

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“A New Dawn” CDs available from:

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

Ex-Members Address List

If you are an ex-member of the choir and have not had an address list with this newsletter, then you are not on it. To request to be on it, contact Naomi.

Doncaster Weekend

Unfortunately, we have not had an article about the Doncaster weekend on 22-24 October 2004. I was, however, in the audience



During the Doncaster Concert

(along with another 4 ex-members) and can say we enjoyed the concert very much. It was good to hear some of the old favourites that Gilbert requested - we had problems not joining in! I lost count how many times the new CD was mentioned during the evening!

Naomi Whittaker

Choir Weekends in 2005

18 - 20 March

Bingley Methodist Church

For ticket information please contact:

Mrs Katherine Watson, Tel: 01274 563140

1- 3 July

Barrow in Furness

21-23 October

Almondbury Methodist Church, Huddersfield

Please visit our website: www.bmyc.info

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