

St. Bartholomew's Choir

20 / April / 1995

Post Easter Trip-

The choir travel north on the weekend following Easter singing Evensong in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on Friday, April 21. On Saturday, apart from practicing, the boys have challenged the St. Anne's Cathedral Belfast to a soccer match.

On Sunday we sing the Eucharist in St. Anne's Cathedral and then, en route home, we sing Evensong in Down Cathedral, Downpatrick.

We will have B&B accommodation in Bangor. These trips play a very important part in the development of the choir in building the warm comradeship which exists.

Solemn Evensong of Candlemass- Thursday February 2

This was a lovely occasion with our President, Mary Robinson, attending and switching on the new floodlighting which was dedicated by the Archbishop, Most Reverend Donald Caird.

Following the service, the President mingled with the choir, telling us that she had some years back, attended St. Bartholomew's when her nephew, Malachy Robinson was a chorister.

Don Cazzini took some lovely photos of the President with the choir which I know boys and men alike will treasure for years to come. The President

was her usual relaxed self and was bombarded with questions and requests from the equally relaxed choirboys. One boy complained "you used to visit my auntie but you hav'ent been to see her since you became President"?

Another pressed the President for her autograph. Fearing she would be swamped by all the boys she said

"I'll do it secretly for you!" , but alas he found a pen and no paper.

The President said "I'll give you 50 marks out of 100 for having half what is needed!

Arrangements were made between the President and the particular boy so that he will get the autograph.

Yet another boy presented a letter asking the President to consider visiting his school. Then the President was rushed away to fulfil her next and fourth appointment of the day in the city. It was a very special occasion for all.



Niall Morris,

Former chorister, Niall took the tenor lead in D'Oyly Carte's production of 'HMS Pinafore' at the Grand Opera House, Belfast on April 4, 5 & 6. The 'Newsletter' critique was delighted with the production singling out Gillian Knight, Yvonne Patrick and Niall Morris for special praise.

St. Bartholomew's at St. Patrick's - Sunday February 26

The choir sang evensong while the Cathedral choir were having an afternoon off. The experience of singing in St. Patrick's Cathedral is always a most rewarding experience with the very complimentary acoustics of the building.

Music - Nicholson in D and anthems Sicut Cervus, Palestrina : Blessed City heavenly Salem, Bairstow.

Dr. Charles Nelson

Well known for his many fine publications on Irish plants Dr Charles Nelson will give a lecture on Tuesday May 30 in the Parish Room.

The subject is "The Bicentenary of the National Botanical Gardens".

Charles is a very good friend of the choir and sang in St. Bartholomew's for quite a few years.

The lecture is one of a series of talks which Mrs Mildred Beresford has been running through the winter months.

Admission is free and is open to all.

Britten, War Requiem -

The Guinness Choir with St. Bartholomew's, choirboys - Wednesday May 3 in the National

Concert Hall.

Practices are well advanced and the boys are looking forward to performing before a full concert hall. No doubt they will give a good account of themselves.

Boys sing for the Salvation Army

Our boys were invited to sing at a concert in the Central Mission, Abbey Street, to aid Salvation Army funds on Saturday March 4.

They were very much appreciated. What a varied musical life today's St. Bartholomew's chorister has?.

Newcomers -

We welcomed new choirboys Simon O'Callaghan and Daniel Groenland. We hope they will enjoy 'learning the ropes' and singing in St. Bartholomew's.

Tim's 'Jazz' -

Tim Thurston, one of our more senior basses on the decani side had been featuring on RTE1 for a number of Sunday evenings with his own jazz programme.

Tim's other main musical interest is right at the other end of the spectrum - early music!.

Bill Fry-

At a hearty eighty years of age Bill Fry became organist and choir-master of another church dedicated to St. Bartholomew in the Bristol area.

In a letter he tells of a recent "mystery tour" which he gave on a fine Willis organ, the final work of which was the Widor Toccata.

He sent his best wishes to all in St. Bartholomew's and we wish him in return continued good health.



Funds Appeal -

It would be great if we could attract a few more subscriptions to the St. Bartholomew's Church Choir Endowment Fund. The fund allows us to pay modest bursaries twice a year to the boys parents towards educational expenses.

With 20 boys we are paying out a total sum of £840 twice a year which at least helps towards the cost of books or other incidental expenses.

We have about 14 friends including ex choristers who contribute £5 a month on bankers order. Then we have generous occasional subscriptions from others including a Diocesan Board grant which we receive, as the money is dedicated to educational purposes both normal schooling and of course, musical.

Separate from this the parish funds meet the main expenses of the choir - organist's fees, boys' pocket money, young mens' fees, sheet music costs, organ tuning etc. Please, if you would like to help by supporting St. Bartholomew's continued musical tradition, contact Neville Beresford or Bobby Barden.

Cary Grant and Fred Leach -

Fred was the leading tenor in our choir for 25 years and an uncle of the famous film star Cary Grant whose real name was Archibald Leach. Both were born in Bristol and Fred joined St. Bartholomew's following a career in Bristol Cathedral.

His son Derick sang as a boy in the choir and to this day generously supports the choir as one of its friends. Derick was of course a cousin and he related to me the cir-



cumstances of the two times he met the famous film star.

One in 1940 when with his father Fred they attended a very sad family funeral - on the occasion of the first German bombing of Bristol - five of the Leach family were lost in an air-raid. This time he just shook Cary Grant's hand.

Next time Cary Grant was attending a gala showing of his final film "The Grass is Greener" in the Dublin Carlton in 1968. This time Cary Grant came back to Derick's Braemor Road home.

The writer, as a choirboy, remembers Fred Leach who died in March 1948, with the warmest of affection particularly remembering chatting when walking home after the choir. Fred lived in Rathmines at the time and the writer in Ranelagh.



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