

St. Bartholomew's Choir

December 1999

Father John Announces Retirement

It came as a great shock to us all when Father John McKay mounted the pulpit in St. Bartholomew's on Sunday, October 24th, and, after reading a copy of a letter from his surgeon to the Archbishop, he announced his retirement.

Father John was always enthusiastic about the choir, and gave his support in many ways over the years. When there were smaller numbers of boys, in the early 1990s, he brought the boys on various holidays, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

He will be leaving us at the end of January. We all hope that, following a most trying year of serious ill-health, he will have a less stressful time now that he can enjoy his well deserved retirement.

Doubtless he will seek to continue his ministry with those special pastoral talents which so many people from St. Bartholomew's bear witness to. He will be missed by all.

Church Grounds - Millennium Project

A specially convened committee has undertaken to turn the church grounds into a more inviting and welcoming place for the people of Ballsbridge in time for the new Millennium.

As you no doubt have seen, the existing plantings in the church grounds - most of which were ancient, and in a poor state - have been rooted out. During the next few weeks, the trees will be pruned so that they enhance

the church and grounds, rather than choking all growth the way they were before. The railings will be repainted, and huge numbers of bulbs will also be planted. The results should really be quite something when all the work is complete.

Perhaps you would like to sponsor a tree or some other part of this work, in memory of somebody, for example. Just ask at the church!

Choir Reunion Service

The annual dedication festival at St. Bartholomew's coincided with a Choir Reunion Service on Sunday October 3rd.

Bobby Barden delivered a brief Eulogy outlining the life of Canon Guy L'Estrange, who sang in our choir between 1942 and 1945. Guy's distinguished career took him from St. Patrick's Cathedral to Canterbury, where he was the Headmaster of the Choir School, and, later on, the Dean's Vicar and Rural Dean. Guy retained an enthusiastic interest in our

choir up until his last years. We send our sympathies to Helen, his wife, and to his son, Reverend Timothy L'Estrange. May he rest in peace. Bobby Barden has the Service Sheet and a tape of the "Requiem for Guy" from Canterbury Cathedral, and if any of Guy's friends want copies, he will be happy to cooperate.

For those who don't know, the lovely Celtic Cross we often carry in procession was presented to the church by Guy in memory of his father, Canon L'Estrange.

Groenland's Exodus

Unfortunately we rarely get the opportunity to say a proper farewell and Thank You to the choirboys who leave our ranks for whatever reason.

For quite a few years, Patrick, Danny, and Timmy Groenland were members of our choir, with Patrick being a particularly outstanding head boy.

All three are studying in Gonzaga College.

Patrick is preparing for the Junior Cert. Danny, in addition to his scholastic work, devotes much time to Irish music, particularly the flute and mandolin. Timmy, now 18 years old, is doing his Leaving Certificate, and plans to study Music at Third Level. We hope we will see them again in St. Bartholomew's, and we will always keep a place for them in the choir.

Diana O'Donnell

Diana O'Donnell and her husband Jim have moved from our parish to a new home in Kent, England. The choir will miss her great support, in so many ways, throughout the years. We all wish her every happiness. Perhaps we will all go and stay with her when some day we sing the services in Canterbury.

Requiem for Barbara Jones

Barbara Jones passed away on Friday, November 12th - at too young an age. She was the mother of two former choirboys - Robert and Graham Jones, as well as three other children.

The choir sang at a requiem service on Monday,

Choir Concert

The annual choir concert with Alan Stanford will take place at 7:00pm on Sunday, December 12th.

Tickets cost £5.00 (or £3.00 for concessions), and are available at the church or from choir members.

Do come early to get a good seat, as we have always had large numbers attending.

November 15th. The music included three of Barbara's favourite hymns, as well as the Piccolo Canterbury Mass and the anthem Panis Angelicus.

Our sympathy goes out to the Jones family. May she rest in peace.

Arrivals and Departures

On Sunday November 14th, six new boys were installed into the choir:

- Ben Boles
- Killian Horan
- Fionnan Keenan
- Cian Kinsella
- Jude Murphy
- Tom Young

In addition to the new people, two of the boys have graduated from the Treble to the Alto line - Graham Kerr and Sean O'Connor.

Four more boys are no longer with us, but we hope they will come back to us some day. These are Ross Traynor, Thomas Collins, and Patrick and Danny Groenland (mentioned separately).

Go-Karting

The annual go-karting for the younger Gentlemen (and those who like to think they are young!) will take place at Kylemore Karting some time during the last week of December.

Rumour has it that Kevin O'Connor has been practising his driving - and will undoubtedly be much better at it this year!

Church Bells

As many of you are probably aware, Father John was called upon to defend the St. Bartholomew's Bells from a small number of local objectors on the Pat Kenny Morning Program.

It seems that, if you

speculated on purchasing a house near the church and opened it as a B&B or guest house, you could have some problems, because of the chiming of the bells throughout the night. However, the bells are part

of the attractiveness of Ballsbridge and they have been sounding since 1881.

Quite clearly well over 95% of the locals welcome their dulcet tones, so they will continue well into the next century.

CD Sales

The choir's first CD, entitled "Sing Praises", was launched last November in the Hugh Lane Gallery by Alexander Anissimov. To date more than 600 copies have been sold.

Be sure to remember them when you are choosing Christmas presents!

The Glory of Christmas

The boys are once again singing in the annual Glory of Christmas concerts in the National Concert Hall. These concerts contain the most popular seasonal music, and for this reason they appeal to all ages.

This year they are taking place on Monday

20th and Tuesday 21st of December. Tickets for these concerts are only available from the National Concert Hall directly - phone 01-4751572.

These concerts are usually sold out, so it is a good idea to book early.

Organ Restoration

As most of you will already know, St. Bartholomew's Church is embarking on what is probably its largest financial undertaking ever - the complete (and long overdue) restoration of the organ. The total cost for the work is likely to approach £200,000, and for that reason any donations towards this cost will be much appreciated.

The restoration will begin shortly after Easter, and the work will be done by Trevor Crowe Ltd. Trevor Crowe, previous to embark-

ing on his own, was a partner in the Ken Jones Company. Listed among his many responsibilities were the voicing of the National Concert Hall Organ, along with the building of the Organ in Great St. Mary's, the University Church, Cambridge, the new organ in St. Peter's, Eton Square, London, which is the largest mechanical action organ in Great Britain, and more recently, the rebuild of the Adam and Eve's Organ in Dublin. Also don't forget

that Trevor has gallantly kept our own organ going for 20 years.

Without giving detail here, we can tell you that the organ will be converted back into a three-manual instrument, which is what it was before it was rebuilt in 1963.

As you can see, this is a huge undertaking - but at the end of the day, our organ is central to the musical tradition in St. Barts, and this present generation has a duty to future generations to see the job through.

Post-Easter 2000 Trip to Gloucester Cathedral

Gloucester Cathedral is the target for our Year 2000 Post-Easter choir trip. It is of course a glorious building, and the choir look forward to singing the cycle of a week's services there.

called St. Peter's Abbey. William the Conqueror ordered the construction of the present building in 1089. Edward II was murdered in September 1327 and was eventually buried in the



Gloucester Cathedral

The following information on the Cathedral comes from the Internet Site of the Pilgrims Association.

“In 681 Saxon Prince Osric founded a small religious community on this site. His sister Kyneburga was the first Abbess. Early in the 11th century, Benedictine monks came to live and work here. It was

Abbey Church. His tomb became a great place of pilgrimage. Henry VIII dissolved the Abbey, and in 1541 it became the cathedral for the new diocese of Gloucester. The beautiful 14th century fan vaulting in the cloisters is considered to be the earliest and some of the finest in the country.”

A Christmas Carol

The John Mortimer adaptation of Charles Dickens' famous work “A Christmas Carol” opens at the Gate Theatre on Wednesday, December 1st.

The show is directed by our good friend Alan Stanford, who will be reading at our concert on December 12th (see page 2).

The Musical Director is none other than our own Assistant Organist, David Falconer. David has composed the original music, along with special arrangements of the different Christmas carols.

If the previews of this show are anything to go by, it is going to be an outstanding success.

Tickets are available from the Gate Theatre - Telephone 01 874 4045. The show is scheduled to run until the 8th of January 2000.

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