



St Bartholomew's Choir

<http://www.stbartholomews.ie/music/>

April 2005

Choir visit Wells Cathedral

Once again, I was privileged to be asked by Malcolm Wisener to join St Bartholomew's Choir on their tour. I had no hesitation in accepting this generous offer. It was a chance to spend some time in the beautiful cathedral city of Wells amidst good music and company.

We set off for Somerset on Tuesday 29th March at 5:15 am (yes, seriously!) from Clyde Road. As a student, I've never really seen what the world looks like before midday, so this was a good opportunity to experience something new! However, I fell into a deep sleep on the boat, so I can't recollect what really happened on the first morning of the trip.

After a long drive from Fishguard of about 170 miles, we arrived in Wells and settled into our accommodation. The gentlemen of the choir stayed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation throughout the town. On the first evening we were shocked when we saw Father Michael not in his cassock, but in casual clothes. Confused and dazed, the choir proceeded to dinner.

The choir's routine on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday consisted of a practice at 9:45 am - 10:30 am (9:00 am - 9:45 am for the boys), free time until 4:00 pm, Evensong at 5:15 pm and non-specific "leisure activities" in be-

were sung at this concert – a personal highlight being Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer".

Wells Cathedral is a unique place. The architecture is particularly stunning – the famous scissor arches are truly amazing. Also, the Vic-



*The choir during the concert in Wells Cathedral which concluded the trip.
[Photo: Gerry Roseingrave]*

tween. Musical highlights at these evensongs included the great Wagnerian romp that is known to Anglicans as Dyson in D, Sumsion in G and Wesley's "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace". On Saturday the choir performed at a lunchtime concert, which was well attended. Many favourites

ar's Close, where the current choir live, is supposedly Europe's oldest planned street. The Close was designed in the 1300s as a way of keeping drunken choir men off the streets and safe in their houses. Should the select vestry of St Bartholomew's consider this idea for their choir?

Choir visit Wells Cathedral (continued)

The group arrived home at 9:00 pm in Dublin on Sunday 3rd April after what turned out to be an interesting journey home for myself. The choir know what I'm talking about. Let's just say, I now know that there are *two* ferry ports in South Wales.

The trip was a resounding success, both musically and socially. As a visitor from St Patrick's Ca-

thedral choir, I was honoured to participate in this ven-



The author of this article improving his mind on the street corner in Wells. [Photo: Richard Bannister]

ture. The choir truly were on splendid form and a credit to themselves, the parish and the Church of Ireland. Comments

from the congregation reflected this opinion. The final word must be one of thanks – to Malcolm for producing the wonderful music, to Andrew for playing the organ, and to all the adults who drove such long distances to get us there safely! Many thanks to all connected with St Bartholomew's for a wonderful trip

*Paul Arbuthnot,
Alto Lay Vicar*

St Patrick's Cathedral Choir

Fund-raising for the trip

Wells is a very small city – more like a village really. It does not have many hotel or guest houses big enough to accommodate the choir group, and none of them are cheap! The best solution to the accommodation problem for the choir boys and accompanying parents was a three star hotel, The Swan, which was just across the street from the Cathedral. They offered us a good deal for dinner, bed and breakfast, but the cost was way above what the choir usually pays. For that reason we had

to make a big effort to fund-raise, in order to keep the costs to boys as low as possible. Those who could look after themselves were accommodated in a number of nearby Bed and Breakfasts.

The fund-raising was very successful. Almost all the boys who travelled to Wells, and several of their parents, did three or more hours each packing bags for customers in SuperValu supermarket in Churchtown. It is hard work, but the boys did it with a smile and people were very gener-

ous. We collected a superb €2,500 over the two days.

The other fund-raising event was a much more social and enjoyable occasion – the table quiz and auction, held in Merrion Cricket Club. Once again Richard Bannister and Robin Heather organised a great evening, raising over €2,000. It was wonderful to see so many parishioners participate. This is the second year running that a quiz has taken place, and it is planned as an annual event going forward.

Niamh Harty

Well, well, well... Wells?

A visit to the smallest city in England, a place I have visited many times before, is always full of surprises. To see the wells which give the place its name and to realise that the water welling up from the springs form the source of the river Sheppey. To visit once again the walled Bishops Palace and not least to have the opportunity to sing in the wonderful and so modern looking medieval cathedral all made the Easter week trip memorable.

As I am a veteran of the many trips the choir has undertaken, the first to Ripon in 1989, I learned at the earliest stage that lodging with the whole choir as a unit was

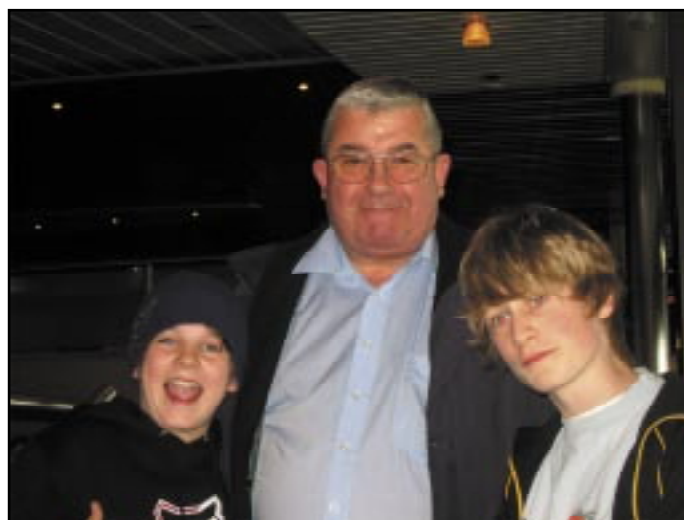
a decision there and then that I would stay in adjacent hostels on future outings and enjoy peace and quiet and some independence.

This year was no exception; I stayed in the Crown Hotel, which boasts a foundation date of 1450 and the fact that William Penn had addressed a

crowd of about 2000 in the market place from one of the first floor windows. I am convinced it was from the window of my room because the cushions and upholstery on the chairs appeared to date from his time. The hotel today is listed as a two star establishment!

The biggest surprise to me, however, was to discover that the boy choristers were staying around the corner at the Swan Hotel which turned out to be a

three star lodging! While this was superior accommodation to mine, it was also far superior to that of most of the other



Ethan Conroy and Tom Roseingrave flanking Mervyn on the boat. [Photo: Killian Horan]

gentlemen singers who were billeted in bed and breakfast establishments around the Cathedral precincts.

So what for the future? Is the emphasis on youth? Will the men be reduced to doss house living while the boys are upgraded to three, four or even five star luxury? What other inducements will be used to tempt future choirboys and parents on these annual safaris? Watch this space, or be bold enough to ask this question of the authorities!

Well, well, well you might say – or on the other hand and in the interests of economy – Wells.

Mervyn Percival



The Swan Hotel in Wells, where the boy choristers stayed. [Photo: Official Web Site]

not the best idea at all, particularly as there were on that trip a number of boisterous young men in tow. So I made

every, was to discover that the boy choristers were staying around the corner at the Swan Hotel which turned out to be a

Comments from the trip

Ian Meldon took the time to talk with the younger faces on the trip to find out what they enjoyed the most. Needless to say, the first thing every one of the boys mentioned was the music and how much they enjoyed the rehearsals. To avoid repetition, this comment has been omitted from each piece.



The theme park was the best, a good selection of sights to see, overall a great trip even if the rehearsals were too early in the morning...

Robert Cooke



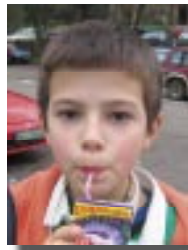
Breakfast too early in the morning. The Cathedral was amazing and massive. Was the trip to Glastonbury just to keep us occupied?

Eoin Meldon



A very good trip, the slides in the fun park and the Wookey Hole caves were the best. It was the biggest church I was ever in, I can't wait for next year.

William Doyle



Singing, especially in the concert, was cool. The room list was a bit suspect - we were too near William's dad and too far from my brothers.

Rupert Adams



The rooms were really good quality, with TV, ensuite and two really comfortable armchairs AND we had our own kettle. I really liked the theme park, especially the shock wave.

Kevin Clancy



I enjoyed the fun park, even though I nearly got sick. The football was great, and I really liked the end of the Kyrie when the doors blew off the back of the church we sang so loudly.

Killian Horan



Pretty good fun, yeah. Wells was smaller than I would have liked. I could not find a

CD I was looking for. I thoroughly enjoyed the games of football, they were the highlight. I was sometimes disillusioned because I could not reach the high notes the way I used to. The carnival was great fun. I saw loads and loads of obese children there.

Tom Roseingrave



Overall it was exquisite; we had a nice big room, the service was great although the breakfast was not particularly nice. The leisure park was great.

Oisín Keenan



Great fun, the last day [theme park] was the best. The Cathedral was huge and amazing, Wookey Hole was great, getting up early was hard. The oldest street in Europe with all the chimneys was amazing.

Alexis Fitzgerald



I liked the market a lot with the olden day guy (town crier). Wookey Hole and the Fleet Air Arm Museum were super. The

Comments from the trip (continued)

slide in the fun park was really good. I enjoyed the evensong services, though if I had to stand much longer in the concert I would have collapsed!

Jack Garvey



The trip was great, better than Paris, but not as good as Chester. Football was the best part of the trip. The food was really nice.

Carl Adams



I thought the trip was amazing. I liked the walk up Glastonbury Tor. The hotel was really comfy. The cathedral was really good. All the trips Niamh organized were class. In general it was a really good trip.

Brian Clancy



I think I really did enjoy the trip, my first with the choir. I did enjoy the music although I wish we did not have to stand for so long. The Cathedral was amazing. The best trip for me was the Wookey Hole caves.

Daniel Tatlow-Devally



A good trip, football and the theme park were definite highlights.

The hotel was great, and the music interesting. Most of the trips we did were really good.

Sebastian Adams



Lots of choice in the food in the hotel. Unfortunately the adults and the hotel people

were on to us very quickly. The football and the variety of music were very good. Despite inside knowledge, the trips were excellent and well organized.

Mark Rogan



The trip was OK. The leisure park was the best, though the concert was a pain.

Brian Horan



I was really tired the first day but luckily I slept for most of the car journey. I overcame

my fear of heights and went on all the roller coasters. The

evensongs were short so they were OK. I didn't like the responses; they were too hard.

Ethan Conroy



I loved the theme park, but even better was when we got to laugh at Richard over

the phone because our boat (the wrong one!) arrived in Rosslare ahead of his!

Emmet Kiberd



The car journey was too long, but other than that, my best choir trip so far.

Declan Doyle



I liked Wookey Hole and playing football in the evenings. The cathedral was big and spacious.

There was a great echo in the building after Haydn's "Insanae et Vanae Curae".

Samuel Killeen



A bit better than Paris, but a bit too much driving. The trips were great.

Eoin Flaherty

Brean Leisure Park

In the last few years I have visited more than a hundred different amusement parks around the world. By a happy



The main roller coasters and some of the other rides at Brean Leisure Park. [Photo: Richard Bannister]

coincidence, Brean Leisure Park, a small affair about thirty miles away from Wells Cathedral, was not in this list. Always eager to visit a new park, I travelled there with the boys after our concert on Saturday.

Brean is home to a small water complex, with a small swimming pool and a water slide. The pool itself was crowded, but that didn't stop all those present from having a huge amount of fun. Of particular note were the few brave parents who joined the melee only to get significant quantities of water splashed in their direction. The entrance to the slide was outdoors, and thus very cold, but most of the group tried it out once nevertheless.

When the water area closed, we were divided into small groups, and all descended en masse into the main park

to try out the various rides on offer. Everybody was given a wristband allowing unlimited access to all the attractions, and these were used to the full. While we were not the only people in the park, it was clearly a quiet evening, resulting in short or non-existent queues.

My group, consisting of a few of the more senior people there, quickly conquered the three Roller Coasters in short order, and yes, that did include the Caterpillar. The biggest challenge with the latter for taller people is the preservation of your knees. This was followed with a few back to back spin rides (X-Treme, Superbowl, Wipe-

out), the net result being that someone who should know better was lying prone on a bench trying to recover. Oops!

Most of the boys were better able to pace themselves, though. Some chose to get themselves well and truly soaked on the Log Flume, while yours truly took photographs. Some preferred the more sedate experience of the Ghost Train and the Ferris Wheel. Others, much to the amazement of the writer, successfully managed three or more back to back cycles on the Wipe Out.

By the time the group departed the park after dark, everyone was exhausted, but happy. Brean may not have been as spectacular as Dis-



Sebastian, Killian, and Ethan testing the integrity of their stomach muscles. [Photo: Richard Bannister]

neyland Paris on the 2004 trip, but the boys were nevertheless delighted with it.

Richard Bannister

White Water Rafting?

Wells did not have much by way of entertainment for the gentlemen of the choir in the evenings aside from the local public houses, so after dinner one evening we decided to make our own. Pictured across is what happened.

The plan? Float a plastic bottle down the wonderful medieval drainage system all the way back to our B&B.

At times it got stuck, but we used our fingers, other bottles, ball point pens, plastic bag dams, and above all our initiative to keep the operation (and the bottle) afloat!

What the local popu-



Ian advising Robert on the best way to free the bottle. [Photo: Richard Bannister]

lation thought about this somewhat curious enterprise is unknown at this time.

Robert Hilliard

Bill Fry

Former organist and choir-master, Bill Fry (1938-1946) lives in St Monica's Home in Bristol. Bobby Barden decided to pay him a visit on his way home from Wells.

Unfortunately he was not at home at the time; instead he was playing the organ at a Requiem for the late Pope in St Mary's on the Quay. Mr Fry plays there every Sunday, as he told Bobby in a subsequent phone call.

We send our hearty congratulations to Bill, who turned 90 in January of this year. He sends his warmest greetings to all in St Bartholomew's.

Bobby Barden

Upcoming Girls' Choir Trip to Cashel

The Girls Choir have been invited to perform a concert and to sing at the Sunday Eucharist in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Baptist in Cashel, Co. Tipperary on the weekend of the 28th/29th May.

The Dean of Cashel, the Very Revd. Dr. Philip Knowles, launched an appeal fund earlier this year for the restoration of the Chancel roof in the Cathedral, which

has suffered a good deal of water damage following recent storms. The proceeds of the concert, which takes place at 8:00pm on Saturday 28th, will be donated to this cause.

At 11:30am the next morning, there will be a united service in the Cathedral. It is a tradition on the 5th Sunday of the month to hold one service in the Cathedral to which all the parishoners from the

neighbouring churches are invited to attend.

Whilst in Cashel, the Girls and Men will stay with host families, and weather permitting the choir will be given a guided tour of the Rock of Cashel on Saturday afternoon. After the Eucharist service on Sunday we have been invited to lunch in the Deanery.

Robin Heather

Letter from Canada

Canada, eh? It's time to come clean. It was all an elaborate excuse to give my voice eleven weeks rest! And with all the singing we've been doing since my return (Easter Weekend and Wells) it's a jolly good thing I did...

No, honestly I was there to ski, and ski I did. I had a fantastic eleven weeks in a little-known

(but highly-regarded) ski area called Red Mountain, BC. I've made loads of new friends, both on the course with me and in the local town I stayed in. I enjoyed every minute of the skiing and a whole range of extra-curricular activities such as ice-hockey games,

snowshoeing, and cat-skiing; I'm also now qualified as a level two ski instructor and level one race coach, as well as my Wilderness First



Some of the boys decided Robert needed another lesson on the return from Wells! [Photo: Richard Bannister]

Aid and CPR certificates and goodness knows what else besides.

After having such a great time away, it was nice to come back to the choir, as it was one of the things I missed most in my time away.

Robert Hilliard

Upcoming Broadcast

The Ascension Day eucharist on RTE Radio 1 will be broadcast from St Bartholomew's this year. Rather than sending the service out live, we will be prerecording the entire thing the night before, Wednesday 4th May, at the usual choir practice time.

New Vestry

The following people were elected to the Select Vestry on Sunday 10th April: Richard Bannister, Bobby Barden, Mildred Beresford, Don Cazzini, Tony Conroy, Traudi Ferguson, Alan Fletcher, Niamh Harty, Robin Heather, Martin Hilliard, Albert Horan, David Jones, Kaye Marshall, Charlie Smith, Ferdinand von Prondzynski, and Malcolm Wisener.

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Treasurer:

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Vicar:

Michael Thompson, 12 Merlyn Road, Ballsbridge, D4. Tel 01-2694813; vicar@stbartholomews.ie.