



# St Bartholomew's News

<http://www.stbartholomews.ie>

May 2007

## Choir visit to Llandaff Cathedral

On Tuesday 10 April at the ungodly hour of 5:00am, the choir set off on their travels to Llandaff. This year, Malcolm asked four singers associated with St Patrick's cathedral choir to attend. Victor Williams, Matthew Day, Roger Pickett and I would like to thank Malcolm and the choir of St Bartholomew's for welcoming us four hooligans to the choir for the week.

On the boat on the way to Pembroke, the choir were treated to a tour of the bridge of the ship. This was organised by Robin Heather.

Back on *terra firma*, some members of the choir travelled in luxury. It was appropriate that Malcolm travelled in the Jaguar of prime-ministerial proportions. However, I am sorry to say that the curse of Paul Arbuthnot struck the Renault Megane in which I was travelling. We managed to get the car to a mechanic in Cardiff who appeared to be baffled by the fault in the car.

So, we arrived in Cardiff at our accommodation, minus the car. That evening was spent discovering the

sights, sounds and smells of downtown Cardiff. Cardiff's claim to fame and unique selling point appears to be that it is "Europe's youngest capital". Need I say much more?

Upon my return from my first evening's entertain-

both Cardiff Arms Park and the impressive Millennium Stadium, and across the road from Cardiff Castle. The accommodation was very central and boasted of a "buffet style" breakfast of fried food and a late night bar. Some



*Rehearsal for Evensong in the Cathedral [Photo: Albert Horan]*

ment I discovered the choir in various states of undress on the street outside our accommodation. The hotel had been evacuated due to the fire alarm being activated. Those who had chosen the sensible option of going to bed early received their just reward!

The hotel itself was situated in the shadow of

took advantage of these facilities with aplomb.

Llandaff is a small but perfectly formed village about two miles from Cardiff city centre. The beautiful cathedral boasts an interesting mix of architectural styles, including the Romanesque east end, the Gothic nave and the post-WW2 structure in the

## Choir visit to Llandaff (continued)

crossing. All bore testament to the fact that every generation who has worshipped in



*The excitement on the first night was thanks to dust (!) in the basement. [Photo: Albert Horan]*

Llandaff cathedral has left their own individual contribution to the architecture.

At this point, it is important to mention that the worshipping community of Llandaff gave the choir a welcome seldom seen at other cathedrals. Special thanks

great sense of humour.

The choir acquitted itself superbly in the execution of the services they sang at. A personal highlight was singing Dyson in D on the Saturday. The choir never lets itself down with this service setting! However, the choir did prove that it can handle more subtle music just as well with John Taverner's setting of "Dum transisset sabbatum" and Byrd's "Second Service" amongst the tour repertoire.

On the Friday evening we were joined by the Assistant Organist, Peter Parshall. I must thank Peter for in-

introducing me to Turkish cuisine during the trip in a restaurant in Cardiff Bay. The Bay area includes a maze of restaurants, cinemas and every other pleasure for the discerning gentleman.

I was particularly pleased to go on a guided tour of the Millennium Stadium during the week. During the

tour we got to walk through the tunnel to pitch side and see the changing rooms of the players. Special thanks must go to the tour guide, who had to answer such difficult questions as "has anyone ever fallen from the top of the stand onto the pitch?" On the tour we discovered that when full, the Millennium Stadium becomes the fourth largest population centre in Wales. If you can name the other three, I'm



*The choristers decided not to sing "Ireland's Call" here. [Photo: Richard Bannister]*



*Some of the group on the bridge of the Isle of Inishmore. [Photo: Richard Bannister]*

must go to Canon Graham Holcombe who welcomed us with open arms and with a

pleased to go on a guided tour of the Millennium Stadium during the week. During the

sure the editor of the newsletter will offer a cash prize. *(The winner will receive five percent off a one way trip to Swansea. The second place will receive the same discount on two trips to Swansea - RB).*

Other attractions visited in the region included Cardiff Castle (former home of the Marquis of Bute) and Caerphilly Castle. They showed that the Cardiff area of Wales

## Choir visit to Llandaff (continued)

is one of marked contrasts. What other city has a medi-



*Nick, Liam, and Ian, who joined us for part of the trip. [Photo: Richard Bannister]*

eval castle across the road from an international rugby and soccer stadium?

The last night was spent in the Hard Rock Café with the unlikely combination of Messrs Day, Williams and Pickett. This apparently was the first time Mr Pickett had ever visited such an establishment. On the other hand Mr Williams claimed to have visited the Hard Rock Café in London where he met Cher. Cher was said to be delighted to have met this musical icon.

Llandaff was a delightful place to visit. The welcome of the clergy, congregation and community in Llandaff was exceptional, the architec-

ture of the cathedral is highly interesting and it is only a 30 minute walk from Cardiff city centre. It is the kind of village one would associate with rural England with old houses interspersed with tea shops and a post office.

The area has stronger links with St Bartholomew's than one might suspect. Fr Michael trained for holy orders in the college of St Michael in Llandaff alongside the aforementioned Canon Holcombe.

Once again, I must thank Malcolm and my choral colleagues for the good humour, excellent singing



*Killian, Ian, Conall, and Albert enjoying a few minutes of respite. [Photo: Richard Bannister]*

and friendships that St Bart's choir trips always produce.

*Paul Arbuthnot*

## Plans

Organising a trip for a group of people can often be challenging, and this year was no exception.

Cardiff is accessible by both boat and air. Though air is more convenient, the ferry was far better value, all the more so when you realise that the combined weight of a Cassock, Anthem Book, and Psalter makes up a very significant portion of the average airline baggage allowance. The catch was that we could not make a Sunday afternoon return crossing while still keeping our commitment to sing that day's services in the cathedral. Fortunately most of our party were happy to stay the extra night

Once again we are indebted to Niamh Harty for her tireless work in the organisation and co-ordination of hotel accommodation, and research into places of interest for the Choristers to visit.

Special thanks are due to Albert, Bernadette, Conall, Ian, Richard, and Victor, who along with

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## Plans (continued)

myself drove the convoy of seven cars.

As usual, the trip was supplemented by several former choristers; Nick, Clive, Ian, and Liam made appearances during the week. We were also joined by four of our friends from St Patrick's Cathedral.

The Organ accompaniment was supplied by Ivan Fowler (who had last worked with Malcolm more than twenty-five years ago) and Peter Parshall, now a regular supporter of the choir.

This year we also had a potential chorister on tour, namely my own son Alfie, who kept me on my toes, and let me experience what it is like to be a choir parent on one of these trips.

Finally to the good people of Llandaff Cathedral, and Canon Graham Holcombe in particular, we thank you all for the warmth of your welcome and hospitality. We all appreciated your support and encouragement throughout the week.

*Robin Heather*

## Visiting Oakwood

Friday was an early rise for this was the perfect time for us. We had been reminded of day when other visitors the night before that we would slowly surveyed the park, and



*Emmet and Killian trying out "Snake River Falls". [Photo: Richard Bannister]*

more seasoned thrill-seekers could ride the main attractions, hop off, and run around to the entrance to go again. This would continue until good sense prevailed, or, in some cases, the patrons threw up. The iron-stomached ones among us managed two rides on each main roller coaster in the space of twenty minutes.

have to leave at 7:45am to get to our destination before opening. (*Those of us in the back row had to leave mid-afternoon to sing Evensong, hence the early start - RB*). We left the hotel, brimming with excitement. This was the day we had been waiting for, the day that we would visit Oakwood Theme Park: Friday the 13th! Perhaps not the luckiest day to ride three roller coasters, but this is exactly what we intended to do.

After a punishing two hour drive (for both car and driver) we managed to arrive just in time for the opening of the gates. We hurried to the roller coasters,

for this was the perfect time of day when other visitors slowly surveyed the park, and more seasoned thrill-seekers could ride the main attractions, hop off, and run around to the entrance to go again. This would continue until good sense prevailed, or, in some cases, the patrons threw up. The iron-stomached ones among us managed two rides on

each main roller coaster in the space of twenty minutes.

The first of these roller coasters, *Megafobia: Thrills Beyond Fear*, to give it its full title, was aptly named. Anyone suffering from a fear of large things, as the name suggests, would run a mile from



*Kevin, Jeff, and Rachel enjoying the Pirate Ship ride. [Photo: Richard Bannister]*

this twenty-five metre tall wooden monster! For a roller coaster that only goes up and

## Visiting Oakwood (continued)

down and turns around, I have never had so much fun.

The next monstrous ride was *Speed: No Limits*. This was far more nausea-inducing than *Megafobia*. *Speed* included a straight vertical rise, followed by a straight vertical drop, and then a loop and a kind of corkscrew turn. This was the most popular ride in the amusement park, and so it had the longest queue, but was worth a twenty-minute



*Adam, Oisin, William, and Alfie enjoying a round of golf. [Photo: Albert Horan]*

wait. The feeling of dropping thirty-five metres in a couple of seconds was unique: the riders experience reverse gravity as they plummet to the ground but are simultaneously thrown up against their seat.

But there was another ride which dwarfed these two, both physically and by reputation. This was *Vertigo*. Imagine flying through the air at 128 km/h, from a fifty metre

height, held in place only by a harness (a glorified dress) and lots of metal ropes. This ride was experienced by a total of three trebles, two altos and a bass. Perhaps it was the £33 price tag for three people, or there was the small matter of not wanting to fly across the theme park at high speed. Those who did find the courage to ride were

not disappointed. The sensation of weightlessness that you feel for half a second is incredible (*not to mention unnerving - RB*), and the brave ones had an added bonus in the hero-worship that they received from

the rest of the trebles later on.

The final notable thrill ride was a huge splash ride called *Hydro: Water's Revenge*. To quote the editor's view on this ride, "You might as well jump into a swimming pool with all your clothes on. You probably wouldn't get as wet doing that." Four trebles drenched

themselves in the name of cheap thrills.

Overall, Oakwood



*Brian and Kevin having been "Hydro'd"!  
[Photo: Albert Horan]*

lived up to its reputation as an excellent theme park, and the great weather and thrills were enjoyed by all. By the end of the day, the adults' fiendish plan was complete, as the trebles enjoyed a long and peaceful night's sleep, while the gentlemen of the choir en-



*Brian, Ethan, and Carl having survived their Vertigo flight. [Photo: Albert Horan]*

joyed a quiet evening in the hotel bar!

*Emmet Kiberd*

## Pearls of Wisdom

*Who better to describe a choir trip than the choristers themselves? Many thanks to Albert Horan for compiling this article.*



My favourite places on the trip were, first Cardiff Castle for the Winter Smoking Room, the Peacocks and the Birds of Prey exhibition, second Technquest for its laser harp, and third Oakwood Park for the bobsleigh, and mini-golf. I liked the Pizzas and going to different restaurants. They were all delicious.

*William (11)*



This was my fourth trip, and for me the highlight was the cool rides called Hydro and Speed with lots of adrenalin. Next was Technquest where you could try things like lifting 500kg and playing musical instruments in headphones. The Millennium Stadium was so big and the seats were so high to watch the pitch. Ubi Caritas was short but my feet ached from some of the longer practices and performances.

*Rupert (11)*



This was my second trip and was slightly better than my first trip. I enjoyed the singing even though there was lots of practice. I really enjoyed the final night being with all my friends. I made many new friends and got to know my other friends much better. I remember Oakwood and its many rides. I enjoyed soccer better because I am much better at soccer than rugby. I would like more sweets and different Cathedrals not just one.

*Peter (12)*



My favourites were Oakwood for the rollercoasters and tree-tops, then Cardiff Castle for the gold in the ceilings, and Technquest for the disc jockey. It was brilliant, real fun!

*Edgar (11)*



I enjoyed Oakwood most, then Technquest where I could take pictures and put them together to make a movie. I also liked the

Scalectric, bubble machine, and especially bending down to go into the cylinder where I could play the xylophone keys. It was tiring at the end but good fun and my brother was here also. The music was magnificent, really good and fun and I enjoyed the singing. This was my second trip which was different and it was great to have my brother with me.

*Adam (12)*



This was my fifth trip and I liked Wales. Vertigo is the best thing you can do with your life. I like theme parks. It was fun! I liked the Norman Keep in the castle, all the different rooms and walking on the walls. The Stadium was huge and tall. I enjoyed the services which were not too long. I liked all the different styles and architecture in one building.

*Ethan (13)*



My favourite was the Millennium Stadium because I saw a really old cup and sat where the important people sit, we could go close to the pitch and

## Pearls of Wisdom (continued)

walk up the tunnels. Next was Cardiff Castle where I saw old rooms with such good art, slots for bows and arrows and good grounds. I also enjoyed walking around Cardiff, going to parks and seeing the sights. I really enjoyed the trip.

*Oisin (9)*



I liked all the music. I had three rides on Tree-tops and liked Speed and Megafobia also. I got a Speed baseball cap. I liked the magnetic cars at Technquest. I would like to live in The Holiday Inn because you could have whatever breakfast you want, go on the computers and get Sprite and Coke. *(Alfie fell asleep during the Dyson in D Magnificat. The gentlemen of the choir are intrigued to know precisely how - RB)*

*Alfie (8)*



This is my fifth trip with the choir. The Stadium comes to my mind first because of its association with Wales and it is tight and cramped. My favourite is Oakwood especially Vertigo where I felt regret while going up, then

fun while going from vertical to horizontal and even more while in free fall. This was the best music of all the trips. There was more selection and my favourite was Dyson in D.

*Carl (13)*



Tree-tops and the Pirate Ship were my favourites at Oakwood. The Stadium is big and the pitch can be moved. When it is full it is the fourth biggest town in Wales. The Castle is really old and many families have lived there. My favourite room was the roof garden at the top with all the plants. I liked Thursday's music the best.

*Jeff (9)*



This was my first trip and better than I expected. I enjoyed Oakwood where the rides were great. Looking at where the players change in the Stadium, especially Stephen Gerrard, was cool. I touched one of the Welsh rugby players jerseys. I also enjoyed visiting my friends in their rooms. I like singing with the choir.

*Kevin (11)*



Oakwood Park was my first choice with roller coasters called Speed, Hydro and Megafobia. The hotel was very good with nice rooms and a great selection for breakfast. The trip was well organised with no waiting around and no uncertainty.

*Kevin (13)*



The Millennium Stadium with its views from the stands was deadly. Loved Oakwood with its range of rides, especially Speed, Hydro, and Megafobia. The hotel was good, as was having my Dad with me. This trip was better and more organised than last time.

*Brian (13)*



Vertigo, vertigo, and vertigo! You're strapped in; you fall forwards and hover eight feet up in the air. Then you're winched up to the sky, and someone shouts three, two, one, fly - but I released on two! Carl and Ethan were not ready, so they screamed for the first half second. Food was lovely! Cathe-

## Pearls of Wisdom (continued)

dral especially the Jesus in the middle was cool. Techniquet was good. Science with facts and experiments.

*Brian (11)*



The football and rugby games were good. The Cathedral and the choir stalls, the music and atmosphere were quiet and then full of sound. Oakwood was great and the food was very good. The Aqua Centre, Techniquet and the Castle were brilliant.

*Hugh (11)*



I appreciated the pleasant atmosphere and camaraderie of St. Bartholomew's Choir, and

the peaceful spirituality of Llandaff location. The competition between the preacher and the bird's song entertained. The side trips to Rhondda and Caerphilly provided wonderful, if brief, insights into Welsh history.

*Roger (4)*



The wonderful weather raised the spirits. Total teamwork and the chosen music complemented the performances brilliantly. The singing and presentation were brilliant. It was a great performance by St. Bartholomew's Choir. I enjoyed the food too well in all the restaurants. The welcome from the Canon was special and warm.

*Victor (7)*

## Cardiff Castle

On Wednesday, 11th of April we went to visit Cardiff Castle.

We saw a giant Norman keep on a hill surrounded by a moat. The rooms we saw in the castle are the Winter and Summer Smoking Rooms, the Banqueting hall, the Library, Lord Bute's Bedroom and the Roof Garden.

The guide told us that the architect of these rooms was William Burges. In the small dining room where the Bute family had their meals the ceiling is twenty two carat gold from the finest Welsh gold mines. It is valued for insurance at £25 million.

I enjoyed the trip very much

*William Doyle*

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### About

*St Bartholomew's News is edited and typeset by Richard Bannister. Submissions for future issues and all enquiries about advertising should be sent to the address on the left. The newsletter is available by post for a nominal charge; for further details, contact the Parish Administrator.*

*A full schedule of services and events is available on the diary page of the parish web site, located at <http://www.stbartholomews.ie/services.htm>.*