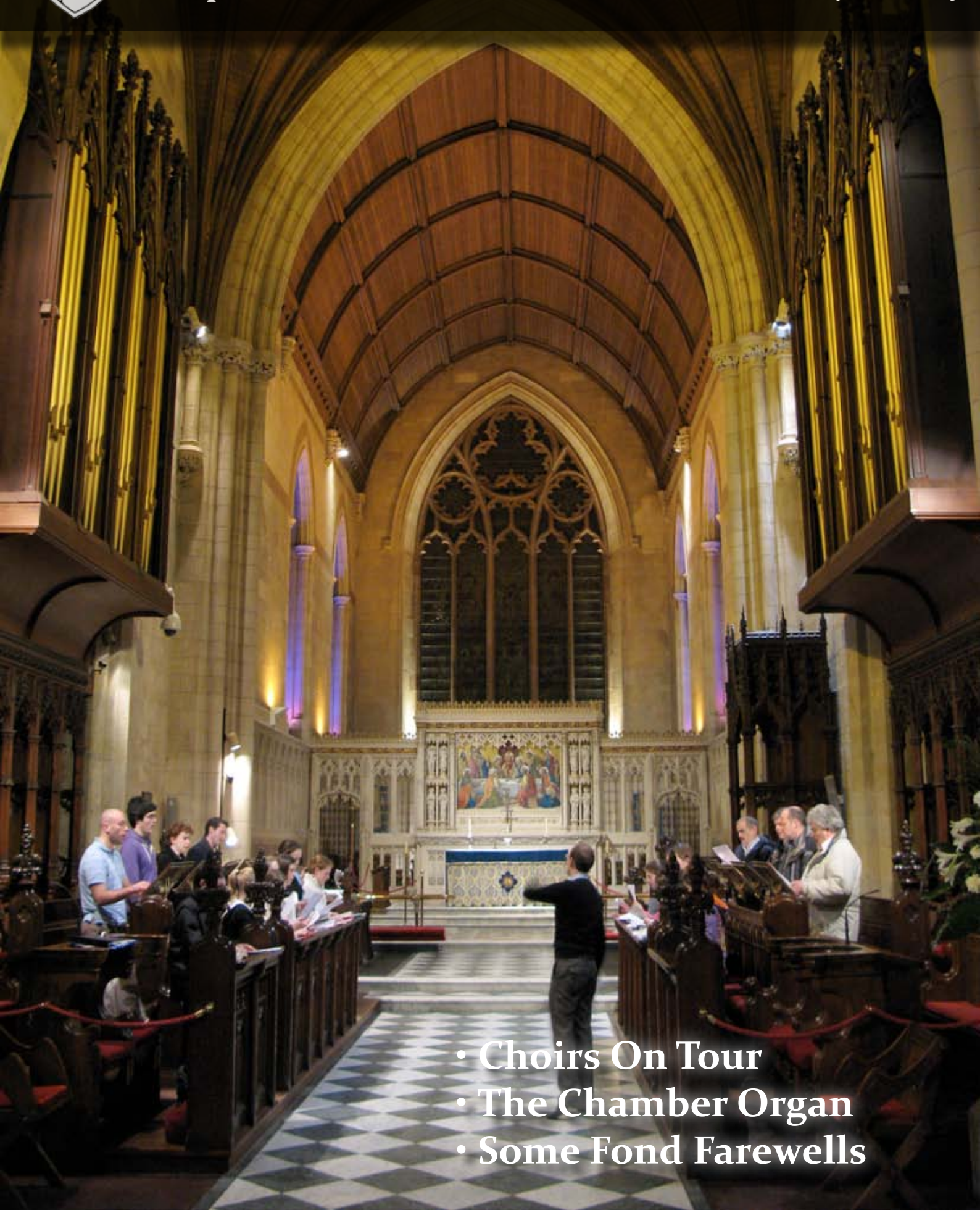




Music @ St Bartholomew's

<http://www.stbartholomews.ie>

June 2009



- Choirs On Tour
- The Chamber Organ
- Some Fond Farewells

Hereford

On Tuesday 14 April an eager group of trebles, some gentlemen of the choir and a few parents embarked on the annual post-Easter choir trip. The destination this year was Hereford Cathedral, last visited by the choir in 1994.

This writer was one of three participants who was also present fifteen years ago, and the memories are wonderful. Two solos from Mr Hilliard, then (officially) a treble, were particularly impressive thanks to his developing laryngitis midway through the trip. Similarly the late Mervyn Percival's rendition of the baritone solo in Ireland's *Greater love hath no man* will go down in choir lore for evermore. There was also the scaffolding next to the cathedral where a sign had been defaced to read "Danger: Falling Missionary". And don't get me started on the choir school

and its amazing conveyor-belt toaster...!

Unfortunately the choir school is no longer a residential facility, and thus our accommodation this year was in Hedley Lodge, part of the magnificent Belmont Abbey complex located roughly two miles from the cathedral. This proved almost ideal for our purposes, with a large room available for rehearsals and also for the evening entertainment. Our Director of Music was lucky enough to be assigned the "honeymoon suite", complete with Olympic-sized bath.

The Cathedral itself is one of the most aesthetically pleasing that the choir has ever sung in. Most importantly, it has all the typical characteristics of a cathedral, including a precarious organ loft and a truly amazing acoustic. Many of our younger choristers were

taken by surprise when their notes took over two seconds to fade away. An echo of this nature is very forgiving to sing in, not to mention superb fun!

Our first evensong featured the Macintosh *Third Service*, a definite favourite of the choir. Mr Macintosh was actually in attendance, though only half the choristers paid him much attention as they sung. Nevertheless his reaction was broadly positive, and the writer understands that he will be composing more music for us in the future. The Lindley setting of *Now the green blade riseth* marked the end of day one.

The next morning featured a tour of the Clearwell Caves. It was quite a surprise to discover that our guide was the same one we'd had on our last visit, meaning he has apparently spent fifteen years (or more!) telling exactly the same



Hereford (continued)

jokes. Be that as it may, the choristers were particularly impressed with a demonstration of just how much weight nine-year-old miners were expected to carry in days gone by, perhaps a reminder that a psalter, hymn book, and three anthem books really don't weigh that much. On returning to daylight we tackled Byrd's *Second Service* and Palestrina *Sicut cervus*. That evening, Messrs Bannister, Heather, and Rogan compiled a junior table quiz for the boys, with the three teams finishing on 27, 28, and 29 points respectively, though a lively controversy ensued over a number of the answers!

Friday marked a day off for the choristers, with an entire day to spend at Drayton Manor Theme Park. Many chose to conquer their fears on "Apocalypse", a fifty-four metre tall "giant drop" ride which

was named Britain's Scariest Ride by the *Daily Mirror* earlier this year. Others could be found camping out in Thomas Land, home to many Really Useful Engines (sorry!). The gentlemen meanwhile held the fort with a rendition of Philip Moore's *First Service* and Howells' *My eyes for beauty pine*.

Saturday opened with a tour of the cathedral, including the world-famous Mappa Mundi. This world map, which dates back to 1300 AD, is a huge piece of seven-hundred-year-old calf skin. It shows a mixture of religious imagery (the Tower of Babel and the Garden of Eden) and curious medieval pictures of dog-headed Scandinavians, headless people and unicorns in Africa - superimposed on an approximation of Europe, Asia and North Africa. All of this is rather impressive, and the group, in particular

the younger members, were not shy when it came to asking questions about this mysterious artefact. Hereford is also home to the Chained Library, containing over two hundred medieval manuscripts including the Hereford Gospels dating from the 8th century. The writer asked if this might have been the inspiration for the Library in the Discworld novels, but sadly the guide was unable to clarify. Evensong featured Noble in B minor with Ireland's *Greater love hath no man*.

Sunday is always a marathon in a cathedral, with three services in the space of seven hours. The Eucharist featured Stanford in C and F, with Elgar's *Ave verum corpus* as an anthem. The boys became the congregation for Matins, which was in many ways the musical highlight of the week. The service featured the exquisite Moore *Te*



Hereford (continued)

Deum, a favourite of the writer thanks to its superbly indulgent low E in the second bass part. We also sang the White *Regina coeli*, a rather splendid piece of music described in memorable terms by our assistant Director of Music as an "alto pillow fight". The final Evensong featured Dyson in D and Hadley's *My beloved spake*, the latter being a superb way to end a week's worth of singing.

Although it had its moments of infamy, such as when the skies opened to drench most of the group as they were walking back to the hotel, the trip in general went off without a hitch. It couldn't have ended on a better note than the "English tea" enjoyed by a few of the gentlemen, sitting in the sun near the banks of the River Wye on Sunday afternoon. Perhaps a return in another fifteen years is in order?

The choir would like to thank the many people behind the scenes who made this trip a reality. The choristers were looked after throughout by Eileen Healy, Evelyn Foley, Niamh Harty, and Wilma Ormiston. Some local transportation was provided in three rental cars by Richard Bannister, Robert Hilliard, and Clive Hope-Ross. The staff at Hedley Lodge - and in particular Hereford Cathedral and Canon Precentor Andrew Piper - went above and beyond expectations to make the trip what it was. Invaluable assistance was provided by Judy Martin, Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral. Last and by no means least, we must acknowledge once again our crack musical team of Fraser Wilson and Peter Parshall.

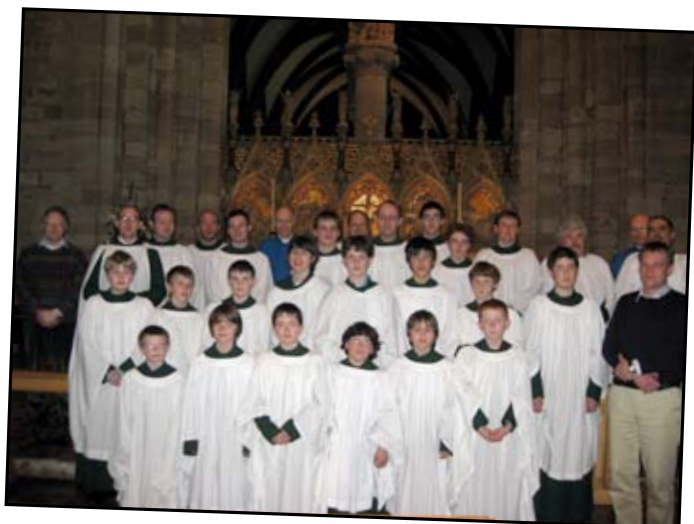
Richard Bannister &
Emmet Kiberd

Fundraising

Messrs Bannister and Heather ran their sixth annual Table Quiz and Auction on Friday 6 March. This event coupled with a separate bag-packing event organised by Niamh Harty raised a combined total of well over €3000 for the Choir Fund.

We have exciting plans in the making for choir trips over the next few years, meaning that a significant amount of extra fundraising will be required. We have plenty of ideas already, but additional suggestions (ideally with volunteers to implement them!) would be very welcome indeed.

Fraser Wilson



The “Drinks Cabinet”

Choir member and organ builder Adrian Heckmann has spent several years working on a Chamber Organ which has already become a major component of the worship in St Bartholomew's. In this article he chronicles the experience of building it.

I started to think about the concept for this Chamber Organ when I came to Ireland in 2000. It was very difficult to get access to a Pipe Organ to practice on in my local area (Bray and Greystones). I decided to build my own instrument with four stops; Gedackt 8', Rohflute 4', Principal 2', and a $1\frac{1}{3}$ from middle C. The most important thing was that it be easy to transport and therefore as small as possible. Building a Chamber Organ is much more difficult than a large organ as there is less space available and everything must be reachable for tuning.

I used CAD software to draw out the case before I finally began construction in 2005. The Gedackt 8' was finished by the end of 2006. Nothing much happened for over a year as my other work kept me busy, but I got back to the organ in 2008. I decided to buy the keyboard from a specialist in Leipzig, as I didn't have the right tools for making it myself. The pipes came from a German pipe-maker based in Portugal.

In February of this year I started working full-time on the Organ in order to finish it in time for a concert that took place just after Easter in Christ Church Cathedral. There were many long nights in St Bartholomew's trying to get it voiced, and indeed it is still not finished; it will need around one hundred working hours to complete. The total time investment has been around

six hundred hours, with about €7000 in material costs including the pipes and keyboard.

I'm delighted to keep it in St Bartholomew's, as it allows people to hear it and will also attract more people to the church. I hope to get work out of it also, possibly another chamber organ or maybe even a full-size pipe organ.

I would like to thank everyone in St Bartholomew's who has supported this project. Also, my old college friend Aiden Scanlon helped me with the final voicing; the pipes had been prevoiced on a higher wind pressure that I couldn't reproduce, so I had to cut each pipe shorter. That made things even more challenging, but nothing is ever easy for an organ builder.

Adrian Heckmann



My Bronze Award Exam

My Bronze Award exam took place in bright sunshine on Saturday 30 May at Christ Church Cathedral. It was at 4.30pm and I was the last person to do an exam on that day. When I went in, Mr Parshall led me into the Chapter Room to take out my books and get ready. The room was very dark and was made all out of wood and there were lots of big paintings hanging on the wall.

Miss Youdell soon came in and helped me to warm up by doing several singing exercises. After I was warmed up, it was time to start the exam, and I was led up a set of stairs by Mr Wilson. I was only a little bit nervous.

He knocked on the door of the exam room, and we both went in. I first sang all my pieces with Mr Wilson accompanying me, then he left. The examiner was really nice and helped me when I was unsure of a question. The questions he asked were quite hard and sometimes I had to think carefully before answering.

After about half an hour the exam was over. I was led back downstairs to the Chapter Room where my dad was waiting for me. Overall it was less scary than I had thought!

On Monday 1 June (only two days later) I got my results and was very pleased with them!

Isobel Howard-Cordone

Memories

The Girls' Choir was founded in 2002 by Malcolm Wisener. Of the original twelve members, Cliona is the only one who remains. When I joined the choir in 2003, there were still six of the original twelve. These gradually moved on. That is not to say that the choir has disimproved in any way; on the contrary it has improved and expanded with every change that's come. Different choir-masters have brought new approaches which have developed our musical skills.

Additionally, the impressive choir trips that Niamh and her team of parents organised have been a treat. First Funderland, then ice-skating and then of course, lest we miss out, back to Funderland again! Not to mention our trips to Cashel, Armagh, Cork, and Kilkenny to display what we had learnt in the previous year.



Memories (continued)

All of these have left me with fantastic memories, most recently the picture of our revered Director of Music wearing a pair of pink heart-shaped sunglasses on, standing solemnly beside the Dean of Armagh and the Cathedral Organist, also wearing sparkly and colourful sunglasses. It was quite a weekend. We had some rather creative meals served to us, teaching us to appreciate our mothers' cooking (some of us for the first time). We had the opportunity to perform remarkable music, especially Mozart's Mass in D.

I'll never forget the Easter Vigil, where, due to birthday celebrations, the Mozart *Agnus Dei* was sung in double time. It's only now that I realise what an impressive job the organist did keeping up with us. Or the occasion when we didn't know if wine and cheese were ap-

propriate Christmas presents, Cliona and Gillian sneakily worked it into casual conversation with Mr Wisener. It was just as well, because we discovered that while, yes, he did like them, he didn't eat them all that often, because they were "bad for him"!

Since Mr Wisener has left, many things have changed. We've had the pleasure of performing work by - and in front of - the celebrated composer, Peter Macintosh, and were rewarded with the prospect of further exciting works to come.

However, the most rewarding aspect of my time in choir has been bonding with the other girls through our shared passion for music. Recently many of us completed Voice for Life books and Bronze and Silver awards. The trauma (I mean joy) of this experience

has brought us closer together and taught us a great deal about the liturgical calendar.

With the advent of Mr Wilson, there have been big changes to how services were directed. Suddenly we have had to put up with boys! We discovered to our astonishment that some of them were actually helpful, especially in times of crisis (like sightreading pieces we hadn't seen before).

I'm really going to miss the girls and the music. May the musical tradition live on; and to quote a well known Scandinavian quartet: "Thank you for the music, the songs I'm singing. Thanks for all the joy they're bringing. Who can live without it, I ask in all honesty? What would life be? Without a song or a dance what are we? So I say thank you for the music, for giving it to me."

Róisín Horan







Armagh

We began our trip with an eventful and highly memorable car journey with our respective drivers. We had the pleasure of traveling with the Director of Music himself, which I'm not too sure pleased him so much. We weren't the easiest passengers, as the topics of conversation were likely not of interest to him - shall we leave it at that?

When we reached Benburb Priory we were greeted by the many choristers who had already arrived and unpacked. Our rooms were nice and comfortable, and after some hasty switching, we all settled in perfectly.

Wanting to test out certain grounds facilities, we "frisbeed" for a while. And, after losing at least one shoe and nearly losing a few more, we gave up and went inside. We then decided to explore the

many rooms of the building. After checking the map - and then rechecking it the right way around - we found the TV room. *Top Gear* was switched on and shoes were kicked off.

We were two minutes late to dinner because the clock on the TV was wrong. It was a complete disaster, but highly enjoyable all the same. After dinner, we went back to our rooms and awaited ten o'clock (with non-stop talking) when we were to go straight to sleep. Naturally we went to sleep bang on the dot with no hassle caused to any parents.

The next morning we awoke drowsily. It was early and we were already late for breakfast. It was a wonderful start to the day. After breakfast, we were driven by some kind people to the practice room which was beside the Cathedral. We were amazed by

the grand piano but got over it soon enough as we began to sing. Our practice was, I must say, the highlight of our day. We learned our music backwards and forwards and even managed to sing some of Stainer's *Crucifixion*. When a break came, we had some cake due to a certain someone's birthday, and the occasion was marked by the Advent of the Gentlemen. After our break, we continued our practice.

After the practice we ventured up a hill and found a nice-looking planetarium. This was all planned thoroughly, of course. We saw a thought-provoking film about astronauts and then were free to roam. We finished earlier than expected, so we got a chance to do some shopping which was accompanied by massive smiles on our part. After some impulse buys, we made our way quickly back



Armagh (continued)

to the room to show Mr Wilson his new present. Needless to say he was thrilled by his new pink heart-shaped sunglasses (additional unpublishable photographs can be found in the St Bartholomew's parish room!). We once more practiced the *Crucifixion*; this time people were more alive and knew the music slightly better.

When we had finished, we went to a well-deserved dinner in Embers, a nearby restaurant. Our food was wolfed down rather sharply due to hunger, and perhaps for this reason we were granted an ice cream apiece to complete the job. Then, we headed into the cathedral for a final half-hour practice before going back to the Priory. We rehearsed the whole service and our entrance and exit processions. A short car journey and a few films later, we were all sound asleep.

The next morning we made it down for breakfast on time only to discover, to our dismay, that it had been rescheduled for half an hour later. We were not impressed!

Our service was exciting with a wonderful performance of *Panis angelicus* and a feast of hymns. After it was over we took some photos and then disrobed. We had an interesting time in the hall afterwards with the Dean, Mr Wilson and the Cathedral Organist all donning the now famous sunglasses.

We packed up the cars, said goodbye to Armagh and fell asleep on the car ride home.

Thank you very much to all of the parents for putting up with our drowsiness, to the people of St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh for having us and to Mr Wilson for pulling us through it.

Cliona Rogan

Cathedral

A visit to the mother church of the diocese is always an exciting adventure, and so it proved in March when the girls (plus some of the men) sang at Christ Church Cathedral with the Cathedral Girls' Choir. The girls surpassed themselves in learning Purcell's splendid *Hear my prayer*, and it sounded spectacular when sung by nearly forty girls and massed ranks of altos, tenors and basses. The two choirs blended beautifully, and the music was a lovely way to mark the developing links between our two choirs.

Fraser Wilson



A view from the bridge

You will find this magazine overflowing with evidence of our flourishing music. What a delight it is to be involved in a church where so much energy and skill is invested by so many in something so worthwhile! I have greatly enjoyed overseeing it all in what has been my first full year at Saint Bartholomew's (though this is easy to forget!), and thought it might be nice to round off the year with a few memories of my favourite moments so far. (I say 'so far' because, of course, we are on a great journey and this has only been the first step. There have been some great successes already and I look forward to many more in the future!)

The Christmas Readings and Carols were an absolute highlight for me and I'm sure for many others. A packed church, a splendid atmosphere, good music, dramatic readings

from the legend that is Alan Stanford, and at least ten heavy choral colds... It was a spectacular success and I warmly congratulate and thank everyone involved, and look forward to the next! We followed that up with an excellent Advent and Christmas, particularly the Christmas Eve service which the boys and men sang superbly. January was, I think, the best month of my tenure so far, closely followed by March. I'm sure you all remember that splendid performance of Ireland's *Greater love hath no man* in January; and William and Rupert's brilliant duet in Greene's *Lord, let me know mine end*. Our two come-and-sing events were enjoyed by many. There has been so much live music in church, involving our choirs and also performers from far and wide, and there is

so much more to come! I really want you all to feel that the music in your church is there to enjoy and absorb. Please do make the effort to come when you can – I am sure you will be rewarded with an enjoyable occasion!

Seven girls became the first from St Bartholomew's to achieve RSCM awards: six Bronze and one Silver. A great achievement, and one which I am sure will become a regular feature of our schedules from now on! Great credit, too, to the five boys who followed in our Senior Choristers' footsteps and achieved their Bronze Awards. Many others have achieved Voice for Life levels of varying kinds and wear their medals with pride. It all bodes very well for the future. We are a team and it has been incredibly pleasing to see much progress as a whole



A view from the bridge (continued)

and individually. Some of the 'middle' choristers in each choir are really starting to 'get it' and have become good leaders in themselves, ready to take on the next level of responsibility. On such things do our choirs rely! Well done to everybody involved.

A certain composer called Peter Macintosh made his first appearance back in October – with some evening canticles hastily written for the boys when a different setting had proved a little tricky. Encouraged by their reception, the boy Macintosh went on to produce two further sets (one for the men, and one for the girls and men – all bearing a close resemblance to one another, which did make them far easier to learn!), plus various other items. Peter (Macintosh) and I were both hugely indebted to the boy Senior Choristers,

the Father of the Choir and the editor of this magazine for quickly deducing the true identity of the mysterious Macintosh and spreading it by way of great subterfuge amongst the ranks. PM has yet to be officially unveiled, but I daresay you will probably have heard of the link between him and me! Suffice to say, I'm very grateful that the music has been so generously received and am delighted that (I generalise) it seems to be well liked! I do want to repeat perhaps the most perceptive pieces of criticism I received this year, though – the first from a very good and respected judge and senior member of our congregation. "That Macintosh fellow. He's mad. That mass was *crazy*. He must be off his head. Ooh dear." The second was one of the boys who, not knowing the exact provenance of the piece

he was holding, declared that he "absolutely hated it". Cue (tongue-in-cheek) dismay of said maestro...

I should also tell the story of the genesis of this magazine. What a wonderful thing it is to have, and I am very proud of the final product – as I think we should all be. Having finished the last one in a bit of a rush, Richard and I were determined to be organised about it this time. So of course a week ago we were sitting with only three pages of content frantically calling articles in and pleading favours of various members of the choir. They were all very kindly granted, and in between a considerable quantity of *Chateaufort du Pape* and frequent checking of the England football score two evenings ago, we managed finally to bring it all together. Then we decided to add four



A view from the bridge (continued)

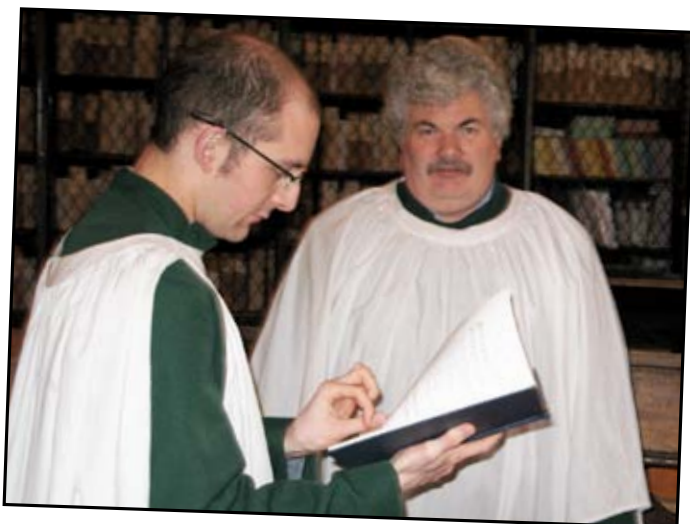
more pages... We are firmly resolved that completion of the Christmas 2009 edition will not have to rely on a) 2am Wednesday nights, b) red wine, or c) desperate last-minute begging. Please help us by writing it! If you come to a concert, sing in a service, attend an event or see some news that you feel like writing about, do! and then send it to Richard or myself. Why not do this at the time, so that we don't have to bother you in a rush at the end of term? It would make the whole process a little less fraught!

What have I learnt so far? I feel as though I have learnt a lifetime's lessons already! I could almost write a book. Perhaps the most important thing to take from this year is the fact that we tend to achieve our best if everyone works together with energy

and understanding. The best occasions since last September have been the ones where not only the singing is well tuned, expressive and all the other things that singing must be, but also where everyone in the choir has arrived in good time, organised themselves well, and put everything into what they are doing with real energy. The discipline behind the operation is of critical importance. From the children's point of view, that is one of the reasons that this choir is so valuable: it aims to instil in them that self-discipline which goes on to serve them so well throughout their lives. That is why I (on behalf of the whole church) am so grateful to the parents, men, families and other supporters of the choir who work so hard behind the scenes. Without all of that hard graft, the music just couldn't happen. Our church has always

been famous for its music and, through being involved in it in our different ways, we share the great privilege and considerable responsibility of maintaining and developing the musical tradition so that it continues to attract admiration and affection. A great challenge and an unutterable joy! and one which I am sure will inspire us all as we return in September for what promises to be a super term. All will be revealed in due course, but suffice it to say that I think it will be challenging and exciting in equal measure. I'm sure I'll be writing in twelve months to say what a wonderful year we have had – again! Until then, I wish you all a fabulous summer vacation full of rest, relaxation and excitement – and of course music!

Fraser Wilson



My Singing Lessons

I joined St Bartholomew's Choir when I was eight years old; I was recruited by Mr Wisener, the Director of Music at the time. At the beginning I was overwhelmed by the multitude of singers around me, being the youngest member of the choir at the time. I was fortunate that I had been learning the violin for some time and was able to read music. However, one great problem I found when I first joined was that I couldn't pronounce the Latin or German words, often to the amusement of the older boys.

Since I joined, I've been on all the choir trips including the ones to Wells, London, Cardiff, Westport and most recently, Hereford. We sang in some wonderful venues such as Westminster Abbey. Though I was only a junior boy at the time the experience was still amazing. We even received

special passes to the Houses of Parliament!

As my voice matured I decided I would like to have individual singing lessons to improve my vocal technique. Two years ago I started lessons with Áine Mulvey. She is a mezzo-soprano, who sings with several groups including the National Chamber Choir. I have made good progress under her tuition. I've completed an Associated Board Grade 3 singing exam, and participated with success in various competitions in the Feis Ceoil in 2008 and 2009. I also received the music scholarship to Sandford Park School in Ranelagh. One special memory was at a school fundraising concert where I sang Mendelssohn's *Hear my prayer* accompanied by the joint choirs of Sandford Park and Alexandra College.

Áine has helped me to develop my vocal technique, diction and breathing. Now, I understand the importance of warming up and not straining, shouting or forcing the high notes. She has taught me how to rest and protect my voice. After the Gaeltacht last year I was very hoarse and she advised me not to sing at a concert which was disappointing – but very important – as I could have damaged my vocal chords permanently.

Overall my singing lessons have been a great experience. Hopefully the choir have benefited also. During the past year Mr Wilson occasionally has asked me to help warm up / teach the younger choristers, and I feel I can pass on what I know to them.

William Ormiston Doyle







Concerts and More Concerts

What a wonderful building St Bartholomew's truly is, and it's splendid to see it being used more than ever for live music: not just in services, which of course are the most important thing, but also in concerts, rehearsals, workshops, and so on. We have space to mention only a few highlights from the past six months!

A successful come-and-sing Stainer's *Crucifixion* with the RSCM and singers from all over the country. Well-attended, powerful orchestral concerts (made possible by Adrian Heckmann's magic work with the front pews!) from the Dublin Symphony

and Youth Orchestras. The beginning of what has proved to be a very successful "Music on Mondays" series, with hundreds of people visiting the church for the first time. A week's rehearsals for the Loughcrew Garden Opera, directed by former Head Chorister Niall Morris and starring some of Ireland's finest opera singers (and we hope to welcome them back before long... watch this space!). A splendid evening's *a cappella* singing by Capella Renacentista from Spain, with a wonderful programme of Guerrero and Palestrina. A Duruflé *Requiem* sung by the Academy Chamber Choir. A

powerful Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* and a moving Clyde Chorale concert in Holy Week. What a list! We have recently started compiling a listings booklet on a bi-monthly basis which gives details of all the music in church during that period. You can collect a copy of the latest from the church, or download it from the website. For September, why not join our emailing list so that you receive all those details straight to your inbox? We're planning a busy and varied programme of autumn music-making and would love you to be part of it.

Fraser Wilson

The Clyde Chorale Strikes Back

It is easy to forget that the Clyde Chorale has only been in existence for a little over six months. Its Lent Term concert, somewhat forebodingly entitled *The End Is Come*, was performed so competently that we nearly forgot the conductor's maxim that "it takes five years to build a choir". Opening with Tavener's distinctive *Funeral Ikos*, visiting the most cutting-edge contemporary territory

with Peter Macintosh's *Reproaches*, and ending with Parry's timeless *Songs of Farewell*, we were treated to an evening of profound and moving singing. It was great to see the Chorale having a good time singing, and enjoying communicating the emotional power of the music to us, the admiring audience. What a large and appreciative audience, too, and deservedly so! This

term the Chorale has almost doubled in size, which suits the forthcoming programme celebrating the work of Felix Mendelssohn. We excitedly await that concert on Saturday 27 June at 8.00pm. Rumour has it that the Chorale plan to commemorate another anniversary in the autumn, that of Henry Purcell, and there has been talk of *Dido and Aeneas*...

David Byrne

Chorister Achievements

It's a great joy that many of our choristers are involved in music-making of all kinds away from St Bartholomew's. This can only make them into more rounded and able musicians. We asked them all to tell us of their achievements in the past few months. These are the ones we received.

Claire Austen: Distinction, AB Grade 6 violin; First Prize (over 16s ensemble) (Newpark Festival, with Quartetto Piccolo); Music Scholarship to the High

School.

Harriet Doyle: Winner, Under 12 strings (Newpark); Distinction, AB Grade 5 viola.

William Doyle: First Prize for singing and Second Prize for violin (Arklow Music Festival); Boy Soprano cup and Rose Bowl for singing (Feis Ceoil).

Isobel Howard-Cordone: Vanacek Cup (Feis Ceoil); First Prize (over 16s ensemble) (Newpark Festival, with Quartetto Piccolo); Gold

Award, AB Grade 6 violin.

Gavin Jones: Scholarship, level 1 classical guitar (RIAM); Honours, piano (RIAM).

Megan Jones: Distinction, level 4 Irish harp; Distinction in Theory (RIAM).

Aaron McGowan: Honours, Grade 1 piano.

Catherine Neenan: Distinction, AB Grade 4 piano; Merit, AB Grade 3 oboe; 91 marks (Newpark under 12s piano).

Fraser Wilson

Music on Mondays

Our Director of Music has arranged a concert series in the church that has been taking place on Monday nights since the start of May. It would surely be difficult to find a more beautiful and perfect setting for this than St Bartholomew's.

The recitals to date have featured young musicians performing testing programmes. In addition the obvious trouble each took over their presentation added very much to the enjoyment of the audiences.

On 25 May we had the privilege of hearing Rosie Cooke as soprano accompanied

by John Mountford on piano. Her Fauré pieces *Notre Amour* and *Les Berceaux* were the writer's favourites.

Monday 1 June featured Cally Youdell as soprano, accompanied by Padraig Wallace on piano and organ. Cally charmed us with lieder, opera and oratoria. A soothing piece *Sleep* by Gurney contrasted sharply with Purcell's *Let the bright seraphim*, dramatically enhanced by John Mountford on trumpet.

On June 2 we had Róisín Horan and Siamsa Doyle perform with Aoifín Shorten on piano. Róisín has of course

just finished after several years in our Girls' Choir, and it was lovely to hear her singing solo. She contrasted the lovely *Pie Jesu* by Andrew Lloyd Webber with Hamilton Harty's *Sea Wrack* and the sadness of Stephen Flaherty's *Daddy's Son*. Siamsa concentrated on an operatic programme. I thought she might be heading for a career in that field, but it turned out that she is currently completing a Ph.D in plant cell biology in UCD!

The series continues until Monday 13 July. See the web site for further details.

Bobby Barden

Feis Ceoil

The church is privileged to be one of the three main host venues for the Feis Ceoil each year, and as usual our fabulous organ was in use from dawn till dusk for ten days in late March, as more than twenty competitors fine-tuned their registrations and perfected their performances.

The competitions took place over two days, with large appreciative audiences for each one. We heard some excellent playing at each event and were pleased that the organ received great praise from all involved. The lovely Catherine Ennis adjudicated, and it really topped everything off superbly when she

agreed to give a short informal recital after the competitions were over. A sixty-strong audience was thrilled by her virtuosic and stylish playing, which was all the more impressive considering that she had only met the organ the previous day!

Trevor Crowe, the distinguished creator of our instrument, said that she sounded as though she'd been playing it all her life. I marvelled at her registration and technique. It was all rather humbling! The evening was topped off by some delicious delights from Amos' kitchen. We look forward to welcoming the ESB Feis Ceoil back in 2010!

Fraser Wilson

Singing with Understanding

It has been a delight to work with the choir boys and girls in the Voice for Life programme. Each level of Voice for Life deals with singing and music with special regard to the relationship between music and the liturgy of the church and its worship..

Over the past year I have met with the choir boys and girls to look at why we do what we do in the church. They have been developing their understanding of what they sing in the context of the church and its worship.

This might sound relatively straight-forward, but it requires a level of understanding of religious language and imagery that is not always easy for a young mind to grasp. However I must



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confess that I have been greatly encouraged by choir members responses and their ability to grasp what can at times be quite complicated or nuanced traditions and understandings. They are in a very good place to learn about all of this, as our church's liturgy is so rich.

I am confident that they will sing with a deeper understanding of the rich tradition in which we exist, which in turn will help them to have a better appreciation for the music and liturgy and to bring it to life for others even more effectively.

It has been a pleasure to work with them over the last year and a great encouragement to see them develop both musically and spiritually.

Andrew McCroskery

Voice for Life

It's fair to say that a lot of hard work has been done over the past six months. The children are rewarded for this not only by their musical successes and their increasing confidence, but also more tangibly by the awarding of various Voice for Life medals.

Since January the boys and girls have been taught each week by Rosie Cooke and Cally Youdell, and we should acknowledge and thank them for their great contribution to the children's achievements.

We were thrilled that so many of the boys and girls were awarded new medals at the end of this term, and hope not only that they will be proud of

their success but also return in September with renewed energy and a determination to complete the next level as quickly as possible!

This term we congratulate the following on their success: *Light Blue*: Hannah, Amaru, Lucy, two Catherines, Maya, Mazzy, Rachel, Liam, Sean, Alfie, two Martins, Cian, and Ian. *Light Blue with DoM Commendation*: Kiah, Isabelle, Nina. *Dark Blue*: Sally Anne, Jeff, Gavin, Aaron, Matthew, and Ronan. *Bronze*: Claire, Daisy, Isobel, Megan, Cliona, Kate, Oisin, Liam, Hugh, Jake and Elias. *Silver*: Róisín. Well done to them all!

Fraser Wilson



Dublin Symphony Orchestra

On Saturday 6 June, the Dublin Symphony Orchestra performed in St Bartholomew's. The concert began with the Overture to *Rosamunde* by Schubert and the loud opening passage by the fifty-piece orchestra really raised the roof. It was followed by Joseph Haydn's 'Surprise' Symphony (no. 94), which closed the first half of the concert. The symphony is known as 'Surprise' due to very quiet passages punctuated by unexpected *fortissimo* bars: most unsettling when one is trying to snooze!

There was a short interval before the orchestra resumed with probably one of the most melodic pieces of the

night, *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* by Grieg. This was followed by *Siegfried Idyll* by Wagner. The conductor, Fergus O'Carroll, gave a little talk about each piece before it was played. He told us that Wagner arranged to have a small orchestra in his house on Christmas morning; and when his wife got up, the orchestra performed this piece for her as a Christmas present. While it started off beautifully and romantically, it seemed to drag on for ages; and one could not help but wonder if perhaps Mrs Wagner wouldn't have preferred some jewellery instead!

The next piece was yet another slow number, this time by a contemporary

American composer, Ronald W. Follas: *A Golden Moment*. Extracts from *Hansel and Gretel* by Humperdinck followed in the same slow vein, but it was a nice melodic piece.

The concert ended with the up-tempo *Zampa Overture* by Ferdinand Herold. This was played very fast and very loud.

It was a musical feast to cheer us on a cold, rainy summer's evening. The acoustic of the church really suited the orchestra, and the sound was magnificent when the ensemble was in full throttle. My only gripe was that the programme was just too laid back and could have done with a little more contrast.

Jake Foley

Dublin Youth Orchestras

On Saturday 4 April the church echoed to the sounds of the Americas as the DYO Symphony Orchestra performed to a capacity audience.

Mexico came first, and the percussionists worked overtime, as the orchestra launched into the first Irish performance of Marquez' *Danzon No 2*.

The scene then shifted to Harlem in the jazz age, with *Rhapsody in Blue*. The mood was set by the thrilling opening glissando on the clarinet, which was handled with panache by Patrick King. Michael McHale went on to electrify the audience with his scintillating rendition of Gershwin's piano score.

After the interval, the

young musicians stayed on the other side of the Atlantic with Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. Under the baton of their new conductor, Fergus Sheil, they gave a thoughtful and energetic rendition of the work.

It would be quite a surprise if this was DYO's last visit to St Bartholomew's.

John King

Changing Faces

As is usual at this time of year, we say a fond farewell to various members of the choirs who are leaving us for pastures new.

Róisín has been a great servant to the girls' choir. She joined when it was only a year old; only Cliona has been here longer. She has been a dutiful senior chorister, inspiring soloist, and thoughtful leader.

Harriet and Catherine are also moving on with our best wishes; we're sure that their many talents will continue to flourish. We are particularly excited for Catherine who is beginning the next stage of her world tour!

Three of the boys –

William, Adam and Isaac – have experienced their voices changing recently, and we hope that they will remain part of the church family as they continue their singing careers in the back rows. William deserves particular mention for his wonderful success in this year's Feis Ceoil and his many notable solos. They have all been excellent trebles and we're sure they will turn into great altos, tenors or basses.

Would you like to join us? There are vacancies for boys (aged 6-9) and male altos, tenors, and basses. Please contact me for further information.

Fraser Wilson

Choir Support Committee

The Choir Support Committee (CSC) was set up this year with the intention of relieving the Director of Music of some of the many tasks related to running the church choirs.

We met in November and started the ball rolling. Since then, the CSC has organised the rehearsal supervision rotas, a bag-pack in Morton's, and the checking and maintenance of cassocks and surplices. We had further

meetings before the choir trips to Armagh and Hereford. The CSC will be organising the "bring and share" lunch which will mark the end of the choir year on Sunday 21 June.

I hope that we will grow, and expand our activities next year. All parents who would like to help should let me know. We all have busy lives, but the more people who work together, the more we can do!

Niamh Harty

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Submissions for future issues of this magazine and all enquiries about advertising should be sent to the editor. This magazine is available by post for a nominal charge; for further details, contact the Administrator, Fergus McCullough on 01-6688522 or fergus@stbartholomews.ie.

Future events

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

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