

Ahead of us looks a little relaxing for a week or two, but then things start to build up steam. The main thing we are heading towards above and beyond the demands from St. John's is the Liverpool Cathedral Sunday. Yep! We've been asked back! Sunday 25th July for both morning and afternoon services again.

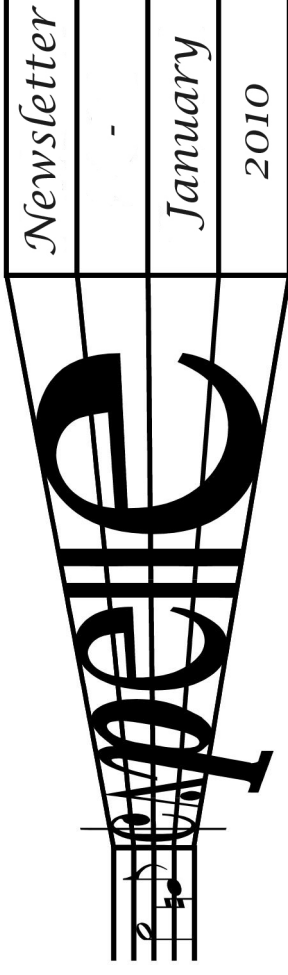
On 8th May, St. Anne's, Stanley is hosting the RSCM Bishop's and Dean's medal presentation service. We've been invited to join a massed choir for this event. A nice place to sing, and a church with a very enthusiastic organist and choir. It should be quite a nice occasion so put it in your diaries!

We also have three weddings booked;
15th May at 1pm,
29th May at 2pm,
20th August at 3pm.

Perhaps even a concert? I don't know, we'll have to wait and see how time goes!

So, here's to the year ahead. Many thanks once again for your dedication to the choir, St. John's and the uniqueness of English Church Music!

Michael



Dear All,

After having not had a "Capelle" newsletter since 2001, I thought I'd resurrect the old thing for the choir and honorary members.

First and foremost, can I thank you all for the tremendous efforts that you give to the choir, and on a greater plane, St. John's. We still remain to be one of the few 'proper' diocesan choirs, and that I am extremely proud of.....and so you should be too! Please remember, though, your commitment to the choir is both Tuesday **AND** Sunday. It is pointless rehearsing on one if you're not there for the actual performance.

Thanks to the efforts and support of members of the 100 Club, we were able to invest in brand new music folders last year, at a cost of around £200. Hopefully the material that they are made of should last a little longer than the leatherette RSCM folders that we got about 10 years ago.

Up to and including Christmas 2009 was disturbingly relaxing for me. Although chaotic in schedule, quality-wise you pulled out all the stops and treated all who listened to very high quality

performances. I know leading forms of worship shouldn't be regarded as 'performances' but when the final cadence of any anthem, carol or hymn is sung, it's only natural that any M.D. does tend to reflect on how well (or, not very often I hasten to say, how disastrous) the rendition went!

Sunday 13th December saw us lead the carols at the Masonic Carol Service in Blundellsands. Even though none of our immediate choristers are in the Masonic movement, and no matter what your thoughts are in how they go about their meetings, they have been very encouraging and supportive of St. John's choir and organ. There is one lady who takes a huge interest in what we sing each year, as she herself runs a choir in Manchester and more often than not introduces at least one of our pieces of music to her choir the following Christmas - leaders all the way, hey?!

In order to accommodate Rice Lane School for their Nativity Service at St. John's we moved our final pre-carol service practice to Monday 14th December. Monday????? But practice is on Tuesday - how dare practice night be changed!!!!

On 20th December we incorporated the Sunday School's Nativity service into the new format Eucharistic Carol Service which seemed to go down quite well.

Following the Christmas Eve "Mass(!)", a relaxing 2 week break in the Bennett household has been thoroughly enjoyed. Lily enjoyed her first Christmas (especially the wrapping paper!) and we were able to get her out on some nice long walks. Boxing day saw us in a very icy Delamere Forest and yours truly on his backside after a completely unplanned, yet spectacularly performed, triple salco!

So here we are in 2010! So what do we have ahead of us?

Well, I have a couple of targets that I'd like to achieve. Firstly, I'd like to be able to introduce a new music setting for the Eucharist. It's one thing that has defeated me in 2009, as finding a setting that is easy enough for the congregation to pick up, yet interesting enough and in four parts to keep the choir challenged is no mean feat. The addition of a new setting would then also give us three decent settings to use in rotation in Sunday Services, the Bickley Walton Service, the Thorne St. Thomas Mass, and the new one.

I'd also like to be able to either introduce a brand new anthem each month or relearn one that we have sung many years ago - or possibly even both. If you have any ideas on this one, or you hear anything on Classic FM or Radio 3 that you like, let me know and I'll see if I can get the music. The challenge for January is Ave Maria by Philip Stopford, the Director of Music at Belfast Cathedral.