



# Chorister

July 2011

**Chorister** covers information and news regarding the web sites 'British Choirs on the Net', 'Concertfinder', 'Choirsites' and other associated websites under the banner of Col Canto Associates.

The aim is to support the British Choral tradition, the Music Manifesto and 'Singing for Health'.

British Choirs on the 'Web' was created in 1995 by Rod Cuff. The final design included the legend 'British Choirs on the 'Net', so the web site name was changed to accommodate the logo.

In August 2002 Rod Cuff passed on the ownership of the site, and associated domain name, to [Phillip Tolley](#).

After fifteen years the [British Choirs on the Net](#) has achieved a prominent and established position within the choral community and has the admiration not just of the choirs using the site but also its competitors and imitators.

This newsletter has been sent to you as you are currently listed on one of the sites, or because the services you provide may be suitable for our website.

## Welcome to the July 'Chorister' Newsletter

British Choirs on the Net is supported by advertising subscriptions from the following;



Going Places  
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CHOIRCONTACTINTERNATIONAL



**British Choirs on the Net** The site continues to grow with over 2800 UK choirs now listed. We continue to welcome new choirs both UK based and internationally. We continue to successfully place music musical directors and accompanists with choral societies and choruses across the UK and also increasingly internationally. [www.choirs.org.uk](http://www.choirs.org.uk)

**Concertfinder**, the online calendar of choral concerts, is now listing events for 2011 and 2012. Please submit your concert details via email in text format. Please do not send pdf or html posters which require the salient points to be extracted and can delay posting the concert. [www.concertfinder.co.uk](http://www.concertfinder.co.uk)

**Choirsites** Low cost website hosting and design for choirs. The choirs include:

Balsham Singers, Cambridge  
Clarkson Singers Wisbech  
Monton Voices, Salford, Lancashire  
Holymoorside Choral Society, Derbyshire  
Leominster Choral Society, Herefordshire  
[www.choirsites.co.uk](http://www.choirsites.co.uk)

**Choirfriends** This small site is designed to help chorister get back in touch with their friends and colleagues when you move to other choirs or (heaven forbid) stop singing. Recent searches have been for former members of the Belfast Girls Choir (in the 1940-1950's), Ulster Girls Choir, the Hall Russell Male Choir (in the 1920—1930's) and the Wolverhampton Girls Choir (in the 1950's)  
[www.choirfriends.co.uk](http://www.choirfriends.co.uk)

**VocalBroker** This is a site which lists vocal soloists seeking work with Choral Societies and Choruses on the Oratorio or concert platform. It is not an agency and the Societies negotiate directly with singers with vocalbroker taking no commission. They are all experienced singers and choral societies and choruses are asked to consider these singers when selecting voices for concerts.  
[www.vocalbroker.co.uk](http://www.vocalbroker.co.uk)

**WeddingSingers** This is a site which lists soloists, choirs, barbershop and gospel group who are looking for work performing at weddings [www.weddingsingers.org.uk](http://www.weddingsingers.org.uk)

**Corrections and Amendments** British Choirs on the Net is only as useful as the information held on it. Please email me with any corrections and omissions to choir information, email addresses or web-site choir addresses. Please email any corrections and amendments to [philliptolley@colcanto.co.uk](mailto:philliptolley@colcanto.co.uk)

**British Choirs on the Net Choral Conductors Forum** This is a new group set upon on Facebook to enable Choral Directors, Choirs Secretaries and Choir members to informally discuss issues of performance practice, request new music and music exchanges and discuss other choral related issues. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

We also have a presence on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/britishchoirs](http://www.twitter.com/britishchoirs)

**Concert Programme Notes** British Choirs on the Net hosts a library of Choral repertoire programme notes which are available for the free use of Choral Societies. We do ask however that you acknowledge in your concerts the authorship of these programme notes, as appropriate. Recent additions to the list include Stanford's Stabat Mater and Bob Chilcott's The Making of the Drum & Little Jazz Mass, all kindly provided by John Bawden. The latest addition is a new programme note for J S Bach St John Passion, provided by Peter Foster.

**British Choirs on the Net Mailing Services** British Choirs on the Net holds a database of over 2000 choir email contacts as a result of its business with these choirs. While the site has no intention of selling this it can provide a mailing service to choirs and businesses to help promote events and services of interest to the choral community. Recent mailings have been sent out on behalf of London Dockland Singers and Shorter House Choral Editions.

**TONSIL** Comprises organisations that work in the field of youth & adult singing. Formed in 1988, it meets two to three times a year or as needed to discuss and what can and should be happening in the world of choral singing, practice and education, in Britain and Internationally. TONSIL is less an official organisation, more an informal association whose function is to serve its member choral organisations and to act as forum for national and international vocal education and practice. Tonsil represents 14 organisations promoting choral singing across a wide variety of genres, supporting over 25,000 members choirs and over 500,000 singers, who each year perform to audiences totalling nearly 3 million. [www.tonsil.org.uk](http://www.tonsil.org.uk)

## **New Choral Commissions**

*The following article has been submitted by Tim Knight, composer and author of the Choir Survival Guide and workshops.*

I am always honoured to receive commissions, big word, but I mean it sincerely. Out of the hundreds of composers when a choir chooses me to write for them it is a matter of great importance to me. In the last year I have been privileged to receive commissions ranging from a full scale 25 minute sacred choral work for an American University to some opening and closing concert pieces for a Ladies choir to a SAB anthem for a deanery choir visiting a Cathedral.

To me all commissions start with the words. Because some pieces are commissioned for special events choirs for these sort of works will already have selected a set of words, sometimes even written by a choir member, other times they have no words in mind and I am happy to suggest some, suited to the reason for the piece. I try very hard to find sets of words that are rarely set, rather than adding just another set of footprints to a well worn path, of course equally some choirs want 'new wine in old bottles' and I remember a commission for a Christmas Carol from a Yorkshire choir who had performed all the versions they could find of While shepherds watched and wanted to continue that tradition by adding another!

Its important to me to also know about the choir, its abilities, its aspirations, its existing repertoire etc., even possible future uses for the piece after its first performance, the likely venues etc and I try hard to make it very personal to the choir, establishing a link between the Composer in his garret and the performers, one that may bear fruit in the future in building a long term relationship.

This will include visiting the choir in rehearsal or concert if possible, I rarely miss the premières. Because one of the reasons for commissioning is often to raise the choirs profile, having the composer at the first performance is always a way to generate good publicity.

In times gone past, Choirs and Orchestras rushed to perform the latest piece of music and indeed most of the great Victorian Choral festivals included brand new works of the day from composers of the like of Dvorak, Stanford, Sullivan Vaughan Williams.( all famous composers now, but not at the time they wrote some of the pieces). I have noticed in my work with American choirs that they tend to perform a great deal more contemporary music than the bulk of our choirs. New music (which comes in many different styles) is vital to the choral scene and though the whole business of commissioning may seem a minefield and financially out of reach, I firmly believe that all choirs should have access to commissioning and am always happy to discuss new projects large or small'

Tim Knight [tim.knight.music@ntlworld.com](mailto:tim.knight.music@ntlworld.com)

(British Choirs on the Net has a number of Composers happy to discuss Commissions)



## **Rayburn Tours' New Choir Tours Brochure 2011/12 is Out Now!**

Rayburn Tours are pleased to launch our brand new Choir Tours Brochure – hot off the press and featuring some fantastic destinations for your next choir tour. Be sure to look out for the following highlights:

Destinations suitable for any style repertoire...

Whether you're a cathedral or church choir, choral society or community choir, we have a wide array of destinations that are guaranteed to provide you with an unforgettable touring experience. Whilst some of our destinations provide a host of stunning churches and cathedrals, which are perfect for those wishing to perform a sacred repertoire, you will also find a host of destinations that are ideal for choirs of a more varied style. Among others, these destinations include Paris, Belgium, Prague, the Rhineland, Spain and the UK and Ireland.

We introduce you to our favourite venues...

New for the brochure this year, our concerts team provides you with their favourite venue in each of our spectacular destinations. Each venue has been chosen as it provides a memorable and inspiring performance stage and is the reason many of our groups return to that destination year on year. Our favourite venues include the likes of The Menin Gate Last Post ceremony in Ypres and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Choirs who are looking for something different...

Are you looking for a destination with a difference for your next choir tour? We have handpicked some fabulous destinations, all with an array of wonderful performance venues that could be perfect for your group. Step off the beaten track and visit Umbria, Bratislava, Budapest for a unique performance or how about a summer tour to Venice to experience the Opera Festival of Verona. Or, if you already have a destination in mind that isn't in the brochure, just contact the team to discuss your requirements.

We have some great early booking discounts to offer you, so don't wait any longer. [Request your copy of our brochure](#) today or contact one of our passionate Concert Tour Consultants to discuss your ideal Choir Tour via our [website](http://www.rayburntours.com/choirs), [www.rayburntours.com/choirs](http://www.rayburntours.com/choirs), or on 01332 347828.