

Publicity Leaflet 1971

The Capriol Singers, formerly the St Michael's Youth Choir, Blundellsands, was formed in 1960 by the Conductor Gerald E Brown. Originally the choir consisted of eleven singers between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, and its first success was gained that year at the Lancashire County Choral Festival. It has, since that date enjoyed a consistent record of success which includes the winning of the Youth choirs, Mixed Voice Choirs, Church and Chapel Choirs Classes of the Lancashire festival, together with fifteen first prizes, five second prizes, three third prizes, and seven cups and trophies, gained at the Crosby, Southport, Wigan, Leyland and Blackpool Music Festivals.

Each year the Singers have a demanding series of engagements, giving recitals and concerts for music clubs and at many and varied functions. Whilst the choir shows a bias towards the work of the twentieth century British composers, it exercises a versatility in its choice of music. Its object is to entertain over the widest possible sphere from the music of Bach and Brahms to that of Gershwin and Britten.

In 1965 the choir recorded for the BBC and in September of the same year gave its first joint choral and orchestral concert. Since that date, works with orchestral accompaniment by Britten, Pitfield, Coleridge-Taylor, Elgar and Vaughan Williams have been performed in the North and Midlands.

Publicity Leaflet 1980

The Capriol Singers, formerly the St Michael's Youth Choir, Blundellsands, was formed in 1960 by the Conductor Gerald E Brown. Originally the choir consisted of eleven singers between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, and its first success was gained that year at the Lancashire County Choral Festival. In subsequent years many further successes were gained at festivals throughout the county, including fifteen first prizes. It has recorded for the BBC and entered for the 'Let the People Sing' competition.

Capriol Singers is now a mixed-voice adult choir with about thirty voices. Members come mainly from Crosby, but others are drawn from Southport, Bootle, Formby and Warrington. Its programmes are varied, ranging from music of the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, but the emphasis has moved from festivals to concerts and recitals. Three concerts are given each year - at Christmas, in the Spring, and a 'serenade' concert in the summer - and the choir also accepts engagements from music clubs and for weddings, receptions, special church services and other functions.

Plans for the future are ambitious. As the choir approaches its twenty-first birthday, it hopes to commission and give the first performance of new works by British composers.

Recent performances have included:-

Kodaly:	Motet, Jesus and the Traders
Britten:	A Ceremony of Carols
Vaughan Williams:	Five Mystical Songs
Purcell:	Queen Mary Funeral Music
Bach:	Motet, Jesu Priceless Treasure

And music by such diverse composers as Byrd, Sweelinck, Schein, Stravinsky and Seiber. The choir's repertory also includes madrigals, part-songs, and folksong arrangements. The choir plans to perform major works by Gustav Holst, Handel and Mozart in future seasons.

21st Anniversary Concert Programme

The Capriol Singers, formerly the St Michael's Youth Choir, Blundellsands, was formed in 1960 by the late Gerald E Brown, the choir's first Conductor and President. Originally the choir consisted of eleven singers aged between fifteen and eighteen, and it gained an immediate success at the Lancashire County Choral Festival in its first season. In subsequent years, many further successes were gained at festivals throughout the country, including fifteen first prizes. It has recorded for the BBC and it has entered for the 'let the Peoples Sing' competition.

The Capriol Singers is now a mixed voice adult choir of thirty seven voices. Its programmes are varied, ranging from music of the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, but the emphasis has moved from festivals to concerts and recitals. Three main concerts are given each year - at Christmas, in the Spring, and a 'serenade' concert in the Summer, and the choir also accepts engagements from music clubs and for weddings, special church services and other functions.

There have been three conductors of the Capriol Singers: Gerald Brown from 1960 to 1977; Martin Fogell from 1977 to 1978; and John Emery since 1979.

Major choral works performed during the past few seasons include:-

Purcell:	Queen Mary Funeral Music
Bach:	Motet - Jesu, priceless treasure
Vaughan Williams:	Five mystical songs
Vaughan Williams:	A vision of aeroplanes
Palestrina:	Mass, Aeterna Christi Munera
Holst:	Hymn of Jesus (with the Gerald Brown Singers and the St Nicholas Singers, Chorley)
Handel:	Messiah
Faure:	Requiem

Summer Concert Programme 15 June 1991

John Emery has had considerable experience in choral conducting. Formerly Staff Tutor in Music in the Open University, he is now a freelance musician, concentrating on composing and teaching. He has been with the Capriol Singers since 1978.

Nancy Mann - left at the end of the 1997/8 season. John Emery referred to her as 'a treasure who will be sadly missed'.

John Emery Biography (as published in Spring Concert Programme, 8th April 2000, 40th Anniversary year of the founding of the choir)

John Emery was born in Reading in 1928. He came to music comparatively late; it was not until he was nineteen that he experienced his first real piano lesson, given by the late John Russell, a greatly gifted and charismatic musician. It was John Russell also who gave him his first taste of the joys of choral singing by persuading him to join the Reading Youth Choir

and after he formed a village choral society near Reading, with the idea of John Russell conducting it, he was told to conduct it himself - after a lesson in conducting which consists of: "This is how you beat two beats - three beats - four beats in a bar."

After training as a teacher, John Emery taught music in Grammar Schools in Berkshire, Middlesex and Huntingdon before his final appointment to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar school in Wimbourne, Dorset. Here, he was given every opportunity to develop the music in the school to as high a level as possible ; he formed several choirs, an orchestra and various instrumental groups, and taught music to the old 'A' and 'S' levels. At Wimbourne, too, he was fortunate enough to work as assistant to the organist of the Minster; and he was coached by the then Music Adviser to Dorset, Dr Reginald Johnson, for his Bachelor of Music degree, Durham, which he granted in 1967.

In 1965 he was appointed Lecturer (later Senior Lecturer) in Music at C F Mott College of Education in Liverpool, where he further honed his conducting skills with the College Chamber Choir. In 1971 he joined the Open University as Staff Tutor and Lecturer in Music. He has the highest regard for the OU, but admits to having been the roundest peg in the squarest of holes in this post. In 1978 John Emery was appointed Conductor of the Capriol Singers, and apart from occasional absences through illness, he has conducted the choir ever since. He has composed a number of works, including a wind quintet, piano pieces, and choral music which he has inflicted on his long-suffering choir (and also long-suffering audiences!)

A Brief History (from Summer Concert Programme 2000)

The Crosby Capriol Singers started life as St Michael's Youth Choir in 1960, changing their name to the Capriol Singers in 1966. There have been three conductors: the choir's founder, the late Gerald Brown (1960 - 1977), Martin Fogell (1977-78), and from 1978 our present conductor, John Emery. Jane Roberts was appointed Associate Conductor in 2000.

In the early days the choir entered festivals and competitions, winning many prestigious awards. Since 1980, the choir has grown considerably and could now be classed as a small choral society.

The Choir's repertory ranges widely from music of the 16th Century to the present day. Several first performances have been given and the choir is interested in receiving new works from composers.

At least three concerts are given each year: at Christmas; a major concert with soloists and orchestra in the spring, and a serenade concert in the summer.

Many of the great choral masterpieces have been performed, including Bach *B Minor Mass*, Handel *Messiah*, Mozart *Mass in C Minor*, *Requiem*, Brahms *German Requiem*, Rossini *Petite Messe Solenne*, Holst *Hymn of Jesus*, Vaughan Williams *Dona Nobis Pacem*. Other composers represented have included Purcell, Vivaldi, Haydn, Schubert, Fauré and Britten.

Jim Cooke (MD appointed September 2003)

Extract from Chair's Letter to members August 2003:

Jim Cooke, was born in 1959 in Sheffield, but has lived in the West Lancashire area since the age of ten. He was awarded the Guildhall School of Music Drama Diploma in Composition in 1979, and at that time began studying arranging with John Harper (Guitarist and arranger with Atarah's Band) and composition with the St Helens-based composer David Forshaw.

Whilst at college he formed a concert orchestra and also conducted the college wind band for a time. Since the early 1980's he has conducted several choirs in the Liverpool and Manchester areas and has been musical director for many amateur operatic and youth theatre productions. A keen choral singer, he has been a member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir since 1988 and sung as a guest of Millfield School Glastonbury on two of their choir tours. He previously played trombone with Ormskirk Music Society until being appointed conductor in 1992. Jim became Musical Director of the Capriol Singers in 2003

James Gallagher Biography (from Christmas Programme December 2009)

James began his musical education as a chorister at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, where he was directed by Philip Duffy and later Mervyn Cousins. On leaving the Cathedral Choir James continued his studies at the choir school (St Edward's College) before going on to read music at the University of Liverpool and Liverpool Hope University. In 2005 he was appointed organ scholar at the Metropolitan Cathedral and studied under Richard Lea and Terence Duffy. James was appointed Musical Director of the Crosby Capriol Singers in September 2009.

From Spring Programme 2010:

James' musical education began as a Chorister at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral; of Christ the King from 1992 - 1998. Whilst at the Cathedral he was directed by Philip Duffy and later Mervyn Cousins. On leaving the Cathedral choir James continued his studies at the choir school (St Edward's College). He went on to read music at both the University of Liverpool and Liverpool Hope University. In 2005 James became the first former Cathedral chorister to be appointed organ scholar at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and studied organ under Richard Lea and Terence Duffy. James was also responsible for training the Cathedral Choir's probationary choristers, accompanying the choir and directing music in the Cathedral Crypt. He has also assisted with CD recordings and live BBC radio and television work. In 2007 James was asked to give the closing recital in the Cathedral summer series. He is now Organist and Director of Music at St Mary the Virgin, Walton. James has worked with several award winning choirs and taught piano and voice in several schools on Merseyside. He is currently music advisor for the Irish Guards Singers, who recently toured Ireland and performed to Irish President Mary McAleese. James is in demand as a freelance musician and regularly plays the Liverpool band circuit as a bassist or keyboard player, he also runs a private recording studio in Liverpool city centre. He became Musical Director of the Crosby Capriol Singers in September 2009.

From Christmas Concert 2014:

Richard Pomfret: Musical Director

Capriol Singers are fortunate and delighted to be working with Richard as their new Musical Director. He is an accomplished conductor, who on separate occasions led a choir that sang for the Queen and Prince Andrew. He has both sung and frequently led choirs in the finals of various National and International competitions. This evening is Richard's first concert as Musical Director and Capriol hope that you enjoy his choice of Music.

From Summer Concert Programme 2015:

Richard Pomfret: Musical Director

Richard has been involved in Choral Music as long as he can remember. He has conducted a number of choral societies, Chamber Choirs and Youth Choirs. His "Pongos" Youth Choir reached the semi-finals of the BBC Choir of the Year in 1992, and featured on "Highway" and several other TV programmes. They reached the finals of "Music for Youth" on no less than thirteen occasions and performed twice for royalty. More recently, his upper voice adult group, "Enkelit," who perform 'a capella' music from Finland, have performed twice on BBC Radio 3 and have been the headline group at the Narberth 'a capella' festival. Richard has also worked internationally, conducting choirs in the Czech Republic and Russia. This is Richard's first season with Capriol Singers.

From Christmas Programme 2019

Musical Director, Katherine Stonham: Katherine is a violinist and conductor from Trowbridge, Wiltshire. She is currently studying the GRNCM/MusB joint course run between the Royal Northern College of Music and the University of Manchester where she learns violin with Julia Hanson and conducting with Robert Guy and Mark Heron. Her conducting studies began through the South West Music School's "Podium Project," run in partnership with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. This provided opportunities to learn from conductors Matthew Wood, Maxime Tortelier and Frank Zielhorst and to conduct the South West Youth Orchestra. Since then she has participated in masterclasses at the Sherborne Summer School of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and most recently with the BBC Philharmonic. She has also worked as assistant conductor with the West of England Youth Orchestra and Heritage Opera. Katherine enjoys working regularly with ensembles and choirs at the University of Manchester and will be conducting part of the University's opera in February 2020, "The Enchanted Pig" by Jonathan Dove. She was appointed musical director of the Crosby Capriol Singers in September 2019 and is looking forward to sharing the products of a term's rehearsing with the audience this afternoon.