

▶ performed most effectively by the choir. This led us to the first of the four New Testament lessons, read by the Senior Warden, and then to the singing by the choir of Purcell's Magnificat in G minor. It appears that the composer gave the opening recital on the organ of St Michael's in 1684; nine of its ranks are incorporated in the present instrument. After *O little town of Bethlehem*, complete with Sir Thomas Armstrong's descant, the Master Turner, Mr Andrew Mayer, read the Fifth Lesson.

This took us to the world première of the new carol, commissioned by the Livery Club. It was composed by Liveryman John Scott, Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral, who is soon leaving London for the church of St Thomas, Fifth Avenue in New York.

John chose an anonymous fifteenth century text and *A god, and yet a man?* struck us as a very moving and thoughtful work. We are grateful to him for giving us this little gem, albeit one which may tax choirs; the tuning of some of the chords is tricky, requiring a fine sense of pitch. This carol now joins those by Liverymen Robin Orr and Christopher Brown which, together with two or three yet to be written, will form a collection which we hope to publish as a set.

After the Master had read the Sixth Lesson, the congregation sang *Unto us a boy is born* with considerable vigour, interchanging gentlemen's and ladies' voices in Sir David Willcocks' arrangement. Christmas would not be the same without a musical contribution by this Company Silver Medallist! The delightful version by the late Kenneth Leighton (sometime Cobbett Medallist) of *Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child* was then sung by the choir, heralding the Seventh (and final) Lesson, read by our Chaplain. *O Come all ye faithful* and *Hark! the herald angels sing* followed, separated by the Blessing, bringing to an end a most enjoyable service. All that remained were the organ voluntaries, superbly performed by Duncan Ferguson, the Assistant Director of Music at St Michael's, who had played for the entire service. Duncan is also the Sir George Thalben-Ball Organ Scholar and Organ Scholar of St Paul's Cathedral; quite a profile.

Those present were thrilled by the occasion, and in particular by the music which included several descants by the Master himself. We made our way to Chamberlain's, a restaurant in Leadenhall Market, and an excellent supper. Among those whom Anne Griffin thanked in a short speech were the Clerk and his Deputy, for all the work involved in the evening's organisation, as well as the Master for the music in the service. It was a good way to begin the joyful season of Christmas.

A tour of London in song

On Wednesday 25 February, members of our Livery Club joined the City Music Society in the Livery Hall of the Goldsmiths' Company for 'a celebration of London' by Catherine Bott. Assistant Paul Campion reports:

No proverbial ride on the number 27 bus could have given us a more entertaining view of the capital than this recital by soprano Catherine Bott and pianist David Owen Norris, who acted as our 'musical bus driver and conductor' for the evening.

Before the start of those proceedings, however, members of the Musicians' Company and their guests enjoyed a privileged real guided tour of Goldsmiths' Hall, led by liveryman Alan Paul. Whilst the

weather outside was wintry, our hearts were then warmed by an affectionate 'virtual tour of London in song' around our city; London past, present, poor, decadent, well-trodden and unexplored.

Talking of buses, the evening's outward musical journey began with the route Chalk Farm to Camberwell Green in a song by Lionel Monckton – and provided a clear warning to susceptible young lady visitors of the dangers of the upper deck. Composers familiar as Gershwin and Walton stepped aboard, but more surprising were



Catherine Bott

A Happy Year!

Reflections by the Immediate Past Master

My goodness, what fun it was! I had been looking forward to my year as Master Musician, but I had no idea how much I was going to enjoy it. What's more, I feel confident that the Company continued along the positive path of development and growth on which it has been for several years, and I believe that I continued the reforming and improving trend which has been driven by almost all Masters in recent times.

I'd like to be self-indulgent and talk first about the things I especially enjoyed about being Master. The best bit was the wonderful live music that I was privileged to listen to. The formal concerts were always interesting – even when the music was not particularly to my taste – and some were amazingly good. One particularly fun evening was the open-air concert at Kneller Hall, featuring 4 different military bands, which combined at the end for a full *1812 Overture* complete with cannon & fireworks – a marvellous spectacle. And, in a year notable for excellent hospitality, I know that Deborah agrees that the Army came top of a very

high-quality list – so organised, and such nice people (thank you Liveryman Malcolm Torrent) – and wearing such gorgeous uniforms! The Master's Birthday Concert, to celebrate my marriage, my 60th birthday, and my Mastership, was a special treat for Deborah and me – thank you very much to all the members of the Livery who kindly supported us.

One highlight was the audition at the RCM for the Allcard Awards. This was the first time that I have seen top-class young classical musicians audition, and – once I had got over the astonishing fact that they start before midday – I was hugely impressed by the commitment and musicianship which they showed. I enjoyed and admired the professionalism of the judges – Petronella Dittmer, Tessa Cahill, and Peter Fowler – and felt re-assured that, on the rare occasions when I dared to venture an opinion, I wasn't laughed out of court.

Part of being Master is representing the Company among other Liveries and on City occasions. I have never been a City person as such, and don't think I would be a member of