

SECRETARY'S NEWSLETTER: No.103: Winter 2025

From the Officers, c/o:
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The Hymn Society Website: www.hymnsocietygbi.org.uk

A huge "Thank you" to Revd Robert & Mrs Jenny Canham

You will have seen on the previous Newsletter that after 21 years as Secretary and more recently Interim Secretary, Robert has finally handed on the baton of producing this Newsletter (along with all the other aspects of the Secretary's role). For the time being, the Executive President and other Officers will coordinate the Newsletter.

We are immensely grateful for all Robert's work for us, and also to his wife Jenny, known to many of us through Conferences and in other ways. Robert and Jenny will be a hard act to follow; we wish them well as they move into life beyond the helm of The Hymn Society.

2025 Annual Conference Tuesday 22nd – Friday 25th July **Highgate House, Northamptonshire**

Booking forms with full information are enclosed. **Note: Places are limited so early booking is essential to ensure a place.** Whilst it may be possible to come as a Day Visitor, we need to know swiftly, as this has had to be planned as a primarily residential Conference. Conference costs inevitably increase each year, this year being £390 for the full conference. We realise that this is not within the reach of all. Therefore, **if you would like to come but find the cost prohibitive, may we urge you not hesitate to request a Bursary.** For further details of these please contact our Treasurer, Michael Garland (michaelgarland368@btinternet.com).

We anticipate there being opportunities for members to contribute to a *Short Metre Session* (10 minutes maximum); if you would like to be considered for this please indicate on the Booking Form insert sheet together with the hymn-related theme you would like to address.

Subscription Renewals 2025

Most Hymn Society subscriptions are renewable each January. Many members now pay by Standing Order for which we are very grateful. UK rates remain at £25.00 (individual members; £30.00 for couples) with varying rates for those living outside the UK and Ireland. Additional supplements can include IAH (£10.00), HSUSC (£20.00), or both. Payment of any outstanding 2024 subscriptions would be most welcome. Please raise any questions on your subscription status with our Treasurer, Michael Garland (michaelgarland368@btinternet.com).

We welcome new members who recently joined the Society:

Miss Angeli R. Alvarez (London UK)
Mr Paul Bevis-Knowles (Ruislip, London UK)
Revd Mark Pickett (Clitheroe, Lancashire UK)

We regret having to report the death of a member:

Mr Malcolm G. Wood (Ardgay, Sutherland)

Another of our members living in Scotland, Malcolm Wood was a member for over twenty years, having joined the Society in 2002.

God Welcomes All – A Supplement to CH4

Recently published as a supplement to the Church of Scotland's well-received and popular hymn book *Church Hymnary Fourth Edition (CH4)* is an exciting new collection entitled *God Welcomes All*.

Co-edited by Phill Mellstrom and our member Iain McLarty, it features over 200 hymns and songs in a wide range of styles by writers from Scotland and around the world, the majority written in the last twenty years. The book has a strong focus on hospitality and welcome. Like most good hymn books, it is conveniently and coherently structured:

- Scripture Songs from the Psalms, and Old and New Testaments;
- Music for use throughout services, including Gathering, Confession, Approach, Prayer, Communion, Baptism, Sending and Blessing;
- Music for all parts of the Church Year;
- Hymns and songs covering a range of themes, including The Living God, Creation, Christian Life, Hurt and Healing, Church and Community, and Justice and Peace.

Published by Canterbury Press, Norwich; ISBN: 978 1 78622 557 3

A book not strictly hymn-related

... but by our long-time member, John L. Bell of the Iona Community:

And Then She Said: True stories without morals

Silliness, sensitivity, sexuality, suffering, surprise – this rich collection of true stories offers a glimpse into the extraordinary lives of ordinary people, revealing the power of faith, the beauty of human connection, and the unexpected ways in which God can work in our lives.

Available at £10.99 from www.ionabooks.com or via your local bookshop.

Calling hymn writers, #1: Search for new hymns

The Jubilate Group are looking for new hymns which local churches can use at particular moments in ordinary services – “pieces that are accessible for congregations and music teams, with words and music that challenge and inspire...” Material is sought for eleven categories including Gathering for worship, Confession and Communion. The deadline for submission is 30th April. For more details or to submit items, see <https://www.jubilate.co.uk/gatheredtogo>.

Calling hymn writers, #2: Search for a hymn or song text: “God the Creator”

Our sister society, The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (HSUSC), is conducting a competition for “one or more theologically rich hymn or song texts for congregational singing that could be used for the celebration of God the Creator”, aligned with an ecumenical movement to set aside a new feast each September celebrating God as Creator and in conjunction with the Season of Creation observed by some denominations. Texts could be for an existing tune or a new musical setting. A prize of \$500 is offered; the deadline is 2nd May. See <https://thehymnsociety.org/2025-hymn-search/>.

Song Writing to Change the World

The Iona Community are to host “a creative songwriting week for beginner or intermediate level”, organised and led by HSUSC, from 31st May to 6th June. Leaders will include Adam Tice, Sally Ann Morris and Brian Hehn. The programme will include worship in Iona Abbey. See <https://iona.org.uk/event/song-writing-to-change-the-world/>.

An enquiry from Toronto

Leanne, an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, is working on a research project about the history of the Cowper and Newton museum, and how from its humble beginnings it eventually became a museum. In particular, she is looking for primary source evidence of it being considered a space of hymnody, especially as Cowper was writing during the height of the Evangelical movement, and for primary sources depicting the museum as a religious / spiritual area or a place of pilgrimage and literary memorialisation of the 'aura' during the time when Cowper was writing.

Leanne has contacted the Museum itself, but much of their catalogue is not digitised, so she is hoping for help from other sources, such as The Hymn Society. If you are able to suggest any lines of enquiry, please contact Janet Wootton (revjwootton@btconnect.com).

And a curious enquiry!

Can anyone identify what hymn is actually being sung in the episode 'Well Catered Funeral' of the BBC sitcom 'Open All Hours' (Season 1, Episode 5), at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2uj35h>? The tune is PETRA but the words are not from any text usually set for that. Lines discerned so far include:

- 'Guide my feet and take my hand / Lead me to the Promised Land.'
- 'What I have I freely give / That my soul once more may live ...'
- 'Guide me, lest my soul doth stray / Hark, thy road runs straight thy way / Angels guide me to thy breast / And eternally to rest. Amen.'

Any answers, please, to Martin Leckebusch (martin.leck@zoho.eu).

Postscript, courtesy of our member Terence Atkins:

'The church of St Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, London (by Bank Underground Station) has a small Coffee Shop in its vestibule. After a brief closure it has reopened as "Newton's Coffee"! Is there any other Coffee Shop or, indeed, commercial outlet, named after a hymn writer, one wonders? And while reflecting on John Newton, please forgive me for adding, there *is* a fireplace shop in East Finchley called... (you've guessed!) Amazing Grates.'