

At last – The Newsletter!

Just when you were thinking it was an endangered species, here it is. We took longer than we expected pulling it together. More importantly we realised we hadn't been proactive enough in sourcing material. This is *your* newsletter – we need your input – so please go to the back page to see how you can contribute. We've taken much from Fred's original concept but with a new design and fresh editorial approach. We are planning a four-page edition in September and March, with a two-page bulletin in January and June. Hope you enjoy it... **Joy and Soo**

View from the middle...

As we approach the Brockham Choral Autumn Term – or, as I like to think of it, *The Trail of Tears* – I've been reflecting on the three years I've spent skulking in amongst the tenors (and a fine, manly bunch they are) and the important things I've learnt during that period.

As a bass player I'm used to instructions being along the lines of 'this one's in A minor, play something that fits' and I've learnt that the demands of our musical director are often rather more rigorous than that. Thankfully, while my sight-reading skills are still fairly rudimentary, unless those little tadpole things jump around a lot on the page I can usually work out what's going on.

I've learnt that while it's possible to blame my own shortcomings on the temperature and acoustics of the rehearsal room, the lighting, overcrowding, draughts, inauspicious phases of the moon and global warming, it's probably best to just Learn The Tune.

I've learnt that, when tackling a new piece, at least one rehearsal (usually the third) will be so phenomenally depressing in terms of the dreadful racket we make that I will vow to forget choral singing altogether and take up the banjo. Then I'll cheer up again and just get on with it.

Oh, and I've learnt that while being in the front row for performances means I have a great view of our conductor, it also means that I have to make sure I've polished my shoes.

David Ord

Photos by Paul Griffin



A dance orff for Carl Orff – an uplifting experience

It was exciting going into the Dorking Halls for the concert as the view of the orchestra and the choir was so good. I did not know either of the pieces so I was looking forward to a new experience. I found the *Rio Grande* very challenging. While I could appreciate the wonderful skills of Marion and the orchestra, it was difficult for me to enjoy the discordant music. The percussion was exciting and to be able to see them performing added greatly to the overall enjoyment. The choir was powerful but controlled and the lighting added to the atmosphere and at times I could hear the warmth and life I associate with the *Rio Grande* in the rhythm of the music.

The *Saint-Saens* and accompanying poetry by Ogden Nash, so ably read by Fred, was wonderful and the whole audience seemed captivated by it. Fred was expressive and funny while the musicians were superb. It was a wonderful light relief after the *Rio Grande*.

Carmina Burana was dramatic, sharp and enjoyable. The dancers were effective and made for good theatre but at times I found them distracting when I wanted to be listening to the singing. I also enjoyed the soloists' performances and their interaction with the audience, particularly Andrew Mayor. The variety of the timpani also added fantastic colour and texture to the

sound. However I do have one criticism, the 'sits' and 'stands' were extremely ragged and not up to BCS's usual standard – it is a small point but it was very noticeable. At the end of the evening I came out of the Dorking Halls feeling elated but also emotionally drained!! I cannot imagine how you must have felt after such energetic singing. Well done again BCS. *ps I'd just like to say that I write as someone with no technical knowledge and it's therefore just my feelings and observations.*

Mary White

Editor's note: I'd like to add my personal thanks to Andy for organising the dancers. Not only were they a stunning enhancement, they were also very easy on the eye.

PASTIME WITH...



Spotted at St Fagans Welsh Folk Museum – too late for the altos



BCS singing at the National Museum of Wales



Nye undeservedly covered in poo



Double bubble...



...toil and trouble



BCS reaches new heights – RWCMD 76 stairs to dressing room



RWCMD Symphonic Brass Quintet provided harmonious interludes



Did the Tardis take the audience? Was it our Welsh dalekt?

Cardiff Tour Jottings from a mad Bavarian professor

■ **Outward coach** Stuffy, but relieved by Champagne/Buck's Fizz, courtesy of Jenni Lee-P, Anne T, and 'coach hostess' Victoria H-R. Our Welsh driver had greeted us with *Land of My Fathers*, not in Welsh...

■ **Hilton Hotel** Ideally placed, luxurious, health suite, lavish breakfasts, including full English with eggs cooked to order; visiting virile soccer players from Verona, lost to Cardiff City the next day. (*Damn I missed them! Editor*)

■ **Extensive shopping centre** On the doorstep, with boulevards, cafés, restaurants, traditional covered market, Millennium Stadium in sight, St David's Hall, Nye Bevan statue, but they'd 'covered him in pigeon poo'.

■ **Singing venues** Royal Welsh

College of Music and Drama, classy, but dressing rooms up steep stairs, Museum - great acoustic, URC Church - dramatic stumbling entry by mad Bavarian professor! St John's Anglican Church - tea and biscuits provided. All within walking distance. Small but appreciative audiences who commended our Welsh endeavours, Reuben with accordion but minus his French beret, co-performers the RWCMD Symphonic Brass Quintet providing harmonious interludes.

■ **The Hotel Bar** A haven of relaxation, replete with alcoholic beverages, though Alan Porteous, temporarily antibioticly teetotal - on his birthday too - exhausted their limited supply of Becks Blue.

■ **Sight-seeing** The Museum,

great art and artefacts, the adjacent Cardiff Castle, Llandaff Cathedral, a significant walk for certain sturdy souls, Sophia Gardens, St Fagans Welsh Folk Museum, 20 minutes coach ride, its castle, beautiful gardens, original farm house, other heritage buildings moved from various parts of Wales, including a 16th century church with stunning replica wall paintings, from Roger Main's uncle's village.

■ **Cardiff Bay on the final day** The view, Ivor Novello's statue, the Norwegian Church for one-time visiting Scandinavian sailors, the Welsh Assembly building, but most of all the Millennium Centre, home of Welsh National Opera, so carefully designed, including much Welsh symbolism, vast stage

and backstage area, foyer and extensive booking counter - used as a simulated airport departure hall in a Dr Who episode; and our lunchtime concert there, streamed to the world - view it on Youtube, Marion accompanying, as ever immaculately and without fuss, Andy coaxing us to our final best and again displaying his facility for good humoured rapport with the audience; fittingly followed by the Tour Lunch in the Centre's restaurant. With sincere thanks to David and Jan John, with Andy, for their thoughtful preparation, planning and execution.

We may not have had big audiences, but we enjoyed much 'Pastime with Good Company'.... nuff said.

Fred Harrison



Greensand Trio minus one

For my pastance – eat, sing and dance

It's July – it must be Jolly! Once again, Maureen and Gareth kindly threw open their home and welcomed a motley group of singers with diverse talents and a penchant for wine and good food. As is tradition, having eaten our fill, we headed for the barn to be welcomed by the inimitable Fred Harrison in his familiar role as MC for an auditory and visual feast. And what a feast it was. From the spoken word – Jane Stride regaling us with readings to raise a smile – to the recorder consort, from Tudor times to jazz, there was something for everyone. Particularly of note were Fred attempting to lead Mary astray, Andy and Reuben arguing the case for tenor and bass, Julianne playing all three little pigs (or leetle cochons), Carol and Romey *Walking Down the Avenue* and the massed alti having a *Swell Party*. There were extracts from Paul Griffin's video of *Carmina Burana*, giving us a chance to see it from the front, not least the dancers. We finished with the Criswick/Suckling quartet giving us a highly entertaining rendition of a familiar song by Henry VIII. And that is what the evening was – Pastime with Good Company.

Tony Earnshaw



Is that rocket? No it's science. Improve on this caption - a bottle of fizz for the competition winner. Entries by 14 December.



Photos by Sue Tanton

'... and this one has only 2022 calories a slice...'

Teas on the Green, dough for the funds

For the final event of a busy, memorable weekend in July, the choir returned to its roots in Brockham to contribute to the annual village programme of serving Teas on the Green – and raising some funds at the same time. Despite heavy rain showers, there was a continuous stream of customers for the sumptuous cakes provided by choir members – the tables were well-occupied and the marquee was always full. Very many thanks to the team of bakers, servers and washers up who were kept busy throughout the afternoon. As well as providing an opportunity to promote the choir and forthcoming concerts, the event raised **£385** for choir funds.

Sue Tanton

What do hampers mean? Hampers mean £886!

The idea of having just one enormous raffle prize with a theme at regular intervals was inspired. Ok, your chances of winning are reduced but the quality of the prize makes it so much more desirable it's worth the risk, and the extraordinary amount of money raised – **£886** in contrast to £305 through raffles last year – is testament to that. The themes have added that extra frisson of excitement and anticipation, with Valentine's Day, St David's, St George's and St Patrick's days, Halloween and especially the sensual *Carmina Burana*... Certainly hasn't hampered our fundraising efforts! Our sincere thanks and congratulations to everyone who organised the raffles and contributed prizes but especially to Mary and Soo for all their hard work and inspiration.

Joy Ridley



An interesting picture sent in by reader Mr Ed Criswick, and while he has your attention he would like to ask... Does anyone have room to store and transport the choir lighting to concerts? There are five boxes and four stands. At present the storage and transport arrangements are carried out by different people, so we would like to rationalise this. Please speak to Ed for further details.

DIARY DATES

Full schedule to be distributed at rehearsal on Tuesday 10 September

Saturday 23 Nov 2013
Rossini
Petite Messe Solennelle
 St Martin's Church

Saturday 14 Dec 2013
Family Christmas Concert
 St Martin's Church

Tuesday 17 December 2013
Carols at Reigate Beaumont and Broome Park tbc

Saturday 15 February 2014
Valentine's Dinner
 Venue tbc

Saturday 5 April 2014
 St Martin's Church
Bach Magnificat in D
Mozart Eine Kleine
Nachtmusik, Mozart Solemn
Vespers K339

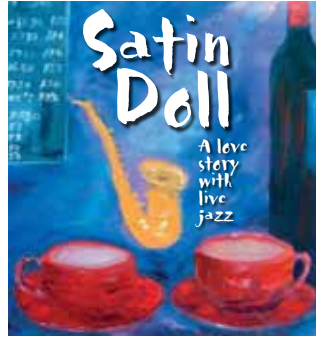
13 - 19 April 2014
Holy Week Services

Saturday 17 May 2014
Rehearsal Day

Saturday 7 June 2014
 Dorking Halls
Sacred and Profane
Malcolm Archer Commission

Choir Jolly and Teas on the Green dates tbc

The joys of directing a play by a living author



I consider myself hugely fortunate to have met Tony Earnshaw, not only because he's a lovely chap with a lovely wife and a lovely voice, but because he writes the most excellent plays.

I cannot say too strongly how good it feels to direct a play when you can actually talk to the person who wrote it, understand where he was coming from and do your best to be true to what he intended. It also feels both scary and exciting to be the first to stage the play. Tony strikes the perfect balance between help and interference – he just seems to know instinctively when to say something and

what to say and is happy to discuss changes to the script to suit our needs.

We have had so much fun this year putting *Satin Doll* together initially for Leatherhead Drama Festival and subsequently the charity performance at St Paul's Church which led to requests for further charity performances. We're also taking the play to Woking Drama Festival in October.

We are hugely grateful to everyone who supported us at the drama festival, but even more so at the charity staging which raised over £1,000.

This was the third of Tony's plays that I've had the honour to be the first to direct. I've loved all of them and hope he will continue to trust me with his superb writing in the future. His plays also offer actors something they can really get their teeth into and the cast of *Satin Doll* have already asked me what Tony's writing for next year's festival!

Joy Ridley



Lunchtime recitals at St Martin's

Every Thursday at 1.00 pm there is a live classical concert in St Martin's Church in Dorking, hosted by their organist and choirmaster, Martin Ellis. The concerts last for about 45 minutes and are free but donations to *The William Cole Church Music Trust* are welcomed. Lunches are available in the Christian Centre from 12.15 pm.

Mick and I frequently go to these recitals which are always worth attending. The music is of a universally high standard and could be a singer or an instrumentalist. It is frequently a piano or organ recital. I recently went to a wonderful concert, given by soprano, Debra Morley, and her accompanist and husband, Graeme Lodge. She sang a variety of pieces including works by Mozart, Rossini and Bizet.

There is a list of 2013/14 recitals published on the St Martin's Church website www.stmartinsdorking.org Lunchtime on a Thursday hearing 45 minutes of beautiful music will give you a period of calm in a busy world... but you might like to take a cushion!

Jackie Rance

Over to you....

This is *your* Newsletter and we want to fill it with your contributions. They don't have to be connected with Brockham or even with music – just whatever grabs your imagination. The sort of things we're thinking of are:

- unusual experiences – it was great to hear Ed's Olympics story
- unusual hobbies or skills – we know there is a lot of talent in this choir
- recommendations of CDs, shows, books, restaurants that you think others would enjoy
- plugs for events you're involved in, especially charity events
- life with Brockham Choral – what does it mean to you?

- short stories and poetry
- jokes and cartoons
- photos – especially any appropriate for a caption competition
- tales from the tour and compromising pics! – forget 'what happens on tour stays on tour'
- punters' comments, for example, overheard at Carmina 'The tickets were only £18. That would have been £50 in London! Astounding show...'

Please send all contributions to Joy at Joy.ridley@surreycc.gov.uk or call 077 7175 3763
 Words: Joy. Colours and shapes: Soo
 The full contacts list will appear in the January newsletter following changes made at the AGM.