

Newsletter

Editor's Introduction - Fred Harrison

Welcome to this Daffodil - hoping "Spring" edition of the Newsletter covering many aspects of the Society's life since December, with items so fighting for space that a classic poem by Tony Earnshaw has had to be deferred to the next issue.

We report on the Christmas Concerts from two angles because our valued newspaper reviewer, Simon Ames, was only available to attend the afternoon performance. The account is completed with a view from the altos by our own Diana Unwin.

A View from the Front - Andy Phillips

It is often said that time flies when you're having fun! Already I appear to be half way through my third season with BCS - and it seems like only yesterday when I arrived 'summoned from my comfy bed' to start work on the Bach B minor Mass.

Yet what a long way we have travelled in that time. I'm sure it's not just my imagination, but surely the choir has changed its tune to such an extent that it is scarcely recognisable as the choir I encountered in September 2007. The faces might be the same - although, come to think of it, even they are looking happier

Certainly more and more members are joining the band wagon (choir wagon) and making huge progress to increase their individual contribution to the choir's activities. It is obvious that the choir is making a much better sound as members improve their own singing

Take in the excitement of the snowy first January rehearsal with two contributions, add the social events of Carol - Singing and Annual Dinner (don't overlook the pen & ink illustration, by our versatile Chairman, of the Caribbean Calypsoists), remember the recent valuable Workshop, and you have a "bumper" edition. And don't miss David John's foretaste of the 2011 Tour on page 4.

So, indeed, our thanks to all contributors, and of course to Messrs. Crow Watkin, Estate Agents, for their printing resources.

and some (well most, in spite of my best efforts) of the messages about the physicality of singing are getting through.

But it's not only the singing. The business of the choir is making leaps and bounds. The hard working and entirely supportive committee is not just drinking its way through copious wine bottles at meetings, but is building a secure financial platform which will ensure the long term future of the choir. Judicious planning, programming and budgeting have improved the financial position of the choir while at the same time we have increased the prestige of the choir by raising the levels of presentation and performance; a process set to continue as we forge ahead to make BCS the choir of choice for singers and audiences alike!

And all this in just the blinking of an eye

Family Christmas Concert - 5th December 2009 - A Review by Simon Ames

Brockham Choral Society hosted an entertaining family Christmas concert at St Martin's Church, with fine contributions from Alberti Brass and visiting guest organist Simon Dinsdale from the Royal Memorial Chapel at RMA Sandhurst.

A delightful feature of the programme of carols and Christmas music was performances by young children from Dorking's Powell Corderoy Primary School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and St Martin's Church of England Primary School accompanied at the piano by BCS Director of Music Andrew Phillips.

Actress Virginia McKenna contrib-



uted to the concert with a Reading entitled *The Barn* by Elizabeth Coatsworth, following it with an inspired appeal on behalf of the Teenage Cancer Trust, the charity chosen by the Society for support.

The choice of music and the performance of the choir, well complemented by smartly-dressed young children in their school uniforms singing Christmas songs with smiling enthusiasm, made this a heart-warming occasion in the true spirit of Christmas.

Bravo!

Virginia McKenna OBE with Andrew Phillips (left) and Simon Dinsdale. (Photo - Simon Ames)

And the Evening As Well - Diana Unwin



This year Brockham Choral Society celebrated Christmas twice over. In the afternoon we were joined by the choirs of three local primary schools for a family Christmas concert and in the evening by another young choir, New Voices. Both concerts were accompanied expertly by Simon Dinsdale on the organ and enlivened by the joyously festive sounds of Alberti Brass. And of course on both occasions the audience – spurred on by Andy’s energetic encouragement – contributed enthusiastically to the communal carol singing.

In both concerts the choir called upon a wide repertoire of Christmas music, from the spirited mediaeval *Gaudete!* through traditional carols and John Rutter’s *Candlelight* and *Shepherd’s Pipe Carols* to jazzy 20th Century



classics like *Jingle Bells* and *Santa Claus is coming to town*. In the evening, the atmosphere was subtly different. The choir’s range expanded with the addition of several more carols, some familiar, such as the Harold



Darke setting of *In the Bleak Midwinter*, others like Gordon Lawson’s *Love Came Down at Christmas*, less so. A highlight was the haunting Humphrey Clucas sequence, *God Incarnate* which was new to this member of the choir and almost certainly to most of the audience.

This time, in place of the three primary school choirs, we were joined by the girls of New Voices. Under the leadership of their singing teacher Tali Glynne-Jones they gave a beautiful performance of Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*, divided between each half of the concert. Fred Harrison’s recital of ‘Some musings by the landlord of the Bethlehem Arms’ brought a welcome touch of humour to the

proceedings; and this time Alberti Brass, as well as encouraging the audience to join in the communal carols with their rousing and spirited accompaniments, treated us to a spot of their own in their ‘Christmas Stocking’ which was widely appreciated by choirs and audience alike. There’s nothing like a brass ensemble to get one in the Christmas spirit, although the wine and mince pies in the interval certainly made their own contribution.

St Martin’s Church was packed for both concerts and by the end of the evening the Teenage Cancer Trust, the charity for which the takings of each performance were dedicated, was richer to the tune of £1260. This year the Christmas season in Dorking can be said to have been well and truly launched by Andrew Phillips and the Brockham Choral Society.



Carol - singing Cameos, Beaumont & Broome Park, 8th December



Mary warms up by singing “Na” and eating a mince pie at the same time!

Our pocket soprano is transported among the angels!



It’s been a tiring Autumn term for the MD

But nothing that a glass of Merlot won’t rectify!



So that’s what we came for - food and drink at the Red Lion!

Snow Reports: *In the Tundra - Tony Newall*

On the 5th January, after a difficult departure from the BCS rehearsal in freshly fallen snow, we reached the Reigate turnpike. However, on reaching the Brockham Hilton, traffic was forced to a halt.

I must have dozed off, for I found myself entering a lift at the Hilton, feeling it rising, and jerking to a halt between floors.

I picked up the emergency phone: a voice said “Hi! I’m Jenni, how can I help?”

“I’m stuck in the lift” I said.

“Well of course you are!” she replied petulantly, “It always stops if you pick up the emergency phone! Stay where you are, I’ll pass you to the Chief Engineer.”

After a pause, I found myself explaining my predicament. The CE cut me

short. “For a start” he said, “I can tell you are not breathing properly. Think “anchor”. Secondly, you are in the middle of what we call in the trade a “breakette”. Have a drink.”

After some time I heard some hysterical laughter, followed by hammering and a ragged rendition of the Anvil Chorus. The lift moved up slowly, the



doors opened a crack, a cheerful neatly bearded face with a twinkling eye appeared, and said “Are you still there?”

I awoke with a jerk to a hammering on the window, and the same genial Leeds accent saying: “It’s OK now, the road’s clear.”

A Winter Break - David John

A shortened rehearsal, with snow, thick and fast
It certainly looked as if it would last

At the first slope we came to a halt
Before, with lots of help – and Carol's salt

We progressed; slowly and with alarm
Would we get home – must keep calm

At Westcott defeated by the snow
A u-turn and back to Dorking we did go

We finally stopped, quite near the Nower

Where could we rest at this late hour?

To Jules! we said – with noses red
She's bound to have a comfy bed

What luck – we were shown the 3rd floor suite
With BA toiletries and nightwear, really neat

After a good night's rest
Tea in bed and 5 star breakfast – Dorking's best

With Steve's Arctic kit – west to Abinger we did head
First passing Wicke's to buy a sled!

(With thanks to all the staff at 'Uplands' B&B)



Choral Workshop, St. Paul's Church, 23rd January - Ed Criswick

A day of music, a delicious lunch (thanks to Estelle, Jules, Tony, and Mary), laughter, good company – and cake! Enjoyed by about 80 singers, 34 of them from choirs other than Brockham, gathered in



Dorking to sit at the feet of our maestro and gain from his years of experience in singing, teaching singers and leading choirs.

After a warm up with simple harmonisations, we tackled exotica such as the Nigerian Gathering Song and the Zulu Wedding Song (an item for our summer concert,

and perhaps a "surprise" addition for our "Weddings" choir!). But first, to master the 5/4 tempo and the different voice rhythms – easier for the basses if given spears to bang on the ground! Brahms Requiem pieces featured, of course (Basses, for "Lard's" sake *sing like tenors!*) and indeed accompanied (via Andy's laptop) by the Berlin

Phil! A Purcell round was well accomplished; mastering the tune of "Tom's Manteau" was less successful. We finished with a 'performance' of the pieces tackled during the day.

Andy's summary, by now very familiar to Brockhamites, emphasised physicality, correct breathing and support to drive the sound, freeing the larynx, and singing convincingly with good tonality.



Excellent feedback came from members of other choirs, including 3 or 4 membership enquiries, with enjoyment of the friendly atmosphere and much praise for Andy – "we learnt so much!". In short a day of happiness, profitable learning and sociability, hopefully to be repeated soon!

The Dinner, Newdigate Village Hall, 13th February - Joan Rae



It appeared as though spring had arrived for the Society's annual dinner on a February Saturday evening. Attractive floral arrangements on each table enhanced the illusion of springtime and jollity.

Estelle Earnshaw and Jules Welch, with an exceptional team of supporters, made the evening not only enjoyable, but also memorable for all of us. Our indomitable Master of Ceremonies, Fred Harrison succinctly put it when he said "It's not a "Jolly", but an occasion to meet each other and see friends". The food prepared for dinner was tasty, hot and delicious. For this our thanks go to Estelle, Val Harden, Bridget Doughty, Romey Criswick and Angela Sharwood and to all those members who helped provide the starters and the wide selection of mouth-watering puddings. Our thanks must also go to the many behind the scenes washing up and clearing away, all gratefully appreciated.



After dinner members of the Society provided entertainment. The Hill House Recorder Group of Ray White, Jenni Lee-Potter and Maureen Jones were able to display their musical versatility. Jackie Rance in the style of Victoria Wood gave us an amusing rendition of the interior of Bronte's home. Jules Welch,

Estelle and Tony Earnshaw, plus Fred (a man of many parts) presented a hilarious sketch encompassing pace, passion, humour and impact. Barbara Steadman-Allen followed this on Trombone. She succeeded in getting us in the mood with a theme on the Hallelujah Chorus, which was then rounded off with a jazzy little number called Little Darling.



Tony Earnshaw then recited two short poems about food and romance. What could be more appropriate on the eve of St. Valentine? Then Jenni Lee-Potter accompanied by Maureen Jones on piano sang a song by Pergolesi, The Gentle Shepherd. Tony Earnshaw (another man of many parts) returned again to the floor and amused us with a recitation by Marriott Edgar – The Magna Carta. The final flourish of the evening came from a new group called the Caribbean Calypso Quartet singing a cautionary tale of scandal in the family, leaving the audience eager for more. Harmony was provided by none other than Mary and Reuben Suckling, Romey and Ed Criswick.

Our hardworking Chairperson Jenni Lee-Potter then eloquently thanked all those who had contributed to the evening's outstanding success.

We pay tribute to Joan Benns, a founder member of the Society and active supporter into her old age who died peacefully on 3rd March; and to Rosemary Revel, who joined BCS as an alto in 2008, sadly killed in a car accident earlier this year.



Brockham Choral Society



<http://surreycommunity.info/brockhamchoral/>

BROCKHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Editor:
Fred Harrison
Phone: 01737 242726
Email: freddypops@talktalk.net

Dates for your Diary

Easter Concert

Saturday 27 March 2010
7.30pm, St Martins Church,
Dorking.
Brahms: German Requiem,
& Symphony No.4 in E minor

Rehearsals Start

Tuesday 6 April 2010 8pm

Summer Concert

Saturday 5 June 2010, 7.30pm
St Paul's Church,
St Paul's Road West, Dorking
"Around the World in 80
Minutes" (includes world pre-
miere of a new work commis-
sioned by BCS, "Travels with
my Pigeon" by Guy Turner)

Note: Concert Workshop,
Saturday 15 May, 10am -
4pm, St Paul's Church.

Teas on the Green,

Sunday 8 August 2010
Brockham Church Hall

The "Jolly"

Saturday 24 July 2010
Hillhouse Farm
Misbrooks Green

AGM

Tuesday 7 Sept. 2010 8pm
Powell Corderoy School

Rehearsals Start

Tuesday 14 Sept. 2010 8pm
Powell Corderoy School

Autumn Concert

Sat. 20 Nov. 2010 7.30pm
St Martin's Church, Dorking
"The Messiah", by Candlelight

Family Christmas Concerts

Saturday 11 December 2010
St Martin's Church, Dorking
Children's Concert 3pm
Evening Concert 7.30pm

MUSICAL DIRECTOR Andy Phillips office@chameleon-arts.co.uk 01252 873313

CHOIR COMMITTEE

Chairman	Jenni Lee-Potter	jennileepotter@tiscali.co.uk	0208 393 9276
Secretary & Music Committee Liaison	Jenny Bartholomew	J.Bartholomew@downslaw.co.uk	01306 882927
Treasurer	Ed Criswick	ed_criswick@tiscali.co.uk	01372 739858
Librarian	Anne Tennent	anne@mollie.demon.co.uk	01372 274803
Concert Publicity	Reuben Suckling	reubendunleyhill@btconnect.com	01483 283957
Promotion/	Nick Tanton	nick.tanton@btinternet.com	01306 885939
Development/	Nick Hands-Clark	nick.hands-clarke@friendsprovident.co.uk	01306 887870
Marketing	(NFMS Rep.)		
Concert Manager & Ticket Sales	Maria Chadwick	mariachad1953@aol.com	01306 886711
Fundraising/	Estelle & Tony	estelle.earnshaw@dsl.pipex.com	01306 880053
Social/	Earnshaw		
100 Club	Jules Welch		
General	Angela Haeems	rahaeems@aol.com	01737 249975
Friends Secretary	Moira Sinden	raingod@tiscali.co.uk	0208 7700764
(Membership Secretary)	Romey Criswick	romeycriswick@tiscali.co.uk	01372 739858

Part Representatives

Please inform your Representative if you cannot attend a Rehearsal.	Sopranos	Janet Budd	01737 843077
	Altos	Moira Sinden	0208 770 0764
	Tenors	David John	01306 730376
	Basses	Ray White	01306 888959

The Tour 2011 Update - David John.

Thanks to all those who expressed an interest in the tour. There is some way to go before we have a full itinerary but the following sets out the present position.

We are fortunate in having the help of a friend of Andy's based in Yorkshire to explore opportunities before we agree an outline. This leaves us with the more straightforward tasks of arranging transport and accommodation.

We have some 50 choir members who expressed an interest. The duration will be 5 days / 4 nights around the last week in July - first in August.

We hope to include a lunch-time concert or two at cathedrals and a sung service together with an evening concert.

To date there has been a good response to enquiries from, Ripon Cathedral, Selby Abbey and the Heavy Brigade Band of the Yorkshire Regiment. (Selby Abbey is of particular interest as the place where one of the finest current MD's in the South East - of Dorking - was christened)

I hope this whets the appetite !

The tour is open to all members of the choir and if you are interested and haven't yet added your name please let me know.

I'll post a more detailed itinerary with a budget estimate in the summer term.

Ed the Treasurer reports:

- The Christmas Concerts, 5th December, made a surplus of £561. Net ticket sales were £2161, Programme sales £160, Programme advertising £656, and refreshments £152. In addition the "bucket" collection for The Teenage Cancer Trust was £553 in the afternoon and £707 in the evening, totalling £1260.
- The Annual Dinner, 13th February, made a surplus of £282. Additionally, Mary's raffle yielded £128, giving a total of £410. (Thanks to Mary also for her November raffle, which raised £97.)
- (Note also that the "Professional" BCS choir which sang at the commemorative Welsh service at Stoke Poges on 28th February earned a fee of £1000!)
- Ed was so impressed with the lighting for a **Christmas Concert** that he and Romey went to in December that the Committee has agreed we should purchase a new lighting system for our concerts. This is being used for the first time at the Brahms concert. Using 8 theatre-style lights on 4 stands, this will provide lighting for both choir and orchestra, ensuring that we can read our music - always useful - and that the choir is brightly lit for the audience. These lights provide the option for future upgrades. For example we could use dimmers and coloured gels.