



Chairman's Message ...

Dear friends,

Welcome back to the second part of the season. I hope that you have all had a chance to relax and enjoy the break.

This year we performed in two summer concerts, which I feel is always a bonus, as we work very hard during our spring rehearsals.

The concert in Wotton-under-Edge went very well despite the difficult seating arrangements. We are certainly looking to alter things for next year if we perform there in the summer.

We were made to feel very welcome at Leonard Stanley and it was good to have the raised seating. The concert seemed to be more relaxed than the one in Wotton even though Dick Deadeye had a few problems in the afternoon!

Those of us who went to the Rose and Crown for a meal between concert and rehearsal

also felt very relaxed by the evening!

Our thanks once again must go to Christopher Boodle whose sensitive accompaniment guides us through our concerts. We are extremely lucky to be able to call upon someone so skilful.

Looking forward to our winter concert, we will be welcoming Stephen Davis as the tenor soloist and we will be joined by the Stroud High School for Girls Choir directed by Delyth Mayhew. If anyone can suggest a good boy treble we are looking for three 'pickled boys' who sing in St. Nicholas.

As I write this welcome I am arranging to meet with Michael so that we may view a new venue for the 2002/3 season. It is with great sadness that we move from Stinchcombe Village Hall after an association going back over 20 years. However, financially it is not possible to remain in Stinchcombe and several other venues are being investigated. If you have any ideas for a rehearsal venue please

let one of the committee know at the first rehearsal in September.

On a lighter note, our 'Come and Sing' Brahms Requiem is on September 21st in Dursley Parish Church and I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to sing. This will be a major fund raising effort this season. Together with sales of coffee and the bring and buy stall, it will make up a substantial part of our income.

There is still time for you to recruit new members, or remind people who have not re-joined this season about our November concert.

I hope that you are all in good voice as we begin the second half of our season and I look forward to seeing you in September.

Finally - one more of my endless(!) music quotations taken from a child's music exam paper -

Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music!

Editorial ...

Regrettably, Michael was unable to make a contribution to the Newsletter this time due to pressure from other directions. I am sure he will make up for it when we restart in September.

Diary Dates and Other Matters ...

New Members

Please try and encourage potential new members to come along to rehearsals at the start of the season, in particular, and make sure you introduce them to the the Chairman, Anne Shipton.

Sales Stall: The stall will again be in operation throughout this second part of the season. It makes an important contribution to the funds, so bring along books, plants and other produce, records, tapes and anything else that is saleable, and in any case visit the stall and buy.

Saturday 9th November - help will be needed to erect staging and to dismantle it after the concert, so please contact the Concert Manager (John Ewer) with offers of assistance - he needs your help as he can't do it all on his own.

Subscriptions: The rate was £31 if you paid before 28th May. It is now £32 (see card). The Treasurer, Kate Reeves (alto) will be pleased to assist.

Thursday 14th November - Annual General Meeting in the Parish Centre, Dursley at 7.30pm.

*Critique of the
Jubilee Concert in Wotton Parish Church on the 29th June*

The Tyndale Choral Society under their conductor Michael Power gave a most enjoyable and varied summer concert in St. Mary's Church, Wotton-under-Edge last Saturday. First they took us to sea in Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*, then we enjoyed views of the British countryside in *The Sprig of Thyme* by John Rutter, and finished out at sea again on *HMS Pinafore*. Or did we? As one of the main characters, the ruler of the Queen's Navy Sir Joseph Porter KCB, sings, the nearest he ever got to a ship was a partner-ship in a law firm.

This concert performance of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan opera was a suitably light-hearted close to the evening. Choir-members Lynette Magnone and Andrew Young were languishing lovers, while Geoffrey Whiley as Sir Joseph Porter gave a most amusing and spirited performance of the famous comic song mentioned above. Another highlight was the duet between Captain Corcoran and Dick Deadeye, played by Richard Bacon and Gordon Jones. This featured some nifty footwork, both literally and vocally. A deceptive feature of G & S is that the (mock?) serious songs can be more difficult to bring off than the comic ones. The restricted space in St. Mary's Church was a disadvantage dramatically, but the choir made up for this with some

confident, bright and solid singing in the choral numbers. The men of the choir had launched the performance off with a rousing opening number, and the women were secure in intonation and attack. The work was sensibly condensed to concert length by the use of narration, which Frankie Telford read clearly and expressively.

Earlier, Michael Power directed a sensitive performance of *The Sprig of Thyme*. This was a selection of eleven English, Scottish and Irish folk songs which John Rutter has arranged with charm and his usual skill. There were lots of long, beautiful melodies, which the sopranos sang with a good sense of line, phrasing, and the diction, as with the rest of the choir, was excellent. A difficulty with this work is that there is an awful lot of gazing over country gates at the misty English countryside. The tenors' and basses' vigorous, humorous and (dare one say it in the sacred surroundings) slightly boozy performance of *The Miller of Dee* came as a welcome contrast. And this was before the half-time glass of wine! At one point there was a misunderstanding at a soprano entry, followed by wry looks on the ladies' faces as they sat down, and perhaps the performance stopped just short of the raptness Rutter intended. Nevertheless this

was a most enjoyable piece of choral singing. The songs explore a wide range of vocal textures and combinations of voices, and the Tyndale Choral Society negotiated them successfully.

The concert had started with Charles Villiers Stanford's five Songs of the Fleet, for baritone solo and choir. The choir were at their best in the three vigorous numbers, lively, dramatic and spirited and with well-rounded, secure top notes. More attention needed to be paid in the two slow numbers to chordal intonation, ensemble and general sense of where the music was going. The men did particularly well in a tricky passage in the fourth song. The piano accompanist, Christopher Boodle, who played superbly all evening, really came into his own in this work, thanks to Stanford's imaginative piano-writing. This really sets the atmosphere in these five songs, and you could taste the salt air in the first song, experience the force of the storm in the second, and feel the rippling waves in the third. Richard Bacon added an expressive performance of the solo line.

All of which leads us to look forward to the Tyndale Choral Society's next concert on Saturday 9th November, in Dursley parish church, which features Handel, Finzi and Britten.

Dursley Parish Church Saturday Recitals

September 27th

Gloucester Police Male Voice
Choir in aid of the Children's
Society

October 19th

The Cappella Singers concert of
Purcell and his contemporaries.

November 9th

Concert by the Tyndale Choral
Society

December 1st

Dursley Parish Church Choir:
Advent carols by Candlelight
(6.30p.m.)

December 22nd

Dursley Parish Church Choir:
Christmas carols by candlelight
(6.30p.m.)

Soloist: Stephen Davis

After an initial course of study with Mary Parsons, Stephen studied with Brian Raynor-Cook at the Birmingham Conservatoire, where he was a finalist in the prestigious Canaldir Choir Competition, and winner of the English Song Competition. After graduating with distinction, he studied with Jessica Cash, Pamela Cook and Ian Partridge.

Stephen is a soloist with many of the leading choirs in the Midlands, most notably Ex Cathedra, the regions foremost chamber choir, and has also sung with the Britten Singers, Northern Voices, London Voices, The Academy of Ancient Music and The Schütz Choir. He broadcasts regularly on Radio 4 with BBC Manchester's Daily Service Singers.

He is an accomplished singer of Bach and has performed as Evangelist in both the St. John and St. Matthew Passions on numerous occasions to considerable critical acclaim. He was tenor soloist in

the first fully staged performance of the St. John Passion at The University of Warwick.

In recent months Stephen has performed in a wide range of major works including Britten's *Winter Words* and *Serenade*.

As well as this, Stephen also works as a choral conductor and a vocal coach to schools and choral societies.

AUTUMN CONCERT

Saturday 9th November at 7.30pm
in St James' Parish Church, Dursley
with the Tyndale Chamber Orchestra

Finzi's *Dies Natalis*

Handel's

Corontion Anthems

Britten's St. Nicolas

Soloist:

Stephen Davis - tenor

Concert rehearsals will be on the two Mondays before the concert, on the 28th October and 4th November in Dursley Parish Church at 7.30pm. The rehearsals on the **afternoon** of the concert will be at 2.30pm.

Dress:

Ladies: Long black skirt and long-sleeved white blouse.

Men: DJ or dark suit, white shirt and black bow tie.

Something of a change from singing!

We all like to get away in the Summer and try to do something a bit different. This can vary from sunning on the beach, either here or abroad, to more energetic pastimes such as walking, cycling or, in the case of someone I know, to skydiving off cliffs and other high, I should say, extremely high places such as Angel Falls in South America. Not for me I hasten to add!!

In June Val and I went to see my niece in Belgium near to the German border. Elaine and her family have been over there for about seven years. Whilst we were in Belgium, we thought we would visit Bruges, Gent and Brussels and what is more, do it the easy way by train. A revelation - the trains were on time and were clean and cheap! We stayed close to the town centres within very easy walking distance of all the interesting places. The cities are all very attractive, with interesting architecture and pleasant people, but each has its own individual character. Because of its height, the Bell Tower in Bruges is visible all over the city. It is also quite a climb to the top although it does give tremendous views of the city and surroundings. However standing next to the bells and carillon when they are about to strike is best avoided as the noise is deafening!

I particularly like stained-glass windows and those in Brussels Cathedral are especially fine. Those in the north and

south aisles were made around 1860, each depicting an episode from the historical legend of the 'miraculous Sacrament'. Another quite small window situated behind the high altar is readily visible right from the back of the church.

One of the oldest windows is the great west window dating from 1528 which is extraordinarily complex. It is composed of three differently coloured layers; green in the lower area where the bodies of the risen dead intermingle in a huge throng. In the central blue area, St Michael the archangel with scales at his feet weighs up the respective merits of the dead to separate them into chosen and the damned, and Christ is enthroned with the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist in the upper yellow area. A remarkable piece of work for the time. The five windows in the upper part of the apse were constructed between 1510 and 1530 by the master glass-worker Nicolas Rombouts who died the following year. There are many others from different periods, too numerous to mention.

The other striking feature is the new organ suspended in a "bird's nest" position above the arches on the north side of the nave. This is designed to allow the sound to carry effectively around this old gothic cathedral. The organ consists of one main case flanked by two pedal cases. It was necessary to

build the organ on three levels and cover three arches. It is not an unusual location as organs are located similarly in other gothic cathedrals in Chartres, Cologne and Strasbourg. The organ was installed in June 2000. It was designed and built by Gerhard Grenzing based in Barcelona in collaboration with the English architect, Simon Platt. It has 4300 pipes, 63 stops, 4 keyboards and a pedal board. It also makes a most glorious sound and, no doubt, the cost was exorbitant. I bought a CD there of the organ played by cathedral organist, Jozef Sluys. The opening piece is the very well known Toccata and Fugue in D minor! It shows off the organ to great effect.

Incidentally, you may think the pulpits in some of the churches in this country are large, the one in Brussels Cathedral is enormous and the carving is extremely ornate - too ornate for my taste.

As well as the Cathedral we also went into some other churches. One which had some fine modern windows was St Mary Magdalene which was restored in 1956/7.

Tucked away in one corner of the rather dark church of St Nicholas at the Bourse was an amusing tableau depicting 'old-time' Brussels. At its centre is the crib scene representing Christ's birth at Brussels placed in the old 'Butter Market' surrounded by the Cathedral with a Procession leaving it, the Grand Place, St Nicholas Church and many other notable

places. In addition, various figures and personages are portrayed including 'Pie Carriers', the 'Blind Leading the Blind', Pilgrims, the 'Hurdy Gurdy Player', 'Breughel the Elder', The 'Magi', 'chimney sweep' etc. Above the crowd and movement in the market, 'Tyl Eulenspiegel' dances balanced on his slack wire smiling on all.

I took quite a lot of photographs and I will leave a folder at the back of the hall to give some idea of what we saw. Unfortunately they would not photocopy at all well.

Dick Skinner

CONTRIBUTIONS!

We would like to receive contributions from you! Please contact **Dick Skinner (bass)** if you have something to offer or would like to discuss any ideas you may have. It can be on more-or-less any topic so long as it would be of interest to other members. The next edition will come out in March 2003 - contributions should reach me by early February (tel:01453 - 860493).

NOTICE BOARD

Amberley Chamber Choir

Conductor Harry Lyall

Concert of Mostly Early Sacred Music

Saturday 21st September, 2002

at 7.30pm

in

St Martin's Church
North Nibley

Oriana Singers

Conductor David Moss

Christmas Concert

Regina Coeli - Mozart
and other Christmas Music

Saturday 14th December 2002

at 7.30pm

in

St Martin's Church
North Nibley