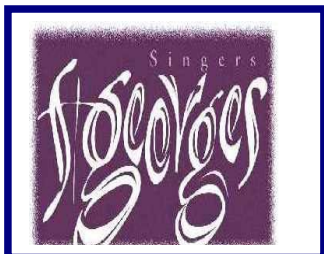


HEMMIOLA



A very big welcome to all our new members!

I can't believe how much this choir packs in! Not only do we have a strenuous and exciting musical programme, we also are a veritable entertainments hothouse as well. Apart from our now well established walking group (well pub walking group!) we now have a folk singing group and an embryonic recorder consort!

Put together with our annual tour and our exciting 50-year anniversary coming up I'm feeling quite dizzy- or was I always??

ED

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL



Collective Nouns (Guess Who?)

A clutter of barstools
 A wriggle of babies
 A worry of mothers
 An ambiguity of roadsigns
 A flirt of young women
 A dischord of musicians
 A bodge of builders
 A brace of dentists
A bellyful of chilli pies!!
 An envy of sopranos
 A superiority of altos
 An insufficiency of pints
 A leak of plumbers
 A yokel of basses
 A volume of tenors
 A ubiquity of traffic cones
 A gridlock of cars
 A frustration of coathangers
 A wheeze of asthmatics
 A comfort of chocaholics
 A handshake of freemasons
 An ego of conductors
 A crutch of invalids
 An ouch of razors
 A meldrew of cynics
 A subjectivity of perspectives
 A surrealism of existentialists

Quizzical?

The 'not yet so famous John Williams' has offered to organise a succession of quiz evenings to assist with fund raising for our next tour to Budapest in May 2006. We are also looking for a small amount of sponsorship from local companies if anyone has any offers or suggestions.



Teams pay £10 to enter and we are suggesting Friday nights in Jan/Feb obviously not to clash with the new singing group George Poynton Singers.

In his murky past John has quiz mastered all over Kent so it promises to be a very entertaining evening.

Elvira Williams (the editor) has all the details. Dates are yet to be fixed but would all interested individuals or teams please let her know.

CHOIR WEBSITE www.st-georges-singers.org.uk
editor Richard Taylor (Bass), email - lyme@ntlworld.com

As this is the beginning of our Golden Jubilee season Margaret Adshead has kindly furnished us with the minutes of the inaugural meeting held in October 1956.

Margaret and Eric were not present on that occasion but they saw the press release which appeared in the Stockport Advertiser two days later (October 18) which encouraged them to attend the rehearsal on the following Tuesday!

“NEW CHOIR FORMED

It was decided at a meeting at St George’s Hall, Poynton, on Tuesday to form a choir to called St George’s Singers

The vicar of Poynton, the Rev R A Chapman presided. Mr G C Versey was appointed choirmaster and Mr A S Daniels of 239 Coppice Road, secretary.

Mr Daniels told the “Advertiser”: “We are anxious to recruit singers, both men and women, and are hoping to get enough singers to present the Christmas music from ‘The Messiah’ on Sunday December 30th in church.”

The first rehearsal will be next Tuesday, at St George’s Hall.”

October 16 1956

First Meeting St George’s Singers

Under the chairmanship of the Vicar Rev E A Chapman a meeting was held in St George’s Hall to discuss the formation of a mixed choir, membership of which would be open to the village generally and to the surrounding neighbourhood. Nineteen enthusiasts unanimously agreed to the formation of this choir which would be know as the “St George’s Singers”. Mr G C Versey was elected conductor and he gave us his ideas on what would be expected of the choir. He required at least 40 voices and asked those present to canvas for members. Rehearsals were to commence in one week.

On the proposition of Mrs Hawkins and seconded by the Vicar, it was decided that Mr A S Daniels be appointed Secretary and that the position of Treasurer be filled by Mrs A S Daniels.

We also decided to commence rehearsing the Christmas music from Handel’s ‘Messiah’ and that we give this in church on Sunday evening December 30th at 8pm. Mrs Cooke suggested that for the time being we provided our own music. This was agreed upon.

Mrs Hawkins proposed, and Mrs Daniels seconded, that there be a 5 shilling membership fee to be renewed annually and after some discussion this was agreed upon.

The Secretary was instructed to contact the ‘Macclesfield Times’ and the ‘Stockport Advertiser’ with a view to having advertisements inserted appealing for members.

A most enthusiastic meeting was bought to a close at 9.55pm.

October 23 1956

A good rehearsal, there being 35 present comprising 17 sopranos, 7 contraltos, 3 tenors, 8 bases.

On the suggest of the Secretary it was decided to amend the ruling of the 5 shilling annual membership fee and instead have a joining fee of 2/6d.

CONCERTO FOR MOTHER TONGUE

The Proms invariably concludes with Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* march, accompanied by a lusty rendition of *Land of Hope and Glory*. There seems to be something distinctly English about that tune. Why? Well, it's because English music echoes English speech.

A research group at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego has compared the rhythms and pitch variations of English and French music and speech, focusing on classical music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They selected 318 musical themes by 16 composers, with Elgar, Holst, Bax and Vaughan Williams batting for England, and Debussy, Ravel and Faure lining up on the bouldrome.

The researchers began by analysing rhythm. The rhythms of everyday speech are measured by the "normalised pairwise variability index (nPVI)", which measures the variation in length between successive vowels in a spoken phrase. The average nPVI of spoken British English is significantly higher than that of French. That means that adjacent vowels in English tend to have different durations – long, then short for example – whereas in French the durations are similar.

Et voila! When they examined the patterning of note duration in the music samples, they found that the average nPVI of English music was also much higher than that of the French selection. Elgar is the most 'English' of all the composers studied, but surprisingly Holst has an nPVI score typical of French composers. In fact, he's more French than Ravel or Debussy. Zut alors!

Turning to pitch, researchers found that although the average change in pitch between two syllables is the same in each language, there is more variation in English. And when they analysed their music selection, they found precisely the same distinction: the variation from the average interval tended to be greater for English composers. Again, the ranges spanned by individual composers overlapped considerably, whilst Saint-Saens not only has two names, but is in two minds – rhythmically French but melodically English.

The researchers believe that music and speech share these acoustic similarities because speech shapes music. Their theory is that composers absorb the speech patterns they hear from childhood, and unconsciously build them into their music. History and nationality also play a part. The German language has a high nPVI, but German music of the baroque and classical eras has a relatively low nPVI – probably because it was strongly influenced by low-nPVI Italian music. Starting in the 17th century, however, the nPVI value of German and Austrian musical rhythms increased steadily as the countries found their own musical voice.

Abridged from *New Scientist* magazine, July 2005

Susan Hodgson

A St Nicolas Miracle

The original concept was fairly simple. "Let's invite St George's Players to come on tour with us. Suggest that they perform some instrumental pieces in the concerts, and accompany our St Nicolas." Once it became clear, belatedly, that they were not as enthusiastic as we were at the prospect of paying money to perform with us, things became more fraught. How exactly does one raise an orchestra on the other side of the country, on a Bank Holiday weekend, and without making the cost of the tour to our members prohibitive? Should we abandon the dream of presenting St Nicolas in the church in which it was first performed and recorded, beside the graves of Britten and Pears, and in a town still full of Britten associations?

At dinner during a Postgraduate Dental Deans conference I sat next to my colleague from East Anglia. Janet and I had been students together so she asked me if I were still singing. I waxed lyrical about the most enterprising choir in the North

West, and explained the problem of our latest enterprise. She told me of her next door neighbour, aptly named Cecilia, who was involved in the lively Suffolk music scene. When I contacted her, Cecilia was keen to help and gave me the telephone number of a local violinist and fixer, Ruth Wright, who declined to fix an orchestra (wisely) but did provide a hand written list of 35 amateur players.

As I worked my way down the list I became more depressed. All but two of the players declined – away on holiday, already booked, or derisory fees. Ruth provided more names, with the same poor strike rate, although many of those I contacted gave me further names.

I had booked Aldeburgh Church through the Churchwarden, Bill Roberts, who had sung many times with Britten (tenor sectionals taken by Pears!) and had participated in the original recording 50 years previously. I had to tell him that it seemed doubtful that we would be able to raise an orchestra, and to perform it without was

unthinkable. He was bitterly disappointed, said that all the local people he had told about our plan would also be bitterly disappointed, and urged me on to greater efforts.

Eventually, if you ask enough people, you have to strike lucky some time, and the strings began to look viable. The percussion problem remained – how to find, hire and transport (cheaply) nine percussion instruments, and three percussionists to bang them. I contacted the Suffolk LEA Music department and mentioned our website if they wanted to know more about the choir making this ambitious request. After what seemed to me to be ages, I received an excited email from another Sue Taylor, Senior County Music Tutor. Sue was born and bred in Marple and was keen to help a local choir. My email had arrived just before a County percussion workshop, and had raised a lot of interest. Yes, she could provide the instruments and young players whom she would train. PS. Could our Librarian possibly be her music

teacher at Marple Ridge Grammar School, who had first enthused her with a love of music? Quick phone call to Gwyneth. Yes, she had started her career at Marple Ridge, and remembered Sue as one of a group of talented pupils – she even had a photo of the group.

I started to get excited about St Nicolas when we visited Aldeburgh. Paying homage at the graves of Britten and Pears, seeing the Piper memorial window, walking along the sea front past Crag House where it was written, all brought home the associations, but also the audacity of our project. Chatting to Bill Roberts about Britten and Pears heightened the thrill of treading in their footsteps. Stephen was wondering where to put the semi-chorus. “Whenever we did it with Ben he put them up in the West gallery.” Said Bill! An easy decision. In a letter to Eric Crozier, the librettist, Britten says that the semi-chorus, which was to be a girls choir (the main chorus being boys from Lancing School who commissioned it, and other public schools) “will

have to be in the gallery, which is the best place in church for females.”!

So we came to the afternoon rehearsal, when Stephen stood up in front of totally unknown players and young Nicolas, not to mention the pickled boys. Hopefully he was re-assured by a well-known and superb St Nicolas – Mike Bennett who had sung the work as a treble in Westminster Abbey Choir at Britten’s memorial service - , our virtuoso accompanist, Jeff Makinson, a skilful semi-chorus, and us in nervous anticipation. Did two graves outside in the churchyard tremble with apprehension? A brief but inspiring introduction from Stephen and we’re off, and the miracle of St Nicolas happens again, and was repeated even more excitingly that evening to a large, knowledgeable and appreciative audience. Who can forget Mike’s declamatory introduction, or the “heartsick” aria when St Nicolas dedicates himself to God, the beautiful sounds of the semi-chorus floating down, Jeff’s magnificent playing, particularly the spine tingling

intro to “God moves in a mysterious way”, and the lusty singing of the hymns, sung in this church at Britten’s funeral. Stephen, hardly ever looking at his score, but at his performers, surely brought the best out of all of us. There was much justifiable mutual congratulations at the party afterwards, but where were Stephen and Mike? They were in the vestry not being able to get away from Rosamund Strode, Britten’s music secretary and personal assistant for many years. She was congratulating them on a wonderful performance “that Ben would have loved.” A further surprise was the presence of Arthur and Mary Daniels, founding Secretary and Treasurer of St George’s Singers fifty years ago. He had driven over from Norwich, in his nineties!

All these coincidences and lucky breaks helped to provide an experience for which “memorable” is hopelessly inadequate. Would I ever do it again? Certainly not! Was it all worth it? Certainly.

Geoff Taylor

George Poynton Choir

All singers welcome

At last it has happened! The long awaited and much talked of folk singing group is up and running! Sixteen members of St. George's Singers, seven altos, six sopranos and three basses, met at Brookside school in High Lane on Friday 7th October. We sat around the piano and sang folk songs, including 'Ilkley Moor', 'The Oak and the Ash', 'Greensleeves' and wonderful seven part arrangement of 'Summer is a-coming in', as well as several others. The emphasis was on the fun of singing together rather than polished performance and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. At 9.30 we adjourned to the pub around the corner.

This was the inaugural meeting of the 'George Poynton' choir. We agreed that the choir will meet once a month and that the aims are to build up a repertoire of folk songs and popular songs that can be sung informally and 'by heart' on any occasion, to sing for pleasure, and to provide a forum for anyone who has a connection of any kind with St. George's Singers, including former members, partners, friends, etc. to sing. At present we are using music provided by members of the group but suggestions have been made about various folk song collections and we may choose one to buy individually to give us a basic core of songs. The good news is that there is no audition and no membership fee! Simply turn up and sing.

It was agreed that, for the time being, the choir would meet about once a month on a Friday evening at Brookside School. A second meeting was held on Friday 4th November. Future meetings will be announced in the choir notices.

Anne Francis



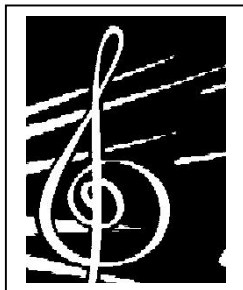
The newly formed singing group, which meets once a month at the moment on a Friday.

Cheshire artists studios open days at xmas

<http://www.artistsatwork.org.uk/featured.php>

Thought this might be of interest to all you art lovers out there, they are having studio open days 3/4 December.

Lynn



Couldn't resist this email from a certain choir member!



Today is International Very Good Looking, Damn Smart Woman's Day, so please send this message to someone you think fits this description.

Please do not send it back to me as I have already received it from a Very Good Looking, Damn Smart Woman!

And remember this motto to live by:

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!"

Have an wonderful day!

" Many of you will know that signing a Gift Aid form enables the choir to get back from the Inland Revenue more than the value of your subscriptions, payments to the 100 Club and indeed any donations you make to the choir- for example, talent sale monies donated to the choir fall under the Gift Aid umbrella. This is good news for the choir and it really is very simple.

There are few conditions. But in summary, you must be a taxpayer, paying an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity claims on your subscription in the tax year. Put more clearly, this is 28p for every £1 you give. That means that with a subscription of £85 in the year, you must pay income tax of at least £23.8!. What else do you need to know? Well you can cancel your Gift Aid declaration at any time, by simply having a word with me. If your circumstances change, such that you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that we as choir can reclaim, you can cancel your Gift Aid declaration.

And finally, if you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment tax return. As I mentioned, the form you need to complete is very short and straightforward. You can get a form from myself at choir rehearsals. Please complete and sign it. The income we generate from our regular income tax reclaim is significant to the choir's resources, making between £1,500 to £1,900 each year. There is no disadvantage to yourself in any way. Finally, for those of you who may have been in the choir a while and been thinking about signing a Gift Aid form, please go ahead, and, if you can, tick the box which enables the choir to count all subscriptions made since 6 April 2000 as Gift Aid donations.

You know it makes sense!!.

For any further information, please have a word

David Robson
Your friendly Treasurer "

******B * I * T * S * & B * O * B * S ******

What a lovely letter received by Geoff Taylor after our concert in Aldeburgh Church from this years' tour in East Anglia.
Dear Geoff

I felt I must drop you a line to thank you and the St George's Singers for a truly great concert in our Church. I have heard many complimentary remarks about the concert and when Rosamund Strode says it is good you can rest assured it was - she is very critical about some of the concerts

I hope you had a safe journey home and can take things a little easier now the trip is over. I cannot tell you yet how much you raised for the Church as the foundation are so slow in letting you have the final ticket sales. However I am sure that our Treasurer will drop you a line when she has the final figures

Best wishes to all
Bill

Amy Wood

Singing lessons available

For help on technique, or if you need help with learning music, etc. £20 per hour.

amycwood4@hotmail.com

Tel: 07736 315708

"A Crafty Cry for Help..

Do you have any left over mosaic materials, such as small glass tiles, coloured ceramic tiles, glass pebbles, mirror tiles, mirrors, or colourful pots which you are just about to chuck out??

If so Lynn Knowling would be grateful if you would chuck them her way (not literally..), as she is getting into making Mosaics and is in need of interesting materials to help her creatively,

If you can help please email her on

lknowling@hotmail.com, or ring on 01925 450240, she will collect if required.



Mel Rimmer has a steam wallpaper stripper, which she is willing to lend

to choir members. The stripper is easy to use and makes quick work of removing old wallpaper, even vinyl, woodchip and anaglypta.

HSS charge £29 per week to hire a similar item, and Melanie hopes that anyone who borrows hers for free will feel moved to make a donation to choir funds of around £10 (reduced rates available for altos). Talk to Mel during rehearsals, call 01625 872 791, or email mel.rimmer@timelord.org.uk

By the way, does anyone else have power tools, such as pressure washers, orbital sanders, hot air paint strippers or the like, which they would be willing to lend out in return for a donation? Perhaps we could have a "tool bank" to go alongside the "talent bank". It could raise choir finds, save members money compared to hiring from places like HSS, and help make our DIY projects that little bit easier. Contact Mel.

He'd certainly make my projects easier! - ED

ऋग्वेद

The Vedas

The Vedas are the oldest texts of Hindu literature, stemming from an oral tradition believed to go back to at least 1500 BC. First written down in Vedic, an early form of Sanskrit, around 600 BC, the forms we have originate from texts written around 300 BC.

There were originally three Vedas: the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, and the Yajur Veda, which constituted "threefold knowledge" (trayi vidya), with the fourth Veda, the Atharva Veda, added at during the Vedic period.

Legend has it that the Vedas were actually composed at the beginning of Creation, but that this "Divine Revelation" was gradually polluted by Man. Some people even suggest that all human knowledge is present in the Vedas, at least in symbolic form. Regardless, the Vedas remain the most sacred of Hindu texts, and provide the foundation for Hindu religion.

It has been actually suggested that the Vedas were originally connected to the oral tradition of the Harappan civilisation of the Indus Valley, but were completed in majority by the war-like Arayan peoples who migrated from the Iranian plateau into India and conquered. (Please note that the Arayans of Iran have *nothing* to do with the notion of a Caucasian "master race".)

The theology of the Vedas was further developed in the Upanishads, which became regarded as essential summaries of all the wisdom of the Vedas themselves.

The Rig Veda

The Rig Veda (Sanskrit from ऋ "praise" + veda "knowledge") is a collection of hymns counted among the four Hindu religious scriptures known as the Vedas, and contains the oldest texts preserved in any Indo-Iranian language. It consists of 1,017 hymns (1,028 including the apocryphal valakhilya hymns 8.49-8.59) composed in Vedic Sanskrit, many of which are intended for various sacrificial rituals. These are contained in 10 books, known as Mandalas.

This long collection of short hymns is mostly devoted to the praise of the gods. However, it also contains fragmentary references to historical events, notably the struggle between the early Vedic people (known as Vedic Aryans, a subgroup of the Indo-Aryans) and their enemies, the Dasa.

The chief gods of the Rig Veda are Agni, the sacrificial fire, Indra, a heroic god that is praised for having slain his enemy Vrtra, and Soma, the sacred potion, or the plant it is made from. Other prominent gods are Mitra, Varuna and Ushas (the dawn). Also invoked are Savitar, Vishnu, Rudra, Pushan, Brihaspati, Brahmanaspati, Dyaus Pita (the sky), Prithivi (the earth), Surya (the sun), Vac (the word), Vayu (the wind), the Maruts, the Asvins, the Adityas, the Rbhus, the Vishvadevas (the all-gods) as well as various further minor gods, persons, concepts, phenomena and items.

Some of the names of gods and goddesses found in the Rig-Veda are found amongst other Indo-European peoples as well: Dyaus is cognate with Greek Zeus, Latin Jupiter, and Germanic Tyr, while Mitra is cognate with Persian Mithra and Ushas with Greek Eos, Latin Aurora and, less certainly, Varuna with Greek Uranos. Finally, Agni is cognate with Latin ignis and Russian ogon', both meaning "fire".

Vena

According to Hinduism, Vena was a great king. However, he decided to become a Jain and thus became evil and corrupt. The world became so gloomy and dark that the earth-goddess Bhumidevi decided that she would not provide crops to mankind anymore. She took form as a cow and went into hiding. Meanwhile, a group of Rishis kill Vena out of anger. They then rub the thigh of his corpse, and take out all the evil from his body. Afterwards they rubbed Vena's arm to create a purely good being. This being was Vishnu incarnate, and as soon as he was born, Vishnu's Sharanga bow fell from heaven into his hands. However, Bhumidevi still refused to give crops to Man. As soon as Prithu threatened to kill her, she gave in, but in return Prithu would be her eternal guardian. This is why Bhumidevi is also known as Prithvi

Tour to East Anglia

After a late start, the coach driver expressing astonishment at the heaviness of the M60 traffic on the Friday evening of the Spring Bank Holiday weekend as he came to collect us, we arrived at our hotel in Ipswich late, but relieved to find the hotel had kept our supper.

On Saturday morning we travelled through the Suffolk byways to Snape Maltings where Esther Platten, who works for the Britten Pears Foundation and is sister of a choir member, was waiting to give us an informative tour of the fabulous concert hall, home of the Aldeburgh festival, created by Britten and Pears. We sang *Locus Iste*, of course, conducted by Jeff Makinson, to claim it for St George's.

We had all too brief a time to explore the pretty town of Aldeburgh, and lunch, before a unique rehearsal in the church. Our Musical Director stood up in front of orchestral players he had never met, not to mention the pickled boys. With the help of St Nicolas another miracle was wrought as singers and orchestra came together in a remarkable way. The special atmosphere created by performing *St Nicolas* in the church where it was first performed and recorded, where Britten's funeral had included the two hymns from the work, and beside the Piper memorial window intensified the emotion of the occasion. In the first half Marcus sang *Let the dreadful engines* and *Evening Hymn*, Purcell, and *The trees they grow so high*, arranged by Britten. (no wonder he got a First when he sang them a few days later at his finals recital) Jeff played a Bach prelude, *Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn*, and a Britten *Prelude and Fugue on a theme of Vittoria* brilliantly. We sang *Zadok the Priest*, Handel, *O Quam Gloriosum*, Victoria, *Beatus Vir*, Monteverdi, and, of course, *Locus Iste*, Bruckner.

After the interval Stephen introduced *St Nicolas*, reminding the audience of all the happy associations between the church and the work, and encouraging them to sing the hymns lustily as a tribute to the composer. The orchestra, (you would have thought they had been playing together for years) Jeff's magical accompaniment, Mike Bennett's bravura Saint, the brave young St Nicolas, the angelic semi-chorus sound floating down from the gallery ("Where Ben always put them") the fabulous pianists, the bold young percussionists, and us, all responding to Stephen's inspirational conducting, not to mention the pickled boys, produced an experience for which the word "memorable" is far too tame. The church was packed and the audience responded enthusiastically, applauding us all the way out. Rosamund Strode, Britten's music secretary and personal assistant for many years, told Stephen and Mike that it had been terrific and that "Ben would surely have loved it." At the party afterwards we justifiably congratulated each other. We raised £350 for the church.

Next morning we drove to Southwold, stopping briefly to sing *Locus Iste* in the ornate church, and a hurried lunch, before discovering the delight of singing in glorious Blythburgh church. The tour organiser had been apprehensive about this concert. By a very unfortunate series of unlikely events Mozart's Requiem had been performed there the night before by a local choral society with orchestra. But we had Jeff, and a surprisingly large audience, drawn, according to the East Anglian Daily Times, by our reputation, and who are we to argue? The first half was similar to Aldeburgh, except that Marcus conducted us in *Locus Iste* and *O Quam Gloriosum* at the west end, Jeff played *Toccata and Fuga in F major*, Buxtehude, and *Fantasia in F minor*, Mozart on the recently rebuilt organ, and we had superb string accompaniment to *Beatus Vir*. It was warmly received.

Stephen's dramatic interpretation of the Mozart *Requiem* was fully realised. The quartet, Amy Wood, Rebecca Anderson, Mike Bennett and Marcus Farnsworth, were just that, not individual soloists striving to shine, but a beautifully blended whole. Jeff Makinson wonderfully realised a difficult reduction of the orchestral accompaniment on a difficult organ. "His accompaniment ensured one didn't regret the absence of an orchestra" (East Anglian Daily Times) The audience erupted into some of the most enthusiastic applause we have ever experienced, many of them standing. The review in the East Anglian Daily Times said "choral singing of a very high standard", and of the Mozart "Here a pure clear sound characterised the well-matched quartet of soloists, but it was the choir which made this such a memorable performance. Superbly trained by conductor Stephen Williams, the sound was a joy to hear." We raised £760 for the continuing

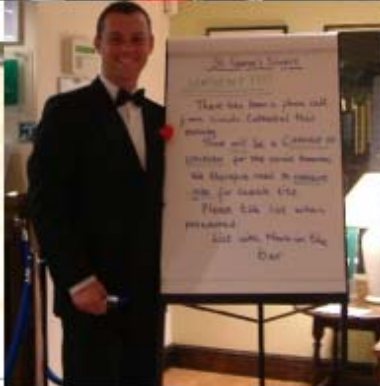
restoration of this priceless church.



On our way home, on Bank Holiday Monday, we stopped off to sing Choral Evensong at Lincoln Cathedral. Once we had got used to the distance between the two sets of choir stalls, singing the service in the huge and imposing cathedral was a tremendously moving experience. Mark O'Leary took the Precentor's role as to the manner born. Jeff excelled himself on the magnificent organ, which he had played for five years. Our canticles, Dyson in D, won praise from experienced vergers. The opening of Zadok the Priest was electric, and the clergy and congregation enjoyed having that vast ancient space filled by a large choir. We solemnly processed from the choir, not cutting any corners, which was a metaphor for the conduct of a successful and enjoyable tour **Geoff Taylor**



. Courtesy Elvira Williams Photography



Choir East Anglia Tour May 2005



Shameless Advertising and why not? Where are the rest of you with a business to promote?

The Pie Factory!

Helen (Sweeney Todd) Korndorffer

As many of you will now be aware, the great chilli pie invasion has begun. If you haven't yet had the experience, let me raise the quality of your life:

Imagine the best chilli con carne you've ever had (perhaps on nachos, topped with cheese?), then enclose it (including cheese, but not nachos) in perfect 'pork pie' pastry, heated, melting, delicious...I can hear the devoted followers slavering already.

The idea just seems to work so well that Chris and I are planning to get a mini factory going in the next month or two (depending on the planning process), so the word will be spread and YOU will be some of the first to try! How about that? 'I was in at the beginning of the pie empire'!

Future products include chilli fingers, varying chilliness (that is, spicy heat, not coolth!), and, **coming very soon** a vegetarian option!!



Additionally, we are contributing a proportion of sales income to the choir, so you benefit your tummy and the choir at the same time! (I know which bit's more satisfying...!)

So as not to disappoint people, it would be good to get specific orders in advance, if you know you're going to want some pies, so I'll get Anna to e-mail everyone the week before the pies appear so you can let me know (helen@chillipies.co.uk). If you want a regular order, that would also be acceptable – just let me know quantities.

Wake up & smell the pies!

Recorder Consort

On Sunday 9th October, a small consort of recorder playing choir members got together for an afternoon of music making. Descant, treble, tenor and bass all blended together in an ecstasy of harmony and syncopation - but they weren't in the same room as the choir members. With a range of music from Byrd and Palestrina motets and pavans to Gershwin's fascinating rhythms and summertime blues, the group filled a Sunday afternoon and increased their sight reading and rhythm skills whilst having a good time. "It's so good to play with adults rather than children", came the cry at one point, as we had just finished a chromatic and syncopated passage from a jazz great - after rehearsing it a few times!

We next plan to meet on 27th November 1:30 for 2:00pm start. If you play descant or treble recorder, and perhaps have an instrument or two lurking and collecting dust, you may want to join us. No committees, agendas, action plans, working parties or rehearsal schedules - just an informal gathering with tea and cakes thrown in. If interested contact Jo Bluck (Soprano) by sending phone message, text or email with contact details to 0161 945 0805 or 07711 328878 or sjbluck@tiscali.co.uk.

The Heart Effect: Startling News About Music And Your Health

There's fresh evidence on the power of music to affect our health. Researchers at Italy's University of Pavia recently confirmed that music changes your heart rate, breathing and blood pressure. But as they analysed their data, they found something new, something no one had expected to find.

By Art Turner, 10/18/2005

Twenty-four young, healthy test subjects lay quietly in a university lab, listening to carefully chosen music through headphones, as doctors and technicians hovered around them meticulously measuring their vital signs. The study concluded quickly and the subjects returned to their normal everyday lives. But as the researchers began sifting through the data, something new and interesting began to emerge.

We've known for some time that music is a powerful relaxation tool. Music can decrease anxiety levels, lower blood pressure and heart rate, and change stress hormone levels. It affects your respiration, reduces muscle tension, increases endorphin levels, and boosts your immune system. The effect of music is so powerful, hospitals around the world use music to reduce stress in patients waiting for surgery.

Now there's fresh evidence on the power of music to affect our health. Researchers at Italy's University of Pavia recently confirmed that music changes your heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure. But as they analyzed their data, they found something new, something no one had expected to find.

Dr. Bernardi and his colleagues were interested in expanding the use of music to reduce stress in medical patients. Here's how their experiment worked: the docs recorded the vital signs of 24 test volunteers (12 musicians and 12 non-musicians) for five minutes. Then the volunteers listened to six different styles of music in random order. Random two-minute pauses were inserted in each

FROM "The Manchester Weekly Advertiser" May 2 1857

Monday Evening Concerts

This series of concerts was brought to an end on Monday evening last when Mr Banks, the conductor, had a very crowded and respectable audience. The principals were numerous, and the chorus trebled in strength, so that as far as the orchestra was concerned, everything passed off with the most brilliant success. A new glee was produced for the first time and the character of the music will be readily inferred from the words. It is soft, sweet and melodious with the voices admirably balanced and blended. Miss Whitham had a good deal to do and did it well; and Mr Henry Phillips sang two or three songs as only he can sing them. We had not heard Miss Newbound for three or four months and were surprised and delighted at the perceptible improvements she has made both in voice and style since we last heard her. If Providence spares her life and health and she continues her career as she has begun it, the highest honours of the profession await her. In addition to a lovely voice she has an intelligent comprehension of the spirit both of the words and music; and as secondary, but by no means unimportant advantages, she has many personal recommendations and manners at once graceful and refined. "The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar" is, we know, hard to climb, but resolute perseverance will, we are

piece of music.

Here's what they found: fast musical tempos increased heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. Slow tempos reduced them. Pretty standard stuff. But then the shocker: the style of music and the volunteers' personal musical preferences made no difference at all. The only thing that mattered was the tempo.

It didn't matter if the music was classical, rap, techno, romantic or an Indian raga. Only one thing made a difference to their cardiovascular systems--whether the music was fast or slow. This means that the music you hear, whether you've chosen it or not, whether you like it or not, is going to affect your health.

There's more: during the silent pauses between musical selections, the test subjects' vital signs returned to normal, in some cases stabilizing at healthier levels than before the music. The researchers say this suggests that listening to any kind of music--fast or slow--could benefit your heart.

Finally, the study found that musicians were more sensitive to the effect than non-musicians. Musicians may have learned to breathe in time to the music, to become more alert during fast passages, and to relax when the music slows down. Whatever the reason, a good prescription for helping maintain your cardiovascular health could be to take music lessons.

Want to conduct your own experiment? Head over to <http://www.relaxationemporium.com/music.html> If you join our mailing list, you'll get immediate access to two free song downloads--one slow (60 beats per minute) and one faster (100 beats per minute). Find out how your body responds to the beat.

persuaded, enable Miss Newbound sooner or later to inscribe her name among the great ones of the profession. It is the most delightful part of the critic's labours, as well as one of his most sacred duties, to encourage the efforts of youthful genius to the extent of his means and capabilities.

This concert being the last of the series, a word of acknowledgement is due to the gentlemen. We have on two or three occasions pointed out what we considered to be eminently attractive and interesting. They were originated in, and have been continued with, an intelligent conviction of the refining tendency of good music, and a desire to bring it within the reach of all classes. We believe that no mere mercenary spirit has governed the management. They may perhaps, in some cases, have pushed prudence to an extreme, but for that they can scarcely be blamed. It is essential that these concerts be made to pay, and in all cases where public taste or patronage are concerned great caution is necessary, lest the balance "dip on the wrong side". If the public give to the next series their hearty and cordial support, we hope and believe the directors will not be behindhand in rendering these concerts the most attractive and delightful of their kind.

Extracted by Connie Jones



Forthcoming Engagements
Saturday 10th December 2005, 7.30pm
Carols and Brass by Candlelight
with VBS Poynton Brass Band

Accompanist Greg Morris
Baritone Marcus Farnsworth
Reader Joan Bakewell
St George's Church, Stockport
Ticket prices £10 (£8 concessions, £1 students)

Saturday 31st December 2005, 7.30pm
New Year's Eve at the Italian
Opera

Manchester Camerata
Conductor Douglas Boyd
Presenter Stephanie Hughes
Soprano Claire Rutter
Tenor John Hudson
The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
Ticket prices £47.50/£37.50/£27.50
Tickets available from The Bridgewater Hall
Box Office (0161 907 9000)

Saturday 14th January 2006 6.00pm
(concert)
Mozart Anniversary Singing Day
Mozart Coronation Mass K317
Mozart Solemn Vespers K339
Accompanist Jeffrey Makinson
St George's Church, Poynton
Ticket prices £15 (to sing); £5 (audience ticket)
Registration from 10.00am

Download the Singing Day brochure for full details and an application form.



Sunday 19th March 2006, 6.00pm
Bach St Matthew Passion
Manchester Camerata
Evangelist James Gilchrist
Christus Christopher Purves
Soprano Joanne Lunn
Mezzo Alexandra Gibson
Tenor Robert Murray
Bass Andrew Foster-Williams
The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester
Ticket prices £25/£20/£15/£10*
£7.50 for students and children
Group discounts for parties of 10 or more

Saturday 20th May 2006, 7.30pm
Hungarian Jubilee
With music by Kodaly and Karai, we also
mark the 50th anniversary
of the Hungarian Uprising in preparation
for our tour to Budapest
and Poynton's twin town, Erd.
Organ Jeffrey Makinson
St George's Church, Poynton
Ticket prices £6 (£1 students)

Saturday 24th June 2006, 7.30pm
Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert
With the Big Buzzard Boogie Band
A joyous celebration of freedom with the Big Buzzard Boogie Band injecting some serious soul into the proceedings. You'll believe an English choir can really swing! Big Band jazz featuring a choir is an unusual mixture, but one which can produce a truly thrilling sound. Stunning improvised solos from trumpets, trombones and saxophones, with a superb rhythm section behind fantastic jazz vocal harmonies. Dancing in the aisles encouraged.

Manchester Cathedral
Ticket prices £10 (£8 concessions, £1 students)



Figures on a beach

A spectacular new installation by Angel of the North artist Antony Gormley will be on view on Crosby beach from July 2005 to November 2006

<http://www.visitliverpool.com/displayproduct.asp?productkey=76741>

Another Place consists of 100 cast-iron, life-size figures spread out along three kilometres of the foreshore, stretching almost one kilometre out to sea. The figures - each one weighing 650 kilos - are made from casts of the artist's own body and are shown at different stages of rising out of the sand, all of them looking out to sea, staring at the horizon in silent expectation.



The work is being exhibited in the UK for the first time. It has previously been seen in Germany, Norway and Belgium. According to Antony Gormley, Another Place harnesses the ebb and flow of the tide to explore man's relationship with nature.

Visitors can see Another Place from all the normal access routes to Crosby beach (there are signs to the installation, also follows signs to the new Leisure Centre where there is parking, with a café and toilets. Go to the end of the M57/M62 - A5207- A565 to Crosby village.

WARNING - Crosby beach is a non-bathing beach with areas of soft sand and mud and a risk of changing tides. Visitors should stay within 50 metres of the promenade at all tides and **not attempt** to walk out to the furthest figures. The figures are under water at high tides, to check tide tables go to : <http://www.pol.ac.uk/appl/liverpool.html>



The figures go from just above Seaforth Freeport all the way along the beach to Hightown on the River Alt. Access from the beach road left off the A565, or thro Crosby at the Leisure Centre or further up the road, follow signs.

Pictures Taken by Lynn Knowling



Gardener's Question Time

1. What is a perennial?
2. What is self-sufficiency gardening?
3. What is a bulb?
4. What is furrow?



5. When is a hose not a hose?
6. What does the phrase "green fingers" really mean?

Answers

1. Any plant, which had it survived, would have flowered every year.
2. Growing vast supplies of vegetables you would never normally eat.
3. A perennial flower buried in autumn and never seen again.
4. Horizontal line on the forehead of a gardener (wondering where the above has disappeared to perhaps?)
5. When it's a crude, but totally safe, type of scythe towed through gardens to flatten flowerbeds and level vegetable plantings.
6. Black fingernails.

ST. GEORGE'S SINGERS GOLDEN JUBILEE SEASON, 2005/6

The 50 for 50 sponsorship scheme.

Would you like to become a sponsor of the St. Matthew Passion at the Bridgewater Hall on 17th March?

This Golden Jubilee season is the biggest year in the history of St. George's Singers, and the centerpiece of the season is the performance of the St. Matthew Passion at the Bridgewater Hall. It will be the biggest concert St. George's Singers have ever mounted, bigger even than our performance of Elijah in November 2004. It requires a double orchestra, a junior choir (and double choir), and a set of SIX internationally known soloists as well as several other soloists.

To make this concert a financial as well as musical success means that we need to raise several thousand pounds in sponsorship. The committee is confident that a sizeable proportion of this money can be raised from external sponsors, including the companies who supported us in Nov. 2004. However these sources may not be sufficient to cover all the costs.

Therefore we are instituting an 'internal sponsorship' scheme through which choir members, who wish to, can become sponsors of the concert on 17th March. The scheme is called "50 for 50", since the idea is that each sponsor from within the choir will contribute £50 (minimum) – one pound for each year of the choir's existence. Their names will be listed in the programme on the night, along with the external sponsors.

We emphasise that this is a strictly VOLUNTARY scheme. No one should feel under any pressure to contribute – you have paid you subs already! But if you would like to consider becoming a 50 for 50 sponsor, either individually or with a partner, please have a word with either David Robson or Kath Wood.

£1.88 please!

Marcus, Jeff and Stephen joining the 50/50 scheme last week set me thinking about what amazing value for money St George's represents.

We get expert choral and vocal training every week from Stephen, Marcus and Jeff, and also amazing accompaniment from Jeff - who can forget the evocative and "four fevered limbs" performance on Sunday night. Is there another amateur choir in the UK with such a team? According to my calculations, by the end of this season we will have had 45 planned rehearsals, two concerts at the Bridgewater Hall, and one each at the RNCM, Manchester Cathedral, St George's Stockport, St George's Poynton and Emmanuel Church. Add to that a **free** Mozart Singing Day for choir members, it is quite a spectacular season. There is also the opportunity to sing in Hungary and to take part in a Vocal Day with Sue Roper.

So now let's look at value for money ...I realise it might have been hinted at before, but I wanted to actually do the calculation - see it written down. Forgive the odd numerical error if made - I do parties, not accounts.

£85 for full membership divided by **45** rehearsals = **£1.88 for a two hour rehearsal** If you add to that the 7 concerts it is **£1.63!**

For an aerobics class that is meant to make me look good on the outside, I can pay up to £3.50 for one hour. I could easily spend £1.88 on a Marks and Spencer sandwich or chocolate pudding, which gives me temporary gratification on the inside. Two hours singing and making music makes me feel great on the inside - and if I do what I'm told, I have a smile on my face, good posture and my tummy pulled in!

Whether you enjoy the intensity of this Jubilee season or perhaps are finding it a wee bit demanding, no-one can deny that when it comes to value for money for your hobby, St George's Singers is amazing value.

If you would like to give to the scheme, but do not want the publicity, just let Dave Francis know. Think about it - the 50 / 50 will give enormous help and security to St George's Singers - which will give enormous benefit to you.

Jo Bluck

Not to mention the pickled boys! St Nicolas in Aldeburgh - continued



Sir Benjamin Britten

Having failed to find pickled boy suppliers in the Yellow Pages, I contacted Woodbridge School. The Head of Music replied that they might be able to help, but half term created difficulties and he would let me know. Weeks went by, and a long Easter Holiday, so when Stephen and I did our recce and met Sue Taylor to discuss percussion I had still not heard. On an impulse I told Sue of the problem. She relished the opportunity to beat the private sector. She could provide and train pickled boys despite half term. She would provide names in three days. After a couple of weeks I had not heard from her, but I did get a phone call from the Head of Singing at Woodbridge. Sorry for the delay, but these are the names of your boys, all members of the National Youth Choir, who would be note perfect, off copy, and not going away for half term. A pickled boy in the hand, so to speak, is worth any number in the bush, so I gratefully accepted, and emailed Sue to say "Don't worry. I've got them". I thought I was saving her trouble, but to call her reply disappointing was an understatement, and I began to worry again about percussion! She had been ill, hence the delay, but the boys had been selected, parents had changed holiday plans, rehearsals had begun etc etc. Although Stephen, very reasonably, agreed to consider six pickled boys, it became clear that I would have the unenviable task of declining Woodbridge.

Months earlier I had phoned the Director of Music at St Mary-le-Tower Church in Ipswich, from where the pickled boys in the original recording had come. "Look old boy, I'm in the middle of a rather enjoyable Sunday lunch. (it was 4:30 pm!) Give me your number and I'll phone you back." While I was pondering the problems of six pickled boys he did phone back! My heart missed a beat as I wondered if I could persuade Stephen that nine pickled boys would make for a really innovative performance. "I've just found this telephone number on a scrap of paper that could be months old. (It was) I've no idea who you are, nor what you want." With huge relief I was able to tell him not to bother.

When I first met Bill Roberts almost his first words were "We've got three boys in our choir who would make excellent pickled boys. Shall I ask them?" No thanks, Bill. I don't suppose finding pickled singers amongst the Freshers was a problem Marcus faced for his recent performance at Manchester University!

Geoff Taylor

And another gem from Mel!

Around AD 774 a man called Paulus Diaconus (Paul the Deacon) wrote a hymn for vespers on the feast of St John the Baptist; the hymn was called Ut queant laxis.

Its relevance comes from the early 11th Century when Guido d'Arezzo, a Tuscan Benedictine monk, used it as a mnemonic for his choir to learn pitch. Prior to this musicians had used small markings above the text called neumes to remind them whether the note went up or down, but there was no system of notation which actually allowed you to sing from sight; crucially, there was no way of communicating where the melody started.

Guido's system, known as solfeggio, was based on the first syllable of each phrase in Ut queant laxis, because every chorister knew the piece by heart (mediaeval choristers typically had to learn by rote something equivalent to the entire output of Beethoven and Wagner, around 80 hours of music), and because each phrase started exactly one tone above the last.

Ut queant laxis
re sonáre fibrís
Mi ra gestórum
fá muli tuórum,
Sol ve pollúti
lá bii reátum, Sancte Joánnes.

So by learning Ut-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La, with aid of a simple and familiar tune, it became possible to pitch any note correctly. With the exception of adding the seventh note, ti, and renaming "ut" to the more ingable "doh" (the French used "ut" for a long time after everyone else had changed), Guido's tonic solfeggio has remained with us ever since. And yes, this really is the origin of the song sung on a hillside by Julie Andrews nearly a thousand years later.

M Rimmer

Editor
Elvira Williams – The Grove Wilmslow, SK9 5EG
Email: elvira@grove-wilmslow.com
Tel: 01625 250910

"Poet Tree with Mist Aches"

I have a spelling chequer, it came with my pea sea,

It plainly marques four my revue, miss steaks I cannot sea.

When I strike a quay, oar right a word, I weight four it two say,

Weather eye am wrong oar wright, it shows me strait away.

As soon as a mist ache is made, it nose bee fore two late,

And I can put the error rite, its rarely rarely grate.

I've run this poem threw it, I'm shore your pleased to no.

It's letter perfect in it's weigh,

My chequer tolled me sew. "

Anon.

June 2005 Wet walk on the Wirral



Actually half the walk was blistering hot. and then the thunderstorm struck.

Here you can see what you wimps missed- and you heroes who came know that we just laughed all the way thru the hail and thunder to the pub. It was a great hoot altogether.

Lynn K

