

HEMIOLA



Not only are we welcoming a new leader but also many new members. You have not only joined a choir but also a big bunch or raving socialites (not raving socialists). There is never enough time to meet everyone in our very short breaks but there are many other ways to get to know members of the choir. Everyone is welcome to:

- Join us in the pub for a drink after Tuesday rehearsal
- Join in the monthly walks followed by a pub meal
- Join the recorder group which also aims to meet monthly
- Join the George Poynton Singers which also meet periodically and sing anything and everything just for the joy of singing.

Elvira

THE HONORABLE NEIL TAYLOR

A native of Bradford and former Cathedral, **NEIL TAYLOR** won a College of Music in 1986. Whilst scholar at St Albans Cathedral, appointed Assistant Organist at as premiering many new works in made numerous broadcasts and Cathedral Choir, which received toured with them on the continent directing the Cathedral Consort, Girls' Choir in 1995, which completed its first CD recording and made a highly successful tour of Germany in 1997.



chorister of Bradford Scholarship to the Royal a student, he was organ and on graduating was Norwich Cathedral. As well his time at Norwich, he recordings with the high critical acclaim, and and in the USA. As well as he formed the Cathedral

In 1997 he took up the post of Organist and Master of the Music at Sheffield Cathedral, where he is responsible for the Cathedral Choirs of boys, girls and men. Since his appointment, the Cathedral Choir has toured both at home and abroad (including Germany, Holland, Paris and the USA). CD Recordings include *Music for a Millennium*, a Classic FM Magazine CD of the Year Award Winner, and seven CD recordings with the Cathedral Choir.

Neil has directed choral courses as far afield as Aldeburgh and Mexico City, and is an Assistant Director on the Eton Choral Courses. As an organist, he has played at most of the major venues in the UK.

In his spare time he enjoys reading, swimming and walking. A keen cook, he is also an enthusiast of real ales and good wines.

Editor's comment

I think we need to monitor those enthusiasms!!

Hemiola - Hereditary blood disease caused by chromatics!!??

CHOIR WEBSITE www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

Editor Peter Giles: peter.giles@manchester.ac.uk

INTERVIEW WITH ST GEORGE'S SINGERS' NEW MUSICAL DIRECTOR, NEIL TAYLOR

Q: *What attracted you to St George's?*

A: When I came to do the audition, I was struck by the tremendous energy and excitement generated within the choir. Having looked at your website and talked to colleagues in Manchester who have worked with you, it was also clear that you have vision and great daring. I have always tried to be creative and challenging in my own programming, but at the Cathedral you are restricted by the demands of the liturgy. It's obviously much easier with a concert choir. But I got the impression with St George's that if I asked you to sing in Serbo-Croat, in 77 parts, with half the choir standing on their heads under water, you'd all say 'yeah, we can do that!'

Q: *Do you see yourself as an Organist or a Choral conductor first?*

A: I've been involved in singing and choral music since I was 8 when I became a chorister at Bradford Cathedral, and choral singing is my favourite form of music. I love the camaraderie of a choir. The big advantage that singers have over instrumentalists is that they carry their voices around with them – we are born with our voices and they stay with us. Singing in a choir is a personal outpouring of an individual's personality and spirit, and a capella singing is the most exciting of all.

Q: *What are your ambitions for the Choir?*

A: The first year I will spend getting to know everyone. I have lots of programming ideas, but in the first year I feel I have to be fairly circumspect. After that I want to have a longer-term strategy so that everyone can see where the choir is going. That may include touring, new works, or even going in a slightly different direction. I want to continue the exciting programming Stephen introduced, and build on the fantastic work he has done. The main thing is to continue the creativity that St George's is known for.

Q: *How do you feel about taking on such a large choir?*

A: I have formed and run smaller choruses, as well as the Cathedral choirs, but never one quite as big as St George's. But I think the time is right for me to extend my range, and take on the challenge of something bigger. I find the prospect of the coming year very exciting!

From Doreen Allis

Welcome Neil!

Almighty and most merciful conductor
We have erred and strayed from thy beat like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the intonations and tempi of our own hearts

We have offended against thy dynamic markings
We have left unsung those notes which we ought to have sung

We have sung those notes which we ought not to have sung

And there is no support in us
But thou, o conductor, have mercy upon us miserable singers

Succour the chorally challenged
Restore thou them that need extra note-bashing
Spare thou them that are without pencil
Pardon our mistakes and have faith that
Hereafter we will follow thy direction
And sing together in perfect harmony.

Some key facts about Neil:

- Neil was a chorister at Bradford Cathedral, won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, was appointed Assistant Organist at Norwich Cathedral in 1990, and Organist and Master of the Music at Sheffield Cathedral in 1997.
- He has directed five BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensongs, recorded eight CDs (including one that won the Classic FM 'CD of the Year' award), is Artistic Director of the Sheffield Cathedral Arts Festival, has toured in Europe, UK and USA with his choirs, and has directed and assisted choral courses in Aldeburgh, Austria, Italy, Mexico City and Eton.

Conductor-
Musician who
is adept at
following
many people
at the same
time

St Georges Singers 50th Anniversary

Geoff

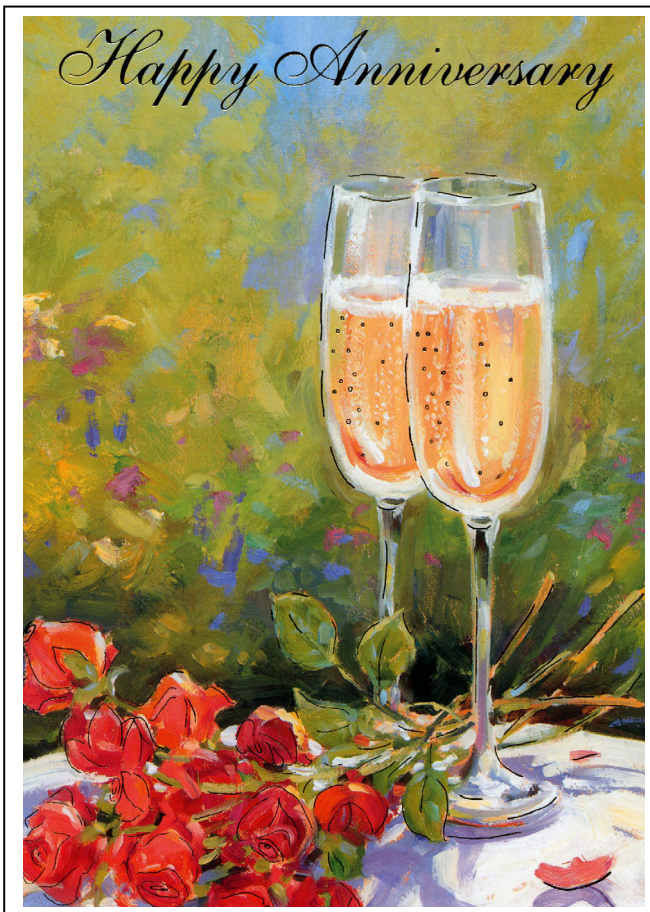
Whilst trying to find scores for Elgar, Spirit of England and Durufle Requiem on www.gerontius.org.uk for Ashford Choral Society (Kent), I thought I'd see whether St Georges Singers were there. And then I did a search and found your website.

I sang in the church choir for Geoffrey Verney from about 1956 until my voice broke, I suppose about 1960. My parents took me to a performance of Messiah. Not far to travel; we lived over what was then the Trustees Saving Bank in the row of shops on London Road North, diagonally across the traffic lights from St Georges. We moved in there just after the war when housing was in short supply. It wasn't as posh as they would have liked but as it was right next to Park Lane as a joke they named the flat "Mayfair"! I must have been impressed by the performance of Messiah because I came by myself to next concert, which was St John Passion, and can still remember the impression that the high tenor of the evangelist made on me, although I also remember thinking that it was very, very long.

Arthur and Mary Daniels were friends of my parents, Kathleen and Albert House, and also good friends of my aunt and uncle Freda and Henry Booth. My grandparent Percy and Clara Frankland were both very involved with St George's, Percy was a Lay reader and spent a lot of time at the tin church (St Martins?) up at Higher Poynton.

I have sung pretty continuously since then, I met my Wife in Maidstone Choral Union, and owe Geoffrey Verney a huge debt of gratitude for that early introduction to singing.

Best wishes - Mike House



St. George's Singers
Sorry we cannot be with you on this special day. Thank you for the invitation.
When I was asked to form this choir by the Rev. E. A. Chapman and my great friend, Geoffrey Verney I never thought I would live to see the 50th anniversary. There have been lots of ups and downs but you have survived. Mary and I hope you have many, many more happy years ahead.
We wish you new conductor every success and we hope he enjoys it as much as Mary and I did whilst we were working for the Choir.
Good luck, and a very happy evening. We shall drink a toast to your continued success on this special night.
Happy singing

Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert Manchester Cathedral 24 June 2006

The first news that Manchester Jazz Society had of this performance came from one of our members, Kath Whale. Being a retired medic., she had her finger on the pulse. Then our secretary Peter Caswell sprang into action, contacted the website, and we were soon in possession of a great wad of elegantly designed flyers which members took away to pass around to the enlightened. We were excited by the names of Ellington and Jacqui Dankworth, but of the St George's Singers and the Big Buzzard Boogie Band we knew nothing. The number of tickets to be sold was 800. They didn't expect to sell out, so it was 'turn up on the night and pay at the door'. As a retired jazz promoter I know that feeling!

The evening of the performance was warm and balmy, the end of a hot summer's day. We joined the crowds of people heading for the Cathedral - ticket numbers 762-3 - phew! We only just got in!

Time to scan the programme. The St George's Singers have 50 years of performing works from Bach and Britten to Flanders and Swann under their belt. The concert, a climax to their jubilee season, was the Manchester première of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert. It was also the last performance under the baton of their Director for the last ten years, Stephen Williams. They are based at St George's Church, Poynton, Cheshire, where they rehearse each week.

The Big Buzzard Boogie Band is the brainchild of Andy Williamson, a man with an amalgam of musical experience who has settled presently for an elastic-sided jive band format, depending on the gig. They are based in the south of England and you may well run them to earth in London's 100 Club. Jacqui Dankworth needs little introduction - daughter of famous parents, actress and singer in many facets of music.

This version of the Sacred Concert has become part of the repertoire of the BBBB. They have performed it at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and also for some BBC broadcasts. The score is known as the Høybe/Pederson version. After Ellington's death it became usual for presenters to select pieces from the three Concerts, depending on the circumstances, musicians and singers available. I quote from the programme notes:-

'In 1993 John Høybe was asked to lead a large international workshop on Ellington's Sacred Concerts. As no score was available, he decided to arrange the music along with Peder Pederson and to have a complete score including orchestral parts and choral arrangements published. In the original version the choir mostly sang in unison and had a somewhat minor role, partly because the touring composer had a very limited time to rehearse with the successive local choirs. Furthermore, Ellington was not nearly as familiar with the choir as he was with the orchestra. In the Høybe/Pederson version of the score, which St George's Singers are using tonight, the choir and the band are equals - perhaps even with a slight emphasis on the choir. As the new version consists of material from all three concerts, it is simply called **The Sacred Concert.**'

The concert begins and Andy Williamson leads the 11-piece Big Buzzard Boogie Band out. Unhappily cathedrals are usually fine for listening but not often for seeing, due to pillars, etc. We could see that the leader was wearing a hat, for which he apologized to the Lord and to those assembled, explaining that it was necessary to keep his great unruly mop of hair in order. They kicked in with **The Preacher**, then **One O'Clock Jump, Stompin' At The Savoy**, all good old good ones suitable for a mixed audience of jazzers and non-jazzers. After **Mambo Mintz, Jumpin' At The Woodside** and **Over The Rainbow** the band was augmented by musicians associated with the Royal Northern College of Music, including the director of their Big Band, Mike Hall, on tenor. At this point Jacqui came on with her trio led by pianist Zoe Rahman. Using

an arrangement by her father, she sang **If I Were a Bell** from *Guys and Dolls*, and then **Teach Me Tonight**. Next, with just the trio, came **But Beautiful** and finally with the band, **September In The Rain**. To finish up the set, the BBBB had us not jiving in the aisles but jiggging in the pews to a spot of Louis Jordan. A happy and satisfying set; Jacqui has a lovely voice and there are nuances of her mother - or maybe it's my imagination?

Now to the second half and the serious business of the evening. With the choir already *in situ* their conductor Stephen Williams was warmly welcomed. They began with **Praise God** and the impact of their voices in the fine acoustics of the building was simply stunning. As I listened the words that came to mind were 'coffee and cream'. I was transfixed. Next came **Heaven**, featuring Jacqui with very much her own voicing, and beautiful it was too. Then **Freedom Suite** with the choir and some terrific solos from the musicians, Zoe Rahman on piano and I think (I couldn't see!) Nick Yates trumpet and a tenor who was hidden behind a pillar. Also included were **The Majesty of God** (Jacqui, choir and band) **Come Sunday** and **David Danced Before The Lord...** (all), **Almighty God** (choir), **My Love** (Jacqui) and **Praise God And Dance**. The reception was rapturous and deservedly so. I reflected that, as this was the choir's last performance with Stephen Williams, it had been the most wonderful parting gift he could have wished for. With the band and Jacqui they made a most 'joyful noise unto the Lord' which would have warmed Duke Ellington's heart.

Eunice Malloch
'Blue Light', the Newsletter of the
Duke Ellington Society (UK), Volume
13 Number 3
(July/August/September 2006)

Chord - Usually spelt with an 's' on the end, means a particular type of pants, e.g. 'He wears chords.'

Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert

And Andy Williamson's own opinion...

Dear Stephen – and everyone involved in organising and performing in last night's gig in Manchester Cathedral

Rarely have I been involved in something so profound. As a prayer to Freedom, I hope the spirit of Duke Ellington agrees that we did his work justice, at a time when such prayers are as necessary as they ever were.

As the Big Buzzard band, we don't very often get the chance to play to an audience who are sitting quietly, listening to our every nuance. For that to be a packed cathedral full of several hundred people was a rare privilege indeed – thank you for making it possible.

Thank you also for giving me the chance to invite Jacqui along. I was sure that she'd be great as a soloist for the Duke Ellington. I wasn't sure what else we were going to do with her until she arrived on Saturday afternoon. This unpredictability is one of the joys of playing jazz – yesterday's was as good as it ever gets.

You also gave me the opportunity to invite Zoe Rahman to play piano with us. I've known Zoe since we were both students together. Since then we've moved in different musical circles. As you might imagine, Zoe is carving out quite a reputation as a jazz soloist and bandleader. With the Buzzard band, we use a large pool of musicians and at the moment we don't have a regular pianist, so yesterday's concert was the perfect chance to invite Zoe to play with us in a decent venue, with some challenging music that I hoped would give her the chance to stretch out a little. The results were more amazing than I could have hoped for – she is a delight to work with and to hear, I'm sure you'll agree.

Congratulations to you and the choir, for getting under the skin of some music whose essence is very difficult to put across with the weight of 'English Choral Tradition' behind us all. I have to pay you the ultimate compliment which is to say that in singing the Sacred Concert, you achieved swing, and I hope the band did you all justice.

Several members of the band commented afterwards about the quality of your musical direction – the best we've ever experienced. Well done – I don't know whether this was your first foray into the jazz world, but I certainly hope it won't be your last. I hope we get the chance to work together again in the future, and see what else can be achieved, as I'm sure there are many more great things to be done.

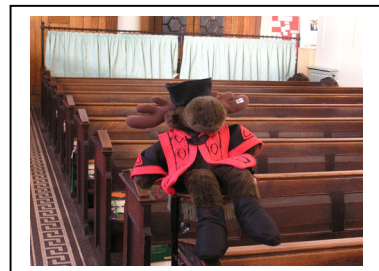
There were other highlights last night – Charlie on drums, and Thierry on percussion were both on fire last night; Ben Cummings' trumpet solo in The Shepherd was stupendous – as was seeing a rostrum full of people jumping up and down and waving their hands in the air for Jump Jive and Wail!

Best wishes to you, Stephen, in your new job at Uppingham, and to the choir with your new MD. I hope we all see each other again sometime.

Warm regards

Andy Williamson
Big Buzzard Boogie Band

Choir Tour to Budapest May 2006



Further Travels of an Elk & His Fan Club

Being an Assistant Leader on tour with a Leading North West Choir (ahem) is very stimulating, to say the least, setting off my normal calm life with Alice in an interesting way.

Stimulating?? Hungary 2006 began with transfer to Kate's in readiness to leave –and their domestic leaks & excitements and oh dear, but finally we made it to the airport. Then time to meet friends & admirers, take in the ambience, watch everyone relax a bit, and face up to being passed around, tickled, talked to, squashed into a series of backpacks, till here we are in another country, my score mounting nicely.

There was lots of music for the singers, and I waited to see what would impress me most, as I'm quietly learning about all this. But also plenty of fun, sightseeing, shopping, eating, drinking going on, and I heard the chat, saw the bags, even if I didn't take the walks, night boat rides on the Danube and so on, let alone swimming in hot thermal baths, a strange local speciality. Now, a cold Scandinavian lake would be quite another matter.

Off into the far countryside, to Erd – important connection with Poynton – we sang, they sang, we had a terrific lunch where I was much admired, and presents were given, including the smartest embroidered coats (for bottles, would you believe?) I have ever seen. We had a shared concert, and reception, & left, hoping to meet again later.

Next day's singing was in St Stephen's Basilica, which has more gold leaf all over it than you'd think possible. The audience of tourist groups seemed to like it, but it wasn't like the Bridgewater Hall at all. And why were the choir still not singing their special Hungarian piece properly? Stephen must have thought that even in his own Basilica it wouldn't do yet.

But then we went to Esztergom, and everything went right – though the choir couldn't find much food, or drink, or toilets, but they managed. Beautiful place above a river, wonderful church, not too much gilt, beautiful day, and a full share for me of sun and picnic, and then the concert, oh my. The Karai worked at last. And quiet calm Jeff drove the organ WILD till we all stopped breathing: What A Man. We had photos afterwards, and Stephen made us pull funny faces, but I kept my dignity.

There was a very big happy party, a Folk Evening, to end with, and we talked to the ladies from Erd, they with no English and we with no Hungarian. And I was measured for an embroidered coat – and hat, and boots! Then we sang and danced on the stage, which shows how happy we all were. When my new outfit comes (I'm sure it will), I shall be the smartest mascot in the NorthWest, but maybe for concerts I'll still wear my black suit, so's not to show up the others.

Choir Tour to Budapest May 2006



Choir visit to Hungary, May 2006
St George's Singers performed at three venues

The choral recitals included music by music by Bruckner,
Rutter and Karai and the performers were:

St George's Singers
Conductor Stephen Williams
Accompanist Jeffrey Makinson
Soprano Amy Wood
Baritone Marcus Farnsworth

Saturday 27 May 2006 at 17:00
Joint concert with Szirmok Choir of Erd, at Korosi Csoma
School, Erd

Sunday 28 May 2006 at 19:00
Choral Recital at St Stephen's Cathedral, Budapest

Monday 29 May 2006 at 13:00
Choral Recital at Esztergom Basilica, Esztergom



George with the girlies



Ivan and Paul in Erd

**Virtuoso - Musician
with very high morals**

**Diatonic - What
buxom
sopranos drink
in an effort to
become svelte**

**Trill - Musical equivalent of
an epileptic seizure**



The ever-changing Stephen

Budapest 2006



Tea At Esztergom

A postscript to our concert in Erd on our Hungarian tour.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between listening to a concert on Bartok Radio and BBC Radio 3 is that on the former, the listener at home is treated to the whole duration of the applause in the concert-hall. A BBC Radio 3 presenter will cut in after 5 or 6 seconds of applause; the volume of the applause will be reduced, and the presenter will talk over it about the comings and goings of the conductor and soloists, about the bowings and blown kisses, and bouquets. What the presenter says is formulaic and uninteresting; but it is a lot more interesting than the sound of the massed clapping of hands.

I could scarcely believe my ears when I heard the slow hand-clapping that is usual in the Hungarian concert-hall. A slow hand-clap would signify deep disapprobation of the performance by an English audience, and the performers would be wounded by it. It took me a while to realise that it means exactly the opposite in Hungary. After just a few seconds of unco-ordinated applause, an audience will fall into a rhythmic, unison clapping; after some further seconds this rhythm will decompose, as if in response to markings in a score; then, seconds later will be re-established- and so on and on. Bartok Radio broadcasts the applause in its tedious entirety, because it recognises that this applause is an integral part of the performance. The audience is performing in the manner expected; the applause is the yin to the yang of the performance. The one is necessary to the other, and completes it, as "thank you" completes a gift.

Taken from "A Country Full of Aliens. A Briton in Hungary" by Colin Swatridge.

Connie Jones.

BLANK SPACE

With over 100 members of the choir why do we have blank spaces in Hemiola??????????????



ÉRD MEGYEI JOGÚ VÁROS POLGÁRMESTERE

2030 Érd, Alsó u. 1. Levélcím: 2031 Pf. 31. Telefon: /06-23/522-313 Fax: /06-23/365-340

Honlap: www.erd.hu E-mail: polgarmester@erd.hu

Mrs Kate Taylor
Concert Secretary
St George's Singers
137 Oldham Road
Springhead
Oldham
OL4 4PY
UK



The Organ at Estzergom

Dear Mrs Kate Taylor,

We are glad to hear that you enjoyed your stay in Érd, Hungary.
It gave us much pleasure that you honoured us with your performance which was a great success and at the same time was a marvelous experience for the audience.
We hope that your relationship with the women's choir Szirmok will keep going in the future too.
We honestly regret that you can not take part in our street dance ball in September.
Nevertheless as we informed you formerly a delegation of the Municipality of Érd is going to travel to Poynton at the end of August.
We really hope that this occasion will give us the opportunity to meet you again.

Thank you once again for your nice letter.



Lunch in Erd



Yours sincerely,

Dr. Döcsakovszky Béla
mayor

BLANK SPACE

Reminder about our Online Shop

Thinking about Christmas shopping? Looking for a birthday present? Fancy a winter holiday? Or just searching around for the best deal on car insurance?

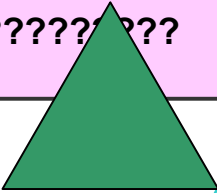
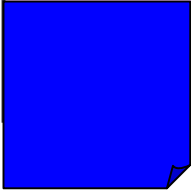
Now you can find exactly what you're looking for AND raise money for the choir - simply by shopping through our online shop. Every time you buy from one of the featured retailers via our website, the company donates a commission to St George's Singers. You pay exactly the same price as you would on the retailers' main sites.


Retailers currently on the site include M&S, Amazon, CD Wow, John Lewis, HMV, Sky, T-Mobile, the AA and RAC, Capital One, Eurocamp, Haven Holidays, Teleflorist and lots more.

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

Famous Quotes - Marcus
Conducting The Jesse Tree –
“No, its triangle, square, square”
??????????????????

I found the following written on my copy of
the Durufle
" Have a full sniff-worth of quaver!"



Accidentals -
Wrong notes



Compound metre-Place
to park your car that
requires twenty pence

Duple metre-May take
any even number of
coins

Triple metre-Only rich
people should park by

BLANK SPACE

With over 100 members of the choir why do we
have blank spaces in Hemiola??????????????

Augmented fifth –
36-ounce bottle


Flat- What happens to a
tonic if it sits too long
in the open air

Metre signature-
Autograph of the
person who writes
you a ticket when
you put an odd
number of coins
in a duple metre

Agnus Dei –
Woman composer
famous for her
church music

Major triad - Name of the
head of the Music
Department

Minor triad - Name of the
wife of the head of the
Music Department

Chromatic scale -
Instrument for weighing
that indicates half-
nounds

Magic Moments

It is Easter Saturday 1999 and coaches carrying members of St George's Singers have just arrived at the Oosterkerk in Amsterdam from the coast where they have been staying since their long journey the previous day. They are here to give a concert later in the day but at the moment they will just leave their music and uniforms before exploring the city. Members stand about gazing in awe around the enormously high building. Someone wonders what the acoustics will be like and tries a note and suddenly the sounds of Locus Iste are floating upwards and filling the vast space –it's a magic moment.

And since then there have been others. In the Salt mines near Krakov, grouped together to be photographed in one of the huge cathedrals hollowed out from the salt, it was there again. Visitors stopped to listen and maybe even the Australian TV crew who were filming recorded us. Later some members ate out in a restaurant in the Jewish quarter (where they filmed Schindler's list) and were entertained by a vibrant Klezmer band. Their programme over, and not moving from where we were sitting, we sang Locus Iste.

And then there was Snape. The tour to Suffolk was something of a pilgrimage for those who had long admired Britten and his music and to be not only shown round the Maltings but allowed to stand on the stage and sing Locus Iste was another of those magic moments.

The latest one was in Erd and as our friends welcomed us to our twin town in Hungary just outside of Budapest we welcomed each other with song. No prizes for guessing what we sang but it was once again a very moving moment.

Definitions

<u>Preparatory Beat</u>	A threat made to singers e.g. sing or else.....
<u>Coloratura Soprano</u>	A singer who has trouble finding the proper note, but who has a wild time hunting for it!
<u>Cadence</u>	When everybody hopes you're going to stop, but you don't
<u>Audition</u>	The act of putting oneself under extreme duress to satisfy the sadistic intentions of someone who has already made up his mind

BLANK SPACE

With over 100 members of the choir why do we have blank space in

Tonic - Medicinal liquid to be consumed with gin before, during, or after a



performance

Bravo - Literally, How bold! or What nerve! Spontaneous expression of appreciation on the part of the concert goer after a particularly trying performance

Geoff up to his Tricks again!

"After the pre-tour concert in Poynton about a dozen members adjourned to Il Pomodoro for pasts and vino. Geoff was proudly wearing his 50 years of St George's Singers badge. At the end of an enjoyable meal the head waiter appeared with a miniature birthday cake, complete with candle. When the party asked whom it was for, he pointed to Geoff's badge! He was disappointed to be told the truth, but said we should sing anyway - so we treated the staff, who were the only ones left, to *Happy Birthday St George's*, in twelve part harmony. Geoff was so delighted that anyone could believe he was 50 that he left more than his customary miserly tip."

And another St Georges Singers Big Birthday



Birthday girl and friends?



**Twist and Strawberry
Milk shake**



Not to be out wiggled!

BLANK SPACE

With over 100 members
of the choir why do we
have blank spaces in
Hemiola??????????????

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