

News Archive - 2011

January 2011

Scarborough Workshop



The Choir's annual workshop was held, for the fourth successive year, at the Red Lea Hotel in Scarborough. Anne vacated her usual role as accompanist to lead the weekend and unveiled several new pieces in Welsh, German and English. Deus Salutis, Das Morgenrot and A Cole Porter Medley filled the bulk of Saturday whilst on Sunday the Barber shop piece, Coney Island Baby, provided light relief after a long night entertaining ourselves and the regulars at the Highlander!

Anne and Jim also provided an enlightening session on concert/rehearsal preparation and voice production.

These weekends are always punctuated by enjoyable solo performances by Choir members but special mention must be made of Robert's inventive take on the song, Jake the Peg. Although, it has to be said, the act needs some more polishing there is no doubt that a star was born. Watch out Rolf!

Derek Dixon



The Choir were deeply shocked to hear of the sudden death of Derek Dixon. Derek was a much respected member of the Choir who will be sadly missed. The Choir would like to offer their condolences to his family and many friends.

The Choir sang at Derek's funeral and were deeply touched that he was buried in his New Mill MVC concert uniform along with his ubiquitous pipe and tobacco. Derek's life generated many amusing stories, memories that will undoubtedly be recalled with affection in the years to come.

Alan Brierley is new MD!



The Choir are delighted to announce that Alan Brierley is to be our new Musical Director. Alan takes over from Elizabeth Hambleton who retired in December 2010. Alan has an extensive musical background. Starting at the age of 6 when he was a choir boy at Huddersfield Parish Church, he went on to study at the Huddersfield Polytechnic School of Music and eventually became Head of Music at Moor End Technology College.

Alan has conducted the Huddersfield Methodist Choir since 1984 and has the enviable record of leading them in performances of Handel's Messiah on no less than 27 occasions!

April 2011

Don Valley Festival, Elsecar



For the third, and final, year the Choir competed at the Don Valley Festival. The competition was the first time that Alan had conducted the Choir and we responded admirably with a fine second place. Winners were Saddleworth MVC. Well done gents. Competition's are always a lottery and we have enjoyed ourselves immensely during the three years we have competed at Elsecar but we had already decided that this would be our final year of competition at this festival. At least for the foreseeable future. The festival has got bigger and better each year and the Choir would like to say a big Thank You to the organisers. We've had a ball.

Rotary Concert, Huddersfield Town Hall

Once again, the Choir featured with Lindley Band at the Town Hall. The Rotary concert is an annual event for the senior citizens of Kirklees and the Choir have appeared several times in recent years. The concert gave us the opportunity to sing several items in public for the first time, notably Das Morgenrot. More work required here, boys! The audience really appreciated Let It Be Me, obviously big fans of The Everly Brothers, and Johnny Come Down to Hilo has become a big favourite.

May 2011

York Minster

The Choir appeared in one of the World's great cathedrals on Saturday May 14th. We staged a concert in York Minster in aid of the charity 'York Against Cancer'. This awe inspiring event began with a rehearsal in the afternoon which immediately drew an audience of appreciative visitors.



Many subsequently purchased tickets for the evenings concert. The acoustics in this vast space have to be experienced to be believed! The sound echoes around the roof before rejoining the same musical phrase at audience level a split second later. Phrase endings have to be negotiated with care! We were joined by sopranos Sarah Ogden and Stephanie Ball who also relished the opportunity to perform in these historic surroundings. It is difficult to pick out individual highlights from this very special evening. For myself, our rendition of Johnny Come Down to Hilo, performed by the tenors on one side of the nave and the basses and baritones on the other, was certainly a winner with the audience and an unusual opener to the second half. The rousing climax of the Easter Hymn, with Stephanie and Sarah made a wonderful ending to a great night.

The Old White Swan was the venue for a well earned drink and the customary 'AfterGlow'. More singing and a chance to relax with friends and family.

On a night of firsts, the evening provided our newly formed Support Group with their first opportunity to promote the Choir. Well done to all concerned.



June 2011

Lions Concert, Huddersfield Town Hall

The Choir joined old friends LB Brass to entertain the senior citizens of Huddersfield at the annual Lions concert. The concert was a great success for both Band and Choir and the audience loved it 'cos it was free! Nothing warms the heart of a Yorkshireman more than summat for nowt! Seriously, though, both the Band and Choir received a warm welcome and responded with a great night of music.

July 2011

The Choir's final public performance before our summer break was with the Hade Edge Community Choir at St John's church in Upperthong. A glorious summers evening did not prevent a large audience leaving their barbecues to attend a lively and entertaining concert in this popular Choir venue. The last time we were in St John's was for the funeral of Choir member Derek Dixon and it was appropriate that the concert was dedicated to his memory. Derek's wife, Pat, was in the audience. The Hade Edge Community Choir are a relatively new Choir and sing with an infectious enthusiasm which quickly strikes a chord (sorry!) with an audience. The age range in the Choir, from choristers whose years are measured in single digits to more mature members who are probably familiar with a Bus Pass, really does demand the epithet 'Community'. Their conductor, Simon Wood, was his usual enthusiastic self and his son Aaron gave us a great display of trumpet playing.

October 2011

Town Hall Concert with Alison Balsom



We have a reputation in New Mill for bringing some of the best artists in the UK to our annual concerts. Few have been higher profile than Alison Balsom. Along with organist David Goode she provided us with a dazzling display of trumpet playing and had the Town Hall audience enthralled. It was easy to see why she has won so many awards in her comparatively short career and why her admirers stretch from the USA to China.

Reputations are forged on hard work and our other guests, Sarah Ogden and Ewan Gilford, work harder than most. Both are post graduate students at the Royal Northern College of Music and delighted the audience with their well balanced repertoire.

This environment always brings the best out of the Choir and we did not dissappoint our supporters. An opening piece that has taken months of effort to get to performance level, the Cole Porter Medley, was a great success. In between this piece and our closing item, American Trilogy, were sandwiched several performances which captivated our audience, non more so than Myfanwy. Alan has added subtle changes to this item which received many favourable comments after the concert.

The Choir retired to HRUFC club after the event where we enjoyed our usual afterglow.

November 2011

Theatre Royal Wakefield

The Choir performed to a small but appreciative audience in the Theatre Royal, Wakefield on Friday 4th November. Our guest for the evening was local flautist and all-round entertainer, Simeon Wood. He moved effortlessly from raconteur, with tales about lost luggage and audiences numbering single figures, to musical performances of favourites such as Gabriel's Oboe from the film *The Mission*. The Choir enjoyed the evening and quickly adapted to the challenge of a stage environment. Although the auditorium gave little feedback to us on stage, our spies in the audience were quick to reassure us at the interval that all was well. The evening ended with rousing performances of pub favourites in a nearby local beer emporium. It's a tough life but someone has to live it!

Remembrance Concert, Holmfirth

On November 12th we were guests of Vocal Expressions at a Remembrance Concert at the Parish Church in Holmfirth. I have to confess that I was not present at this concert but feedback to me has all been positive. The concert raised in excess of £1100.00 for the Royal British Legion - a magnificent sum.

December 2011

Annual Carol Concert, Christ Church, New Mill

Our annual Carol Concert was unusual this year. Unlike the previous two years we had few, if any, weather worries! This was Alan's first Choir Carol Concert and he chose the event to reveal his dashing, battery powered, snowman waistcoat. Unfortunately, no photographs exist of this startling garment as all electronic light cells were overpowered by its brilliance. Besides the Choir, the audience were entertained by young soprano Sophie Daniels, a pupil of our good friend Stephanie Ball. I can reveal that Stephanie and Simon are expecting a baby in 2012 and that both are 'over the moon'. Congratulations to the pair of them from the Choir! The audience also enjoyed the chocolate raffle tickets. Thanks to those Choir members who recycled their 'tickets' when demand outstripped supply!

Annual BASF Carol Concert, Low Moor

This concert has been in the Choir's annual calendar for 20 years and is still one of the most popular. I have attended the previous 3 but this was by far the best. The audience, much bigger than last year, thoroughly enjoyed the lighter repertoire that the Choir presented. They were more than happy to remain in their seats for the second half when, in previous years, they have tended to evaporate after the young children, quite rightly, steal the show with their nativity play at the end of the first half. An excellent way to round off 2011 and look forward to 2012.