

Patrons Newsletter February 2010

Welcome to the new decade. I wonder what marvels of modern technology will regale us in the next few years. Well, for a start, the choir has a new website and for those who are abreast of surfing the internet, you will find us at www.budleighmvc.co.uk . It is well worth a visit if only to look at the photos.

Now I had better tie up the loose ends from last year. Following the cancellation of the concert at Seaton on October 31st, we hastily arranged another venue so that we could accommodate the Casterbridge Male Voice Choir from Dorchester. St. Margaret's Church in Topsham came to the rescue and the charity was for Exmouth & Lymptone Hospiscare. The last time we sang there we were raising money for their organ fund; so we were doubly pleased to hear the newly installed organ played by Tony Yates. Considering the short notice there was a good audience. The Casterbridge choir were very enthusiastic and their rendition of the selection from the Pirates of Penzance had everybody foot tapping. Our choir was in good voice, and the combined choirs singing of Morte Crriste at the end was truly inspiring. It was decided to hold the afterglow in the church and the refreshments were provided by our ladies. They never fail to amaze me at what they can produce in an instant. I think we could have fed 5000 and I know that our guests were very well satisfied. So once again, a big thank you to the wives and partners who helped.

Our final concert of the year was held in the Offwell Village Hall in aid of Church Funds. If ever there was a precursor of the winter to come, it was November 31st. It rained all day and was blowing a gale, with roads awash with water. Somehow or other 45 members made it to the concert and so many villagers weathered the conditions, there was standing room only for the latecomers. Consequently with such enthusiasm, we performed very well in a hall where the acoustics can be difficult. Our final two events were the carol singing at the Feathers in Budleigh Salterton and the Rolle Arms in East Budleigh.

So that was 2009 and armed with a portfolio of suggestions Allen moved into 2010 despite losing one practice to the snow and ice. The newest piece we are currently learning is the Abba hit 'Thank you for the Music'. This was purchased for the choir by Gerald Boor, in memory of his late wife. At the moment it seems difficult, but we are gradually getting there and it will not be long before it is in the programme. Another piece that is new to a lot of the choir is the magnificent 'Comrades in Arms'. This is a 'tour de force' with a tuneful melody followed by a stacatto interlude before a thunderous finale. The changes in tempo and volume gradually build to a crescendo with the basses and baritones at counterpoint to the tenors. Although the words are by today's standards slightly jingoistic, they still bear relevance to the sacrifices made by our armed forces every day around the world.

The choir held its annual dinner at the Manor Hotel, Exmouth on 20th February. Our guest of honour was our president and founder, Pam Jones. Pam presented the attendance trophy to Brian Hart who once again topped the list winning by one point from Gerald Boor. Brian is quite well known in is other guise as the Otterton miller but Gerald is less well known as a skilled glass maker for clock and watch faces. Both are still working part-time and managing to support the choir in their retirement. Peter Dolling, who is the Assistant Musical Director and Music Librarian, was presented with a

certificate by Pam recording 30 years service. It just goes to show you that belonging to our choir is not so much a hobby as a way of life. Our entertainment for the evening was provided by Tom Earls, one of our newer members, who regaled us with his Irish wit and songs. The evening closed with the redoubtable Eddie Collard, who for once left Jethro at home, but still managed to make us all laugh. Thus concluded a most enjoyable evening.

Recently, Stephen Connolly who sings with internationally renowned 'Kings Singers', moved to the area and we have decided to take advantage of his expertise. He will be coming to two of our Tuesday practises to assist us in various techniques; such as breathing and voice control. Hopefully this will improve us overall. It will be good to hear the opinion of such a well respected professional, especially as there are so many performances this year. I will keep you informed of our progress. Later this year we will be recording a new CD, which will be out in time for Xmas presents.

Currently there are 15 concerts scheduled for this year and below are details some of them:-

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| March 6th. | Tower Street Methodist Church, Exmouth |
| March 27th. | St Francis Church, Sidmouth |
| April 17th. | St. Luke's Church, Milber, Newton Abbot |
| May 1st. | All Saints Church, Exmouth |
| June 5th. | St. Mary's Church, Churchstow, Kingsbridge |
| June 26th. | Sidmouth Methodist Church. |

All the above are due to start at 7.30.p.m.

Well, that is all for the moment. My next missive will be sometime in June when I will bring you up to date with all our performances and any developments.

Chris Emms