



CHORUS - the Winchester Community Choir *newsletter*

Issue 4, October 2008

Welcome to Chorus

Here is the 4th edition of your newsletter, packed with information, news and chit-chat. We hope you enjoy it and the whole of the Choir's wonderful run-up to Christmas. Please note our newly re-vamped logo at the top of this page, which reflects choir colours.

Hello

All our new choir members. You are very welcome and we're delighted you've come to sing with us.

And before we get down to business..

We thought you'd like to see this photo of our lovely ex co-leader Freya, receiving her choir leaving present of a fiddle case from Jan and Catherine - thanks to Helen White for supplying the picture.



Preview..

Seasonal singing

Dig out your singing gear, your sparkles and your best voices because it is nearly time for our usual busy round of Christmas engagements. Having listened to what you said, we reduced the number of these - the MacMillan Tree of Thought is anyway not coming to Winchester this year and, by general consent, we have decided not to sing at the Christmas Market (those of you who did this last year will remember that we were placed in the far corner of the Food section where few could hear us - and we couldn't even raise money for charity to compensat!).

However, we have our Christmas concert on December 9th, which will be great fun, with Paul Sartin and Paul Hutchinson (Belshazzar's Feast) providing the instrumental backing to "Chariots" as well as delighting our audience with their own delicious offerings. The Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Winchester will be attending our concert, as will Khalid Aziz, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire and John Miller, Artistic Director of the Winchester Festival. We are also looking at singing in the Brendon House and Abbots Barton nursing homes on the afternoon of Sat 13th December, for which Sandra will lead us! And on another Christmas note, our Choir party will be held during usual rehearsal time on Tues 16th Dec - please bring along a plate of finger food to share.

January Dates

Just a quick reminder that Sarah is holding an all-day (10.30-3.30) 'Winter Sing' workshop at the United Church in Jewry Street, on Saturday 10th January. This is free to WC Choir members and those on our waiting list, £7.50 to anyone else. So come along and bring your friends. Choir members should sign up at a prior Tuesday rehearsal, non-choir members will need to contact Sarah to book their place (01264 738629, sarah@smbourne.plus.com).

Then, on the evening of 26th January there is the Peace Vigil in the Cathedral. If you would like to take part in this, please sign the list at rehearsals if you haven't already done so.

Finally, Choir starts again after Christmas on Tuesday 13th January.

For Now..

Keeping Up Appearances - a message from Sarah

When we started the choir, nothing was further from our minds than any sort of uniform. However, it wasn't long before we began to get invited to sing at events, and these became higher and higher in profile. We realised that we needed an image that would reflect our ethos - lively, colourful, a sense of being part of a cohesive group, but without being too rigid or formal. Something smart enough to show respect for our audiences and pride in our choir, while still giving scope for individuality.

Finally, we came up with a cunning plan - black trousers or skirt, and a top in a "sea colour", i.e. anything from blue to green. For those who prefer it, we provide the variation of black top, with perhaps a piece of jewellery or tie or scarf in a sea colour. What seems to work best is plain colours, not patterned, and, under lights, a

slightly glossy fabric shows up well. We don't extend these guidelines to bits that don't show (though we'd hate to prevent anyone from rushing out to splurge on new turquoise underwear!), but socks and T shirts do tend to, so please colour match if you can. So the choice is yours - there are no rules about style or fashion, only common sense. And finally, although we can all recall days when the sea was a dull grey, we don't include that in our colour range!



Increasing our audiences

We all know it can be awkward asking friends and relations to come to yet another WCC concert! So how about increasing the range of your target audience by putting some flyers through letter boxes in your street? We have already distributed 10 flyers to many choir members and are now printing more. Please don't be shy, if you haven't been given yours yet, ask us at the next choir session, and if you think you can dispose of more, that would be very helpful. Also, by the time you get this issue of Chorus, you should have received an "E-flyer" by email, which you can send to selected contacts in your address book. If we all manage to sell three tickets to our concert the church will be full. The Committee is also having a concerted marketing campaign to bring the WCC's concert to the attention of a wider audience.

Choir Profile

As you know, the Committee have been working to update our new Choir Profile. Sarah read this out to members before half term, to general approval. We thought it would be useful to remind you all of it here. It is also on our website:

"Winchester Community Choir is an inclusive choir for those who can sing, those who would like to get back into singing, or those who want to try it for the first time. There are no auditions and there is no requirement to read music, as most of our songs are learnt by ear. Our repertoire consists largely of folk and world music, prepared for us by our choir leader, Sarah Morgan. The committee, which members have an opportunity to join, organises concerts each year, as well as sing-outs elsewhere (these latter are often by invitation). The money raised at our concerts is usually donated to local charities. We sing for pleasure, friendship and fun and work hard before concerts to achieve performance standard. Maximum numbers for the Choir are 100, with new members joining from the waiting list at the start of each term."

Suggested Charities

Just a quick reminder, and for those who are new - proceeds from our concerts and sing-outs are given to local charities. We welcome suggestions from all members and use this list when picking which organisation/s to support. So do please give us your suggestions. A list of charities so far supported is on the website:

www.winchestercommunitychoir.co.uk

For the Christmas concert we are supporting CLIC Sargent children's cancer charity and Key Changes, an

organisation which provides music therapy for children and adults suffering from a variety of conditions that make communication through speech difficult or impossible.



Choir attendance

This is a tricky subject to write about and one you may not have thought about before. Most choir members make the effort to come to each and every rehearsal, which is great and we thank you for your loyalty and hard work. Also of course, there are good reasons for absence from choir; illness, holidays and the like. But we know there are some choir members who belong to the choir but come maybe two or three times a term, because they are doing other activities or just not very keen to attend.

As you may know, many choirs have a rule that members should be at 75% of rehearsals. We do not want impose such a rule but we would like people who attend choir infrequently to think if they really do want to continue. We all know how hard it is to learn something like Chariots and I think we all enjoy giving our best at performances. But if you don't come to most rehearsals, you won't know the songs for our concerts and is that really fair to the other choir members who have worked hard or to others who may be desperate to join the choir? We urge you to talk to any of the Committee if you have a problem coming to rehearsals.

And about the Committee..

Firstly a warm welcome to Paul Montgomery, who has been co-opted onto the Committee. And a possibly timely reminder of who we all are:

Wenda Moroney, Chair

Jean Forster, Treasurer

Catherine Hahn, Secretary

Jan Gapper, Membership Secretary

Miranda Johnson, Communications

Sue Elliott, General

Jean Guevara (known as Traicee, for reasons we're not quite sure of),
Words and Copying

Sandra Thibault, Events

Paul Montgomery, Stage Manager

This information is also in the folder put at the back of the church each Tuesday, together with copies of the minutes and choir constitution.

Deflation in choir fees!

Prices rarely come down in the shops do they? So, we hope you are pleased with the reduction we have made in choir fees. If you haven't given instruction to your bank for the new standing order amounts (£9 for non-concessions, £6.50 for concessions) now is the time to do it.

Review..

Finest Workshop

We were very fortunate to have Finest Kind taking a WCC workshop on November 11th. This Canadian folk trio have wowed North American audiences for years with their glorious harmonies and exciting arrangements of traditional songs. One reviewer said of their vocal blend, "any closer and they wouldn't be allowed to do it in public". Not only did we learn 2 gorgeous new songs, we gained a fascinating insight into how the 3 members work to build their harmonies - as Sarah would say, it only makes sense when you *listen to each other*.

Summer Concert

It seems a ridiculously long time ago now, but for those who are new, who missed either of them, or simply have fond memories, the Choir performed at a very successful 'Songs for the Summer Solstice' concert held at the United Church in Jewry Street on 21st June. Our guests were Winchester Young Voices. We raised approx £850 and the proceeds were split equally between the Young Voices and Winchester Youth Counselling

Caption Competition

A small addendum to the above concert report:

Local photographer Joe Low once again came to take pictures before our concert. Thank you Joe, they were lovely. However, some hilarity ensued when we discovered that he had photographed us under a banner so large most of us didn't even realise it was there! A selection of the best captions for the picture below will be published in the next edition of Chorus (provided they're not too rude!!)



ChoirFest

The second ChoirFest was once again held on the last weekend of August at Mellow Farm near Farnham. This included members of community choirs from Winchester, Alton, Andover and Guildford and was tutored by Anna and Freya Tabbush, Sarah Morgan, Carolyn Robson and

Lucky Moyo (you should have seen us all getting stuck into Zulu!).



Those who came, it seemed without exception, had a fabulous and very rewarding weekend. Some camped, which may have enriched the experience but probably made Sunday harder work (all that extra singing round the camp fire till the small hours - we say nothing of beverages!) Nearly everyone stayed for the Saturday evening ceilidh. About 100 people attended in all, approx 20 of us from Winchester.

Passion Follow-Up

As you may know, The Passion that some in the Choir took part in back in March has been given a very significant award.

It was recorded and covered in depth by BBC South and Radio Solent and this coverage was recently given a 'Jerusalem' - the religious equivalent of a BAFTA. Congratulations to all involved.



Choir Chat Corner

Exciting news for the Choir Corner chat space. As you already know, our wonderful ex-leader Freya announced her engagement to Chris a few weeks ago. The happy couple will be getting married in June next year and we wish them all the very best for the future.

Goodbye and farewell to...

Terry Cooper, who has served on the Committee for a year (for which many thanks) but is now leaving the choir to develop his instrumental music group. Also goodbye and good luck to Mike Gray, who is leaving Winchester for south London and a new start. We will miss you both. Keep in touch.

This newsletter is edited for Winchester Community Choir by Miranda Johnson and Catherine Hahn. If you have photographs we can use in the next issue please email them to mirandajohnson@btinternet.com. Suggestions for stories should not be emailed direct. Please discuss beforehand with Catherine or Miranda at the next Choir session.

