





**A CELEBRATION OF SONG,**  
**proceeds to the British Liver Trust.**



What a treat to spend an evening in the magnificent Oxford Town Hall listening to two excellent male voice choirs. The Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir with their dynamic M D Helen Swift, and the Builth Male Voice Choir from Powys in mid-Wales, under the direction of Luned Jones and Adrian Morgan.

The evening started with a medley of Welsh music, arranged and played by Andrew Patterson on the organ, followed by a rousing rendition of the National Anthem. Most of the choral items had piano accompaniment, with the organ joining in some of them.

The choirs sang a varied programme, both individually and combined, and started the programme together with the rousing Men of Harlech. What a pleasure it was to see their concentration, all eyes on the Conductors, and of course, not a copy in sight. The dynamics were well observed, and the domed roof of the Town hall meant that the sound really soared in the fortissimo passages. Familiar items were “With a voice of singing”, “Unchained Melody”, “Anthem” from Chess, “Do you hear the people sing”, and “World in Union”. The rendition of the combined choirs singing an African Prayer: Enoch Sontonga, was a highlight.

During each half we were entertained by Rhiannon Drake, a soul singer, and her brilliant accompanist Alex Howgego. Very accomplished performers, but we felt a little out of place in the programme.

I must make mention of the full concentration of the choirs when during the final item, one of their number gracefully sank to the floor, and was immediately attended by a small group of helpers. The singing didn’t falter, and all was well in the end.

The concert ended with the rousing Welsh National anthem, words provided, and my daughter Kate who studied for her degree in Aberystwyth, and myself who was a member of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union for eight years, sang with gusto. We hope that we didn’t offend anyone with our rather rusty pronunciation of the Welsh!

Ann Holder



## **SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING**

A very successful Soup and Puds event went ahead in November organised with quiet efficiency, as ever, by Cynthia East. There were some exotic soups on offer as well as extremely naughty but nice puddings, everything homemade. As well as enjoying the lovely food, the large number of people who attended commented on the very warm and convivial atmosphere which made for a pleasant precursor to Christmas. It was also great to see so many choir members wanting to help and joining in what was a superb team effort. Many thanks to everyone who supported the event in whatever way and for helping to contribute towards the very respectable £250 raised for choir funds.

### **Why do we need additional money? Why fundraise?**

It could be argued that as it is not long since members agreed an increase in annual subscriptions, the need for additional funding is reduced. The reality is that with Helen's guidance, we are becoming a little more adventurous and innovative in our 'productions', as evidenced by 'Narnia' at Christmas, generally held to be a great success. There can sometimes be a little more expense incurred in a more ambitious production, but the results are very satisfying. We also enjoy the services of excellent soloists from time to time and we need to pay their fees, even though these are often modest. I think we would all agree that the staging which David is able to hire for us for at least three performances a year is a wonderful aid to our effectiveness as a choir. It's great to be able to see Helen clearly and hear each other, as well as having a comfortable seated position. Unfortunately, comfort and efficiency don't come cheap! We need to carry on with a bit of fundraising to supplement our income so that we can continue to develop as a choir and present ourselves in a more effective way (i.e. using good staging when we can afford it.)

It has never been our intention to keep asking choir members for money, which would soon wear thin, but our aim has been to hold some (generally food-related!) social events to which members can invite friends and family. The raffles held throughout the year have also been a great success, bringing in an ever-increasing income.

**PLEASE DO KEEP COMING ALONG TO OUR EVENTS AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS! YOUR SUPPORT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL SO FAR. MANY THANKS.**

**CHRIS**



## **Up and coming events for your diary!!**

### **Next event.....**

**April 10th 2015** - Quiz Night with fish and chip supper Towcester Rugby Club, tickets £12.

Prizes will be awarded, and a raffle will take place. Please come along and bring your friends, will be an enjoyable evening!

**June 17th 2015** — Cream Teas afternoon—exciting new venue TBC

**14th November 2015** - Soup and Puds

### **A Saturday with the Armed Man in September**

The Burford singers are a friendly choral group of about 100 singers aspiring to high standards of performance under their Director of Music Brian Kay. Their website describes them as providing the finest choral music in the heart of the Cotswolds! A group of about 350 singers, including two TCS members myself and daughter Katherine, enjoyed a day in Burford under the baton of Brian Kay in a workshop organised by the Burford Singers on Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup>. We started at 10.30am, with breaks for lunch and tea, and at the end of the afternoon gave a creditable performance for a massive audience of about 40 who had to sit on the stage because the Hall was full of singers!

Many of the singers had never sung the work before, but I think were probably avid listeners to the CD, or else very proficient sight readers. The “orchestra” was a brilliant pianist, with tambour played by Brian where required. Katherine and I had been to a workshop of a shortened version of the Armed Man in a small village Church near Guildford at the end of May, so we were quite well prepared. The sopranos and altos outnumbered the basses and tenors as usual, but they were a fine body of men who made a very commendable contribution to the singing.

Brian Kay was very encouraging as always, saying things like could we help the pianist not to play sharp all the time, and the men were not giving enough jam! I think he was quietly pleased with the result at the end of the afternoon.

The Really Big Chorus are promoting the Armed Man in the Albert Hall on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2015, and we certainly hope to be able to take part.

Karl Jenkins is reported to be the most performed composer now, even rumoured to be beating John Rutter, but Brian thinks they might be about equally popular!

Ann Holder

## **My TCS Journey**

I realised on 15<sup>th</sup> January that I have been a member of Towcester Choral for five years, and I can't believe how fast those fifteen seasons and concerts have sped by. I also appreciate that the Society has many members of much longer standing, which is testament to its successive MD's, hard working committee members, and continued year on year support of the audiences that come year in year out to see our concert offerings.

In January 2010 I came to my first practice with trepidation. I had sung in choir at school, but that was 35 years ago and I had done nothing since. Could I still sing? Was I still a soprano? I don't read music, so could I keep up with this established choir who sing big pieces of music? I need not have feared, everyone was very friendly, I could keep up, and best of all Janet Montgomery took me under her wing as she scooped up all new members (miss you Janet).

Later that year Helen joined as MD and encouraged everyone to try small solo spots in our concerts. Oh gosh, my heart leaped, I couldn't do that. When it came to my turn my legs shook, my heart pounded, my voice went shaky and I had a whole butterfly farm flapping about in my stomach. Why am I doing this? I must be nuts! Little did I know that eight months later I would stand on a cruise ship stage in front of 750 people and sing a solo of Summertime. Well that's one way of dealing with "face your fear" therapy and hey, I'm never going to see any of them again! I think that was the time I got the singing bug and there is no antidote.

Last January (2014) I plucked up the courage to book my ticket for the Really Big Chorus to sing the Messiah at the Royal Albert Hall in November, and decided that I would make learning this piece my summer project while we were not in rehearsal. (I really miss choir through those summer weeks, do you?). In the break I had my singing lessons, was learning the Messiah choruses and also some of its solos. I really enjoyed last summer. The first session back to choir practice in September really took me by surprise though. I love my lessons with Helen, I love singing solo, anywhere, on the petrol forecourt, in the supermarket, in the car, in a concert, almost anytime and anywhere, but that night I realised; there is nothing that lifts my heart and spirit as much as standing shoulder to shoulder with choir mates and voice with voice combining to creating that glorious sound that TCS can do so well.

"I'm not singing because I'm happy. I'm happy because I sing".

Thank you TCS.

Gillian

## Towcester Choral Society and the Internet

This is an update regarding our web site and the online fundraising that has taken place.

Newer members may not be aware that our society has its own website which can be found at [www.towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk). Thanks to Gillian Griffith-Porter we now have a much improved look to the website. Thanks for your work here Gillian, I never was very artistic, it's a big improvement.

### Easy Fundraising

Many of us use the Internet for purchasing goods, if you do then you can help us with our fundraising in a painless way at no extra cost to yourself. Instead of shopping direct with your chosen supplier, you can go to them via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/towcestercs>.

This selects Towcester Choral Society as your preferred 'cause'. You must register as supporting TCS and then we will then receive a cash-back as a result of your purchase.

There are some 2700+ online shops who are registered with Easyfundraising. It seems that the most popular for our members are John Lewis, Amazon and Ebay. Tell your friends too, anyone who buys on the Internet can choose Towcester Choral Society as their cause. Why not add <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/towcestercs> as your favourites NOW. But don't forget you must register with Easyfundraising first and then log on to the site before going shopping to ensure we get the cash from your purchase.

### Easysearch

Why not change your search engine too and help TCS?

Go to <http://towcestercs.easysearch.org.uk> and save the entry and use it instead of 'Google' or any other search engine you may currently be using. Since we became members of Easyfundraising and Easysearch, £390.25 has been raised from our activities.

Although more than 50 members have Internet access only 25 have registered with Easyfundraising so far and hopefully all buying or at least searching?

Keep buying and even if you are not buying please keep searching with Easysearch.

### New Email Addresses

We now have two particular email addresses which should be used to contact individual members relating to selected matters. Catharine Tarbun looks after publicity matters including this newsletter, and is our contact with the press. **Catharine has**

**[publicity@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk](mailto:publicity@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk)**

Enid Rippon has the responsibility for supplying tickets for our Towcester concerts. It has always been the case that for concerts outside Towcester the venue handles their own ticket sales. All contact with **Enid should be via [tickets@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk](mailto:tickets@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk)**

Royston King

IT Manager

E-mail: [g8chk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:g8chk@yahoo.co.uk) or [webmaster@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk)



**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**  
**2015 Season**

22	3 <sup>rd</sup> February	Rehearsal
23	10 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
24	17 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal (Half term)
25	24 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
26	3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Rehearsal
27	10 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
28	17 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
29	24 <sup>th</sup>	Dress rehearsal – St. Lawrence’s Church
30	29 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday concert – St. Lawrence’s Church
31	14 <sup>th</sup> April	Rehearsal
32	21 <sup>st</sup>	Rehearsal
33	28 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
34	5 <sup>th</sup> May	Rehearsal
35	12 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
36	19 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
37	26 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal (Half term)
38	2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Rehearsal
39	9 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
40	16 <sup>th</sup>	Rehearsal
41	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Spring concert dress rehearsal – Towcester Town Hall
42	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Spring concert - Towcester Town Hall
43	26 <sup>th</sup>	Spring concert - Towcester Town Hall
	7 <sup>th</sup> July	AGM

**TOWCESTER CHORAL SOCIETY  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014**

<b><u>Post</u></b>	<b><u>Post Holder</u></b>	<b><u>Telephone</u></b>	<b><u>E-mail</u></b>
Chairman	Margaret Hawkins	01604 751454	margaret.hawkins6@btinternet.com
Secretary	Ann Ward	01327 860165	itinerantlady@aol.com
Treasurer	John Maleham	01327 860558	j.maleham@btinternet.com
Stage Manager	David Coppock	01604 859645	david.coppock@tesco.net
Publicity Officer	Catharine Tarbun	01327 353107	catharinetarbun@gmail.com
Librarian	Janice Whyte	07770530951	janicewhyte968@gmail.com
Social Secretary	Chris John	01327 352332	chris.john@talk21.com
IT Manager	Royston King	01327 353691	g8chk@yahoo.co.uk