

THE CLARION

Newsletter of the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir



Editor: Gerry Brown

www.nelsonarion.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1116138

AUTUMN 2008

Chairman's Report

Since the last 'Clarion' in June, the Arion have performed at four engagements. I was on holiday for our concert at Poulton le Fylde – a return fixture as we were there two years ago, but reports from choir members and supporters suggest that it was again a successful and enjoyable event, helped by a capacity audience determined to enjoy itself.

In mid – October we gave a concert in aid of the Manorlands Hospice at Silsden Methodist Church. Although by no means full, the audience and organisers were delighted with our performance and raised a substantial sum for their charity.

Just a couple of weeks ago a 30 strong team sang at the wedding of the son of our Choir Secretary, Tony Young, at St Andrew's Church, Longton, Preston. This went very well, although the audience seemed to be in two minds whether to applaud or not. For what it's worth, as this was a marriage service, I think that the focus should be on the bride and groom and applause from the congregation should not be sought, unless invited as a gesture of thanks by the officiating minister. If a concert is in a church, then although some audiences seem to be inhibited by their surroundings, applause would seem to be entirely appropriate.

This brings us to our Celebrity Concert on October 25th with our guest Jane Gilchrist. You can read Duncan Read's review elsewhere in this 'Clarion', but I would like to air some more general points

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 16th November 2008

In Concert

St John's R C Church

PADIHAM 2/30pm

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Saturday 29th November 2008

In Concert

St Matthew's Church

BURNLEY 7/30pm

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Sunday 7th December 2008

Seasonal Music at Towneley Hall

BURNLEY 2pm

Small Team

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Saturday 20th December 2008

Christmas Cracker

Municipal Theatre

COLNE 7/30pm

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Saturday 27th December 2008

Wedding

St Michael The Belfry

YORK

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Saturday 10th January 2009

In Concert

Kelbrook Village Hall

KELBROOK 7/30pm

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Saturday 24th January 2009

In Concert

Sion Baptist Church

BURNLEY 7/30pm

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Sunday 25th January 2009

In Concert

With

Pendle Youth Choir/Adrian Thompson

Colne Municipal Theatre 2/30pm

Con't from Page 1.....

concerning the Celebrity Concert which I hope will be a basis for discussion.

PLEASE NOTE, these are discussion points only, nothing has been decided, but I would appreciate feedback from choir members and patrons, which may point to the future.

1. In view of the limited audience at our last Celebrity Concert, is it worth having a celebrity at all? Perhaps we should just put on a choral concert – after all, we haven't done a full concert in the 'Muni' for a long time. Just because we have had a Celebrity Concert for the last 40 years doesn't mean that we should always do it.

2. Should the Celebrity Concert be an occasional thing, when we are able to book a suitable artist?

3. What sort of artist should we be booking? The cost of a top artist in either the operatic or more popular field will be high and would involve charging ticket prices of £20 to £25 at least. We would make a profit only if we filled the venue. If we decided to charge just a 'break even' ticket price and we failed to fill the venue, then that could be a financial catastrophe.

4. Who is the Celebrity Concert aimed at? High ticket prices would deter some of our regular supporters, but a 'popular' artist may attract their fans – would we be putting on a concert for the fans of the artist who would have no interest in the choir's contribution and who we would never see again after the event.

5. In view of our difficulties in selling tickets partly due, I know, to the fact that we have fewer members to sell tickets to their nearest and dearest, but I think we could have made more effort to 'sell' Jane Gilchrist. Should we opt for a smaller venue – back to St Thomas's perhaps? At least it would be clean and tidy!

I hope that all readers will think about the above and let me, or any choir officer, know what they would like to see in the future.

For the remainder of 2008 and into 2009 the choir are busy, as can be seen from 'Dates For Your Diary'. There have been some spare seats at our last couple of 'Crackers' – please encourage your friends and family to come and celebrate with us.

Until the New Year. K H



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WELL DONE VAL & MONICA!

My wife Val and her sister Monica Forrest, wish to send their sincere thanks for the generous contributions by the men of the Arion towards their London to Paris Charity Cycle Ride.

Between the 10th and 14th September, they biked from Blackburn to Dover, crossed to Calais by ferry then continued southward towards Paris, finishing by cycling with about 240 fellow cyclists, up the Champs Elysses to the Eiffel Tower.

All the competitors' efforts were for various charitable causes and the two heard many moving tales of reasons for raising money. Val and Monica were cycling in aid of the Pendleside Hospice and the Stroke Association and raised a total of £2186 to be divided equally between the two charities. Peter L Roberts (2nd Bass)



An appointment with.....

My years of service with the Arion brought a quite unexpected invitation earlier this year, namely, to attend one of the Royal Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace. We were thrilled at the prospect and a certain amount of shopping inevitably followed!

The day itself turned out to be one of the sunniest of the summer and we strolled through Hyde Park from Paddington Station to the Palace gate. After a

brief security check we were inside the grounds amongst a spectacle of Royal Ascot headwear. Two bands played light music and at the appointed hour the Yeomen of the Guard processed to their places creating an open square area for the arrival of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh together with other members of the Royal family. We were fortunate to be very close as they walked by and we were impressed as to how well they looked despite their age and what must have been a tiring day.

After our 'Royal tea' - cucumber sandwiches of course but other tasteful morsals as well, we enjoyed a private meeting with Prince Michael of Kent. He asked me about my musical background and I told him of the splendid choral traditions of Northern England. All in all a most pleasurable experience but tough on the feet for a number of ladies! New shoes!

F E H S

CELEBRITY CONCERT

The Arion opened their 40th Celebrity Concert with guest Jane Gilchrist at the Muni last Saturday with a rousing trio of choruses from operas by Verdi to cheer a weather beaten Colne audience. There was even a hint of choreography in the Anvil chorus as the men took an imaginary glass of wine served by their conductor Frank Smith. A soothing song followed this with global provenance entitled "Away from the roll of the Sea" which had been brought to the Arion by a New Zealand choir via the Llangollen Eisteddfod.

When Jane Gilchrist took to the stage her warmth and charm filled the hall. Two things were noticeable, firstly the lack of amplification which her singing voice did not need and secondly the control as she began Porgi Amor from the Marriage of Figaro by Mozart. She fully exploited her womanly wiles, with a little audience participation, in the Habanera from Bizet's Carmen which was very expressive and ended the first half with "One fine Day" from Madame Butterfly, a piece she had chosen for her audition for Channel 4's Operatunity, sensitively sung.

The second half was a lighter program with the choir singing the Anthem from the musical Chess and reassuring us that they "Ain't Misbehavin" an Alan Simmons arrangement of the Fats Waller classic. Jane followed and was clearly intent on misbehaving with the assistance of two apprehensive men from the audience in "On my Lips every Kiss is like Wine" by Lehar. I hope they didn't receive any retribution when they got home as they deserved a good round of applause judging from the audience laughter. She sang an unaccompanied folk song "Spinning Wheel" learned at the feet of her own father before the finale "The Holy City" where the choir joined her in the choruses accompanied by John Taylor.

Duncan C Read (1st Tenor)

NELSON ARION PATRONS

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We are pleased to acknowledge the support we receive from our Patrons. Your donations have been gratefully received. Where Patrons and Members are able to complete a simple 'Gift Aid' form, this enables us to claim a further 20% (or 20 pence in the pound) from the Inland Revenue, which is of tremendous help to us in times of ever increasing running costs of the choir.

If you have overlooked renewing your membership and wish to continue, the cost is £10 per annum. Our new Patron Secretary Tony Young would be pleased to hear from you. His address is: - 197 Casterton Avenue BURNLEY BB10 2PF.

In return you will have choice of tickets for our two main concerts in the year and you will be kept updated of all the choir's activities by receiving a copy of our quarterly magazine the **CLARION**. Thank you most sincerely