

THE CLARION

Newsletter of the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir
President:- Ruth E Sutton



Editor: Gerry Brown

www.nelsonarion.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1116138

WINTER 2009

From Our Chairman

Since my last report in the autumn, the choir has been very busy, fulfilling 6 engagements between mid-November and mid-January. We gave a good account of ourselves in all these concerts, but the size of audiences in some cases gave cause for concern. Our Christmas Cracker did not sell out either this year or last year, and whilst the size of the audience was respectable, must we give consideration to moving this concert to a smaller venue, on the basis that filling a smaller venue (St Thomas's?) is preferable to half-filling a larger one? I would appreciate feedback from members and patrons. The Christmas Cracker itself was very successful, with Stockport Brass encouraging audience participation, and Pendle Boys Choir giving a spirited performance, under the inspirational leadership of David Wilkinson. One of the more successful concerts recently, both in the size of the audience and the attendance of choir members was at St John's Roman Catholic Church in Padiham. I think it was significant that this concert was held on a Sunday Afternoon, and this could be the way forward for us. If any member or patron wants us to give a concert for them, Sunday afternoon rather than Saturday evening could produce a better result.

Finally, I have just learned with great sorrow of the death of Brian Earnshaw. A fuller appreciation of Brian will appear in a later edition of the Clarion. The funeral will take place on Friday 23rd January at St Bartholomew's Church, Colne.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 24th January 2009

In Concert

Sion Baptist Church

BURNLEY 7/30 pm

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Sunday 25th January 2009

In Concert

With

Pendle Youth Choir/Adrian Thompson

Colne Municipal Theatre 2/30 pm

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Saturday 7th February 2009

ANNUAL DINNER

Calf's Head Hotel

WORSTON 7 for 7/30 pm

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Saturday 28th February 2009

In Concert

St Anne's Church

FENCE 7/30 pm

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Sunday 8th March 2009

In Concert

St John's R C Church

Ivy Street

BURNLEY 7 pm

.....

Sunday 29th March 2009

In Concert

St Mary's Church

GISBURN 2/30 pm

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Saturday 25th April 2009

In Concert

St Andrews Church

GARGRAVE 7/30 pm

**PLEASE NOTE VARYING
COMMENCEMENT TIMES**

Brian Earnshaw



It is with deep regret that we record the death of Brian Earnshaw, who passed away at Pendleside Hospice on the 14th January 2009.

I visited Brian only a few days before he died. We reminisced about the good times and the camaraderie enjoyed with the choir and its members. Brian will long be remembered for the support he gave to the choir over a period of some 29 years. In concert, his rendition of the Hippopotamus Song was always met with rapturous applause. (Ed)

Our thoughts are with you Brenda at this sad time. Brian was a lovely man and he will be sadly missed.

Choir Officers and Members send to you and your family their Deepest Sympathy.

Special New Year Greetingsto members & former members who are presently feeling unwell:-

Keith Johnson, Joe Spencer, David Hoyle, Peter Ogden, Mike Warner, & Bill Lord.

We pass to you our best wishes and trust that our special thoughts bring you comfort at this time of year.

Arion Choir Members and Officers.

Memories... recalled by Neville Hudson

I felt the need to record the achievements of 'Nelson Arion' during my term of office with them, which is a reminder of many, many happy hours.

The membership was 28 when I took charge in March 1957, and here are the names — purely from memory — of those present at my first rehearsal:- with Jas Barraclough at the piano, Bill Simpson, Eric Carson, Geo Jones, Walt Hargreaves, Fred Ratcliffe, Dennis Dixon, Dick Elliot, Geo Richards, John Hudson, Ernest Burrows, Tommy Thompson, Harold Jackson, Jon Spencer, Frank Horsfall, Harold Ward, Harry Butterworth, Ken Nelson, Harold Webb, A Bracewell, Vernon Tomlinson, Bill Fish, Percy Bancroft, Brian Watson, Arthur Steel, Dick Roberts, F. Greenwood. Recruitments in the next 3 or 4 years included Ted Parr, David Smith, Frank Smith, Neville Hudson, David Corden, Eddie Collingwood, Peter Stowell, Dennis Rushton, John Shaw, Derek Burnett. (These included names of some present members and many whose names are very familiar. Ed). We normally sang 50 to 58 voices. Many BBC engagements and Festivals were entered during this time and included Ilkley, Freckleton, Blackpool, Blackburn, Southport, Lytham, Colne, and Keighley.

To say thank you to all concerned—particularly to those who sat, clad in overcoats, at Stanley Street and later at the Conservative Club, to keep warm in the winter—this was loyalty plus! But it kept the choir alive. **Jack Smith**

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Small World Cont'd.....resulting in some of Alan's arrangements appearing in our repertoire. In a subsequent email I received from Alan, he wished to be remembered to everyone in the choir. I have a feeling Alan may be adjudicating at Truro!! Ed.

CRACKER 2008

The Nelson Arion introduced their now familiar Christmas Cracker concert last Saturday at Colne Muni with guests Stockport Brass and the Pendle Boys Choir. In the opening selection the men sang an arrangement by conductor Frank Smith of the traditional carol "We Three Kings" with soloists taking the verses. The audience was invited to join in the rousing "While Shepherds Watched" to the tune Lyngham which was particularly appreciated by Michael Fowles the band's conductor who thanked the choir for bringing back childhood memories. The



Pendle Boy's Choir with David Wilkinson

band followed with a group of items including a sensitive "Away in a Manger" with cornet soloist Mike Eccles who was on loan from the Fairy Band, particularly appropriate for the time of year! It was the first time on stage for the Pendle Boys Choir but they were not a bit daunted by the experience and launched into the Canoe Song from North America with gusto. The Arion formed the backing group for the Latin rhythms of El Cumbanchero and just managed to keep up. Then it was back to the band to close the first half with the unfortunately named "Dance of the Buffoons" by Tchaikovsky.

In the second half the audience were invited to join in a Bavarian style foot stomping hand clapping accompaniment to "Schneewaltzer" with both sides of the hall competing and I think the result was a dead heat. The boys returned to give us the Song of Pendle Council (with all references to gritting omitted). No choir should be out so late but the Arion reminded us of the days of caroling around the village with "Past Three O'Clock" and the concert ended with everyone singing the traditional "O Come all ye faithful." **D Read**

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Small World

Richard Vaughton was a former rugby colleague, whose name may be familiar to the likes of John Thornton, Ken Hollas, Chris Dennis & Andrew Wild (whose cricketing days in particular are well remembered by Richard). Just before Christmas I sent an email to Richard and his wife Dorothy who have 'retired' to France. He wrote. "Whilst passing thoughts on musical issues, a gentleman who has a house in the next village has invited friends and enthusiasts to make sounds from mouths.....so Dorothy and I have joined our first choir. We have our pre performance rehearsal this evening—our 4th, so we are quite expert. We couldn't get a booking at Notre Dame in Paris so were at the local village pub! Our man is none other than that well known arranger, composer and leader of the Mastersingers, all the way from Yorkshire**Alan Simmons**. You must have heard of him!" ...Many members will remember a workshop the choir attended with the New Zealand M V C in Huddersfield a few years ago, *Cont'd P2—Col 2.*

FESTIVAL

May 2009 sees the Arion returning to the competitive platform, as they plan to attend the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival to be held in Truro.

Arrangements are well in advance and we are pleased to see that a number of Patrons have asked to join us at this 3 day event. Previous experience has shown that it is a long way to travel by coach, so the Committee have decided that members will have the choice of travelling by Air or Rail. Reservations for Air Travel have already been made.

The Choir will be based at Porth Veor Manor Hotel (www.porthveormanor.com), which is on the outskirts of Newquay. This charming mid-19th century Manor is complemented by the modern day comforts of a well-appointed hotel. It is set in two acres of terraced lawned gardens in an elevated position overlooking the beach at Porth. Within the complex are 12 deluxe villas and apartments, which were only introduced in July 2007.

This promises to be a musical Bank



Gibbon Bridge Hotel is ideally located in a beautiful part of the Forest of Bowland near to Chipping, an area which is overlooked by Longridge Fell.

During the summer months, the Hotel promotes special events to compliment Evening Dinner which is served in there renowned restaurant. One such event is being held on Sunday the 19th July 2009, when the Arion Choir will contribute to an evening of light music to be held in the colourful gardens which surround the hotel. (weather permitting)

The Arion Choir are honoured to be associated with this promotion which takes us into an area of the Ribble Valley which, as a choir, we have not had the benefit of visiting before.

The proprietor of the Hotel Janet Simpson has produced a summer brochure which is now available. As these events in the past been shown to be very popular with their regular clientele, it would be essential for anyone wishing to attend to book a table as soon as possible. Tables for eight or ten are envisaged to help create a 'party' atmosphere. The telephone number is 01995 61456 or speak with Gerry Brown (01282 428384) You can also visit the website:- www.gibbon-bridge.co.uk

Most people like to 'push the boat out' and celebrate a special Anniversary or Birthday during the course of a year. This could be for you! . Ed.

! Holiday weekend not to be missed!